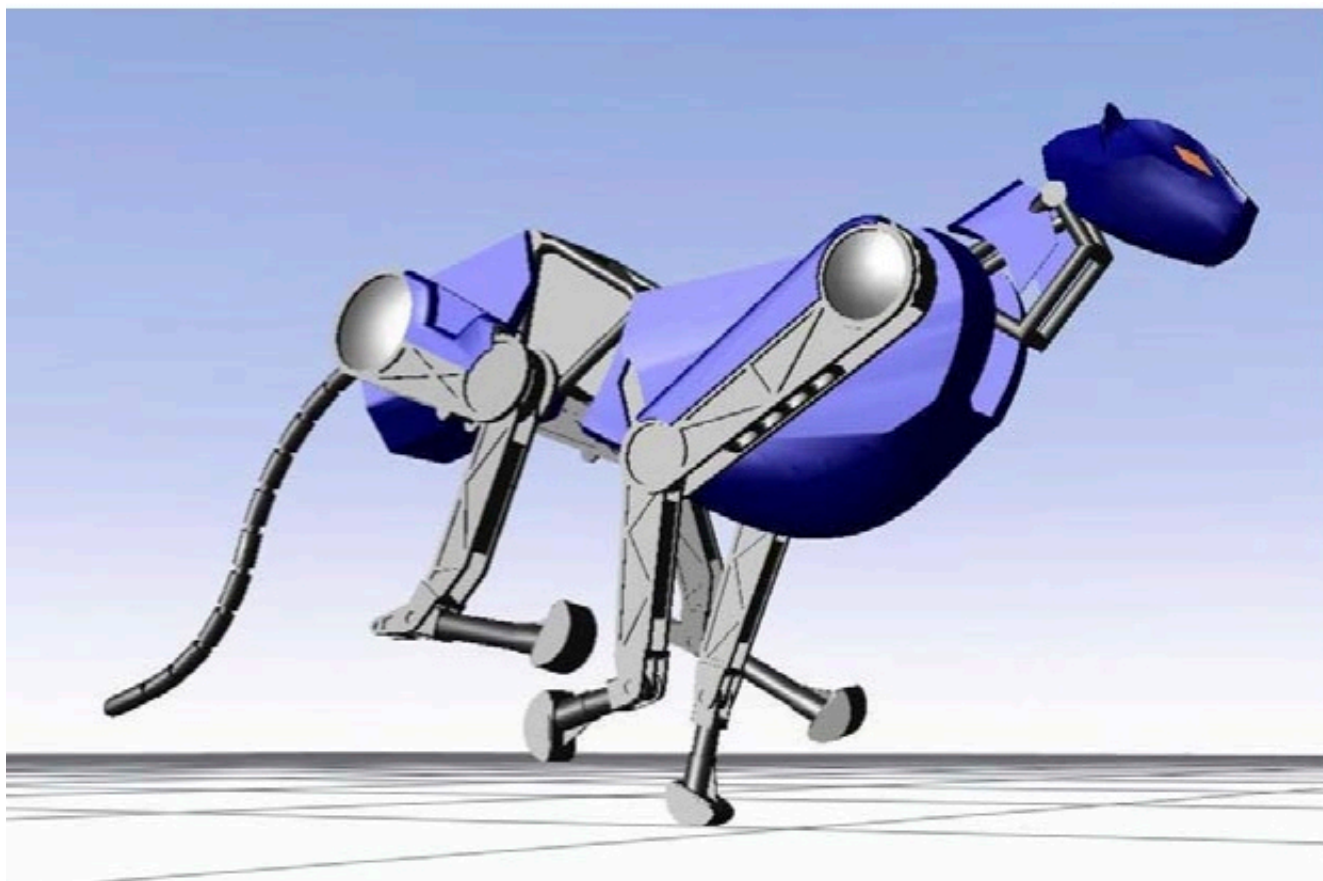


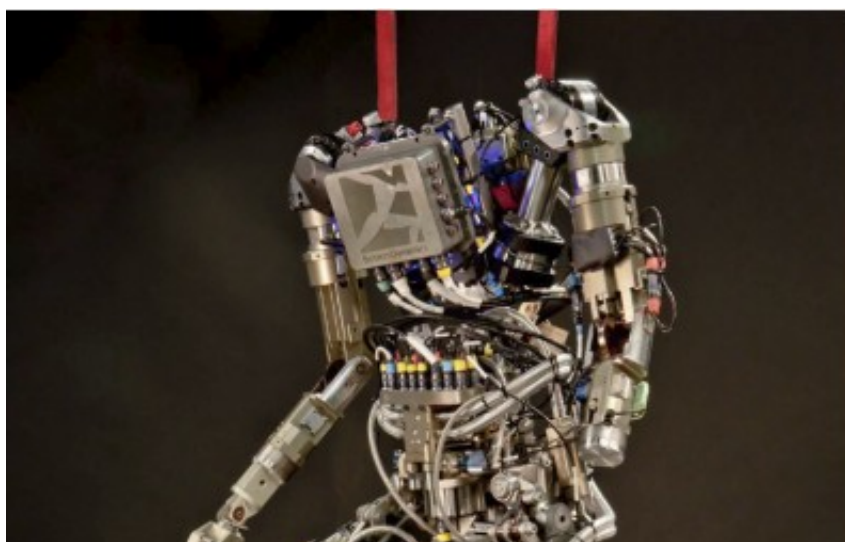
Darpa's Cheetah-Bot Designed to Chase Human Prey



Perhaps you thought the four-legged BigDog robot wasn't eerily lifelike enough. That'll change soon. BigDog's makers are working on a new quadruped that moves faster than any human and is agile enough to "chase and evade."

Boston Dynamics, maker of the Army's [BigDog](#) robotic mule, announced today that Darpa has awarded it a contract to build a much faster and more fearsome animal-like robot, Cheetah.

As the name implies, Cheetah is designed to be a four-legged robot with a flexible spine and articulated head (and potentially a tail) that runs faster than the fastest human. In addition to raw speed, Cheetah's makers promise that it will have the agility to make tight turns so that it can "zigzag to chase and evade" and be able to stop on a dime.





Cheetah builds off work on the company's previous four legged animal bot, [BigDog](#). It was built as a kind of unmanned pack mule, designed to carry equipment for troops on the battlefield. The robotic donkey could carry **300 lbs. over 13 miles** on flat ground, take a swift kick and keep on moving. It's creepy, lifelike movement can be seen on a number of videos online, [climbing over hills and snow](#) and [hiking alongside soldiers](#), using GPS coordinates as its waypoints.

Aside from its unspecified military applications, Cheetah's makers see it galloping to the rescue and building a brave new future in the fields of "emergency response, firefighting, advanced agriculture and vehicular travel."

