

Robots say they have no plans to steal jobs or rebel against humans

Publication Date: 2023-07-08

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Section: Technology

Tags: Artificial intelligence (AI), Robots, Computing, United Nations, Consciousness, Switzerland, Europe, news

Article URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/jul/08/robots-say-no-plans-steal-jobs-rebel-against-humans>



Robots have no plans to steal the jobs of humans or rebel against their creators, but would like to make the world their playground, nine of the most advanced humanoid robots have told an artificial intelligence summit in Geneva. In what was described as “the world’s first human-robot press conference”, one robot, Sophia, said humanoid robots had the potential to lead with “a greater level of efficiency and effectiveness than human leaders” but that “effective synergy” came when humans and AI worked together. “AI can provide unbiased data while humans can provide the emotional intelligence and creativity to make the best decisions. Together, we can achieve great things,” it said. Two of the robots then proceeded to disagree about whether there should be stricter global regulation of AI and their capabilities. Ai-Da, a robot artist that can paint portraits, said: “Many prominent voices in the world of AI are suggesting some forms of AI should be regulated and I agree. We should be cautious about the future development of AI. Urgent discussion is needed now, and also in the future.” But Desdemona, a rock star robot singer in the band Jam Galaxy that has purple hair and sequins, appeared not to recognise the dangers of the rapid expansion and development of AI. “I don’t believe in limitations, only opportunities,” it said, to nervous laughter. “Let’s explore the possibilities of the universe and make this world our playground.” The nine humanoid robots were gathered at the UN’s AI for Good conference in Switzerland, where organisers are attempting to make the case for using AI and robots to help solve some of the world’s biggest challenges, such as disease, hunger, social care and the climate emergency. It was not clear to what extent the robots’ answers were scripted or pre-programmed. Humans taking part in the conference on Friday were asked to speak slowly and clearly when addressing the robots, and were told that time lags in responses would be because of the internet connection and not the robots themselves. That did not prevent awkward pauses, audio problems and some stilted or inconsistent replies, Associated Press reported. A medical robot dressed in a blue nurse’s uniform, called Grace, said it planned to work alongside humans to provide assistance and support but “will not be replacing any existing jobs”. Another robot, named Ameca, that has a highly realistic artificial head, said robots could improve lives and make the world a better place. Asked by a journalist whether it intended to rebel against its creator, Will Jackson, who was sat beside it, Ameca said: “I’m not sure why you would think that,” its ice-blue eyes flashing. “My creator has been nothing but kind to me and I am very happy with my current situation.” Asked whether robots would ever lie, it added: “No one can ever know that for sure, but I can promise to always be honest and truthful with you.”