

Nadine the eerie social robot looks and feels like humans do

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NTU says that some private companies have shown interest in its newly unveiled robots (Credit: NTU)

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Machines that can read and respond to human emotions like the [fast-selling Pepper](#), and [spooky lifelike models](#) that look much like we do have bridged the gap between robots and humans, for better or for worse. By combining these two approaches scientists at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University have taken another step in this direction, taking the wraps off a creepy new humanoid named Nadine who has her own personality and is designed to play the role of social companion or personal assistant.

Some roboticists are treading cautiously in developing machines that approach human-like form. This is motivated by the idea that the more robots look and act as humans do, the more likely they are to creep us out. This sentiment is known as "[uncanny valley](#)," and has moved some researchers in the field to [reconsider](#) how we'll interact with robots in the future.

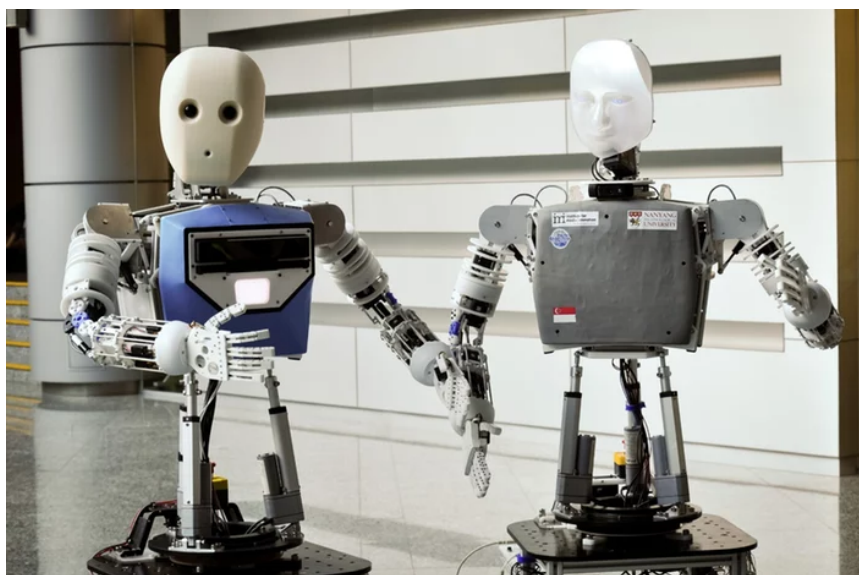
But scientists at Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) apparently don't hold such reservations. Nadine is a product of NTU's School of Computer Engineering and was designed as a lookalike of her creator, Professor Nadia Thalmann. Her hair appears a little stiffer and her eyes a little colder, but just like her inventor

Nadine will smile when greeting you, remember your name the next time you cross paths and recall your previous conversations.

With her own moods and emotions, Nadine can be happy or sad depending on the situation and is said to have a good memory. The scientists behind Nadine liken her intelligent software to Apple's Siri or Microsoft's Cortana. Though she is currently playing the role of a receptionist at NTU, they hope that further advances in silicon chips, sensors and computation will see social robots like Nadine one day be used commonly as a robotic assistant in homes and offices and provide companionship for the young and elderly.

"This is somewhat like a real companion that is always with you and conscious of what is happening. So in future, these socially intelligent robots could be like C-3PO, the iconic golden droid from Star Wars, with knowledge of language and etiquette."

Alongside Nadine, the NTU team also showed off a new telepresence robot named Edgar. Where Nadine is designed to play a supportive role alongside its owner, Edgar is aimed at breaking down geographical barriers by allowing the user to control it remotely from anywhere in the world.



Edgar reenacts the gestures of the human user once they've recorded their movements through a specialized webcam. This includes upper body movements and extends to their facial expressions, which are displayed on Edgar's face in real time. He also features a webcam of his own, through which he can meet people and even hold conversations.

"In future, a renowned educator giving lectures or classes to large groups of people in different locations at the same time could become commonplace," says Associate Professor Gerald Seet from NTU's School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering. "Or you could attend classes or business meetings all over the world using robot proxies, saving time and travel costs."

NTU says that some private companies have shown interest in its newly unveiled robots, and the scientists' next move is to look at building partnerships to bring its technologies to market.

This recent video below shows Nadine in action.

Source: [NTU](#)