

Benjamin Narin

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SUMMARY

Robotics engineer and technical product owner with 8+ years building autonomous robots that work around people (6+ in industry, 2 in graduate research). Found and fixed safety gaps in production robots, dug into fleet data to track down field failures, and took new features from spec to launch. Now focused on AI safety, especially for robots and AI agents.

EXPERIENCE

AI Safety & Embodied AI Exploration

San Jose, CA

Career Break, Independent Work

December 2025 – Present

- Completed BlueDot Impact's Future of AI course and joined AI safety reading groups and events on robotics and AI.
- Embodied AI Hackathons (Hugging Face, Saeed Studio): built a robot that reminds people to take their medication and uses a VLM (NVIDIA Nemotron) to check the pill and dose (2026). Trained a robot arm to play tic-tac-toe from demonstrations (2025).

Zebra Technologies (formerly Fetch Robotics)

San Jose, CA

Advanced Robotics Engineer

June 2025 – February 2026

- A 200-robot customer across the U.S. was seeing about 2,000 mislocalizations a month. Worked with them to pick which failures to pull from their fleet data, then led the fixes that brought it down to 3 a month.
- Co-led a 3-person task force on next-gen robot compute. Recommended an x86 board with a GPU over Jetson and a phased move from ROS 1 to ROS 2. The plan was adopted and underway until the business unit closed.

Senior Robotics Engineer

May 2022 – June 2025

- While scoping two feature requests, found that nothing stopped the navigation stack from driving the motors while the robot was in an error state or being joystick-driven. Worked with engineering leaders who helped write R15.08 to design and ship a command-arbitration layer, moving the product toward compliance and unblocking both features.
- Technical product owner for a new peer-to-peer system that shares large floor maps between robots, letting a map built on one robot's downward-facing localization sensor be used by the whole fleet. Wrote the PRDs and specs, coordinated 8 engineers across infrastructure and robotics, and shipped it with a debug console and physical fallback for field teams.
- Moving into Fulfillment needed a broader architecture change, including replacing legacy stack components that couldn't support the required fleet size, analytics, and stability. Designed that replacement, aligned robotics and cloud tech leads on it, and owned the build of several core components after approval.
- Took part in postmortems on robot behavior incidents, tracking root causes across the robot and cloud.
- Mentored interns and junior engineers. Spoke on the robot APIs at DevCon 2023 (Madrid) and represented Zebra at ICRA 2022 and 2024.

Robotics Engineer

November 2021 – May 2022

- Main developer and go-to person for the robot-to-cloud pipeline. Defined system behavior and user flows for key platform features.

Google Brain (now Google DeepMind), via AutoRoboto (contract)

Mountain View, CA

AI Research Engineer

January 2019 – March 2021

- Adapted a shared robotics framework to run on three hardware platforms (about 9 robots) used by 6 research projects, with a common hardware abstraction layer so researchers could move faster.
- Helped move the team off one-off custom infrastructure and onto standard systems.

Earlier Experience

2013 – 2018

- **Researcher, OSU Personal Robotics Group; Graduate TA, Mechatronics (2013–18):** built and tested several versions of an autonomous wheelchair for people with severe physical disabilities, and built data-collection platforms.
- **Robotics Engineer Intern, SuitX (2016):** standardized processes so the team could build critical systems in parallel.

EDUCATION – OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Master of Science: Robotics - Advisor Dr. William Smart

2016 – 2018

Bachelor of Science: Computer Science | Bachelor of Science: Electrical & Computer Engineering 2011 – 2016

SKILLS

Safety & Product: R15.08 safety, fleet reliability, failure analysis, PRDs and specs, cross-team planning

Technical: Python, C++, ROS/ROS 2, Docker, Kubernetes, Linux, GTest, Networking, NVIDIA Jetson/GPU, VLMs, imitation learning

PATENTS AND AWARDS

- Patent: Visual Guidance for Locating Obstructed Mobile Robots (US 12,318,915 B2)
- Patent: Guided Travel Mode with Dynamic Force Feedback for Mobile Robots (US 12,330,313 B2)
- Patent (Pending): Systems and Methods for Updating Maps for Robotic Navigation
- Patent (Pending): Dynamic Control of Operational Data Handling Settings in Mobile Robots
- Robotics for Good Competition Finalist, Dubai 2016