

Japanese Speed-Dating Event Has Potential Matches Sitting in Silence While Robots Do the Talking for Them

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Based on the premise that people who are having trouble finding a romantic partner probably lack the confidence and experience to properly interact with a potential match, a Tokyo-based robotics association recently hosted a speed-dating party where human participants sat in silence across a table from each other while tiny robots spoke on their behalf.



The bizarre event took place in Tokyo, Japan, and was organized by the Contents innovation Program (CiP) Association, which specializes in developing AI, robotics and other technology, according to The Japan News. In a series of videos posted on YouTube, potential matches can be seen sitting across from each other, but instead of talking, they just sit there quietly with their gazes focused on two little robots placed on the table between them. They just sit in silence while these robotic assistants ask each other questions and provide answers, based on information pre-loaded into their system from a 45-question survey participants completed prior to the event.

The proxy conversation between potential matches lasted about three minutes, and at the end participants had the option to decide whether they wanted to also engage in direct conversation with the person sitting across from them, or not. According to Japanese news sources, many of the 28 men and women who took part in this unique speed-dating event were impressed by their robotic assistants, saying that because the robots spoke on their behalf, they were able to focus on listening and learning about the other person.

"The person didn't seem like my usual type, but as our robots talked, I was able to see that we have many things in common, so I'd like to go on a date next time," one participant said.

"It was easy because the robot explained everything about me, and I didn't have to say anything during multiple interactions," another person said.

Apparently, the robots made it easier for participants to have their interests and qualities presented to their potential matches without coming off as dull or self-centered. The robots, on the other hand could be excused for talking up the people they were representing.

"Especially in Japanese society, where humility is always considered a virtue and people are always conscious of the fact that the things they love might be seen as dull and pointless by others, many singles are reluctant to self-promote themselves, and having a robotic wingman was likely a great help," SoraNews24's Casey Baseel explained.

The tiny robots used in this innovative speed-dating party were developed by Japanese media company Cyber Agent in collaboration with Japanese tech giant Sharp. They reportedly helped form four new couples at this event alone, so we probably haven't seen the last of them.

Romance by proxy seems to be trendy in Japan these days. Just last week we wrote about a unique service that specializes in confessing to clients' romantic crushes on their behalf, sparing them the stressful experience of having to do it themselves.

(520 words)

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Content: What is the merit of this dating system, especially in Japan?

Activity: 1. Please talk about this dating system. (now)
2. Write your opinion about this system within 100 words. (today at home)