

[Hot Clicks: The Military Wants a 250-Drone Swarm](#)

Rounding up IT and advanced tech-related news impacting government and industry.

[Amanda Ziadeh](#)

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The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is asking robot developers to submit ideas for tactics and technologies that could allow U.S. Army and Marine Corps infantry squads to deploy swarms of 250 (or more) flying and crawling semi-autonomous drones.

These would largely be used in urban “built-up areas” of up to eight city blocks for missions of up to six hours, according to the program manager, Dr. Timothy Chung. It’s part of his Offensive Swarm-Enabled Tactics initiative, which looks to provide swarm capabilities for small urban ground units and empower troops with tech to control scores of unmanned air and ground drones at a time.

These swarms could help detect enemies, and guide artillery and airstrikes in and around tall, hard-to-see, tightly packed urban buildings. The current challenge isn’t the drones, but the military’s lack of technology to manage drone swarms. The goal is to have teams of developers work in six-month stints and develop scalable swarm tactics. [Motherboard](#)

Two Cities to Bring Commuter Transit to 21st Century

New York City’s transit system is looking to swap its paper fare cards for smartphone scans and debit or credit card swipes. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority recently approved a \$573 million contract for a new fare payment system already in use on the London Underground. It’ll allow pay-as-you-go with an online account. Electronic readers will be installed in 500 New York City subway turnstiles and on 600 buses starting in late 2018, and expand to the rest of the city’s stations and buses by late 2020. [The New York Times](#)

Los Angeles is taking notes from Uber and Lyft, as the city looks into a rideshare service citizens can electronically “hail” with a smartphone app or phone call. This on-demand transit program being called “microtransit” would deploy vehicles bigger than sedans but smaller than public buses to those beckoning a ride from it via app or phone.

It would run on a similar platform as UberPOOL and Lyft Line, creating routes based on where the customers are and where they are going, with a fixed-rate fee. LA Metro already issued a request for proposals for the program, with hopes of an experimental service rolling out in 2018. [Wired](#)

At This NYC-based Company, Robots Work with

Humans

The fear of robots someday taking all our jobs is a real one, but the New York City-based e-commerce startup Boxed is proving humans and robots can work together when employees are retrained to do so.

The company, which aims to be the mobile version of Costco, has a warehouse in Union, New Jersey, now fully automated. It's equipped with four-story-tall gray robot employees called the Opex, and a Willy Wonka-style ramp for bins to slide down. It sorts, fills and spits out incoming orders of bulk items.

Though this robot did steal workers' jobs, most of the warehouse staff have been retrained to work alongside it. For example, Boxed taught workers to man the Opex, troubleshoot the conveyor belts and use the new software for filling orders. This implementation could set the stage for other industries advancing automation (like self-driving vehicles and delivery drones) at a rate that could endanger the jobs of current workers. [CNet](#)

A Few Ways Cities Get Amazon's Attention

As we all know, Amazon is looking for a city to build its second headquarters, promising to bring 50,000 jobs and invest more than \$5 billion in construction.

City bids were due Oct. 19, and Amazon received 238 of them. Aside from the expected tax breaks, fee reductions, city connectivity, growth opportunities, diversity and relocations grants, some proposals were rather creative. For example, the Atlanta suburb of Stonecrest said it would use 345 acres of industrial lane to create a new city called Amazon, and company CEO Jeff Bezos would be mayor for life.

Philadelphia compared its belief in this theory of the "rainforest of talent development feasting on the city's biodiversity" to the biggest rainforest of them all, Amazon. And Little Rock, Arkansas, sent a break-up-like video explaining why Amazon's HQ2 actually won't work in its city. [Fortune](#)

Stephen Hawking Broke the Internet

Well, just one site. The famous British scientist made his 1966 doctoral thesis “Properties of Expanding Universes” open to the public in honor of Open Access Week via the University of Cambridge’s open repository site.

This move proved to be too exciting for the world, because moments after it went live, requests to view the document crashed the website. There was nearly 60,000 downloads in less than 24 hours of going live, and the school said the thesis is already the most requested item in its catalog.

Hawking hopes to inspire people around the world to wonder about the universe and try to make sense of the cosmos, expressing that “anyone, anywhere in the world should have free, unhindered access” to his research and all research of great minds. Just prepare for slower download and access speeds when doing so. [CNN](#)

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