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Robots set for North Sea rig tests as oil and gas giant targets safety improvement

It is hoped the autonomous machines dubbed the 'Argonauts' will take humans out of danger during inspections.



By [Charlie Gall](#)

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NEWS



The autonomous robot trials will be carried out on platforms in northern North Sea as well as in Shetland (Image: Handout)



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Oil workers could soon be joined by robots on **North Sea** platforms.

In a world first, French **oil and gas** giants Total are pioneering mechanical manpower in a bid to improve safety and drive down costs.

A £4million project over 18 months will see trials carried out on Total's Alwyn platform in the North Sea and onshore at the Shetland gas plant.

Dubbed the Argonauts, the robots move on tracks and have an articulated arm with a reach of 1.3m.



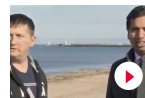
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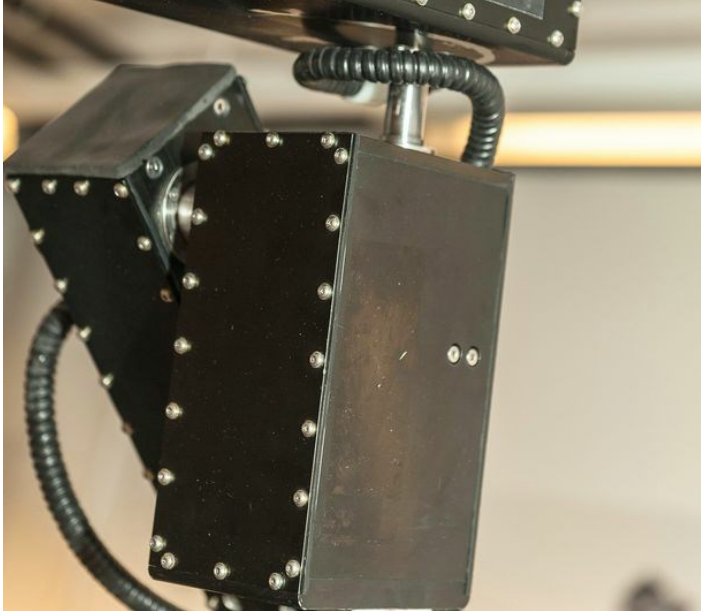


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It is hoped the ARGOS (Autonomous Robots for Gas and Oil Sites) will make inspections cheaper and more reliable (Image: Handout)

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If the Autonomous Robots for Gas and Oil Sites (Argos) pilot project proves successful, the Argonauts will be unleashed by 2020.

Total want them to be doing inspections on all their offshore installations and industrial sites.

Robots will be capable of taking pressure readings, analysing temperatures and detecting gas leaks.

The rig robots are being brought to life at Aberdeen's Oil & Gas Technology Centre by Total and Austrian robot-makers taurob in partnership with German research university TU Darmstadt.

They will perform visual inspections, read dials, level gauges and valve positions, navigate through narrow pathways and up and downstairs.



A total oil platform in the North Sea (Image: Handout)

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Taurob managing director Lukas Silberbauer said: "For safety, we are going to take people out of dangerous environments.

"Robots will constantly perform maintenance and inspection jobs. We envision that breakdown and failures will occur less often."

Rebecca Allison of the Oil & Gas technology Centre said: "We're delighted to be involved in this world-first project at the cutting-edge of robotics for the oil and gas industry.

"A robot working alongside humans on a North Sea platform could be a reality in the next 18-months."

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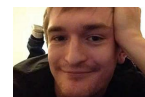
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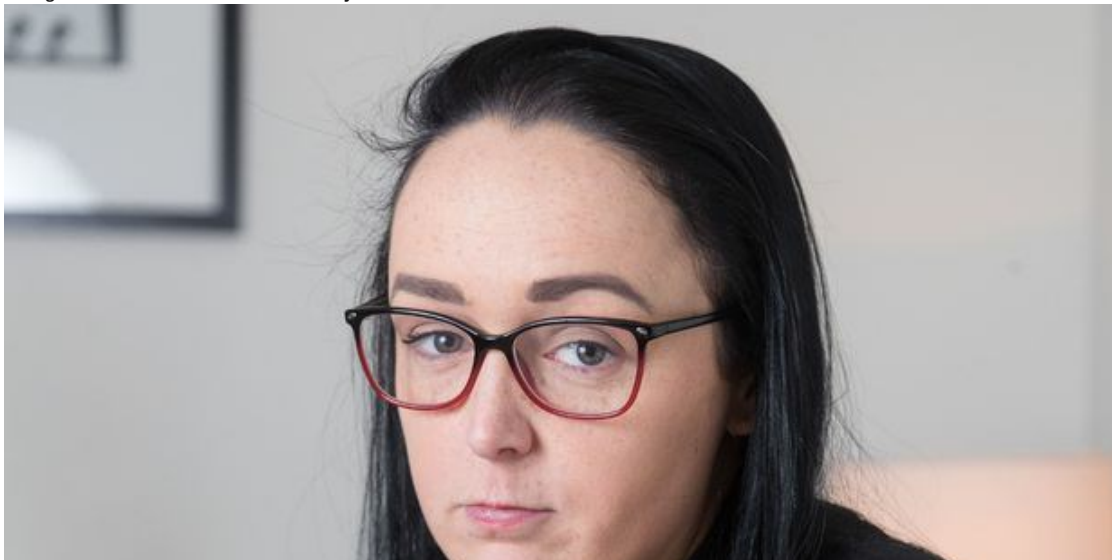
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