

Knightscope K5 on security patrol roams campus

24 November 2014, by Nancy Owano



A Mountain View, California-based company called Knightscope designs and builds 5-foot, 300-pound security guards called K5, but anyone scanning last week's headlines has already heard about them, with the news that Microsoft was deploying a number of autonomous robot security guards to patrol its Silicon Valley campus. The company making the K5, Knightscope, refers to the guard as an "autonomous data machine."

Sebastian Anthony, in ExtremeTech, described it as a security guard on [wheels](#). This [autonomous robot](#) is designed to roam outdoors, knows where it is by GPS, charges itself when it needs to, and uses enough technology to see, feel, hear and smell. The robot is packed with four cameras, odor detectors, thermal imaging system and scanners that can read an impressive number of 300 car license plates every minute. Its [optical character recognition](#) system can convert scanned images of alphanumeric text into machine-encoded text for comparison against a defined database or 'hot list'. It uses the infrared light spectrum to provide video in low or no-light conditions.

Back in January, Forbes carried a piece about Knightscope; its CEO William Santana Li noted they are not a robotics company but rather a security company. "This is Security 3.0," said Li in Forbes. "This isn't about waking up and deciding to make a robot, this was about waking up and seeing an industry that has dangerous, repetitive, mundane work and has not changed its [methodology](#) on the front lines since it started, it's time for a change." He also made the point that there is much more "intelligent technology for people who are putting themselves in harm's way for minimum wage . There is technology that can help them do their jobs more effectively and safely."

Earlier this month, Rachel Metz wrote about the robots in MIT Technology Review. She said that they use Wi-Fi or a [wireless data network](#) to communicate with one another and with people who can remotely [monitor](#) cameras, microphones, and other data sources. "The robots have a battery that could last about 24 hours on a single charge, though the K5 is supposed to monitor its battery life and wheel over to a charging pad when needed."

How do they offer protection? Metz provided some details. If you walk in front of the robot, it will stop abruptly. If you try to detain it, an alarm will chirp and will send a low-level alert to a remote monitoring center. Try to really bother it and the result will be an "ear-piercing alarm" which sends off another alert. The operator uses Knightscope's browser-based software to check out the robot and talk to anyone who may be there. If a person outdoors on the compound where the robots are roaming needs help, the procedure is to press a button near the top of a nearby [robot's](#) head to summon someone remotely.



More information: www.knightscope.com/

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