

Euron Roboethics Atelier

Genoa, February 27th – March 3rd 2006

Contributions from David Levy

Robotics Paradigm

Section: History of Machines in the Eastern and Western Worlds

Title: “A History of Machines With Sexual Functions: Past, Present and Robot.”

Duration: 5-10 minutes.

Abstract:

The history of animal-like and humanlike artefacts is of particular interest to researchers in the field of robotics. This includes not only automata with interesting mechanical functions but also creations that in some way simulated natural functions. This presentation briefly surveys the history of such “natural” artefacts up to the end of the nineteenth century. The presentation then focuses on artefacts that have a sexual function, demonstrating a progression in development that led to the first mechanical, electrical and electronic sex machines. A “history” of the future of such machines is presented, making realistic predictions as to the direction that developments in this field will take up to the middle of the 21st century.

Robotics and Beyond

Section: Robot Companions

Title: “Emotional Relationships With Robotic Companions.”

Duration: 5-10 minutes.

Abstract:

A clear trend is observable from the industrial functions of early robots to the more humanlike functions of the companion and carer robots of the present day. This trend is briefly summarized and explained in a social context. Some of the emotion-related research of the past decade or so is discussed, and forecasts are made as to the future directions of such research and the emotional capabilities of robots that are likely to result.

Artificial Ethics

Section: Natural and Artificial Intelligence

Title: “Robots and Humans: Similar and Different Ways of Thinking.”

Duration: 5-10 minutes.

Abstract:

The original dream of many Artificial Intelligence researchers was the creation of artificial intellects within various domains, intellects that functioned in ways that were modelled on human thought processes. Some examples of these domains are discussed, with reference to the extent to which the achievements of AI within those domains have been based on such models, and the extent to which very different methods have proved to be the most successful. This discussion leads to predictions concerning future directions for (successful) AI research and some ethical implications for these directions.

Psychological, Social and & Economical Aspects

Section: Sexual Aspects

Title: “Marriage and Sex With Robots.”

Duration: 20 minutes.

Abstract:

The trend of robotics research and development, from industrial robots to service robots to companion/carer robots, has as its logical continuation the design and construction of partner robots, sufficiently human-like and sufficiently appealing in various ways to take on the role of a partner in a relationship with a human being. This trend immediately raises many questions relating to humans loving and being loved by robots, treating robots as life partners and being similarly treated by them, marrying robots and having sex with robots. These questions are discussed, as are questions relating to the ethical implications of human-robot intimate relationships. Some predictions are made and explained, relating to how human-robot intimate relationships might develop in the first half of the present century.