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She lives! Well kind of: here's the very life-like "Repliee Q1"

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TAKEAWAYS

- This year's international conference on robotics showcases some truly remarkable technology. A "robot in every home" is not that far-fetched. Robotic technology is evolving so quickly it's kind of scary.

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A Robot in Every Home A Look at the "International Conference for Robotics and Automation"



By Gary Picariello Published April 16, 2007 Click to contact me

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Imagine a robot that not only can pop the top off a bottle of ice-cold beer and then pour it in a glass without making a head of foam. A robot that can render assistance in an emergency or natural disaster. A robot that can perform simple surgery. A robot that can even enjoy sexual relations.

The stuff of Hollywood fantasy? A page ripped out of a comic book or sci-fi novel? Not by a long shot.

That's the word coming from researchers and scientists attending the International Conference for Robotics and Automation (www.icra07.org) which is taking place in Rome this week and runs from Tuesday through Friday.

President elect of the conference Professor Bruno Siciliano says it's only a matter of time -- actually about 20 years, maybe less -- before a robot in every home is as common as a car in every garage. In fact, Siciliano was quoted in the Sunday edition of the Italian newspaper Il Messaggero (www.ilmessaggero.it) that in some countries like South Korea and Japan, the robotic time-line has been narrowed to about 2010. In case you weren't counting, that's only three years away. Forgot about the cute little "robotic dog" that SONY debuted back in 2001. What's debuting in labs now would even give Boris Karloff a run for his money.

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Consider the following robotic breakthroughs:

- Already in the research and development phase is a domestic robot being readied in Japan that can handle light housework. - Another "droid" at the conference that can perform -- to the millimeter in detail - some simple surgical operations. - A "robot dancer" that can mimic the complex human movements of ballet dancer (minus the leaping in the air) and has done so already in a study conducted at the University of Tokyo. - or how about South Korea's "Repliee Q1" an amazingly lifelike female droid that can move her eyes, hands, and arms and is programmed to replicate human breathing as well. (Repliee Q1 has already been replaced by Repliee Q2 which can do even more complex facial movements including some phrases).

Meanwhile Kim-Jong Hwan -- the director of the Intelligent Robot Research Center (www.tamagawa.jp/en) in Seoul, Republic of South Korea - has created the most fantastic robot of all: a female robot "companion" capable of having sexual relations. Before you brush off the thought and compare this droid to a blow-up doll with a wind-up mouth, think again. Hwan's robo-friend can not only have sex but can "feel" like having it as well. Thanks to a secret "artificial chromosome" that can imitate human DNA sequences.

Just what the world of science needs: a female robot that can have a headache.

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04/20/2007

**Donna:** Wow! Unbelievable and fascinating AND I want a male robot! I wonder if they have one of those in the works! It can do all those chores my husband always puts off (and keep me company when he deploys, just kidding! :)

**Carol**

04/17/2007

Now what is wrong with those researchers? Why would they make a robot to handle "light" housework? It's the heavy stuff the dang robot ought to be doing! This is an exciting article- I love reading this stuff though it still seems like sci fi to me. BTW my article rater is broken! I tried to give you a 5 and your article stayed at 3. :( Maybe it's something about my son's computer.

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