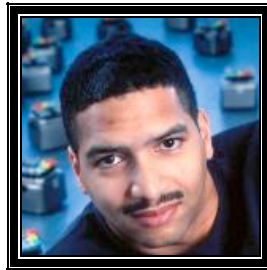




## JAMES MCLURKIN BIOGRAPHY

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Robotist James McLurkin knows the power of play and exploration to the budding scientist. As a child, he was constantly building with plastic bricks, cardboard boxes, or any other materials he could access. Today, McLurkin continues this tradition, both in his work and in his lectures. James McLurkin is dedicated to illustrating the fun and excitement in science and engineering, and has taught many classes for high school programs from physics to civil engineering, in an effort to help mold a future engineer corps.

Using Mother Nature as a model, his core research is developing algorithms and techniques for constructing and programming large swarms of autonomous robots. Inspired by the behavior of ants and bees, the SwarmBots perform individual tasks that collectively contribute to the goals of the group. They were originally created during his five-year post as Lead Research Scientist at iRobot, one of the world's leading robotics companies.

McLurkin holds an SB in electrical engineering with a minor in mechanical engineering from MIT (1995), a M.S. in electrical engineering from the University of California, Berkeley (1999), and an SM in computer science from MIT (2004). He has just completed his Ph.D. in computer science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL), working under Professor Leslie Kaelbling. His first robot, Rover, was constructed in 1988, and was quickly followed by many other designs, including the Robotic Ants created at the MIT Artificial Intelligence Lab for his undergraduate thesis.

In 2003, McLurkin received the Lemelson-MIT Student Prize, which is awarded to burgeoning MIT student inventors. Also in 2003, he was recognized by Time Magazine as one of five leading robotics engineers in their "Rise of the Machines" feature, and by Black Enterprise magazine as a "Best and Brightest Under 40." In 2002, he was featured in the Lemelson Center's nationwide interactive traveling exhibit, Invention at Play, which began at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

McLurkin is a native of Baldwin, NY, where his parents were very encouraging and began cultivating his inventiveness and engineering prowess at a young age. From Lego bricks to BMX bicycling to programming self-designed video games, he quickly became consumed by his passion for engineering. McLurkin recounts, "I remember when I was in the 7th grade and saw the MIT 2.70 Design Competition on a Nova special. I thought, wow, that's the coolest thing on the planet." The T.V. program featured a behind the scenes look at students working in the labs using tools as large as they were to design robots to perform a specified task. "I was amazed that there were such tools and I saw how they were building intriguing stuff and having a competition... and I realized that's where I wanted to go."

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