

The Evolution of Warehouse Robots

A timeline of robotic innovation from concept to cutting-edge

1921

The Word "Robot" is Born

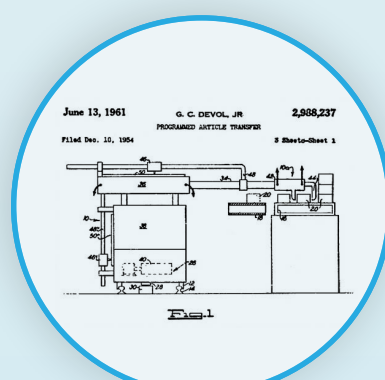
Czech playwright Karel Čapek introduces the term "robot" in his play R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots), meaning forced labor.



1954

The First Industrial Robot Concept

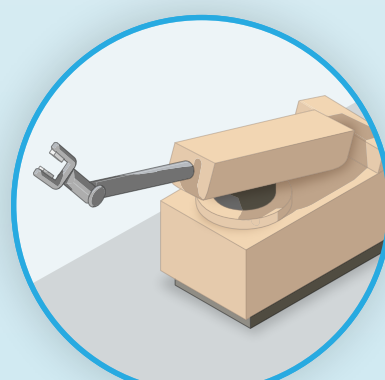
George Devol files a patent for "Programmed Article Transfer," laying the groundwork for the world's first industrial robot.



1961

Robots Enter the Factory

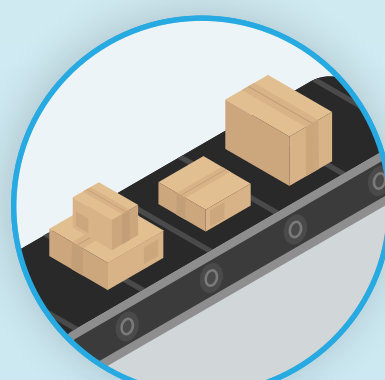
Unimate becomes the first industrial robot to work on a General Motors assembly line, automating the handling of hot die castings and ushering in a new era for manufacturing.



1980s

Early Warehouse Automation

As barcode technology matures and warehouse management systems (WMS) begin to scale, the idea of automation in warehousing gains traction. Conveyor belts, AS/RS systems, and fixed-path robots take hold.



2003

Mobile Robotic Fulfillment is Introduced

Instead of walking to shelves, workers stay in place while mobile robots bring inventory to them.



2013

Robots-as-a-Service Reshapes Deployment

Robots become more accessible through RaaS models to enable companies of all sizes to adopt warehouse automation without the upfront capital costs.



2014 – 2020

Mobile Robotics Go Mainstream

A new generation of autonomous mobile robots (AMRs) emerges. These systems offer more flexibility, scalability, and faster ROI compared to fixed automation and changes for the better how e-commerce and 3PLs fulfill growing order volumes.



TODAY

Human-Robot Collaboration at Scale

Robots are teammates. Collaborative robots help humans move faster, reduce physical strain, and increase throughput. Systems are smarter, safer, and more tightly integrated into supply chain operations.



FUTURE

Coordinated R2G Intelligence

The next frontier is Robots-to-Goods (R2G), where intelligent fleets coordinate autonomously across dynamic environments using advanced AI. Locus Array, the latest innovation from Locus Robotics, performs picking, putaway, and reslotting functions without the need for human intervention or the inventory to be moved. This evolution enables true zero-touch fulfillment, where decisions are made in real time, workflows are optimized automatically, and human intervention is minimized. It's a major step toward total warehouse automation with unmatched flexibility to adapt, scale, and accelerate as operations evolve.



Prepare for Your Warehouse's Future Today

Locus Robotics delivers unmatched flexibility and unlimited throughput, powered by intelligent fleets that coordinate seamlessly across workflows.

Ready to improve your warehouse efficiency? Contact us today.

For more information, visit www.locusrobotics.com or email us at info@locusrobotics.com