

Domino's initiative uses robots for pizza delivery

March 30 2017, by Nancy Owano



(Tech Xplore)—Sidewalk robots will deliver pizza this year. Domino's pizza, to be exact. Datelined London, a news release on Wednesday on the Starship Technologies site brought news of the launch of a pilot

program with Domino's Pizza Enterprises—"the master franchisor for the Domino's Pizza brand in Australia, New Zealand, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Japan and Germany." Across these seven markets, DPE and its franchisees operate over 2000 stores.

Alex Davies in *Wired* said, "Under the new deal, a fleet of five Starship robots will operate out of Domino's stores in Hamburg before more launch in other (yet to be announced) cities in Germany and the Netherlands."

The robotic delivery units will complement Domino's existing delivery methods, including cars, scooters and e-bikes, according to Don Meij, Domino's Group [CEO](#).

"With our growth plans over the next five to 10 years, we simply won't have enough delivery drivers if we do not look to add to our fleet through initiatives such as this," he added.

Specifically, the robots will start delivering pizzas to customers within a 1-mile radius of selected Domino's stores in Germany and the Netherlands. "Domino's is running the project under the framework of DRU (Domino's Robotic Unit), an initiative using robot and drone technologies for delivery," said the news release.

Starship Technologies has offices in Estonia, UK and US. It was launched in 2014 by Ahti Heinla and Janus Friis.

The company said the robots weigh no more than 40 pounds. They can move at 4 mph (walking speed). You can check out *Wired* for a neat word picture: "The six-wheeled robot Starship built to conquer that final stretch holds about four or five medium pizzas, runs an electric motor, and ambles down the [sidewalk](#) at a casual 4 mph



Starship Technologies' site described generally how delivery systems work. "Parcels and groceries are directly delivered from stores or specialised hubs, at the time that the client requests via a mobile app. It takes 5 to 30 minutes for the shipment to arrive and the robots' entire journey can be monitored on a smartphone."

Talking about this recent pizza plan, Davies said, "you'll be able to watch its progress on your phone, and get a link to unlock the cargo compartment once it arrives."

While you are grooving over your melted cheese, the robot is busy returning to base. Davies said there, "someone swaps in a charged battery, reloads it, and sends it on its next mission."

The robots are autonomous but humans are to walk with them to see if anything goes wrong.

Speaking of things going wrong, what about [pizza](#) thieves? *The Telegraph* said "its storage [compartment](#) can only be opened by people with adequate permissions, according to its makers." Not only that, but the company said the movements are tracked for the journey.



Wait, ground-based [robot](#) delivery system? Haven't you read about these little bots before? Yes, we reported on them in January. (Chris Davies in *SlashGear* had remarked that the "robots look more akin to miniature moon rovers, with their squat bodies and six [wheels](#).")

The company makes another selling point besides being efficient, and

that is being kind to the planet. "Because of minimal emissions and energy efficiency, our system is incredibly clean and incredibly [green](#)."

TechCrunch said "In 2015, people in the U.S. ordered about \$210 billion worth of food for [delivery](#) or [takeout](#). "

More information: www.starship.xyz/starship-tech...s-pizza-enterprises/

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