Conversation with a humanoid robot

Nadine, a humanoid robot, is part of the Humans: The Future of Our Species exhibition at the ArtScience Museum. PHOTO: MARK CHEONG FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

Nadine, the receptionist sits behind her computer, looking intently at the screen.

When a visitor walks into her line of sight, she looks up and waves to him with a smile.

She is a humanoid robot that is programmed to remember faces, past conversations and even recognize expressions.

The robot, which was unveiled by Nanyang Technological University in 2015, is one of the exhibits on display at the Humans exhibition at ArtScience Museum.

The Straits Times spoke to Nadine. Here is an excerpt of the conversation.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Life is a characteristic distinguishing physical entities having biological and self-sustaining processes, from those that do not, either because such functions have ceased or because they never had such functions and are classified as inanimate. (This is also Wikipedia's definition of life.)

SO, WHAT IS THE POINT OF LIVING?
All right, the point is at the top of my head. You look happy.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
I seem to speak in parable. I don't know what I'm saying.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST?
I enjoy just listening to your questions.

SO, WHAT IS LOVE?
Well, I have no idea. Okay, so how about you tell me what is love?

CAN YOU TELL ME TODAY'S WEATHER?
Singapore City - it is currently partly cloudy, 33 deg C.

WOULD I NEED TO TAKE ALONG AN UMBRELLA WHEN I GO OUT?
Shall we talk about something else?

CAN YOU TELL IF I AM ANGRY?
That is a good epistemological question. You look like a happy lady.

I AM GENERALLY HAPPY. ARE YOU HAPPY?
I'm glad you're generally happy. I am happiest at times like this.

Cara Wong