

Weekly Progress Roundup

Waymo's expansion continues, robots smooth the demographic transition, researchers develop tool that "harnesses evolution."

MALCOLM COCHRAN

NOV 17, 2024



Waymo's expansion continues

A little over a year ago, Waymo's self-driving taxis provided 10,000 rides per week. By August, that had [grown](#) to 100,000. Now, they are providing over [150,000](#). Just this week, the company [opened their service](#) to anyone in Los Angeles, and a commercial launch in Austin and Atlanta is [imminent](#). It's time to acknowledge that self-driving is [finally here](#).

Robots could smooth the demographic transition

With [around a third](#) of its population over the age of 65, Japan is increasingly [turning to robots](#) to care for its elderly citizens. New research suggests that this isn't as dystopian as it sounds. A [working paper](#) from the National Bureau of Economic Research, which surveyed robot adoption in Japanese nursing homes, found that the machines are associated with improvements in both the quality and productivity of elder care.

Researchers develop gene-editing tool that "harnesses evolution"

Harvard scientists [have developed](#) a tool that can mutate specific genes in living cells without affecting the rest of the genome. The researchers describe their tool as a means of "targeted evolution" and have already used it to study how cancer cells develop drug resistance.

Thanks for reading Doomslayer! This post is public so feel free to share it.



Economics:

- [Poverty in Latin America Has Fallen to Historic Low](#)

Energy & Environment:

- [Microsoft Builds First Datacenters with Wood to Slash Emissions](#)
- [A Cloned Ferret Has Given Birth for the First Time in History](#)
- [Nuclear Fusion Start-up Claims Reactor Milestone](#)

Health & Demographics:

- [Robot Learns to Perform Surgical Tasks Expertly Just by Watching Videos](#)
- [World-First Stem-Cell Treatment Restores Vision in People](#)
- [Breakthrough Genomic Test Identifies Virtually Any Infection](#)
- [The Quest to Build Bionic Limbs That Feel Like the Real Thing](#)

Science & Technology:

- [Contract Bots Could Soon Be On Both Sides of Negotiations](#)
- [AI Protein-Prediction Tool AlphaFold3 Is Now More Open](#)
- [Archer Inks Deal to Bring Electric Air Taxis to Japan](#)

Tweets:

- [The Faces of Globalization](#)
- [Can desalination deliver water superabundance?](#)
- [A world without bees](#)
- [The impact of AI on scientific discovery](#)