**ON THESE PAGES, please provide notation that shows evidence of your thinking, questioning and connecting WHILE you read (text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world), along with your best attempts at figuring out unknown words in context. Then, complete the Food for Thought section at the end.**

**Sex robots will be 'detrimental' to society, ethicists say**

**Researchers argue widepread use of humanoid sex bots could hurt men, women and children**

By Lauren O'Neil, [CBC News](http://www.cbc.ca/news/cbc-news-online-news-staff-list-1.1294364) Posted: Sep 17, 2015 12:45 AM ET Last Updated: Sep 17, 2015 11:27 AM ET

Once confined to the worlds of [science fiction](http://io9.com/344123/hottest-sex-robots-of-science-fiction) and future-porn, humanoid sex robots are making their way to market fast — so fast that some scholars say we haven't had time as a society to prepare.

Dr. Kathleen Richardson is a robot anthropologist and senior research fellow in the ethics of robotics at England's De Montfort University.

She, alongside Swedish cognitive scientist Dr. Erik Billing, is spearheading an initiative aimed at stopping the development of sex robots (or at the very least, ensuring that they're developed ethically) for the purported sake of women, children and men everywhere.

"Over the last decades, an increasing effort from both academia and industry has gone into the development of sex robots – that is, machines in the form of women or children for use as sex objects, substitutes for human partners or prostitutes," writes Richardson on the newly-launched [Campaign Against Sex Robots](https://campaignagainstsexrobots.wordpress.com/) website.

Arguing that such robots are "harmful" and that they could have a "detrimental effect on society," she stresses the need for an organized approach in addressing the ethical issues surrounding sex-bots and their production.

"We are not proposing to extend rights to robots. We do not see robots as conscious entities," the campaign website cautions. "We propose instead that robots are a product of human consciousness and creativity and human power relationships are reflected in the production, design and proposed uses of these robots. As a result, we oppose any efforts to develop robots that will contribute to gender inequalities in society."

The campaign itself is hinged on ideas in a paper Richardson presented last week at the [20th annual Ethicomp conference](http://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/research-faculties-and-institutes/technology/centre-for-computing-and-social-responsibility/ethicomp2015.aspx) in Leicester, an event that serves as a forum for academics to discuss ethical issues surrounding computers.

Her paper, entitled [The Asymmetrical 'Relationship': Parallels Between Prostitution and the Development of Sex Robots](https://campaignagainstsexrobots.wordpress.com/the-asymmetrical-relationship-parallels-between-prostitution-and-the-development-of-sex-robots/), can be viewed in full on the Campaign Against Sex Robots website, along with a summary of its main points.

Richardson argues, among other things, the development of sex robots further objectifies women and children, will reduce human empathy that could only be developed in a mutual relationship, and build upon ideas present in prostitution regarding the inferiority of women and children. She challenges the notion sex robots will have a positive benefit to society or reduce sexual exploitation and violence towards prostituted persons.

A hashtag coinciding with the project (#CampaignAgainstSexRobots) is being used by some online to mock the ideas put forth by Richardson, Billings and their supporters.

"Feminists are terrified men will have no use for women," [wrote](https://twitter.com/NorBdelta/status/644287852843544576) one Twitter user. "Stop the robot sex industry. It's a real campaign... and great potential TV show," another [said](https://twitter.com/JeffLi_NC/status/644158422275985408).

Others are similarly making light of the issue, referencing fictional works like Futurama and the film [Ex Machina](http://www.cbc.ca/news/arts/ex-machina-and-getting-over-our-fears-about-artificial-intelligence-1.3047995). Some have even gone so far as to call the threat of robot sex workers "[imaginary](https://twitter.com/enbrown/status/643869134569242624)."

And yet, as [the BBC notes](http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-34118482), there have already been thousands of pre-orders for what's been billed as "the world's first sex robot."

Roxxxy is a human-sized, interactive sex robot developed by artificial intelligence engineer Douglas Hines through his New Jersey-based company, [True Companion](http://www.truecompanion.com/home.html).

In development since 2010, Roxxxy is set to roll out to consumers later this year for about $7,000 US — though some are skeptical about whether or not this will happen given how advanced the technology behind the doll appears to be.

According to the company's website, Roxxxy "can carry on a discussion and expresses her love to you. She can talk to you, listen to you and feel your touch."

"We are not supplanting the wife or trying to replace a girlfriend. This is a solution for people who are between relationships or someone who has lost a spouse," Hines [told The BBC](http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-34118482) this week in response to the Campaign Against Sex Robots."The physical act of sex will only be a small part of the time you spend with a sex robot - the majority of time will be spent socialising and interacting."

Whether or not Roxxxy makes her way into thousands of homes next year or not, some believe that robotic sex dolls are inevitable at some point in the future.

British computer programming expert David Levy claimed early this century that human-machine relationships would be commonplace by 2050.

"Love with robots will be as normal as love with other humans, while the number of sexual acts and lovemaking positions commonly practiced between humans will be extended, as robots teach more than is in all of the world's published sex manuals combined," he wrote in his [2007 book](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/02/books/review/Henig-t.html) Love and Sex with Robots.

Much of the conversation surrounding sex robots to date (and there's been a lot of it) has revolved around the [technological aspects](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2009/sep/16/sex-robots-david-levy-loebner) of developing artificially intelligent companions.

A renewed focus in new outlets this week on the ethics of getting intimate with machines has shown many online to be more excited about the prospect of sex robots than wary — though some of the comments are likely being made in jest.

In [an interview with CNBC](http://www.cnbc.com/2015/09/15/sex-robots-campaign.html) published Monday, Billing didn't outright decry the development of such products on moral grounds. His concerns have more to do with the unknown consequences of widespread human-sex bot relationships on society at large.

"There are a lot of worries that we're introducing this technology on a large scale without looking at what consequences there are on human-to-human relationships," he said, pointing to an already existing global trend towards greater isolation.

"Introducing sex robots that could replace partners is the extreme of this trend, where we start to objectify our human relationships," he continued. "We're on the brink of these applications being sold in stores. In five to 10 years time this will be a common product in any random sex store."

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:**

**Ignore your personal views on this one just for a minute. In the space below, please indicate TWO POSITIVES about the advent of “humanoid sex bots”, followed by TWO NEGATIVES (Analyzing/Evaluating). Then, explain YOUR views, providing plenty of support (Evaluating)**