

We use [cookies](#) to give you the best online experience. Please let us know if you agree to all of these cookies.

Yes, I agree

[No, take me to settings](#)

Menu

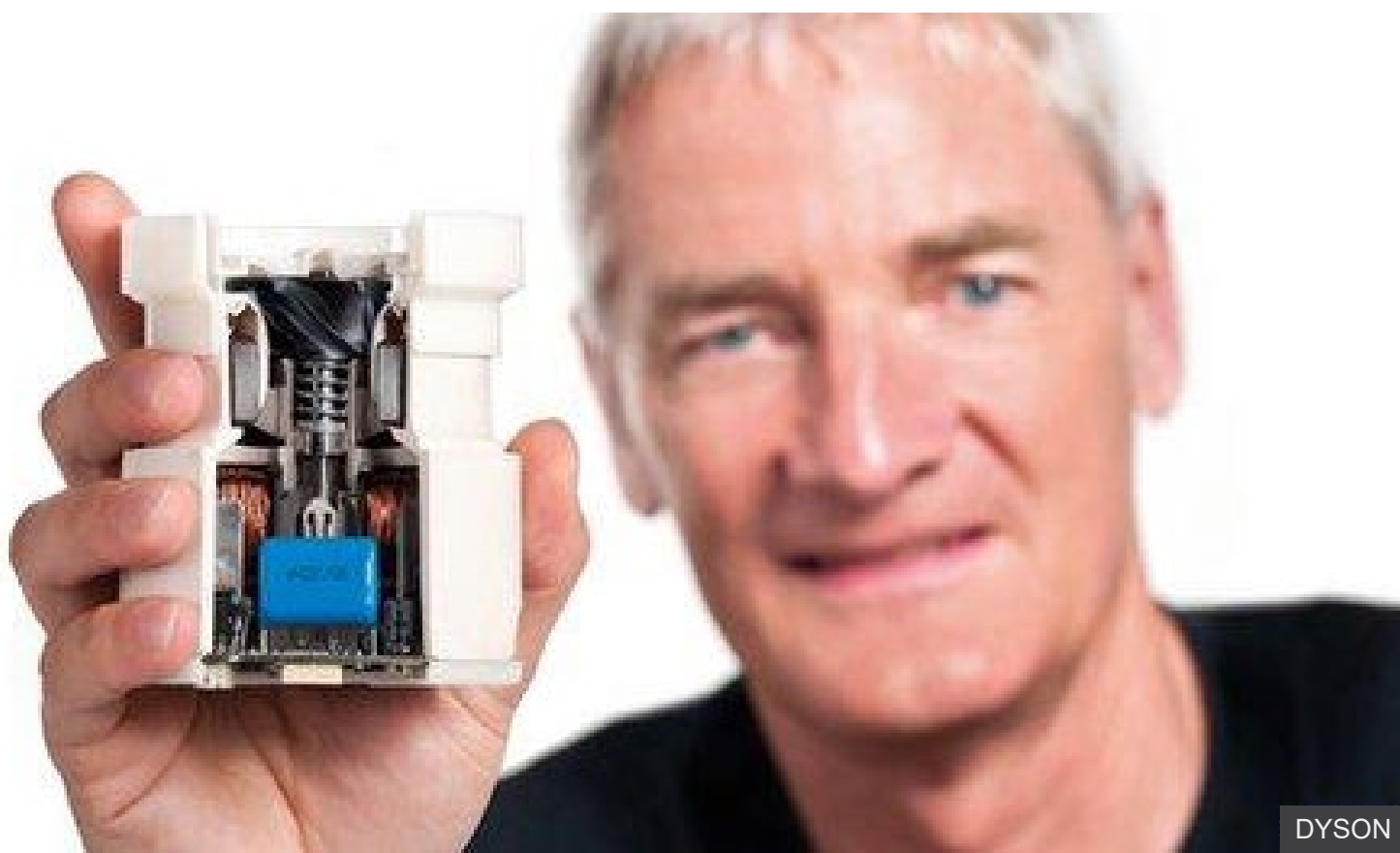
Technology

Menu

Dyson invests £5m in robotic vision lab with Imperial

By Matthew Wall
Technology reporter, BBC News

9 February 2014



DYSON

Sir James Dyson has always been an evangelist for engineering

Dyson, the engineering company best known for its bagless vacuum cleaners, is to invest £5m in a robotics lab at Imperial College, London.

The research will focus on vision systems that can help robots understand and adapt to the world around them, the company said.

Dyson has been working on robotics with Imperial's Prof Andrew Davison since 2005, and he will run the new lab.

The research will cover domestic robots as well as robotic vacuum cleaners.

Sir James Dyson said: "My generation believed the world would be overrun by robots by the year 2014. We now have the mechanical and electronic capabilities, but robots still lack understanding - seeing and thinking in the way we do.

"Mastering this will make our lives easier and lead to previously unthinkable technologies."

Robotic cleaners

In 2001, Dyson's prototype robotic vacuum cleaner - the DC06 - nearly made it into production, but Sir James pulled the product saying it was too heavy and expensive.



DYSON
DYSON

Dyson's prototype DC06 robotic cleaner never made it to market

Since then a number of small robotic vacuum cleaners, such as LG's Hom-Bot and iRobot's Roomba, have come on to the market

The five-year investment, supplemented by an additional £3m of match-funding from other sources, will pay for 15 scientists, including some of Dyson's own engineers, the company said.

Prof Davison, currently head of robot vision at Imperial's department of computing, is an expert in Simultaneous Localisation and Mapping (SLAM) systems using a single camera.

He said: "A truly intelligent domestic robot needs to complete complex everyday tasks while adapting to a constantly changing environment.

"We will research and develop systems that allow machines to both understand and perceive their surroundings - using vision to achieve it."

In January, Dyson announced a £250m investment to double the size of its research centre in Wiltshire and hire 3,000 more engineers.

The company said it had "drawn up a blueprint" for the largest expansion in its 20-year history.

The plans include a new technology research and development campus but are still subject to planning permission.

Related Topics

Robotics

More on this story

Samsung connects home gadgets at CES

5 January 2014

Robot window cleaner gets to work

8 January 2014

Dyson wants to hire 3,000 engineers

22 January 2014

Dyson to recruit 250 new engineers