

Should robots have a face

When Tina Sorg first saw the robot rolling through her supermarket, she said to herself, “It needed personality.”

So Sorg, 55, who manages the store’s beer and wine department, brought back a large pair of googly eyes and **affixed** them on the top of the robot.

affix 附于

The eyes were a hit with executives. They are now a standard feature on the global grocery company’s nearly 500 robots across the United States.

How this supermarket robot got its goofy eyes touches on a serious question: Will robots with friendly faces and cute names help people feel good about devices that are taking over an increasing amount of human work?

Robots are now working everywhere from factories to living rooms. But the introduction of robots to public settings like the grocery store is fueling new fears that humans are being pushed out of jobs. McKinsey, the consulting firm, says the grocers could immediately reduce “the pool of labor hours” by as much as 65% if they adopted all the automation technology currently available.

Retailers said their robot designs were not explicitly meant to **assuage angst** about job losses. Still, companies of all sizes are investing in tens of thousands of friendly looking robots that are quickly upending human work.

assuage 平息; 缓和

angst 焦虑; 担心

Most of the retail robots have just enough human qualities to make them appear **benign** but not too many to suggest they are replacing humans entirely.

benign 亲切的; 和蔼的

cataclysm 灾难; 地震

“There is never going to be this great **cataclysm** of job loss,” Peter Hancock, a professor at the University of Central Florida who has studied the history of automation, said.

Throughout history, Hancock said, workers have attacked technologies when they feel threatened, like the 19th-century Luddites, who destroyed machinery in *textile mills*.

textile 纺织的

mill 工厂

"If you push too hard, too far, people transfer their anger to the technology, and they *revolt*," he said.

revolt 反抗; 叛乱