

Not Just Robots

AIDAN, KENNY, ROSE, & KOLTEN

1193Z

JAY COUNTY JR – SR HIGH SCHOOL

PORTLAND, INDIANA

Design Process

When starting robotics, many people focus on what's in the title: the robot. They often think that the robot is the only outcome of the hard work and dedication put forth from the teams who labored on them. This is simply not true. There is so much that goes into a robotics program before and after the construction of a robot that often possess more value than the robot itself. This was the driving thought behind our piece, "Not Just Robots."

First: it starts with a team. It starts with your fellow S.T.E.A.M.-minded peers itching to put their talents to good use. After all, more brains are better than one, especially in the case of robot design. Once the team is formulated, heads are put together in order to dream up an amazing bot. It takes teamwork to reach the goal of a miraculous robot, not just the brains of one. To encompass this idea, we added symbols that represent teamwork and collaboration; from blueprints to a team celebrating, it can be understood that teamwork is a quintessential part of the robotics experience.

Next up: the building process. After a design has been worked up by a talented group of S.T.E.A.M.-minded individuals, it's time to put plans to product. Of course, a robot cannot come to existence without the building phase. We wanted to highlight how important this step is by making it the largest part of the piece filled with classic building tools; screws, nuts, metal, and many more make their appearance in robots everywhere, bringing ideas to life.

After the robot is built, you've gotta make it move! This is done through programming & coding. It takes computers, wires, and coding software to make a robot scurry off towards some game pieces. Without this step, you'd have a shiny sedimentary showcase of metal. Code allows a robot to move, (sometimes on its own,) and lets a team operate their efforts in a fun and exciting way.

Last but certainly not least is the competition. Competitions are easily the most exciting part of a robotics season, as teams from near and far clash to see whose bot comes out on top. And it's not just the competition matches and skills runs that make a competition either! Judged aspects add an entirely new level of competition, demanding teams to prove that they know their stuff through notebooks evaluations and interviews with judges. This runs from a local level to the world stage, which easily makes this a huge part of the robotics experience, and shows why we believe it's important to include this in our work.

Robots are awesome, no doubt about it. However, it's not the only part of what makes a robotics program amazing. It's about the teamwork and dedication that it takes to successfully design, build, code, and compete with a robot – all from scratch! Our piece, "Not Just Robots," encompasses these thoughts and highlights their importance. This work is heavily inspired by our own wonderful experiences in robotics, and we hope it inspires others to dive into robotics.