Social Robots from a Human Perspective

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This book presents a comprehensive overview of the human dimension of social robots by discussing both transnational features and national peculiarities. Addressing several issues that explore the human side of social robots, this book investigates what a social robot is and how we might come to think about social robots in the different areas of everyday life. Organized around three sections that deal with Perceptions and Attitudes to Social Robots, Human Interaction with Social Robots, and Social Robots in Everyday Life, it explores the idea that even if the challenges of robot technologies can be overcome from a technological perspective, the question remains as to what kind of machine we want to have and use in our daily lives.

Lessons learned from previous widely adopted technologies, such as smartphones, indicate that robot technologies could potentially be absorbed into the everyday lives of humans in such a way that it is the human that determines the human-machine interaction. In a similar way to how today's information and communication technologies were initially designed for professional/industrial use, but were soon commercialized for the mass market and then personalized by humans in the course of daily practice, the use of social robots is now facing the same revolution of 'domestication.' In the context of this transformation, which involves the profound embedding of robots in everyday life, the 'human' aspect of social robots will play a major part. This book sheds new light on this highly topical issue, one of the central subjects that will be taught and studied at universities worldwide and that will be discussed widely, publicly and repeatedly in the near future.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Addressing several issues that explore the human side of social robots, this book asks from a social and human scientific perspective what a social robot is and how we might come to think about social robots in the different areas of everyday life. Organized around three sections that deal with Perceptions and Attitudes to Social Robots, Human Interaction with Social Robots, and Social Robots in Everyday Life, the book explores the idea that even if technical problems related to robot technologies can be continuously solved from a machine perspective, what kind of machine do we want to have and use in our daily lives? Experiences from previously widely adopted technologies, such smartphones, hint that robot technologies could potentially be absorbed into the everyday lives of humans in such a way that it is the human that determines the human-machine interaction. In a similar way to how today's information and communication technologies were first designed for professional/industrial use, but which soon were commercialised for the mass market and then personalised by humans in the daily practices of use, the use of social robots is now facing the same revolution of 'domestication'. In this transformation, which involves the profound embedding of robots in the everyday life, the 'human' aspect of a social robot will have a key role to play. This book casts light on this burning issue, which is one of the central topics that will be taught and studied in universities worldwide and that will be discussed widely, publicly and repeatedly in the near future. The book makes a comprehensive overview of the human dimension of social robots by discussing both transnational features and national specificities.

About the Author

Jane Vincent, Ph.D., Jane Vincent is Senior Research Fellow at the LSE Media and Communications Department and Visiting Fellow with the Digital World Research Centre at the University of Surrey. She researches the social practices of mobile communications and ICT users. Her studies for industry and international academic organizations on the social shaping of technology, children's and older peoples' use of mobile phones are published widely and Jane's work on emotions and mobile phones is published in English, German and Russian.

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