

EMIEW3 robot will go on duty in customer service role

April 11 2016, by Nancy Owano



EMIEW3

(Tech Xplore)—EMIEW3—the name does not easily roll off the tongue but it is the name of a people-friendly robot. Hitachi showed the robot along with its associated customer service platform earlier this month. The red and white cutie was designed to be helpful to customers, for providing service and guidance at public facilities as well as stores.

Why is the number 3 in the name? In *Nikkei Asian Review*, Nikkei staff writers Tomohisa Takei and Satoshi Morotomi said, "The new robot marks the third generation, and first commercially viable member, of a series that began with an experimental model in 2005."

Key characteristics are the wheels on both of its feet and how it is fed data on its surroundings by cameras and microphones.

Hitachi said the remote brain platform is connected to intelligent processing systems which are cloud-based. The platform is also connected to a remote operation system, said the company, which can monitor and control robots at various locations. What is more, "restoration instructions can be sent from a remote location to quickly resume services, thus improving the operation availability of robot [services](#)."

What's next for this helper? Tokyo-based Hitachi will start proof of concept on the robot services, together with [customers](#). The company seeks to put it on the market in 2018, said *Nikkei Asian Review*.

According to Jun Hongo in *The Wall Street Journal*, "The price of the [robot](#) hasn't been decided, but it will be on sale for business use and not for consumers, said Hitachi spokeswoman Tomiko Kinoshita."

In fact, the company put the prototype through a situation recently, reported *Nikkei Asian Review*, where the prototype surveyed its surroundings and approached an actress playing a lost foreigner. "Is there something I can help you with?" the machine asked her in Japanese. "Where is the tourist information?" the woman asked in English. The robot switched to her language and led her to the place she was looking for.

EMIEW3's capabilities summarized: It can identify a person requiring assistance, autonomously approach the person and initiate customer services, share information with other EMIEW3 units to ensure smooth service continuation, and, if knocked over, it can resume a standing position.

How would the robot know if a shopper was looking for some assistance? Hitachi said, "by linking human movement and network cameras for environmental recognition, the robot can identify customers requiring support and autonomously initiate customer services."

No problem if the customer is in an environment with lots of noise—Hitachi said there is "voice and language processing technology" involved which enables voice recognition and translation.

The [robot](#)'s features include a height of 90cm, weight of 15kg, and an ability to keep pace with humans.

Whereas we often read news about robots designed for purposes of security, rescue, defense and industrial work, Japan has kept an impressive focus on robots which can talk with people and express themselves through gestures.

In just a few years," remarked Takei and Morotomi, EMIEW3 "will provide customer service in airports, hospitals, train stations and other facilities, speaking four languages so that it can even serve the masses of foreign tourists streaming into Japan."

More information: [www.hitachi.com/New/cnews/mont .../2016/04/160408.html](http://www.hitachi.com/New/cnews/mont.../2016/04/160408.html)

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