

*Exploratory Workshop on the Social
Impacts of Robotics: Summary and Issues*

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**Exploratory Workshop
on the
Social Impacts
of Robotics**

Summary and Issues

A Background Paper



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Preface

Advanced computer and communication technology is providing a wide assortment of new tools for improving industrial productivity by automating manufacturing. Robotics technology is an important component of modern automation technology, one in which U.S. industry is vitally interested.

On July 31, 1981, the Office of Technology Assessment held an exploratory workshop to examine the state of robotics technology and possible public policy issues of interest to Congress that may arise from its use. The workshop participants included researchers in robotics technology, representatives from robot manufacturing firms, and representatives from firms that use robotics technology. The principal goals of the workshop were the following:

- assess the state of robotics technology;
- examine the structure of the robotics market;
- determine the relationship of robotics to other new automation technology; and
- determine whether significant Federal policy issues were likely to be raised.

This report contains a summary of the results of the workshop along with copies of four background papers that were used as starting points for the discussion. The workshop was exploratory in nature, and OTA does not at this point take any position on the merits of the issues discussed or on their worthiness for future assessment.



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