

New Japanese robot dog sniffs out smelly feet

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Hana-chan, a Japanese robot dog with an odour sensor, will offer an honest appraisal of the smell of your feet, barking if they honk a bit and keeling over if they emit a putrid pong

Do your feet smell bad? Just a little or absolutely awful?

If you don't dare to ask a friend, one Japanese start-up might have the answer with a new robot dog that will sniff your feet and give you a pitilessly honest verdict—even fainting if the stink is especially strong.

Malodorous feet can be socially awkward in Japan where shoes are removed at the entrance to every home.

Hana-chan—a play on the Japanese word for "nose" and a common girl's nickname—is a helpful little robot mutt who will bark if she detects moderately whiffy toes, but will keel over if the pong is particularly pungent.

The 15-centimetre (6-inch) dog, equipped with an odour detection sensor for a nose, also sprays air freshener to resolve the situation if the aroma is unbearable.

Manufacturers Next Technology created the robot in response to a request from a man who was desperate to know if he had a problem.

"He told us his daughter had said his [feet](#) were smelly... But he didn't want to know how bad the odour was because he would feel hurt," employee Kimika Tsuji said.

"That's why we developed this cute robot."

Tsuji said smells are becoming more of an issue in Japan, a place where subjecting others to your honking body can even be considered harassment.

In July, Konica Minolta, a Japanese tech company, began pre-sales of a pocket-sized device that allows people to self-test three categories of smell on a scale from 0 to 100.

Next Technology plans to start selling the [robot](#) dog early next year, with a price tag of more than 100,000 yen (\$9,280).

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