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Metro

Lost on MIT's campus? Follow the drone

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT SEPTEMBER 14, 2013

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It is notoriously easy to get lost on MIT's mazelike campus. But soon, bewildered visitors could use a smartphone to beckon a small, hovering drone aircraft to show them the way.

At the MIT SENSEable City Laboratory, researchers are working to perfect the technology behind the SkyCall project, which will allow users to summon and communicate with the quadcopters via a special app. In addition to directing visitors, the small flying robot highlights interesting points they pass along the way by speaking to users through their phone.

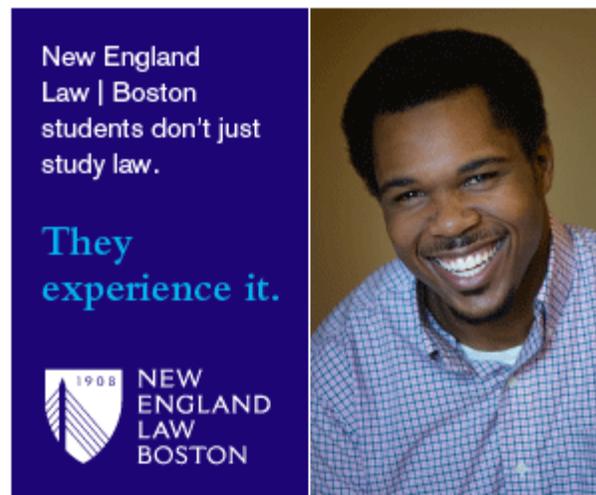
After months of trial and error that led to at least one crash landing in the Charles River, the project had its first successful launch last month, the researchers said. The prototype is not ready for public use yet, they said, in part because FAA regulations currently bar such uses.

The project shows the growing potential for drones, beyond bombing raids and spying missions.

“Our imaginations of flying sentient vehicles are filled with dystopian notions of surveillance and control, but this technology should be tasked with optimism,” Yaniv Jacob Turgeman, who heads research and development, said by e-mail.

A clip posted to YouTube that demonstrates the technology pokes fun at “someone you would typically expect to be lost within MIT.” The video’s flummoxed main character, who is shown being led through campus by the drone, wears a bowtie and a Harvard lanyard and pin.

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Marathon security balances new rules, old ways

With two months to go before the Boston Marathon, officials are working at a feverish pace to lock in a comprehensive safety plan.

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Conn. casinos employ hardball tactic to collect debts

Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun have placed dozens of liens on homes across Mass. since the early 2000s, according to a Globe review.

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Pope softening tone, not stance, O'Malley says

Cardinal Sean O'Malley cautions that those expecting major changes in church teachings are likely to be disappointed.

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Walsh says Boston will hold gun buyback

Mayor Martin Walsh said the city will partner with the police department on a gun buyback program.

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Child welfare agency shows signs of panic

In the wake of Jeremiah Oliver's disappearance, the DCF has moved to take many children from their homes. Is this really what we want?

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With horror, hope, Ukrainians watch crisis from afar

Most of the 26,000 Ukrainian-Americans in Mass. are following the increasingly violent struggle against embattled pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich.

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State Senate president won't run for reelection

Therese Murray, the first woman to serve as the chamber's president, called her time in the Senate "the greatest honor."

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Air Force jet lands in Mass. after losing pressurization

The massive C-5, traveling to Delaware, was forced to divert to the Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee.

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Protesters highlight Chinatown's affordable housing crisis

Marchers also walked to a nearby luxury condominium building to express concern over their plight.

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Malden man in drug trafficking ring sentenced

Brendan Joyner, 21, was one of 11 people arrested in 2013 for moving 400 pounds of marijuana from California to Massachusetts.

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R.I. man dead after powered paragliding crash off Plum Island

The 49-year-old was powered paragliding off the northern tip of the island, Newburyport police said.

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What's the deal with South Station's closed staircase?

Commuters are irked that they received little to no advance warning that their transfer between modes would require them to take the outdoor stairs from Feb. 1 to March 31.

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Bird sightings

Bird sightings by the Massachusetts Audubon Society

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Officials warn residents about displaced bears

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is warning residents about displaced, agitated bears due to the fickle winter. A lack of snow exposes dens and winter rain can make bears uncomfortable and restless, both factors that can cause them to awaken and abandon their dens, said Bear Project Leader Forrest Hammond. The department said it has received reports of bears at bird feeders, in residential areas and in the back country. A bear is reported to have killed a hunter's beagle in Elmore. Disrupted bears sometimes produce nests of spruce boughs in dense evergreen thickets so hare and rabbit hunters should be extra wary of these areas, the department said.

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STORY 14 OF 15

Exotic monkey seized from home

Connecticut officials have seized a small, exotic monkey from a home in Waterbury and charged a woman living there after the animal scratched her 10-year-old daughter. Television station WFSB reported Saturday that Mariantonia Morales was charged with risk of injury to a minor and owning an exotic pet. Morales' daughter was with a friend when the child opened the cage containing the palm-sized marmoset monkey. Morales tells WFSB-TV that the monkey scratched her daughter and she applied an antibiotic to the wound. Investigators say Morales did not take her daughter to hospital and authorities only learned of the incident after a teacher questioned the girl on what caused her injury.

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