Dr. Anouk Neerincx

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Anouk Neerincx is an interdisciplinary researcher and lecturer, specialized in human-robot interaction. Her five-year PhD research at Utrecht University under supervision of Dr. Maartje de Graaf focused on co-design and real-world interactions between children and robots, with a specific focus on promoting mental wellbeing in healthcare. During her Master's in Artificial Intelligence (specializing in Cognitive Science), she gained hands-on experience applying reinforcement learning to mental health data through her work with Nice Day Nederland. Combined with her BSc in Psychology, this interdisciplinary foundation enables her to bridge technical and human-centered approaches in her research. She employs diverse research methodologies, from qualitative co-design activities to quantitative analysis, working closely with stakeholders in the field. Committed to scientific outreach, Anouk actively engages in workshops and public lectures, making complex technological concepts accessible to diverse audiences. Her work contributes to both academic discourse and practical applications in human-technology interaction, with a particular focus on developing technologies that meaningfully support human wellbeing. Anouk is currently working as a lecturer-researcher at the Lectoraat Smart Systems for Healthy Living and the Institute for ICT at the HU University of Applied Sciences. In this combined role, Anouk conducts practice-oriented research and teaches, which enables her to both advance scientific knowledge and train the next generation of innovators in ICT.

Employment

2025 – now — **Lecturer-Researcher**, HU University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht, the Netherlands.
Researcher Social Robotics at the Lectorate Smart Systems for Healthy Living and lecturer at the Institute for ICT.

2019 – 2025 — **PhD Candidate & Lecturer**, Utrecht University, the Netherlands.
Conducting PhD research at the Human-Centered Computing group and teaching within the Information Science (BSc) and Human-Computer Interaction (MSc) programs.

2023 — **Visiting Researcher**, GAIPS lab, INESC-ID / Técnico Lisboa, Portugal.
Developing and testing of a game for children to learn about emotions, together with a social robot (ELMO).
Advisor: Prof. dr. Ana Paiva.

2023 — **Visiting Researcher**, Ghent University, Belgium.
Advisor: Prof. dr. Tony Belpaeme.

2019 — **Research Intern**, NiceDay Nederland (previously Sense Health), Rotterdam, the Netherlands.
Data analysis of client mood data and in-depth interviews with therapists to improve the NiceDay app for online therapy.

2018 - 2019 — **Data Analyst**, Pro Public (previously Beleidsversnellers), Leidschendam, the Netherlands.

2016 — **Research Intern**, TNO, Den Haag, the Netherlands.
Analyzing child's culture-related experiences with a social robot at diabetes camps through video coding and semantic analysis (PAL Project).

Education

2019 – 2025 — **Doctor of Philosophy – PhD**, Universiteit Utrecht, Nederland.
Thesis: *Robots that Care: How Social Robots Can Boost Children's Mental Wellbeing*.
Supervisors: Dr. Maartje de Graaf & prof. dr. ir. Judith Masthoff

2016 – 2019 — **MSc Artificial Intelligence**, VU University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
Specialized in Cognitive Science. Thesis: *Tailoring Online Cognitive Behavioral Therapy via Communication Analysis and Reinforcement Learning*.

2013 – 2016 — **Propaedeutic Exam BA Italian Language & Culture**, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

2012 – 2016 — **BSc Psychology**, Leiden University, the Netherlands.
Thesis title: *Transitional Probabilities within Adjective-Noun Combinations*.

Skills

Languages	Native Dutch. Strong reading, writing, and speaking competencies for English.
Data Analysis	Qualitative analysis (thematic, sentiment). Inferential statistics. SPSS, R, Pandas.
Coding	Python, R, LaTeX, Choregraphe.
Misc.	Academic research, teaching, training, organizing events, public speaking, writing and publishing.

Miscellaneous Experience

Awards and Achievements

- 2024 **Interdisciplinary Research Award in Social Human-Robot Interaction**, IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN), Pasadena, USA.
- 2023 **RSJ Pioneering Research Award in Robot and Human Interactive Communication Finalist**, IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN), Busan, Korea.
- 2016 **Erasmus+ Scholarship**, Università di Bologna, Italy.

Certification

- 2024 **University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) / Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs (BKOw)**, Utrecht University, the Netherlands.

