

Relative Comfort of People with Acting Robots by Theatre and Technology Experience

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ABSTRACT

Robots of varying kinds are appearing with increasing frequency in all manner of staged theatrical productions (see [1] and [2] for examples). While the individual productions are often greeted with positive receptions from their audiences, it is difficult to determine how the general public may react to the very idea of robots on stage acting alongside humans. While robots are growing more capable of the task, people are often hesitant at introducing technology into older art forms.

One way to gauge opinions is to poll social networks. A short survey was linked to on the social networking sites Facebook, Google+ and Reddit. Using self-reported ratings of involvement with theatre and involvement with technology, respondents were separated into one of four groups: those involved with both theatre and technology (N=53), just theatre (N=19), just technology (N=49), and neither (N=1). They answered the question “How comfortable do you feel with the idea of robot actors performing alongside human actors on the stage?” on a scale from 1 to 5. The percentage of comfortable respondents (answering 4 or 5) was 47% for both fields, 67% for just technology, and 15% for just theatre.

BODY

People involved with both theatre & technology are more comfortable with acting robots than just theatre people, but less so than techies.

REFERENCES

- [1] D. V. Lu. Ontology of robot theatre. In *Proceedings of the workshop Robotics and Performing Arts: Reciprocal Influences*, ICRA, 2012.
- [2] D. V. Lu and W. D. Smart. Human-robot interactions as theatre. In *RO-MAN 2011*, pages 473–478. IEEE, 2011.

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