

# MUTINY ON THE SIDEWALK

A few proposals  
for Creative  
**Civil Disobedience**  
to stimulate discussions about  
autonomous delivery machines



[sidewalkmutiny.org](http://sidewalkmutiny.org)

**GREEDY CORPORATIONS ARE PAYING OFF\* LEGISLATORS TO APPROVE THE USE OF AUTONOMOUS DELIVERY 'ROBOTS' ON PUBLIC SIDEWALKS AND BIKE PATHS.**

**THESE MACHINES WILL TAKE JOBS AWAY FROM HUMANS, AND MAKE OUR PUBLIC SIDEWALKS AND BIKE LANES MORE DANGEROUS.**

\* I don't have any direct evidence that these legislators (mostly Republicans, in the USA) are being paid off, but - honestly - how likely is it that there *isn't* some kind of financial incentive for them to support this?

An autonomous machine  
done stole my goddamn job  
and then it ran over my toe;  
I tell you these marauding  
delivery machines have really,  
really got to go...

Along with the increased unemployment, the loss of safety, and the impacts on the general quality of life on our public streets, it's important to note that these machines are covered with cameras.

Selling their surveillance capabilities will be "An extra income stream" for the people who run the machines;



They will be used to increase the (already high) level of surveillance that we are all subjected to in public spaces.

## **Proposal: turn machines into Unauthorized Audio Platforms**

Old music players with speakers can be had for a few dollars at thrift stores and yard sales. A CD or cassette of information about the problems with these machines could be attached with duct tape on and set to play, turning the machines into Roving Educational Platforms.



# SO

# WHAT'S THE

# PROBLEM WITH DELIVERY

# MACHINES?

**More work done by machines means more poor, unemployed humans.**

**No matter how regressive and inadequate they may be, 'gig economy' jobs - like delivering things - do, at least, allow people to survive.**

**When you say Hello to machines, you say Goodbye to jobs for human beings.**

**The proliferation of machines on sidewalks and in bike lanes will endanger pedestrians and cyclists. Pennsylvania law allows the machines to weigh up to 550 pounds without cargo; to travel on sidewalks at 12 mph, and in bike lanes at 25 mph, and legally classifies them as pedestrians!**

**The legislation that gives the machines legal access to sidewalks and bike lanes is also part of the long-term tendency toward the 'enclosure of the commons': the privatization of public space by the wealthy and powerful few, against the interests of the rest of us.**



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**WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF A LARGE CARDBOARD BOX WAS DROPPED ON TOP OF ONE OF THESE MACHINES?**

**OR OTHER THINGS; LIKE LARGE TARPS - THAT ARE EASY TO FIND IN DUMPSTERS**





## Proposal: turn machines into Mobile “Free Speech Zones”

Remember when everywhere was a Free Speech Zone? Let's use delivery machines as roving platforms for public speakers - or poets, or singers, or... With some cooperation from audiences, the machines could be kept in one location, or orators/performers with good balance could speak/sing/recite on the move.



## A Few Thoughts on General Strategies and Tactics:

The problem with human-izing these machines

It's tempting to put signs with statements like "Get out of my way: can't you see I'm busy stealing jobs from humans?" on these machines, but I think this would be a mistake.

We've been conditioned by movies and television to view "intelligent" machines as either:

- destructive threats to human existence, or else as
- adorable, friendly, helpful, anthropomorphised little pals.

Since the designers of the physical appearance of these machines are probably not going to go for the Killer Robot look, I think some people will have a tendency (with or without realizing that they're doing it) to see the machines as conscious beings.

Any attempts to get people thinking about the implications of these machines will be weakened by any tactics that feed into anthropomorphisation, so it's better to avoid this.

The use of the word 'robot' is more complicated, because it has both positive and negative associations, but I think it is so associated with 'consciousness' in the popular imagination that I avoid using it in any of the text-based interventions proposed here. You'll see that I call them "Machines" in all of these proposals.



# DANCES WITH/AGAINST MACHINES

*Traffic Calming* is the rethinking of automobile-centric public spaces; to create safer, healthier spaces that focus on the needs of humans (and non-human animals) rather than cars.

How would we approach MACHINE CALMING?

**TAPAS:** TEMPORARY ADVERSARIAL PERFORMANCE ART SITUATIONS in which dancers and other performers use the crash-avoidance features of the software that runs the delivery machines to engage the software in involuntary performance collaborations. This would enliven our streets with creative performances and force the machines' software to slow these dangerous machines down.





## UNAUTHORIZED ADAPTIVE REUSE



## Autonomous Roving Billboards



## Whose fu@king sidewalks?

If the corporations and their pet legislators have their way, the delivery/surveillance machines will own the sidewalks.

And you? You'd better get the hell out of the way.

**Remember:**  
There are cardboard boxes everywhere.

Just add:

- Some sticker paper - or regular paper and some tape.
- & A printer/copier, or some markers, for your text.
- + Some duct tape to secure your new billboards to the space-invading machines,
- & Your thoughts about a system that **ALWAYS** values money and power for the few over peace, security and happiness for the rest of us.



# ROVING SUPPORT CIRCLES FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

Groups of people who are unemployed or underemployed; because of automation and the gig economy, could follow delivery machines until they enter a space large enough for the people to form a full circle around the machine.

The circle of people could talk about the impact of unemployment on their lives, and also discuss the dominant social systems that are designed to support inequality and exploitation, and how we all might join together to create alternative, egalitarian forms of social organization.



Because the delivery machines are programmed to avoid collisions, they will stay in the middle of the support circle. The built-in surveillance equipment in the machine will record and transmit the discussions, thus providing the added value of free educational opportunities for the employees of the companies that run the delivery machines.



## WHOSE FU@KING SIDEWALKS?

Here are a few more possible tactics.  
What can you come up with?

# DISGUSTING!

You can help to  
make it clear just  
how disgusting these  
machines are, using  
'Propaganda by  
Decoration'

Fake vomit, poop,  
and cockroaches are  
easy to buy - or  
make - and will  
definitely get a  
response from  
passersby.

What else could we  
use to do this?



What kinds of  
**SPORTS & GAMES**  
can the machines  
be used for?

### POSSIBLE POSITIVE USES?

In a better world - when we've moved beyond bosses and wages and 'employment', perhaps these machines will be used for the benefit of all of us, and not just to enrich the greedy few. If they could be made in non-environmentally-destructive ways, they could be used in situations where it's difficult, or unpleasant, or just undesirable for humans to do the things that they can do.



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## This MACHINE is a SCAB



Definition of scab

- 3a : a contemptible person- **MACHINE**  
b(1) : a worker who refuses to join a labor union  
(2) : a union member who refuses to strike or returns to work before a strike has ended  
(3) : a worker who accepts employment or replaces a union worker during a strike  
(4) : one who works for less than union wages or on nonunion terms



**I'm guessing that the people who run the corporations that are working on filling our sidewalks with these dangerous machines will not be super-enthusiastic about these proposals.**

**I'm an artist who enjoys coming up with fun, creative responses to social issues, with the hope that the proposals will spark thought, discussion and action.**

**I don't know how legal or illegal the things that I'm proposing would be, if people decided to do any of them, so - investigate and proceed at your own risk!**

**Albo Jeavons**

**What about bike lanes?**

**I have focused on sidewalk actions because cyclists in bike lanes are already dealing with being menaced by cars, and any actions might increase those risks.**

**If you can figure out safe ways to act against machines in bike lanes, that would be great!**



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