Figure Humanoid Robot Startup Comes Out of Stealth

It’s not enough that artificial intelligence (AI) has become an ongoing public obsession. A startup that just exited stealth mode this week, Figure, wants to make 5’6″ humanoid robots as ubiquitous as press releases and student essays authored by ChatGPT.

[embedded content]

TechCrunch first reported on Figure in September 2022, and in a new article published today revealed that the company, founded by Brett Adcock, already has $100 million in funding (from Adcock, who co-founded Archer, an electric vertical takeoff and landing or eVTOL aircraft company in San Jose, California), and an impressively credentialed staff of 40. Here’s more from TC:

> *“The team is ex-Boston Dynamics, Tesla, Apple SPG, IHMC, Cruise [and Alphabet X]. Collectively we align on building a better future for humanity through the intersection of AI and robotics,” Adcock tells TechCrunch. “We’ve been fortunate to hire the best in the world at specific skill sets in AI, Controls, Electrical, Integration, Software and Mechanical Systems. The team believes we’re at a point where we can commercialize robots that have primarily been R&D over the last two decades. This is something a lot of our team has dreamt about doing for a long time.”*

Adcock also addressed his company’s official public reveal in a Twitter thread.

> *? WE’RE LIVE ?*

> *Today, Figure emerges from stealth.*
>
> *We're building autonomous humanoid robots.*
>
> *One robot for every human on the planet.*
>
> *Here's what the future will look like: pic.twitter.com/McEXbHtRpo*
>
> *— Brett Adcock (@adcock_brett) March 2, 2023*

"We are now working on our second-generation humanoid robot," Adcock told TechCrunch, "which will be feature-complete for commercial operations. In the near term, we believe it's important to validate our humanoid in commercial operations as the critical milestone for the Figure team."

On Figure's website, Adcock outlined a master plan for "positively affecting the future of humanity," which he says "is the moral priority of our time."

Figure, according to Adcock, will need "billions of dollars invested and engineering innovation in order to achieve a mass-market impact." Adcock believes that as automation continues to grow in scale, there will be a labor-based economic revolution. Eventually, human manual labor will be optional. Figure is betting on what it calls "general purpose humanoids" able to operate in human environments to one day provide virtually unlimited support to humanity in a variety of ways. The startup believes it is at the head of something with unprecedented market potential.

Figure's plan in its most simple form, according to Brett Adcock, is this:

- Build a feature-complete electromechanical humanoid.
- Perform human-like manipulation.
- Integrate humanoids into the labor force.

TechCrunch notes that Adcock didn’t comment on his company’s most obvious competition, Tesla’s Optimus Robot. He did, however, say he believes his humanoid robot, Figure 01, is “at the forefront of any electromechanical humanoid in history.”

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