



Zoobots: Wild Robots Inspired by Real Animals

Helaine Becker

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Innovations in the world of robotics are multiplying, with many cutting-edge breakthroughs, and this exciting and timely new book for young readers explores one particularly intriguing area: the world of robo-animals, or zoobots. In an attempt to design robots that can solve problems or perform tasks that humans can't, or just can't do easily, roboticists have been looking at the unique skills some animals have. Using something called mechatronics --- mechanical and electrical engineering combined with computer science --- they are finding ways to closely mirror those skills in robot form. Some fascinating examples from the book of what zoobots can do include: finding survivors of a fire using sensitive, computerized "whiskers"; scaling skyscraper walls using super stickiness; or delivering drugs deep within the human body using microscopic whiptails for locomotion. Twelve zoobots are described, each on its own two-page spread.

Award-winning children's author Helaine Becker's text is comprehensive, yet clear and lively, and is made more manageable by being broken up into shorter segments. The futuristic design of the book includes vivid, detailed color illustrations by Alex Ries, of both the zoobot prototypes as well as the animals from which their skills were derived. This imaginative and interesting nonfiction book will definitely capture the imaginations of technology buffs. It also has enormous potential for classroom use in exploring everything from basic technology and robots, to engineering concepts, to inventions. A glossary and an index make it work well as a wonderful reference tool.

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