

Head full of expression and language chops aims to serve in business interactions

November 8 2018, by Nancy Owano



With the launch of Furhat, one can see a flip side of the pundit-nervousness over an evil empire of smart space kiddies, pups and muscle-bound guardians turning on us, no mercy included. The visionaries in the company Furhat Robotics appear to believe that you might want to join them in a world where technology can be more human.

The Stockholm-based startup has a highly advanced social robot. In form, *Interesting Engineering* says what you are actually looking at is "a face onto a moveable base shaped like a human head. The social robot is reminiscent of a wig's [resting](#) base only it actually talks and interacts."

A video of Nov. 6 shows what gives them the confidence to back up claims of having a special [social robot](#).

Furhat not only talks, not only listens, not only makes eye contact, and not only shows emotions, but—well, the "also" may only be limited by imaginations. "It can serve customers, provide companionship, train employees or teach a language." (*Teach a language?* Their system supports text-to-speech voices in over 30 [languages](#).)

Technical features include a HD camera with computer vision, face tracking system and backprojected facial animation system. The robot has natural neck motion with 3 degrees of freedom. It can direct attention to you and entities around you in group interactions.

You can probably guess the next sentence—a motivational message for expanding a community including developers. "If you are an entrepreneur, developer, designer or researcher, the time to build apps for social robots is now."

You meet Furhat when you click on the site, as you see a [blue-eyed](#) face with a curiosity-laden gaze staring right back at you, moving the eyes around to let you know it is very much actively contemplating meeting

you at first sight.

Not everyone in the world has blue eyes and hopefully the options address the world's diverse human features. A hopeful sign is that the site said you choose between their standard masks or create your own mask for a personalized robot-persona.

Computer features include Intel Core i5 7260U, 64-bit, Intel Iris Plus Graphics 640, 8GB RAM, 120 GB SSD.

The company said the platform "takes the concept of conversational AI to the next level both in terms of creating new social and business opportunities."

Based on situational videos posted by the company, where the robot is in business interactions, the potential for Furhat seems great in corporate training and customer service than as a living-room companion. The robotics firm suggests Furhat can be used to interact with customers, train employees or teach a language.

In a Nov. 6 news release, the company announced its launch of the [robot](#) —noting a "sophisticated platform specifically for multisensory and immersive language interactions." The release stated that 70 international brands were working with Furhat. The statement said, "The company currently works with over 70 international businesses and development agencies, spanning multiple industry sectors including [recruitment](#), entertainment, transportation and finance."

Already, it appears that observers will be acknowledging that Furhat is more than just a Siri wannabe on a stand. Earlier this year, a January article in *Forbes* remarked how Next Gen technology was focused on "creating experiences with machines that feel like talking to another person and it's the biggest, most difficult and fascinating part of [robotics](#)

."

Nonetheless, contrary views are useful in the Next Gen tech race so that we may examine what we want and what we need. A *TechSpot's* reader reaction: "Honestly, I can't think of a single logical reason for science to be trying so hard to reach the Uncanny Valley..well, no good reasons, anyway. Could we maybe focus on making [people](#) smarter for then next couple decades?"

More information: www.furhatrobotics.com/furhat/

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