

A robot that can do housework is being invented

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We're still years, perhaps decades, away from Rosey, the housekeeping robot from the classic cartoon series "The Jetsons," according to Siddhartha S. Srinivasa, a professor of robotics at University of Washington's Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science and Engineering. Image from public domain

Robots already have many uses. They help build cars and perform surgeries. What about robots that can make a bed or do the dishes, though? These robots may not be far off.

Amazon is a large technology company. It is working on a top-secret project to make a robot for the home. The project has already been going on for several years.

The project is known as "Vesta." Vesta could be ready as early as next year. What the robot can do is still unknown.

Siddhartha S. Srinivasa is a professor of robotics. He said we're still many years away from anything like Rosey. Rosey is the famous housekeeper robot from "The Jetsons." "The Jetsons" was a cartoon show from the 1960s and 1980s. It was about a family living in the future.

Rosey Is The Perfect Robot

Srinivasa said Rosey has something that everyone is working toward. She can interact with the world around her. She can communicate and perform physical tasks. This is extremely hard to make in the real world, Srinivasa said.

There are many challenges ahead, Srinivasa said. The home is one of them. Homes are hard for robots to move around in. There are piles of clothes or children's toys that get in the way.

Another challenge is communication and understanding. Will a robot understand that not all families are the same? Will it be able to change based on different behaviors and customs? This is an "incredibly hard problem" for researchers to solve, Srinivasa said.

Finally, he said, companies will have to think about privacy. When a robot enters a home, it will collect private information. What will happen to that information?

Other Companies Are Building Robots, Too

Amazon is the first major company to work on this type of robot. Still, it has some competition.

First, there is the Aeolus Robot. This child-sized machine can perform household chores. It can mop and pick up stuffed animals off the floor. The robot was even able to get drinks from the fridge with an advanced grabbing arm.

There is also Pepper. Pepper is a doe-eyed robot on wheels made by SoftBank Robotics. The company says its machine can read people's feelings. It can do this by interpreting faces and voices.

Finally, there's Jibo. Jibo is a 12.5-inch-tall stay-at-home robot. He can't do much other than keep his owners company. One website said he can "dance and tell some pretty corny jokes."

Quiz

1 Read the section "Rosey Is The Perfect Robot."

What is a reason WHY it is challenging for researchers to create robots?

- (A) Robots will have to stay inside and avoid interacting with the world around them.
- (B) Robots will need maps so they know how to get around the houses they are in.
- (C) Robots will have trouble collecting private information from the homes they enter.
- (D) Robots will need to be able to change based on what different families want.

2 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-4].

Select the paragraph that gives examples of the work robots can do.

- (A) Robots already have many uses. They help build cars and perform surgeries. What about robots that can make a bed or do the dishes, though? These robots may not be far off.
- (B) Amazon is a large technology company. It is working on a top-secret project to make a robot for the home. The project has already been going on for several years.
- (C) The project is known as "Vesta." Vesta could be ready as early as next year. What the robot can do is still unknown.
- (D) Siddhartha S. Srinivasa is a professor of robotics. He said we're still many years away from anything like Rosey. Rosey is the famous housekeeper robot from "The Jetsons." "The Jetsons" was a cartoon show from the 1960s and 1980s. It was about a family living in the future.

3 Which sentence from the article BEST states a MAIN idea of the entire article?

- (A) It is working on a top-secret project to make a robot for the home.
- (B) Siddhartha S. Srinivasa is a professor of robotics.
- (C) Pepper is a doe-eyed robot on wheels made by SoftBank Robotics.
- (D) One website said he can "dance and tell some pretty corny jokes."

4 Read the paragraph from the section "Other Companies Are Building Robots, Too."

First, there is the Aeolus Robot. This child-sized machine can perform household chores. It can mop and pick up stuffed animals off the floor. The robot was even able to get drinks from the fridge with an advanced grabbing arm.

What is the MAIN focus of this paragraph?

- (A) The Aeolus Robot is the same size as a child.
- (B) The Aeolus Robot can help out around the house.
- (C) The Aeolus Robot has an advanced grabbing arm.
- (D) The Aeolus Robot can do only two kinds of chores.