



# Almost Human: Making Robots Think

*Lee Gutkind*

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**Almost Human: Making Robots Think** Lee Gutkind

A remarkable, intense portrait of the robotic subculture and the challenging quest for robot autonomy.

The high bay at the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University is alive and hyper night and day with the likes of Hyperion, which traversed the Antarctic, and Zoe, the world's first robot scientist, now back home. Robot Segways learn to play soccer, while other robots go on treasure hunts or are destined for hospitals and museums. Dozens of cavorting mechanical creatures, along with tangles of wire, tools, and computer innards are scattered haphazardly. All of these zipping and zooming gizmos are controlled by disheveled young men sitting on the floor, folding chairs, or tool cases, or huddled over laptops squinting into displays with manic intensity. Award-winning author Lee Gutkind immersed himself in this frenzied subculture, following these young roboticists and their bold conceptual machines from Pittsburgh to NASA and to the most barren and arid desert on earth. He makes intelligible their discoveries and stumbling points in this lively behind-the-scenes work.

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