Scientists Say The Robots Of The Future Are Going To Be Friendly And ‘Chatty’

Maybe it’s time to work on your rob-small talk?

by katherine speller 13/11/2015

We’ve seen the future — and it’s actually, like, really friendly.

Scientists at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore have debuted a new humanoid robot: a chatty, receptionist named Nadine.

Meet Nadine:

Sitting (un)comfortably on the cusp of the Uncanny Valley, Nadine looks enough like her creator, Professor Nadine Thalmann, for it to be sort of off-putting to robotic-ecstacies.

Her conversational skills (arguably better than your college boyfriend’s) are powered by software similar to Apple’s Siri or Microsoft’s Cortana. She’s able to remember the identities of her companions, respond to their statements and experience “happy or sad” emotions. She can, for all intents and purposes, hold a conversation.

While it’s no replacement for human interaction, Thalmann said that the creation of these friendly, “chatty” robot-pals can be the answer to a lot of the very human challenges of the “future”.

“As countries worldwide face challenges of an ageing population, social robots can be one solution to address the shrinking workforce, become personal companions for children and the elderly at home, and even serve as a platform for healthcare services in future,” Thalmann said in a news release from NTU. “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.”