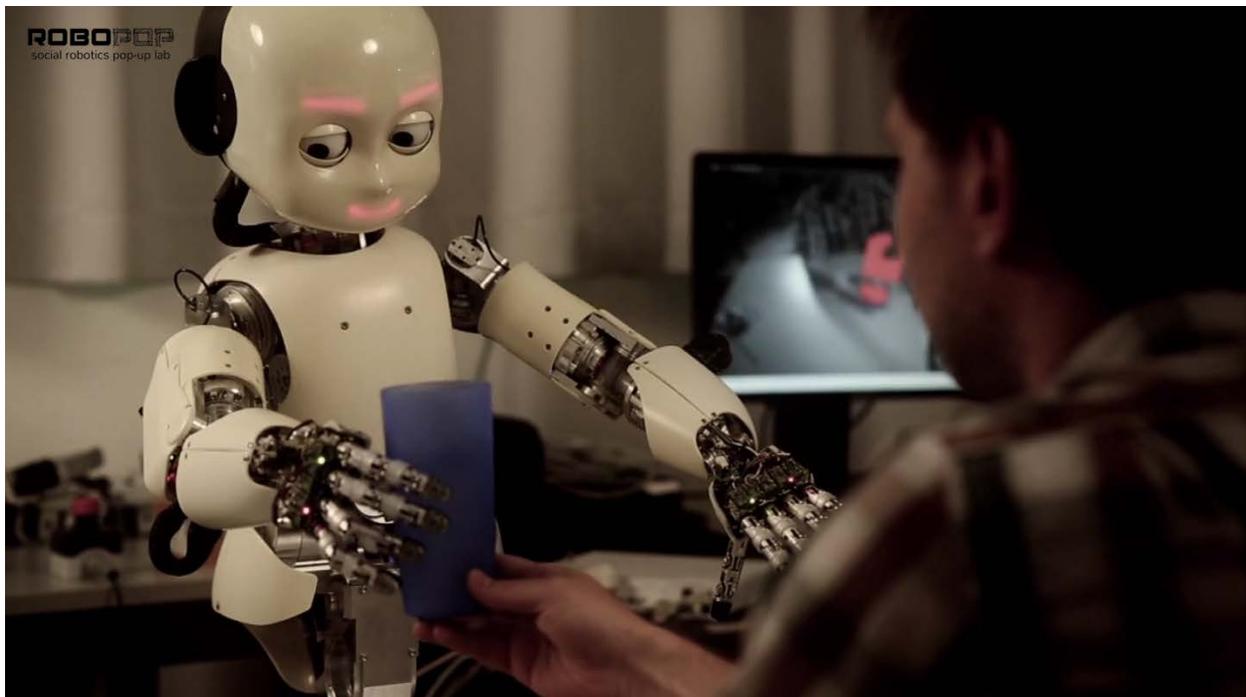


Press release

# Social Robotics Pop-up Lab instigates societal debate on how robots can improve our lives

Multidisciplinary meeting point where all the knowledge and stakeholders in social robots collide, collaborate and co-create



**AUGUST 13, 2015 – AMSTERDAM**

**On the evening of September 8<sup>th</sup> 2015, the Social Robotics Pop-up Lab will take place at A Lab, a lab where creativity and tech meet based in Amsterdam. This event aims to instigate the debate on how people *want* and how social robotics *can* improve people's lives. The event combines technical, business and ethical perspectives and will host i.e. executives, startups, robot manufacturers, robot hobbyists, researchers and academics.**

## **Bringing together stakeholders**

The initiative came from Johan Hoorn, director of research group SELEMCA at VU Amsterdam, and KPMG Innovative Startups. Social robotics are coming, but according to

Hoorn there is demand for this kind of event: *"The Social Robotics Pop-up Lab is a multidisciplinary meeting point where all the knowledge and stakeholders in social robots collide, collaborate and co-create."* Many prototypes of social robots have entered the market but the big breakthrough has not seen the light yet. Hoorn: *"We cannot make robots work without people working together at different places, with different people, and different information influx, continuously."*

### **The potential of social robotics**

It is with no doubt that robotics have potential. KPMG Partner Eric Wesselman explains why: *"Robotics will herald a new era of applied disruptive technology. It will change the way we live, we do business, the way we will impact our natural environment and how we explore the universe."* Hoorn: *"Social robots fill in where workforce falls short. Where we do not have enough people to support others (e.g., health and education), robots that behave in a socially acceptable way can be of great help."*

### **Instigating the debate**

However, skepticism has drawn a veil over the development of social robotics. Critics question if there is market demand, people are afraid of losing their jobs and elderly might not want to have a robot in their home. Next to showing the potential application of robotics, this is where the Social Robotics Pop-up Lab instigates the debate. Desmond Germans, the founder of Tinybots, explains: *"Social Robotics is a brand new field among Psychology, Sociology, Biology and Artificial Intelligence. How does a robot speak and understand? How should a robot interpret emotions? Moral dilemmas? Practically, Social Robotics is about finding and building state-of-the-art speech and animation systems, and test them in real-life situations, like healthcare."*

### **Carebot Alice**

One of the main acts of the Social Robotics Pop-up Lab is carebot Alice, invented by research group SELEMCA of which Hoorn and Germans are part. Alice wants to prove that carebots can help elderly which is shown beautifully in the documentary "Ik ben Alice". Here, Alice is placed in the homes of three retired women and followed for a while. Alice shows compassion and offers the women companionship. It wants to show that robots do not necessarily replace jobs but they can be of great help.

### **Tickets**

Ticket sales for the Social Robotics Pop-up Lab open today. Next to carebot Alice participants get access to an expo with many more (social) robots and a societal debate led by Johan Hoorn. Tickets cost 15 euros and are available via [www.popup-lab.com](http://www.popup-lab.com). Special tickets with a dinner with the inventors of the social robots are available for a premium, which will take place after the event.

### **About KPMG Innovative Startups**

KPMG Nederland is part of the international KPMG network, renowned globally in Audit, Tax and Advisory. KPMG Innovative Startups bridges the gap between corporates and startups and strives for a broad technological knowledge base and network. As robotics

is a prominent and promising field of technology, KPMG aims to connect people in this industry to stimulate cooperation and development.

### **End of Press release**

Note for the editorial team

The Social Robotics Pop-up Lab is organized by A Lab, KPMG and the VU Amsterdam. More information and the latest updates about the program can be found [here](#). Tickets can be purchased [here](#). In case there is any way you want to contribute, please contact the organizers via the [website](#).

Please contact Mitchell Weijerman via [Weijerman.Mitchell@KPMG.nl](mailto:Weijerman.Mitchell@KPMG.nl) in case you have questions regarding this press release.