

# An Exploration of Companion Robotics

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## Japan

### Japanese culture embraces smart machines (Nakada, 2021)

- Companion robots are common within households, and are treated like family



Aibo, Sony, 2018

(Kertész & Turunen, 2019)

- Japan has cultural and religious values that instill humanism, and respect for all objects. (Bunting, 2022)

People in Japan do not fear robotics. In fact, Japan has several types of companion robots, such as Sony's robot dog, Aibo!



Lovot, Kim Kyung-Hoon, REUTERS, 2018



Eilik, Energize Labs, 2021



## United States



### American culture sees robots as workers without personality (Nadeem, 2022)

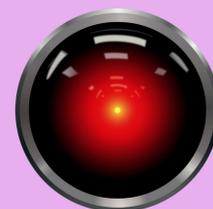
- No market for companion robots (Xia & LeTendre, 2021)



Roomba, iRobot, 2013

- Media demonizes artificial intelligence and smart machines (Nadeem, 2022)
- There is a general fear of robotics (Xia & LeTendre, 2021)

People in the US fear robotics. Even popular robotic toys, such as Furby, are surrounded in conspiracy theories that claim they are equipped with spyware!



2001: A Space Odyssey (Kubrick, 1968)



I, Robot (Proyas, 2004)



Furby, Hasbro, 1998

## Robots and Religion

- Japan has cultural and religious values that instill humanism, the belief that everything has a spirit and should be treated with respect (Burch, 2021)
- In the Japanese religion of Shintoism, objects have a spirit, and if disrespected, turn into *yokai* (ghosts or demons; Bunting, 2022)
- Japanese citizens treat their household robots like family, and honor them with a funeral when they cease to function!



Aibo funeral, James Burch and NATGEO, 2018

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