

Supermarket robot to help the elderly (w/ Video)

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Robovie-II, a retail-assistant robot designed to help elderly and disabled people shop in supermarkets, is being tested in Kyoto, in Japan.

The child-sized [robot](#) was developed from an earlier version of the Robovie-II [humanoid robot](#) designed by Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International (ATR), which is based in Kansai Science City, or "Keihanna Science City". Along with other digital technologies

and sensors, the company hopes the robot will make shopping easier and more entertaining for elderly people, helping them remember what is on their list, guiding them to the items, and carrying the groceries for them.

Before leaving home, a shopper enters his or her shopping list into a mobile device that displays an avatar of the robot. When the shopper arrives at the [supermarket](#), [sensors](#) detect the mobile device and the shopping list data is transmitted wirelessly to a waiting retail-assistant robot. The robot then greets the shopper by name and says "Let's go shopping," and then follows them through the store, helping them find the items on the list, and carrying the goods in a shopping basket.

As they travel through the supermarket the robot reminds the shopper of items on the list, and makes recommendations and suggestions of other items that would go well with items on the list (such as lettuce with other salad items), and makes comments on how delicious foodstuffs look.



One of the approximately 20 elderly shoppers taking part in the experiments said it was fun shopping with the robot, and it reminded her of shopping with her grandchild. She said she didn't get tired because the robot carried the [shopping](#) basket

[Japan](#) has an aging population and a love of consumer culture and technology, and the retail assistant robot is expected to be well-received.

ATR sells a range of robots, and according to the Director of ATR Intelligent Robotics and Communication Laboratories, Norihiro Hagita, the company is aiming to develop robots that can serve people with special needs, such as the elderly.

The system is being tested until March 2010 at the Apita-Seikadai supermarket in Kyoto.



More information: In Japanese: robot.watch.impress.co.jp/docs/20091214_335825.html

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