

Would you trust a robot to mind your child?

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With an anticipated 39.5 million domestic/household robots expected to be in our homes by 2021 (IFR, 2018), Cranfield University is calling for members of the public to comment on a survey launched to identify people's views on robot ethics.

Dr Sarah Fletcher, Head of Cranfield University's Industrial Psychology and Human Factors research group who are managing the [survey](#), said: "With the increasing ways in which robots and robotic systems are impacting on our everyday lives, it is important that we have ethical standards that are informed by public opinion.

"While some of the scenarios in the survey may seem futuristic and far-fetched, they are potentially just around the corner as we have already seen a rapid rise in [robot technology](#) in domestic settings. Who would have thought 10 years ago that a robot could be vacuuming your floor or mowing your lawn?"

The survey explores how comfortable people would be with various robot roles and responsibilities in six different scenarios to enable designers, developers and manufacturers to understand how people feel about accepting robots and AI into their everyday lives.

Respondents of the survey so far have revealed that people remain sceptical about the roles they would feel comfortable handing over to domestic robots, with more than 60% believing there should be a limit to what a domestic robot should be allowed to do.

M. Osman Tokhi, Professor at London South Bank University and Chair of the Ethics of Robots and Autonomous Systems sub-committee, said: "The robotics technology is advancing at a fast pace and as robots will continue to share the same environment with us in various sectors of life, new challenges and ethical issues are expected to emerge.

"We continue to address these issues and challenges within the robot standardisation work to inform the designers, developers, and users of robots, and the results of the survey will form valuable input to our work."

The scenarios in the survey cover:

- Robots used for childcare in the home
- Surgical robots in a hospital
- Domestic servant robots in a care home
- Workplace assistant robots in a factory
- Robots in a war/conflict zone
- Companion robots

The findings will help inform the Ethics of Robots and Autonomous Systems Sub-Committee at BSI, when they review the world's first standard for the ethical design and application of robots and robotic systems; BS 8611:2016.

Nick Fleming, Head of Manufacturing at BSI, said: "Robots and AI are no longer confined to the pages of science fiction and as they become reality, the ethical boundaries of how we interact with them needs to be defined. This is why we published the world's first standard on [robot ethics](#), BS 8611, three years ago.

"However, as our lives with robots becomes more intertwined and technology advances, our standards must evolve. The input from this survey will provide invaluable insight into how the public currently feels about robotics and AI as we revise this standard."

Members of the public are invited to complete the [survey](#) to give their views.

Provided by Cranfield University

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