

**Innovation Now**  
**Episode #:IN0038**  
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**TITLE:** Sample Return Robot Challenge

**HOST:** Can you build a robot that can fetch your slippers from the living room?  
*How about from behind a rock on Mars?!?!*

**ANNOUNCER:** This is “Innovation Now”...bringing you stories of revolutionary ideas, emerging concepts and the people behind the concepts that shape the future.

**HOST:** NASA’s Centennial Challenge Program engages the public to find innovative solutions through competition and cooperation. One of these forward-looking contests is the “Sample Return Robot Challenge.” Scheduled for 2012 - it carries a million and a half dollar total prize-purse for the winners.

The goal of the “Sample Return Robot Challenge” is to develop a robotic system that can operate without human guidance or interference. The plan is for the pre-programmed robotic competitors to find, gather, and return multiple objects to a designated zone... and do it before the clock runs out!

The robots will be retrieving items such as a hockey puck, a metal hook, and several other small objects. *I don’t actually* think slippers are on the list!

The benefits of such an invention are far-reaching. Since it’s not dependent on communication with a control room on Earth, a robot that can operate autonomously will enable deeper space exploration. It could also cut down the time it takes to gather samples to analyze and achieve mission goals.

For Innovation Now, this is Buddy Rubino.

**ANNOUNCER:** “Innovation Now” is written and produced by the National Institute of Aerospace through collaboration with NASA and is distributed by WHRV. Visit us online at “InnovationNow-dot-US”

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