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YOUR GUIDE TO PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY

FROM
THE
EDITORS
OF
TIME

DRIVING THE FUTURE

A look inside the newest hi-tech cars



SUPPLEMENT TO TIME

culture shock

Michael Idinopulos, left, and Ken Goldberg use Web-connected robots to pose age-old questions about reality



PLANTING SEEDS OF DOUBT

If you're looking at a perfect replica of the *Mona Lisa*, does it matter that it's not the real painting? If so, why? These are the kinds of questions philosophers have been asking since the days of the ancient Greeks, in a field called epistemology—the study of knowledge itself—and it's being revisited with a high-tech twist by some researchers at the University of California, Berkeley. Professor Ken Goldberg is compiling a book that examines how the Internet challenges rules about what is "authentic" or how we know what we see on the Net is genuine. "The Net is an anonymous medium, which means there is huge potential for deception," Goldberg says. "How do we know what's real when we see it on the Internet? What is valid evidence?" Goldberg started tackling these issues when a telerobotic website he worked on drew serious questions from its viewers. At the site, <http://telegarden.aec.at>, users direct a robot to plant and water seeds in a real garden. "People started writing in, asking, 'How do we know this is a real garden? How do we know we're actually planting these seeds?'" Good questions, Goldberg thought—and in his book *The Robot in the Garden*, due from M.I.T. Press next year, he'll let various artists, scientists, historians and philosophers tackle them.

Online visitors control this garden-tending robot from their own keyboards

