Robot Bugs

The nervous system of an insect is infinitely more complex than our most sophisticated computer-driven robots. Robots can only solve the simplest problems. While an insect has no difficulty walking, a walking robot is limited to an uncluttered, flat floor where it clumsily clanks about until something goes wrong.

An Indiana high school student recently had a better idea. He collected syringes for pistons and voltage converters from old computer printers, along with other spare parts. If he had simply assembled them and wired the result into his computer, he would have done well to produce the usual, clumsy robot walker. In an effort to build a better walking robot, he wired crayfish nerve cells that control walking between the robot and his computer. His computer acted as the brain while the nerve cells processed the signal as a real animal would. His robot walked more like a living creature and earned him national attention.

As a result of the student's success, researchers have built robot insects with simple, computer-simulated neural networks like those in the crayfish nerve cell. The result has been robot bugs that walk much more like real insects, although not well enough to fool anyone.

Such is the excellence of the work of the Creator. A few cells from a crayfish's nervous system can do so much more than all of our most sophisticated computers and programs!

Psalm 8:1
“O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.”

Prayer: Lord, Your work is excellent in every aspect. I thank You for that and I pray that through Your Holy Spirit You would help me to be excellent at everything I do. Let all my actions be for Your glory and not for mine. Amen.

REF.: Elizabeth Pennisi. "Robots Go Buggy." Science News, Vol. 140.