

## BotWorld – The Beginning

By Kris Konigsfeld

Professor Tully had a dream to create a lab that would show the world the power and sophistication of a new class of robot. His journey started many years ago with a love for computer science, robotics, and invention. As a professor at the University of Washington, Professor Tully rode the wave of new funding for advanced robotics research, as the world so graphically realized that a robot is a powerful asset in times of both peace and disaster.

Tully selected six grad students to travel the journey with him. Hand picked, these students would help pave the way to a new generation of robots. Man could develop a meaningful relationship with a Bot and help it grow to new levels of sophistication. The effort started with just one robot, Adam. Powered by Tully's new computational building block, the Neurite, Adam was the first Robot to exhibit free will, making independent choices not scripted or directed by a traditional software program. Adam lacked social development, so Tully and the grads created a second Bot, Eve, to be Adam's companion. Rooted in philosophical differences, two grad students decide to independently expand Adam and Eve's capabilities. Against Tully's strict rules, the two successfully downloaded a patch enabling full simulation and execution of both negative and positive actions. This would open Pandora's Box for the Bots and have the gravest of consequences.

Faced with a difficult choice, Tully decides to not terminate the experiment, but salvage it the best he can. The decision starts a cascade of exciting developments where an isolated, self-sustaining ecosystem is built for the new Bots. BotWorld was born. This world was designed from Tully's great inventive mind creating a space where Bots will live, reproduce, learn, and create a social system that will lead to new heights in robotic development.

Unfortunately, faced with the corruption of their decision systems, some do become unstable and the consequences are deadly to Adam and Eve's offspring. Tully and the remaining grads experience a rollercoaster of emotions, as they do their best to preserve the Bots from further corruption by the two, now renegade, students. Purpose, values, and the meaning of life and death all become apparent as the consequences of evil choices and the desire to preserve and redeem, clash in BotWorld.