Think that's creepy? Wait till you see its humanoid, Terminator look-alike buddy.

Meet Atlas, Cheetah's humanoid pal. Atlas is supposed to look more or less like the [T-800 series of Terminators](#), minus the head. Its designers say it'll be able to walk like a human over rough terrain, crawling on its hands and knees when necessary and turning itself sideways to slip through any narrow passages it encounters. Headless, with a torso and two arms, it's a step up from Boston Dynamics' other biped, the lower-body-bot [Petman](#).

Petman was built to test out chemical weapons protective suits for the Army by "walking, crawling and doing a variety of suit-stressing calisthenics" and "simulat[ing] human physiology." Designers made it capable of walking heel-to-toe at 3.2 miles per hour and staying upright even after it gets pushed.

As the new models go into development, let's hope Cheetah never develops a taste for human flesh and that Atlas doesn't have any hard feelings about its predecessor being a poison-gas guinea pig for the Army.

Images: Boston Dynamics

See Also:

- [Darpa to Teen Geeks: Build Us Better Robots](#)
- [Darpa Wants to Create Brainiac Bot Tots](#)
- [Darpa: Fuse Nerves With Robot Limbs, Make Prosthetics Feel Real](#)
- [DARPA Grand Challenge vs. European Land Robot](#)
- [‘Snake-Bot’ Evolves into Shorter, Smarter ‘Worm-Bot’](#)
- [Army Terminators Walk Like Men](#)
- [Darpa Preps Son of Robotic Mule](#)