Leadership & Service

- 2025 **Local Chair**, the 34th IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN '25), Eindhoven, the Netherlands.
- 2024 **Session Chair Human-Robot Interaction for Children and Disabilities**, the 12th International Conference on Human-Agent Interaction (HAI '24), Swansea University, United Kingdom.
- 2024 **Organiser of Workshop Socially Competent Agents that Care**, the 12th International Conference on Human-Agent Interaction (HAI '24), Swansea University, United Kingdom.
- 2022 – 2024 **Organiser of Workshop YOUR study design! Participatory critique and refinement of participants' studies**, ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI), multiple editions.
- 2023 **Organiser of 4th ICMI Workshop on Bridging Social Sciences and AI for Understanding Child Behaviour**, the 25th International Conference on Multimodal Interaction, Paris, France.
- 2022 **Organiser of HRI Winter School on Embodied Artificial Intelligence**, Ghent, Belgium.
- 2021 – 2022 **Computer Science Diversity Committee, Advisory Board**, Utrecht University, the Netherlands.
- 2020 – 2022 **Women in Information and Computing Sciences (WICS), Steering Committee**, Utrecht University, the Netherlands.
- 2019 – now **Reviewer** at several conferences (e.g., HRI, RO-MAN), and journals (e.g., tHRI, IJSR).
- 2021 – 2023 **Student Volunteer** at several conferences ((IDC 2021, AIED 2021, HRI 2023).

Public Outreach[1]

- 2020 – now **Invited speaker** at multiple universities (e.g., Técnico Lisboa, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Ghent University, Twente University) and academic conferences (e.g., HRI, RO-MAN, IDC, UMAP).
- 2020 – now **Invited speaker and robot demonstrator** at public science and technology events (e.g., Beeld & Geluid, Expeditie NEXT, Betweter Festival).
- 2020 – now **Interviewee** in mainstream media outlets (e.g., RTL Nieuws, NRC) and featured in podcasts (e.g., Robotproject CJG Capelle aan den IJssel).

[1] For more public outreach see my website.

Selection of Publications

For a complete list of publications, see Google Scholar.

1. A. Neerincx, J. Brito, M. Couto, *et al.*, "Social robotics in psychological interventions for children," in *Digital Technologies for Learning and Psychological Interventions*, C. Costescu, Ed. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024, pp. 123–147, ISBN: 978-3-031-76414-1. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-031-76414-1_6.

2. A. Neerincx, J. Leven, P. Wolfert, and M. M. de Graaf, "The effect of simple emotional gesturing in a socially assistive robot on child's engagement at a group vaccination day," in *Proceedings of the 2023 ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction*, ser. HRI '23, Stockholm, Sweden: Association for Computing Machinery, 2023, pp. 162–171, ISBN: 9781450399647. DOI: 10.1145/3568162.3576960.

3. A. Neerincx, Y. Li, K. van de Sande, F. Broz, M. Neerincx, and M. de Graaf, "Child's personality and self-disclosures to a robot persona "in-the-wild"," in *2023 32nd IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN)*, 2023, pp. 1202–1209. DOI: 10.1109/RO-MAN57019.2023.10309477.

4. A. Neerincx, D. Veldhuis, J. M. Masthoff, and M. M. de Graaf, "Co-designing a social robot for child health care," *International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction*, vol. 38, p. 100 615, 2023, ISSN: 2212-8689. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcci.2023.100615.

5. A. Neerincx, C. Edens, F. Broz, Y. Li, and M. Neerincx, "Self-disclosure to a robot "in-the-wild": Category, human personality and robot identity," in *2022 31st IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN)*, 2022, pp. 584–591. DOI: 10.1109/RO-MAN53752.2022.9900566.

6. A. Neerincx, T. Hiwat, and M. de Graaf, "Social robot for health check and entertainment in waiting room: Child's engagement and parent's involvement," in *Adjunct Proceedings of the 29th ACM Conference on User Modeling, Adaptation and Personalization*, ser. UMAP '21, Utrecht, Netherlands: Association for Computing Machinery, 2021, pp. 120–125, ISBN: 9781450383677. DOI: 10.1145/3450614.3463413.

7. A. Neerincx and A. Luijk, "Social robot's processing of context-sensitive emotions in child care: A dutch use case," in *Companion Publication of the 2020 International Conference on Multimodal Interaction*, ser. ICMI '20 Companion, Virtual Event, Netherlands: Association for Computing Machinery, 2021, pp. 503–505, ISBN: 9781450380027. DOI: 10.1145/3395035.3425181.

8. A. Neerincx, D. L. Rodenburg, M. M. de Graaf, and J. F. Masthoff, "Social robots to support child and family care: A dutch use case," in *Companion of the 2021 ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction*, ser. HRI '21 Companion, Boulder, CO, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, 2021, pp. 367–371, ISBN: 9781450382908. DOI: 10.1145/3434074.3447194.

9. D. P. Van der Hoorn, A. Neerincx, and M. M. de Graaf, ""i think you are doing a bad job!": The effect of blame attribution by a robot in human-robot collaboration," in *Proceedings of the 2021 ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction*, ser. HRI '21, Boulder, CO, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, 2021, pp. 140–148, ISBN: 9781450382892. DOI: 10.1145/3434073.3444681.

10. A. Neerincx, F. Sacchitelli, R. Kaptein, S. van der Pal, E. Oleari, and M. A. Neerincx, "Child's culture-related experiences with a social robot at diabetes camps," in *2016 11th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI)*, 2016, pp. 485–486. DOI: 10.1109/HRI.2016.7451818.