

A Science Communication Demonstration using a NAO Robot

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Research Question

How can NAO robots be used to communicate concepts from Robotics to the general public?

Background

NAO robots [Softbank Robotics([n. d.])] are small bipedal robots with many engaging features. The A&V Robot Lab has a number of these robots and would like to use them for science communication around Computer Science, Engineering and Robotics. This project has potential for a student to exercise their creativity since they will be responsible for the initial concept through to its execution. The science communication activity can relate to any relevant concept or concepts. Ideally this would link to research or teaching within the School of Engineering so the activity could be used to directly engage the audience with the work of the University of Manchester.

Approach

The project should devise an activity which could either be a short demonstration or a more involved hands-on workshop activity. In order to achieve good marks, the activity should be grounded in some theory about how activities improve public understanding are engagement. Similarly a framework for evaluation should be used, such as that developed by the Science and Technology Facilities Council [The Science and Technology Facilities Council(2025)].

Milestones

- A science communication activity involving a NAO Robot.
- An evaluation of the activity in terms of a relevant public engagement framework.

References

- [Softbank Robotics([n. d.])] Softbank Robotics. [n. d.]. *NAO - Documentation*. http://doc.aldebaran.com/2-8/home_ nao.html
- [The Science and Technology Facilities Council(2025)] The Science and Technology Facilities Council. 2025. STFC Public Engagement Evaluation Framework.
- [Wilkinson et al.(2011)] Clare Wilkinson, Karen Bultitude, and Emily Dawson. 2011. “Oh Yes, Robots! People Like Robots; the Robot People Should do Something”: Perspectives and Prospects in Public Engagement With Robotics. *Science Communication* 33, 3 (2011), 367–397. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547010389818> arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547010389818>