The Pentagon is hosting a 3.5 million international competition that will have robots against each other in an obstacle course. It is designed to test their physical abilities, agility, awareness and cognition. Our group has decided to participate in the competition.

We know that we should participate in this competition because we wish to help as much as we can for disasters, we crave to see engineering from around the world, the latest innovations and ideas, and we aspire to win the money to help us fund for more technology. As stated in the article, “ Military push for emergency robots worries skeptics about lethal uses,” “Organizers of the DARPA Robotics Challenge are quick to point out that the robots are designed for humanitarian purposes...” We know that it is a good cause to strive for, especially since the disaster of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. We contend this could have been avoided if there had been robots capable of going in and turning the valve so the hydrogen could be released so that there would have been no risks to the humans inside. Another reason we would go is because of how many other teams from around the world will be there and how it will be an amazing learning experience. This will not just be a competition to help out the world for disasters, but a chance to talk with other scientists from other countries and learn some of the latest innovations and theories. Lastly, we aspire to go to the competition because of the grand prize of two million dollars. This money would fuel the way for much research in our program and funding for many projects that could be vital in producing much needed information for improving the robotic world that we are currently migrating into.

Even though we want to participate in the competition, we do have concerns about the end result of our machines and what they might be used for after the competition. Mary Wareham, the global coordinator for Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, states her concern when she says, “We want to talk to the governments about how [the robots] function and understand the human control of the targeting and attack decisions, we want assurances that a human is in the loop.” There is some concern to us as if there might be talk of the Pentagon to use these robots, or research done on this technology, for military purposes. Another reason for this concern is how Google dropped out of the competition even after they had won the competition last year, plausibly because “...the decision was tied to a reluctance to work with the Pentagon.” Why would they not want to work with the Pentagon if not for this reason?

To conclude, we are honored to be in this competition. Even though we have concerns in certain aspects of the competition we would still go. The three reasons why we are to attend such a competition are that with this technology we can help when disasters happen, experience, and money.