

Misty II robot's crowdfunding campaign has developer community in mind

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Credit: Misty Robotics

Misty Robotics has a new Misty in the wings, readied for December, just the time of year when cute little robots are on a lot of shopping lists. Misty II, though, is targeted for developers. It has been positioned as a development platform.

Toward that goal, Misty Robotics is launching a crowdfunding campaign. It is a more polished [personal robot](#), and it reflects the vision of a company that has set an ultimate goal of a day when people use robots for daily useful tasks both at home and in the office—not just for take-the-[robot](#)-out-to-the-living-room for family entertainment.

If Misty is to reach its goal of becoming more of a part of homes and offices, the company CEO believes first things first: put Misty in the hands of developers, as *TechSpot* put it, "to create apps and use cases for the robot."

It appears that the company is well aware that soulful-looking eyes on a cute robot with a youthful chirp in its speaking voice will not be a long-lived delight. Robots that are cute but minimally useful will be relegated to the attic or good-will depots.

Shawn Knight in *TechSpot* said, "Developers with advanced skills are invited to use JavaScript APIs to create [custom](#) skills and integrate the bot into third-party services such as those offered by Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant."

The company press release said, "The Misty II personal robot is easy for non-technical owners to program using the Misty Blockly client, a visual block-based programming interface, to create new skills for the robot that can make it move, talk, roar, and more. Pre-set blocks, or skills, will come installed on Misty II to quickly get started."

Those with programming experience, meantime, as Knight pointed out,

can turn to JavaScript APIs for more sophisticated skills and modifications, such as integrating with third party services.

Not so long ago, Misty 1 was introduced at CES, earlier this year. A spruced-up Misty II, 14 inches tall, "has an extra microphone to accommodate developers' desire for additional voice control capabilities," said Knight.

Will the new robot come with many pre-set skills? Knight said the skills will include "the ability to respond to commands, navigate autonomously, recognize faces and even locate its charging base."

Evan Ackerman in *IEEE Spectrum* said out of the box Misty II can: move autonomously, dynamically respond to her environment, recognize faces, create a 3-D map of her surroundings, receive and respond to commands, locate her charger, and display emotional characteristics.

All in all, the Misty team is offering the Misty II robot in a crowdfunding campaign at a discount, and the ship date is targeted for December 4.

On its FAQ section, the company answered the question, but why go out to crowdfund, when you are venture-backed?

Their response is all about community, which they seek to strengthen. "Crowdfunding aligns with our early mission of building a community of developers and makers." The company can also leverage this as a channel for getting feedback.

Pricing is at \$1,499—that is, 250 units are being offered at this price and once those are gone, the price is \$1,599 for the next batch of 1,175 and onwards and up.

In an *IEEE Spectrum* interview with Misty Robotics' Tim Enwall, head of company, Enwall was asked how much of an obstacle did he believe cost would be for Misty II adoptions? "We feel that \$1,500 is the most affordable price for such an [advanced](#) robot; several others in the market are more expensive with less capability."

On their site, the "Misty II Founder Edition Personal Robot" at \$1,499 was described as an advanced personal robot with sensors that can be programmed with the languages one already knows or with a visual block interface.

They determined a MSRP as \$3,200 based on cost and the value of advanced features and capabilities. "This is discounted by 50% for the crowdfunding offering to \$1,599." Misty II Founder Edition Personal Robot is offered at \$1,499 for the first 250 backers (\$100 off initial price).

Misty's planners are going by a planned journey with markers for where home robotics is going next.

"The Misty II is primarily for software developers, STEM students, and makers. This community will invent thousands of uses, which, we predict, will take about three to five years. During this three to five year timeframe, there will be advances in processing speed to enable general object recognition, advances in motor life, manipulation, as well as finding ways to make the battery last longer. After truly homing in on improving the extensibility and depth of APIs, it will then be early adopters who will utilize robots in the home and office. Five years following that, we feel that Misty will be ready for mass adoption (i.e., greater than 20% penetration) consumers."

So what can we expect?

In CNET, Scott Stein said a new [personality](#) and emotion engine was maybe its most fascinating feature. Enwall talked in terms of the robot having an "infinite personality," developing emotions in 3-D space and mapping emotions to the presence of triggers.

More information: — www.mistyrobotics.com/

— [www.businesswire.com/news/home ... ew-Misty-II-Personal](http://www.businesswire.com/news/home...ew-Misty-II-Personal)

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