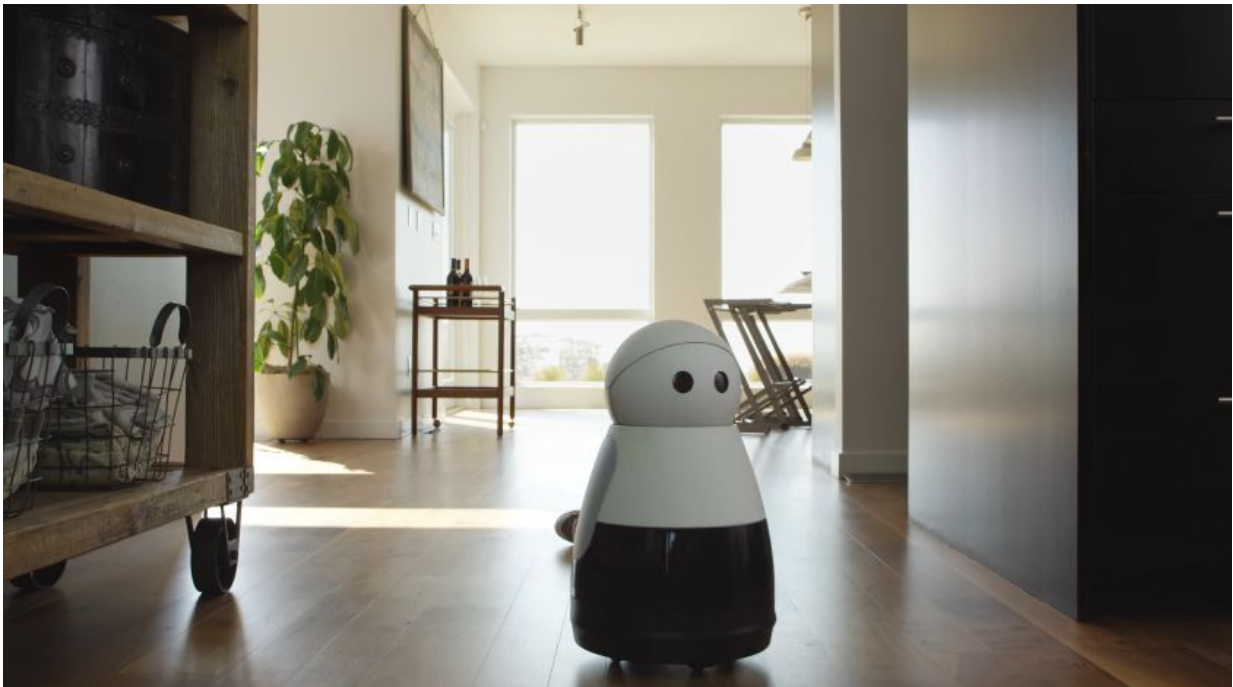


Kuri robot speaks language of companionship in chirps and beeps

January 5 2017, by Nancy Owano



(Tech Xplore)—Cute is an understatement. It is chubby, wheeled and not only looks but sounds like a robot. Think friendly chirps. Meet the little home robot named Kuri. Evan Ackerman commented on it in *IEEE Spectrum*: "There's speech recognition, but Kuri won't talk back, instead relying on a variety of beepy noises and its expressive head and eyes to communicate."

Its designers, instead of trying hard to make Kuri pose as a human, leveraged its cuteness as a simple looking robot to love.

"When something talks to you, you can't help but expect it to communicate like a human, and when it inevitably fails, it's annoying. Kuri sidesteps this by not giving you a chance to think that it's trying to be human at all, theoretically making it much harder to disappoint," said Ackerman.

In the promotional video, we see a young girl saying, "Hey Kuri do you want play? You can see Kuri in the video moving to follow her and it expertly navigates itself around a pair of sneakers strewn on the floor.

Impressive. Ackerman in *IEEE Spectrum* commented that the robot had "some sort of 'laser-based sensor array' that it uses for obstacle detection, localization, and [navigation](#)."

Kuri is 20" tall, weighs about 14 lbs, and includes an app for iOS and Android for setup and control [capabilities](#).

The robot comes from Redwood City, California-based Mayfield Robotics. While it looks like an unadorned cute little robot, it has technology features that are likely to impress its future owners.

"Kuri contains serious technologies on the inside that represent the latest [developments](#) in smartphones, gaming, and robotics," said Mayfield CTO Kaijen Hsiao in *PCMag*.

The robot, said *PCMag*, can respond to questions with facial expressions, head movements, and sounds.

(According to Mayfield Robotics, a gentle tap to the head makes Kuri look up at the person and chirp.)

Features, said the *PCMag* article, include "a built-in 1080p camera, four microphones and dual speakers, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity, various sensors for mapping and detecting objects," and others.

According to Mayfield Robotics, the camera is behind one of its eyes and can capture HD pics and videos in a range of lighting conditions. The microphones help it locate sounds.

Kuri can help as well as entertain. It can remind the child to check blood sugar in an hour, for example, as shown in the video, with Kuri interacting with a child.

Kuri goes to the charging [pad](#) for a power nap between activities or when energy is running low, said the company.

The robot is on pre-order, and the price for the [robot](#) is \$699. A \$100 deposit is required with purchase; the balance is due at shipping. Kuri is targeted to ship later this year.

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