

Soft-skinned, brunette robot wants to be your friend

By Yaron Steinbuch

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It's going to be hard to "resistor."

A life-like cyborg was unveiled this week by engineers at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore — and is being touted as the first emotionally intelligent humanoid.

Nadine has been working as a university receptionist to test her skills — expressing a range of emotions and changing moods depending on the subject and tone of her conversations, [according to UPI](#).

The robot uses software similar to Apple's popular people pal Siri, but Nadine uses her social savvy to recognize people she's met before and remember previous conversations.

"This is somewhat like a real companion that is always with you and conscious of what is happening," said Nadia Thalmann, a robotics professor at the university's School of Computer Engineering. "So in the future, these socially intelligent robots could be like C-3PO, the iconic golden droid from 'Star Wars,' with knowledge of language and etiquette."

Social robots like the soft-skinned, brunette Nadine — who bears a striking resemblance to Thalmann — may one day also serve as office assistants and caretakers for kids and the elderly, she said.

"[They could] even serve as a platform for health-care services in the future," she said.

The university also introduced EDGAR, a telepresence robot that can replicate its user's movements in real time.

EDGAR, which features a webcam and highly articulated arms, can be operated from anywhere on Earth — mimicking the human's motion and displaying his or her face, [The Telegraph reported](#).

The robot also can interact with people — greeting them, smiling and reading a programmed script.

Engineering Professor Gerald Seet said such robots could be useful in education, business and tourism industries.

"Telepresence provides an additional dimension to mobility," Seet said. "The user may project his or her physical presence at one or more locations simultaneously, meaning that geography is no longer an obstacle."



Nadine with robotics professor Nadia Thalmann, whom she resembles.

Photo: NTU Singapore