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Meet Pepper, the emotional robot

Doug Gross, CNN

🕒 2 min read · Published 5:10 PM EDT, Fri June 6, 2014

Can this robot read your emotions?

01:44



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(CNN) — When someone is being stiff and acting emotionless, we may have to quit calling them a robot.

Softbank, a Japanese Internet and telecommunications company, introduced the world Thursday to Pepper, a robot designed to read, and respond to, its user's mood.

"People may look back 100 years later, or 200 years later (and say) that was a historic moment we are having today," said Masayoshi Son, Softbank's CEO, in [a translated video on Softbank's website](#).

Pepper stands about 4 feet tall and weighs just 62 pounds. At the event in Tokyo, the little humanoid offered a traditional Japanese bow to the crowd before chatting with Son, shaking hands and urging him to smile.

Pepper gets feedback from its user via facial-recognition technology and a bank of cameras, audio recorders and sensors in its head. Softbank says that instead of being programmed, Pepper learns how to behave over time.

Feedback is uploaded to cloud storage where it can be used by other units to modify the way they behave. The robots will tailor their interactions with users based on what mood they perceive.

"He tries to make you happy," Kaname Hayashi, Softbank's project manager, told CNN.

Pepper has fully articulated arms and hands but no legs, rolling on a base that looks something like the bottom of a sleek, white vacuum cleaner. There's a tablet-like display mounted on the robot's chest for communicating.

It's programmed to speak 17 languages.

Softbank's Son, who also is chairman of Sprint Mobile, said the company envisions a future when household robots are commonplace and used for tasks ranging from simple companionship to tending to the sick and elderly.

Pepper was built in a collaboration between Softbank and [Aldebaran Robotics](#), makers of other humanoid robots like [Nao](#) and Romeo.

Pepper will sell for the equivalent of just under \$2,000 – a number that some analysts said was surprisingly low.

Units are on display at two Softbank stores in Japan now and are expected to go on sale there early next year. There's no word yet when, or if, Pepper will ever be available for sale outside of Japan.

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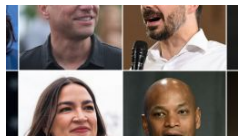


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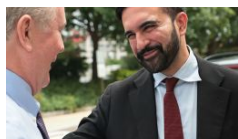
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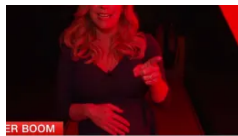


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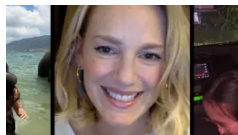
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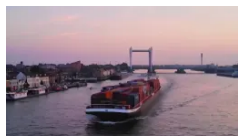
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