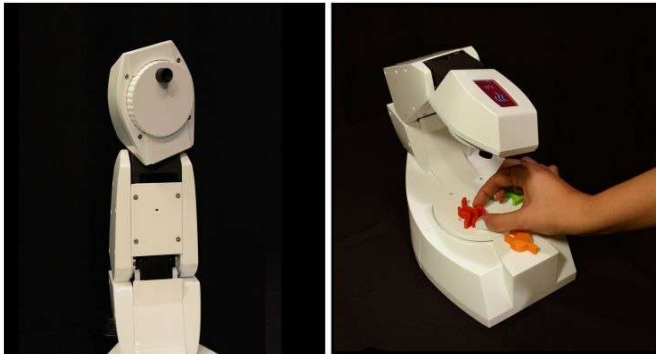


Social Vyo adjusts temps, frets over unplugged irons, reacts to physical icons

13 June 2016, by Nancy Owano



Credit: researchers

We see there is another member of the growing crop of "social" robots that are being engineered to help you through your domestic tasks: Meet Vyo. This is a home robot for controlling smart home devices. It's the result of a collaboration between Milab IDC Herzliya, Cornell University and SK Telecom.

("When designing the robot, we worked in a large team that included academic researchers, industry partners, puppet designers, engineers and animators. The interdisciplinary nature of the project [resulted](#) in several novel design outcomes that were integrated in the final prototype.")

Videos on Vyo reflect a lot of thought went into its making as an efficient and at the same time approachable social [robot](#).

Some of the team players behind Vyo described Vyo as "a prototype of a superintendent social robot." It makes use of various interaction paradigms. Vyo returns screen feedback, expressive gestures and uses physical icons too.

It responds with subtle gestures. It can nod a greeting and can wait for a command. That is

where wordless interacting gets interesting.

Yes, it can respond to a verbal command but it can also respond to physical icons (one of the collaboration sites describes them as tangible physical icons or "phicons") to indicate what the user wishes to happen.

You can place an icon on it to turn on a device and remove it to turn it off.

"No problem," it says to an icon placed on it, in a pleasant male adult voice. (At last, a home robot without a poor rendition of a child's voice). "I will take care of the dishes." The robot gives a quick gesture of acknowledgment as well.

Vyo can gesture if something is wrong, and will tell you what is wrong, e.g., your monthly bill is expected to exceed the previous month's.

If something is terribly wrong, the robot has an extremely stressed gesture. The robot turns this way and that, as if nervously looking for help. "The iron is still on. Would you like me to disconnect it?"

Leaving home? You place a security icon on its lap. When you are gone the robot will see if someone is at the door and will send an email. While the owner is away the robot can also manage smart electricity usage. Using calendar information, it can anticipate when the user is about to return home and can heat up the home using the "heating" icon.

Hope you had a great day, it tells the owner on return. "I've done the dishes and I also heated the house," it responds when asked for a "status update." You can use icons instead of verbal questions for requesting status updates and for watching out for electricity consumption.

You can even make adjustments. Grab a heat icon and the robot will show you the temperature at that moment. Move the icon and the robot will adjust the

temp. (There is a small screen at the head of the [robot](#).)

More information: [research.milab.idc.ac.il/vyo/research.milab.idc.ac.il/wp-co ... t-Home-Assistant.pdf](http://research.milab.idc.ac.il/vyo/research.milab.idc.ac.il/wp-co...t-Home-Assistant.pdf)

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