

ROBOTS SCOTT SNOWDEN LOOKS AT SOME OF THE BEST-KNOWN SILVER-SUITED, METAL-BOOTED NON-HUMAN STARS OF SCI-FI FILMS

The tin man's in, man

Robots, cyborgs and androids have featured in science fiction in all shapes and sizes since the earliest documented visions of the future. In 1940, Russian-born author Isaac Asimov laid down three laws governing a robot's artificial intelligence: 1) a robot may not harm a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm; 2) a robot must obey the orders given to it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law; and 3) a robot must protect its own existence, as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law. These laws form the premise of the new blockbuster movie, *I, Robot*, in cinemas now and starring Will Smith.

However, there have been a number of other well-known, circuit-based characters that have starred in sci-fi. We look at some of your favourites.



The Terminator

There are several different models of Terminator Class Infiltration Units. Most well known are the T-800 series, the T-1000 mimetic poly-alloy model and the T-X. However, the T-800 model was by far the coolest. Unlike the early T-600 series, which had rubber skin and were easily detected, the T-800 range had living human tissue over a metal endoskeleton. They even had hair, blood, bad breath and could sweat. – thus they were very difficult to detect and destroy.

As seen in: The Terminator, T2: Judgment Day, and T3: Rise Of The Machines

Strengths: Virtually indestructible hyper-alloy titanium combat chassis

Weaknesses: Dogs can detect Terminator units

Most noted for: Its sheer ruthlessness and undeterred dedication to a single mission

Typical line: 'Uzi 9mm...'

Robby the Robot

Constructed by the archetypal eccentric professor, Dr Morbius, who was driven to the borderline of genius and insanity by artificially boosting his intelligence with ancient alien artefacts. Robby was everyone's dream silicon-based buddy. He could make pretty much anything using his built-in, molecular-level replicator, he was highly intelligent with a cheeky personality and was always obedient without question.

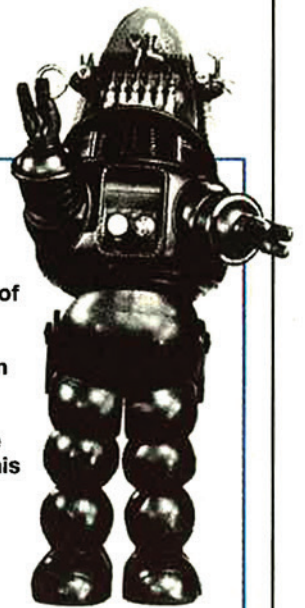
As seen in: Forbidden Planet

Strengths: Arid dry sense of humour and a built-in replicator

Weaknesses: Tends to blow a fuse when given conflicting orders

Most noted for: Replicating 60 gallons of whisky for the ship's cook on the side

Typical line: 'Sorry miss, I was giving myself an oil job.'



Marvin The Paranoid Android

Marvin is the ship's robot on the revolutionary starship *Heart Of Gold*. Marvin (pictured, below left, with Arthur Dent) was built by the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation and incorporates their Genuine People Personality technology. He



is also incredibly intelligent but, sadly, this is seldom utilised. Instead, he found himself stranded for millions of years on the desolate planet of Magrathea, working in a car park, being dropped several miles on to solid rock and being left to defend himself against some pretty awesome military technology.

As seen in: The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy TV, radio series and forthcoming movie

Strengths: Has a brain the size of a planet

Weaknesses: Has a terrible pain in all the diodes down his left side

Most noted for: Constant complaining

Typical line: 'Pardon me for breathing, which I never do anyway, so I don't know why I bother to say it, oh God, I'm so depressed.'

Bender

He was his mother's 1,729th son and his father was killed by a can-opener. He went to Bending State College, where he majored in bending and minored in robo-American studies. His pastimes include watching TV, smoking cigars and stealing. To function properly, he needs the chemical energy from alcohol, so excessive drinking is mandatory.

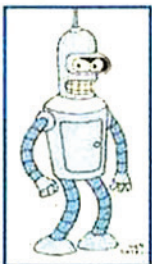
As seen in: Futurama

Strengths: Excessive drinking, smoking and partying

Weaknesses: See strengths

Most noted for: Being drunk, gambling, breaking girl robots' hearts, breaking the law

Typical line: 'It's like there's a party in my head and everyone's throwing up.'



Robocop

A fusion of electronic technology and robotic prosthesis, Robocop was constructed from the remains of policeman Alex Murphy, who was shot dead. His body is made of titanium alloy and his programming follows, supposedly, three Asimov-style rules: serve the public, protect the innocent and uphold the law.

As seen in: Three Robocop films, TV series and video games

Strengths: Useful crime-fighting devices, including a video memory, thermal imaging and a multiple targeting system

Weaknesses: Susceptible to system software reprogramming

Most noted for: Having a big gun and holster sited neatly inside his thigh

Typical line: 'Come quietly or there will be... trouble.'



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