

Mini 'Pepper' robots start new jobs in Taiwan

October 6 2016



Cathay Life Insurance, Taiwan's biggest insurer, introduced its first Pepper into its Taipei branch on October 6, 2016

A shiny new cohort joined the workforce in Taiwan Thursday—a troop of mini robots all going by the name "Pepper", enlisted to entertain customers and give them the hard sell.

Chinese-speaking Pepper was introduced into two banks and an

insurance company in the capital Taipei, dancing to music, playing with children in lobbies and leading staff aerobics sessions.

The pint-size white automatons are designed to flatter queueing customers, declaring: "It's my honour to serve you".

Skilled in public relations, they guess clients' ages at far lower than reality.

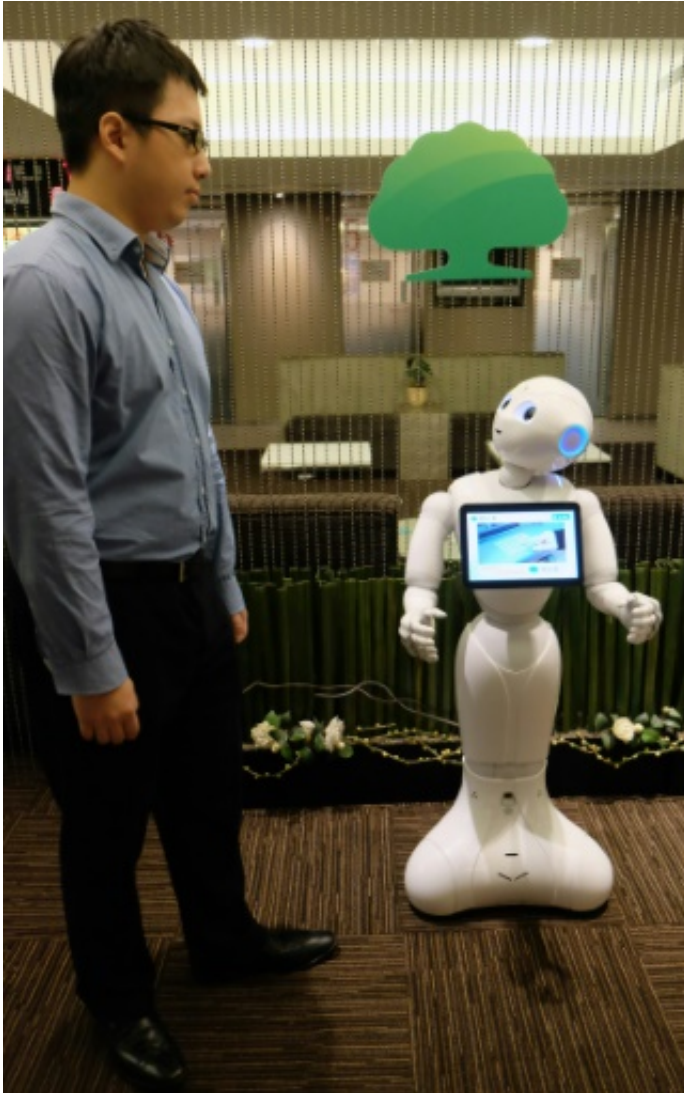
Then they move in for the kill, providing information on financial products and encouraging customers to go to company websites and sales staff for information.

Cathay Life Insurance, Taiwan's biggest insurer, introduced its first Pepper into its Taipei branch Thursday.

The firm plans to have 10 robots island-wide, but stressed that Pepper is meant to supplement its human colleagues, not sideline them.

"Pepper's job is to greet customers and introduce products to make the wait for services less boring," said Rachel Wang, the insurer's executive vice president.

"We hope it can do more in the future, but it definitely won't replace our staff," she said.



Cathay Life Insurance has stressed that Pepper is meant to supplement its human colleagues, not sideline them

Standing 120-centimetres (four-foot) tall, the [robot](#) was first unveiled by Japanese mobile carrier SoftBank in 2014, whose French arm Aldebaran developed the technology.

Pepper has a wide-eyed face perched on top of a white plastic body, with rollers and what looks like a tablet computer on its chest showing its

name.

The robots have already been introduced into other workplaces around the world, including in Japan and France.

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Citation: Mini 'Pepper' robots start new jobs in Taiwan (2016, October 6) retrieved 17 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-10-mini-pepper-robots-jobs-taiwan.html>

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