

Japan's Honda unveils futuristic unicycle (w/ Video)

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Honda President Takanobu Ito displays the prototype model of a personal mobility device called the 'U3-X', at the company's headquarters in Tokyo. Honda Motor on Thursday unveiled the experimental electric unicycle with inbuilt balance control, a bit of advanced technology Honda borrowed from ASIMO, its humanoid robot.

It looks a bit like a plastic figure of eight, and its Japanese designers say it could revolutionise the way we get around, in total comfort and without breaking a sweat.

Honda Motor on Thursday unveiled an experimental electric unicycle with inbuilt [balance](#) control, a bit of advanced technology Honda borrowed from ASIMO, its [humanoid robot](#).

Riders steer it by shifting their upper body to move in any direction --

forward, backward or diagonally.

"We believe this is the first step in realising the fun of human transportation and expanding the joy indefinitely," Honda president Takanobu Ito told reporters taking a glimpse at Japan's latest high-tech [gizmo](#).

The U3-X moves forward and backward with the use of its single wheel, which in turn is made up of a string of perpendicular smaller wheels that can move the vehicle left and right. Combine both, and the vehicle swiftly moves diagonally.

It can run for one hour on a single charge of its [lithium ion battery](#) which propels the device at roughly the walking speed of an adult, six kilometres (3.7 miles) per hour.

The U3-X is 65 centimetres (about 26 inches) tall and weighs less than 10 kilograms (22 pounds).

Its chief engineer, Yasuhisa Arai, said Honda had no immediate plans to sell the device but was looking for fun for potential uses.

"Today is the first day we have presented this technological achievement, and we look forward to receiving lots of ideas about how to use this, particularly from the younger generation," Arai said.

Honda said it would continue its research and development of the device, including some real-world experiments, to verify its practicality.

In a visual presentation, Honda pictured some fun uses it imagines for the U3-X -- a group of people on an outing, a teenager using it for skateboard style acrobatics, and even a rider-less version serving up

cocktails.

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