

S. Korea administrative robot defunct after apparent suicide

June 26 2024



An administrative officer robot is seen at the Gumi City Council building.

A city council in South Korea said Wednesday their first administrative officer robot was defunct after throwing itself down some stairs, with local media mourning the country's first robot suicide.

South Korea's Gumi City Council announced the [robot](#) was found unresponsive after having apparently fallen down a two-meter (six-and-a-half foot) staircase last week.

Witnesses saw the robot officer "circling in one spot as if something was there" before the accident occurred, but the exact cause of the fall is still being investigated, a [city](#) council official told AFP.

"Pieces have been collected and will be analyzed by the company," the official said, adding that the robot had "helped with daily document deliveries, city promotion, and delivered information" to local residents.

"It was officially a part of the city hall, one of us," another official said. "It worked diligently."

Headlines in local media questioned the apparent robot suicide, saying: "Why did the diligent civil officer do it?" or asking "was work too hard" for the robot?

Appointed in August 2023, the robot was one of the first to be used in this manner in the city.

Made by Bear Robotics, a Californian robot-waiter startup, the robot worked from 9 am to 6 pm and had its own civil service officer card.

Unlike other robots, which can typically only use one floor, the Gumi City Council robot could call an elevator and move floors on its own.

South Korea is one of the most enthusiastic users of robots globally.

It has the highest robot density in the world, with one industrial robot for every 10 employees, according to the International Federation of Robotics.

Gumi city council is currently not planning to adopt a second robot officer at this moment, it told AFP.

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