

A Social Robot as Connected Home Hub

Written by Marco Attard
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Dr. Cyntia Breazeal believes the families of the future need something more than a tablet or PC to handle their general computing needs-- which is why she and her team created Jibo, the world's first "family robot."



Looking like something out of a slightly sinister science fiction movie, Jibo is essentially a pod on top of a 3-axis motorised swivel. The pod carries dual cameras, 360-degree microphones, a 5.7-inch circular display, a quad-core ARM processor and wifi radios, as well as software handling artificial intelligence, facial recognition and natural language processing.

The Jibo pitch video has the robot act much like a physical version of voice-activated mobile device personal such as Siri and Google Now. However, unlike a smartphone Jibo can recognise faces, rotating its cyclopean "face" (complete with animated eye) to directly address the speaker and even moving its 2-part plastic shell in an approximation of body language.

According to its creators Jibo can manage all of its users mobile communications, with a smartphone app pushing emails, messages and call notifications. It can also act as a videoconferencing device, search for information on the internet, take photos, call for deliveries and even show interactive eBooks on its circular face/display.

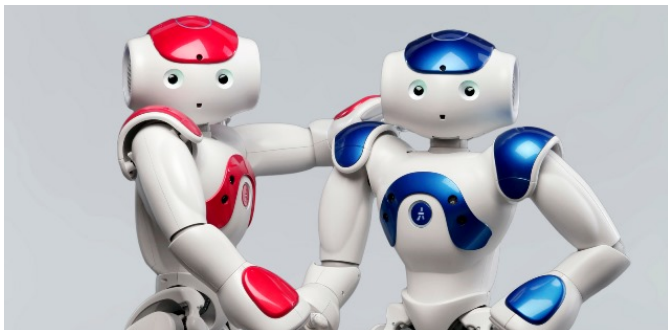
"We need technology to transcend the world of information into a more humanised realm," Breazeal tells Wired. "Something like this is a nice bridge between devices and tablets and robots that we imagine in science fiction."

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The video also suggest the robot's functionality will be further expanded to have it take care of home automation, switching the lights on when the home owner enters the house.

Being legless, the robot is designed to be moved around the house (it weighs only 2.7kg), even if it only runs for around 30 minutes on built-in batteries. Charging comes through wireless charging pads, and the Jibo team suggests users can have multiple pads for use around the home.



Jibo is to hit the market on Q3 2015, following an already successful Indiegogo preorder campaign, having raised over \$340000 with nearly a month to go. By then it won't be the only personal market on the consumer market-- for instance Japanese mobile operator SoftBank has "Pepper," a joint-development with Alderbaran Robotics.

Like Jibo, Pepper recognises faces and understands spoken commands, but unlike the "family robot" it is over 1m tall, weighs 28k, has a pair of humanoid arms and rolls around on a 3-wheels base. Either way, as the population gets older and technology improves, expect more friendly robots to step (or wheel) into our lives.

Watch [Jibo: The World's First Family Robot](#)

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Go [This Friendly Robot Could One Day Be Your Family's Personal Assistant \(Wired\)](#)

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