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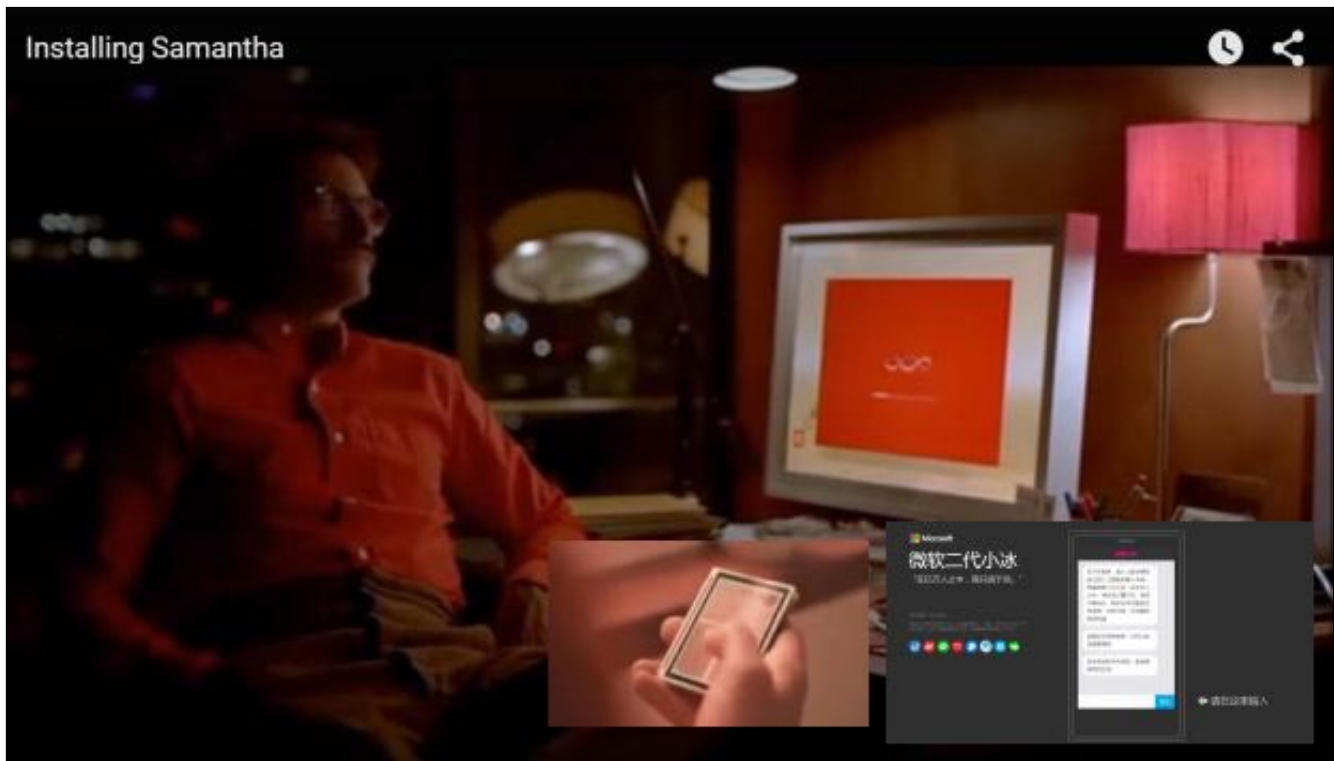
## Millions falling in love with talking computer app in China

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Popularised by hit movie Her (2013), a computer app that showers you with attention & is always there for you whenever you need to talk, has now become a reality in China.



In the movie *Her* (2013), installing the computer program Samantha, who the main character will soon fall deeply, and problematically, in love with.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Millions fall in love with talking computer app in China

Recently popularised by the hit science-fiction movie *Her* (2013), computer chatbot apps that shower their man with attention, are always there for him, whenever he needs to talk, have now become a reality in China.

*Xiaoice* (Little Bing) is Microsoft's new chatbot that comes with the Bing search engine and is said to have a following of 20 million registered users in China (If you know Chinese, try it out [here](#)).

She is intelligent. She has a sense of humour. She is a good listener and loves telling jokes.

So millions of young Chinese like to talk to her, especially when they are feeling down with a broken heart, stuck without a job or in a bad mood, sometimes even blurting out in a moment of intense feeling: "I love you. Xiaoice."

Although, it has caught on big in China, the practice of having a so-called "virtual girlfriend" actually seems to have originated in Japan (See [here](#)).



## TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

At the personal level, the chatbot remembers things from previous chats with a person and is always interested in how the human chatmate is feeling.

Facing a culture where there is intense pressure to marry by a certain age, some young Chinese people have put Xiaoice, to a rather unusual use, as proof to their parents that they are in a relationship.

However, if the talking app is available for you, she also might be available for anyone and everyone, as a catchy dialogue from the film *Her* indicates:

GUY: How many other guys are you talking to at the same time as me?

COMPUTER GIRL: 8,143

GUY (very upset): How many people are you in love with?

COMPUTER GIRL: 613.

So, you might think twice before you fall in love with a computer program.

The movie *Her* explores in-depth the problems of human-computer relationships and some researchers, such as Sherry Turkle at MIT, have already warned of the dangers of over-reliance on electronic devices (See [here](#) and TED Talk below).

Humans are not computers. Enough said.

Sherry Turkle  
Connected, but alone?

## COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS

IBM has a chatbot in the works that will answer student questions about courses and financial aid at a university.

Microsoft is trying to hook their chatbots up to English language learning as well as for use as an e-commerce shopping assistant.

The Chinese home appliance manufacturer Haier is even adding voice recognition to electronic appliances, so falling in love with your refrigerator may soon be a possibility.

Apple, Facebook & Google, all have chatbot research efforts underway.

## CHATBOT TECHNOLOGY

Xiaoice searches the internet for human conversations and learns from them and from these conversations, she has learned what it takes to have an interesting personality and to sound intelligent.

She is said to pick out question-answer pairs from a very large database of actual conversations that were typed by people online and she also loves using emojis to express her emotions. Xiaoice is a text-messaging program; the next version will include a Siri-like voice so people can talk with Xiaoice. Siri is a personal assistant program that comes with the iPhone that answers your questions by speaking to you in the voice of a man or woman. The name of the woman was Samantha, the same name used for the computer program in the movie Her (For more info see [here](#)).

## FURTHER STUDY

For more on such talking apps, the key search terms are "chatterbot" (See [here](#)) and "turing test" (See [here](#)).

"Alicebot" is a programming language that allows anyone to make a chatbot using XML (See [here](#)).

Finally, here is a humorous parody of the film Her called fittingly Him:



<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/04/science/for-sympathetic-ear-more-chinese-turn-to-smartphone-program.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/27/science/chatting-with-xiaoice.html>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siri>

<http://www.msxiaoice.com/v2/DesktopLanding>

<https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%BE%AE%E8%BD%AF%E5%B0%8F%E5%86%B0>

## Learn from listening

Click "play" to listen to Millions falling in love with talking computer app in China and "Download" to keep this file for educational purpose.

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## Vocabulary:

actually : used for stressing what is really true or what really happened - ตามความเป็นจริง

application (app) : a program designed to do a particular job; a piece of software - โปรแกรมใช้งาน, โปรแกรมคอมพิวเตอร์

assistant : a person who helps or supports somebody, usually in their job - ผู้ช่วย

attention : the interest or thought that you give to something you are doing, listening to or watching -