

# The Asian Reporter

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Fukushima farmers appeal with live bull

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'Transformers' shoots for delicate balance

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The maturation of Michelle Wie

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## Woman or machine? New robots look creepily human



**REALISTIC ROBOT.** Android robot Kodomoroid speaks during a press event at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation Miraikan in Tokyo. The latest creations from Japanese robotics expert Hiroshi Ishiguro are a female-announcer robot called Otonaroid, a girl called Kodomoroid, and Telenoid, a mannequin head with pointed arms that serves as a cuddly companion. The robots with silicon skin and artificial muscles were shown to reporters at the Miraikan museum. Kodomoroid read the news without stumbling once and regurgitated complex tongue-twisters glibly. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)

By Yuri Kageyama  
AP Business Writer

**T**OKYO — The new robot guides at a Tokyo museum look so eerily human and speak so smoothly they almost outdo people — almost.

Japanese robotics expert Hiroshi Ishiguro, an Osaka University professor, says they will be useful for research on how people interact with robots and on what differentiates the person from the machine.

“Making androids is about exploring what it means to be human,” he told reporters, “examining the question of what

is emotion, what is awareness, what is thinking.”

In a demonstration, the remote-controlled machines moved their pink lips in time to a voice-over, twitched their eyebrows, blinked, and swayed their heads from side to side. They stay seated but can move their hands.

In a clear triumph, Kodomoroid read the news without stumbling once and recited complex tongue-twisters glibly.

The robot, designed with a girlish appearance, can use a variety of voices, such as a deep male voice one minute and a squeaky girly voice the next. The speech can be input by text, giving them perfect

articulation, according to Ishiguro.

There were some glitches — such as the lips not moving at all while the robot spoke, or the Otonaroid announcer robot staying silent twice when asked to introduce itself.

But glitches are common with robots because they are delicate gadgetry sensitive to their environment.

Kodomoroid and the woman robot Otonaroid were joined at the demonstration by the minimally designed Telenoid, a mannequin head with pointed arms that serves as a cuddly companion.

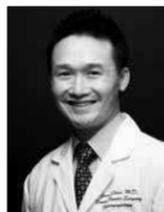
The two life-size robots, which have silicon skin and artificial muscles, are on

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