

Scientists work at creating a 'robocar'

A U.S. government competition is under way with scientists at 53 universities and other institutions developing "robocars" -- cars of the future.

The robocars must be designed to operate by themselves, with people serving only as passengers. The competition will be narrowed by October to 30 semi-finalists whose entries will be judged by the ability to navigate a simple network of roads with other vehicles present.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's third "DARPA Urban Challenge" competition will be held Nov. 3, with vehicles executing simulated military supply missions in a mock urban area.

DARPA will award \$2 million, \$1 million and \$500,000 awards to the top three finishers.

In the Urban Challenge, the goal is to have the cars operate safely and autonomously through 60 miles of urban surroundings in less than six hours. The competition will take place at an undisclosed location in the western United States.

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