

# Robotics Daily



## Site Navigation

- [Home](#)
- [News Archives](#)
- [Syndicate News](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Contact Us](#)



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## Latest News

### Robotic Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter

Posted on 3 May 2005

The next time you look at the Moon, pause for a moment and let this thought sink in: People have actually walked on the Moon, and right now the wheels are in motion to send people there again.

The goals this time around are more ambitious than they were in the days of the Apollo program. NASA's new Vision for Space Exploration spells out a long-term strategy of returning to the Moon as a step toward Mars and beyond. The Moon, so nearby and accessible, is a great place to try out new technologies critical to living on alien worlds before venturing across the solar system.

Whether a moonbase will turn out to be feasible hinges largely on the question of water. Colonists need water to drink. They need water to grow plants. They can also break water apart to make air (oxygen) and rocket fuel (oxygen+hydrogen). Furthermore, water is surprisingly effective at blocking space radiation. Surrounding the 'base with a few feet of water would help protect explorers from solar flares and cosmic rays.

To find out if lunar ice is truly there, NASA plans to send a robotic scout. The Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, or "LRO" for short, is scheduled to launch in 2008 and to orbit the Moon for a year or more. Carrying six different scientific instruments, LRO will map the lunar environment in greater detail than ever before. [Read the full article...](#)

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- [Prototyping Wireless Robots Move Into Corporate Roles](#)
- [Robot to investigate narrow pyramid shafts](#)
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