

Trends in Japan

Sci-tech

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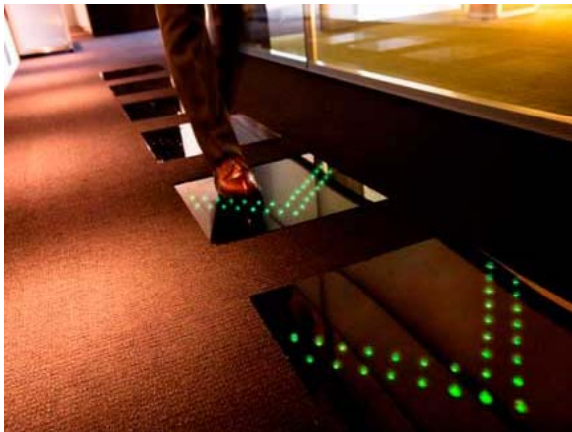
The Power Beneath Your Feet

Power-Generating Floors™ Offer New Source of Clean Energy

A Japanese startup company called Soundpower Corporation is tapping into a new energy source, generating both electricity and hope that it could contribute to the battle against global warming. The company's flagship product, the revolutionary Power-Generating Floor™, works by converting physical pressure into electricity and has a wide range of potential applications. Part of the appeal of this device is that it emits no greenhouse gases or other pollutants.



A CG image of the Power-Generating Floor™. (C)soundpower corporation



Power-Generating Floor™ tiles at the Kokuyo headquarters. (C)soundpower corporation



Power-Generating Floor™ tiles being tested at Shibuya Station. (C)soundpower corporation



The illuminations at Goshiki-zakura Ohashi Bridge. (C)soundpower corporation

Robot Chefs Herald a New Dining Experience



The two ramen robots cooking noodles.
(C) AISEI Co., Ltd./aiseieng



A finished bowl of Fa-men.
(C) AISEI Co., Ltd./aiseieng

Among the plethora of new robots Japanese researchers have developed are some that are able to prepare foods like ramen noodles and *okonomiyaki* (thick, savory pancakes), and these "robot chefs" are proving popular among diners. Far from simply preparing meals, these robots also boast a variety of talents including the ability to work in pairs, to entertain and communicate with customers, and to adapt their cooking methods in line with customers' requests.



A robot making *okonomiyaki*. (C) Toyo Riki Engineering Co., Ltd.

Mobile Desalination Unit Offers Hope to Disaster-Hit Regions

Water shortages are a growing problem around the world, especially in developing countries. Desalination, or turning seawater into potable water, is one way of increasing water supplies, but desalination plants require vast amounts of energy and infrastructure. Now a Japanese team has developed Courier Water, a mobile desalination unit that has tremendous potential for helping people in areas affected by water shortages or natural disasters. The unit's defining feature is its mobility. With its compact design, Courier Water can be installed on a four-ton truck, allowing it to travel far and wide.



The truck-loaded Courier Water. (C)Organization for the Development of Private Participation in Public Projects



Mobile seawater purification and drinking water supply system.
(C)Organization for the Development of Private Participation in Public Projects