

Number LANCs-D4.3-RN-Human-Relationship A-PI--

Title	Research Note (RN) for D4.3
Subtitle	Issues in Focus : Human relationships

PROBLEM	<input type="checkbox"/>	SOLUTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Note	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Selected Annotation	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Categories: | | |

Summary:

This note addresses the question of what human-machine relations mean for the future of human-human relations, and takes as example companion / pet robotics

CONTEXT

Companion robots are an area of robotics development with particularly strong relevance to questions of human-machine relationships in comparison with human-human relations.

(Key readings include, Arras and Cerqui, 2005; Barbrook, 2007; Capurro et al, 2006; Castellano et al, 2008; Coeckelbergh, 2009; Coeckelbergh, 2010b; Coeckelbergh, 2010a; Ishii, 2006; Heerink et al, 2006; Heerink et al, 2008; Hsu et al, 2005; Weng, 2009; Warwick, 2000; Turkle, 2007; Tamura et al, 2004; Sparrow and Sparrow, 2006; Salter et al, 2008; Pacchierotti et al, 2005; Looijea et al, 2010; Lohse et al, 2008; Lee et al, 2006).

FACTS

Philosophical and ethical reflections do not agree on the extent to which human-robot relations can be considered genuine companionship in care, at home, in teaching, and other principally social and emotional scenarios. Warnings that machines can never replace humans abound on the grounds that machines cannot actually care for and truly understand humans, only humans can. But empirical studies indicate that robots for companionships do not replace human contact (and ought not to) but they confuse the issue of what counts as companionship and what human-robot relations actually bring to a person's life.

COMMENT

The key problem is what precisely human-robot relations consist of and how to understand the relationships that can evolve:

- What counts as companionship?
- How do people reflect their vulnerabilities in companionships?
- What is the role of imitation and make-believe in companionships?
- Is there a principled difference between relations with a robot pet, a doll or teddy bear, a living pet, another human?