

## Voice command-based robot feeding arm unveiled (w/ video)

March 22 2011, by Katie Gatto

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Eating a good meal is one of the few things in life that is both absolutely necessary, and extremely pleasurable at the same time. But what would you do if you could not pick up the knife and fork to eat with? You would have to rely on a caregiver to help you feed yourself. Up until now that caregiver has been a human, but what if it could be a robot?

No, I'm not playing with you. Someone has developed a [feeding](#) robot. That someone is an undergraduate student named Isao Wakabayashi, who studies at Chukyo University in [Japan](#).

The robot works simply enough. It detects the food on your plate, and feeds you what you want to eat. How does it know what you want to eat? Simple, you tell it. The robot has the ability to understand a limited set

of [voice commands](#). So, if you tell it to feed you the broccoli, it will pick up the green stalk and bring it right to your mouth.

The body of the robot was made from a Rascal [robot](#) set by [Robix](#), but Isao Wakabayashi wrote the image processing software that allows the system to tell meatloaf from pudding, and this is the [innovation](#) that really sets this feeding bot apart. Companies, such as the Japanese Secom, have been selling feeding robots as feeding assistants for the differently abled, for several years now, but the voice system will help to make the robots more user friendly, as most current models cannot be used independently unless the user can operate a joy stick.

No word yet about when this product will come to market, or at what cost.

**More information:** via [IEEE Spectrum](#)

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