News story: 'Brain' for driverless cars: Oxford spin-out wins FT award

Oxbotica: imagine the future

A company spun out from the University of Oxford in 2014 to develop a 'brain' for driverless cars has won a Financial Times ArcelorMittal Boldness in Business award.

Oxbotica carried off the 'Smaller Company' award for its achievements in creating artificial intelligence software for the next generation of autonomous road vehicles.

Creating an autonomous control system

With support from Innovate UK, Oxbotica has developed an autonomous control system called Selenium. It can work on any vehicle, including forklifts and cargo pods.

The software uses data from laser and camera sensors mounted on the vehicle to find out where it is, what's around it, and to calculate a safe and efficient route.

The technology is already running on Oxbotica's fleet of vehicles, including a last-mile delivery van, the ESA Mars Rover, and the £8 million GATEway (Greenwich Automated Transport Environment) project in London.

Creating value through intellectual property

Originating from the university's Oxford Robotics Institute (ORI) research group, the company has spurned conventional financing through external investment.

Dr Graeme Smith, CEO of Oxbotica, said:

> We didn't take the easy money. We've got very specific methodology to creating value through intellectual property and opportunities to license that. We stuck steadfastly to that approach. It's nice to have a big investor but we didn't want that to change our focus or direction.

Oxbotica began with 4 employees and has now grown to 30, with the intention of doubling that number this year.

Dr Smith added:

> We've opened up a third office in Oxford, a full fleet of

autonomous vehicles, and a dedicated test track and workshop. Our customer base is expanding rapidly and we're growing fast to meet this demand. This award is a major deal to a small company like us.

Oxbotica's success was recognised alongside other winners, including Google's [Deepmind](#), [Dollar Shave Club](#), [Dong Energy](#) and [Preferred Networks](#).