

Hello Rick, My name is Andrew Filo, and I was an Androbody. I was at Androbot for the last 6 months, but threw myself into the work. One of my life's passions is robotics. I was hired by Richard Foote as a result of an article called "Designing a Robot From Nature" published in BYTE Magazine in 2 parts in Feb/Mar of '79. I came in as the "Sensors" guy and later became VP of engineering. My background was in electronics/medicine and aerospace and my goal was to make Nolan's Androbot Vision a reality. As part of Nolan's management style I was a Skunk works within Androbot. My project was the Baseline Line Bob BLB (or later the known as the XA, eXpandable Androbot). The goal was to make a baseline robot that could receive user commands and interpret them, navigate from point A to point B unassisted, and achieve automatic acquisition and docking with special objects in its environment as a result of the input commands and the environment it was in. This would be done by making a clone of the the IBM PC and clone industrial automation cards, combine them with multiple layers of sensors and mechanisms. The First phase was the Andro Base, designed as a stable, differential platform to support the body and lifted objects. Next was the Andro Lift which was a passive compliant "forklift", Andro Table, and a modulated IR unit. The IR unit was a range finder and code reader that served a multi role. The IR could detect wall and most objects (2-3 feet) to avoid them. The IR could also detect Andro Tables (10-15 feet) and for precise vectoring for navigation and docking with them. The IR could also read the tables to their purpose or content. The tables could be used to transport items such as drinks (beer fetch bob), hot air popcorn, or even serve as recharge points or data transfer stations. Next a sensor suite was composed of Bump Switches, Flux Gate Compass for orientation and navigation, Wheel Encoders, Side IR for wall hugging. Body plastics including the signature head was also part of the plan. While this was happening the company was unwinding. I pushed Nolan to make a "toy" grade version of and Androbot, but it was too late. I returned to Androbot from Christmas Vacation to find I was Fired but told to report to Nolan's Catalyst Building, where He told me to try to develop a toy androbot. I quickly crafted a robot based on the FRED plastics and started on a software package called the personality editor. It cost about 1/10th the price of a FRED and was intended to be a roaming and interactive computer "pet" as opposed to the original drawing turtle. Nolan Christened it Andy Robot to honor me and spite the Androbot. Under the Alxon Banner (a defunct pocket terminal company Nolan Had) we sold 2300 Andys and ran out of plastics in 2 months. Desperate for plastics, we turned to a large tupperware bowl, inverted it and covered it with plush fur and deely boppers and renamed it a Petster. Toys R Us was expressing interest in the item but instead of showing them a computer peripheral, we transformed the Petster into an autonomous unit with the computer on board. A user interface was developed along with a simple personality. Sensors added to the Petster Deluxe included sound triangulation, Day/ Nite sensing, Pet sensor, Remote leash. The body was still based on the tupperware bowl! The item was a success, a tv commercial was made, and the sales of the Petster were equal to loss racked-up by Androbot. I worked on over a dozen different designs at Axlon, including puppets, bears, other robots, tech force, but left and worked with Mattel's Blue Sky group as a consultant to design toys for year 2000 (yeah, this was a while ago, 1985) I stayed in toys and designed products for Crayola Crayons, then Tiger toys. For Tiger Toy I created Sound Bites, Hit Clips and VideoNow. I also licensed a Biped and quadra ped robot to Tiger. Tiger and Silverlit had entered into a joint development to make a robot dog called iCybie. Tiger wanted to use My IP to make iCybie walk. I agreed to head development to Make iCybie walk and give it senses and a personality. I added a walk-up charger and programming cart to the product as well. If you are still active on the site I can send you some pictures and scans. Anyways, Thanks you for the Androbot website!

Andy Filo