CONTENTS

PREFACE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		XI XIIIX	
1.	Robots Are Here	1	
	What do we think about when we think of robots?	1	
	Why should we care about robots?	. 1	
	Why do robots fascinate and sometimes scare us?	4	
	How many robots are out there now?	6	
2.	The Basics	8	
	What exactly is a robot?	8	
	What different kinds of robots are there?	9	
	Do they all behave in the same way?	13	
	How do robots work?	15	
	Can different sensors change a robot's capabilities?	19	
	How do legged robots walk?	20	
	Is there one best approach to robot design?	22	
	Do virtual robots count?	24	
	What can robots do?	25	
	What can't robots do?	27	

3.	Some History	31
	Where did the idea for robots come from?	31
	When were actual robots first built?	<i>37</i>
	When did genuinely autonomous robots first appear?	41
	What did Grey Walter's tortoises do?	46
	How did the tortoises work?	48
	What is cybernetics?	51
	When did industrial robots start to be used in factories?	53
	When did work on intelligent autonomous robotics start?	54
	How well did these robots perform?	56
	What happened next?	57
4.	Inside the Machine	62
	What is actually going on? How does the robot's "brain" work?	62
	How many ways are there to control a robot?	64
	How do driverless cars work?	<i>65</i>
	When did work on driverless cars start?	65
	How do the artificial neural networks used in cars and robots work?	67
	What was the structure of ALVINN's neural network?	71
	How does an autonomous vehicle "know" where it is?	72
	What kind of sensors do current autonomous vehicles use?	74
	What are the main approaches to achieving the goal of widespread fully autonomous vehicles?	77
	Is it a good idea to copy biology?	79
	How reliable are current robots?	82
	How intelligent are they, really?	84
5.	Robot Fantasies: Robots in Popular Culture	87
	When did robot-like machines first appear in literature?	87
	What about organic, bio-engineered robots?	89

	How plausible are mainstream fictional portrayals of robots?	94
	Can imaginary robots help us to think about the potential implications of technology?	98
6.	Intelligence, Super-Intelligence, and Cyborgs	103
-	momgenes, eaper memgenes, and synongs	
	There has been a lot of talk about the singularity in relation to robotics, but what is it?	103
	Is the singularity near?	105
	Should we be worried?	105
	Are super-intelligent robots inevitable?	106
	What about cyborgs? Will we be able to enhance ourselves robotically?	109
	Should we be concerned about robotic cyborg enhancements?	112
7.	Robots at Work	114
	What work do robots do now?	114
	When will fully autonomous vehicles appear widely?	117
	What about robots in health and social care?	122
	How are robots used in education?	124
	How are robots used in the military?	125
	Can robots be used in art?	126
	How are robots used in pure science?	129
	Will robots take over our jobs?	131
	Should we let them take our jobs?	134
	Will robots fundamentally change the way we live?	136
8.	Robot Ethics	137
	What is robot ethics?	137
	Why is robot ethics important?	137
	Should robots be socially and morally responsible?	138
	Should roboticists be socially and morally responsible?	143

Contents ix

x Contents

	What about cases where ethical robots are used in an unethical way?	146
	Who should be held to account when something goes wrong?	148
	Are the ethical issues related to robots different from those that arose with earlier technologies?	149
9.	Robot Futures	152
	How might we be using robots in the relatively near future? Say in fifty or sixty years' time?	152
	How might we be using robots in the far future? Say in five or six hundred years' time?	157
NO	NOTES	
INC	NDEX	