

LOVOT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

Updated November 23, 2023



Introduction

The UBC IDEA lab is thrilled to present a summary of our recent events in our community. The primary aim of our community events was to engage Canadian community members to learn about the new social robot LOVOTS for joy and social connections.

We are proud to announce that between the LOVOTs arrival on July 7th, 2023 and to the creation of this report, we have held 15+ community events. We have also participated in national and local media interviews to reach the public widely.

About the Project

This study explores how LOVOT may bring joy and social connections to older adults in Canadian long-term care homes.

Project Objectives:

1. Investigate the experiences and perceptions of using the social robot LOVOT among older adults in Canadian long-term care homes.
2. Examine LOVOT's potential in addressing loneliness and boredom in older adults residing in long-term care homes in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Canada.
3. Collaborate with Singapore and Hong Kong in a three-country study to expand the understanding of LOVOT's impact.

Significance of the Project

This is the **first** study of LOVOTs in Canada to understand Canadian's attitudes and acceptance toward these robots.

The study will provide insights into the facilitators, barriers, and psychological benefits of having social robots in Canadian long-term care settings. The cross-cultural comparison of three countries, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Canada, will yield valuable knowledge to inform future research and practice.



Timeline of Community Events

May 2023

- UBC Design for People Showcase (poster)

July 2023

- Dementia Friendly Café
- Villa Cathay Long Term Care Home

LOVOTs arrive in
Vancouver

August 2023

- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
- South Vancouver Neighbourhood House
- Nikkei Home Iki Iki Program
- West Vancouver Seniors Activity Centre
- Willow Bean Café (Vancouver General Hospital)
- UBC Nursing Class

September 2023

- Marpole Oakridge Family Place
- Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House
- Willow Bean Café (Vancouver General Hospital)
- Nikkei Cultural Centre and Museum
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Health Fair
- Media day (Global News, CTV, CBC, Fairchild, OMNI, and more)
- Research at Amica West Vancouver

October 2023

- Research at Amica West Vancouver
- Willow Bean Café (Vancouver General Hospital)
- Dialogue for Aging Seminar (demo)
- AgeWell Conference (poster)
- Putting Patients First Conference (demo)
- Canadian Association of Gerontology Conference (poster)

**We have even more events planned for
November 2023 and beyond!**

Community Events Highlights



Engaging Presentation

Many older adults were very excited to learn about the LOVOTs and asked questions about the robots and our research.

Activity with the LOVOTs

For some events, we included a structured activity. One successful activity was the **clothes-making workshop**. Here, older adults helped create outfits for our LOVOTs. Another activity we had was a **quiz game** with fun prizes.

Photo Time

Many attendees wanted to take pictures with the LOVOTs. They picked them up, hugged them, and took photos of and with the robots. Many people wanted to show their relatives that they met the robots at the event.



Dementia Friendly Cafe (part 1)



The first public event with the LOVOT robots!



Above:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/jZ8MV17EkJ4>

Right:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/DSDgv2qe1us>

Dementia Friendly Cafe (part 2)



Villa Cathay Care Home



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Zlug43bOq0>

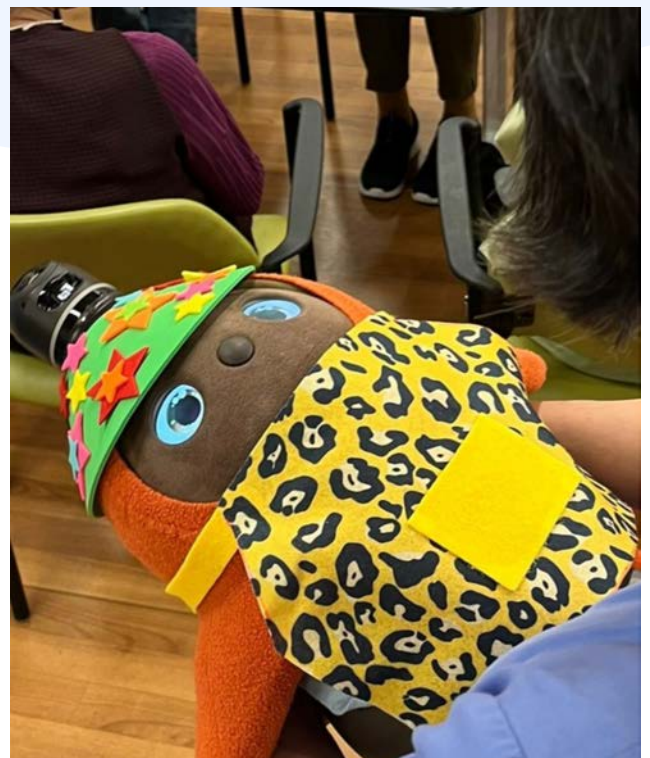
Clothes-Making Workshop

This clothes-making session was very well-received by our attendees! Using fabric, glue, stencils, and scissors, the participants created custom outfits for our LOVOTs, Kiwi and Mango.



Beyond the mere act of dressing up the LOVOTs, this activity became a way for the participants to show their creativity. They also talked about memories that were important to them.

This outfit was one of the most popular outfits created out our event! It was created by our program participants. Some called it the “Osaka lady” outfit!



Marpole Oakridge Family Place

All eyes were on the UBC IDEA Lab's LOVOT Robot, Kiwi, at Marpole Oakridge Family Place last week, as participants from the Senior's program and the Children's Drop-In program met and interacted with Kiwi for the first time!



Kiwi was like a celebrity! The participants of the Senior's program took many pictures of themselves with Kiwi in their arms.



The Senior's program coordinator, Carol (left), IDEA Lab's family partner, Lily (center) and Andrea from MOFP (right) snapping photos with Kiwi after the LOVOT presentation.



Seminar at Nikkei Cultural Centre



The LOVOT robot team went to Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Center to conduct a seminar on healthy aging and dementia. From left to right: Hossein, Helen, Hiro, and Bubli.



Hiro (left) and Bubli (right) presenting information on dementia and dementia research in English and Japanese to a group of approximately 40 seniors, staff, and volunteers.

More community events!



Lots of research-focused questions and engagement from the community



The LOVOT robot engaged adults in conversations around language diversity, hearing accessibility, and gender engagement.



“Cute!”

Lots of laughter and joy!



“I want to take it home with me!”

“Lovable”



While admiration was unanimous, some participants expressed that the robot was a bit heavy and noisy.

Media



CBC News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Zlug43bOq0>

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the UBC Media Relations team and Amica, the LOVOT Social Robot Study has reached over 6 billion views across 60+ media postings across Canada. Major news outlets in Canada showcasing the project include CBC News, CTV News, Global News, and Fairchild.

View some postings here:

- [CBC News](#)
- [Global News](#)
- [CTV News](#)



UBC News
Can 'social robots' be used in elder care?
Learn how these robots interact with older adults and what this groundbreaking UBC study led by Dr. Lillian Hung reveals about the future of...
6 days ago

CTV News Vancouver
Why 'social robots' are being introduced at a B.C. seniors' home | CTV News
A facility in West Vancouver has partnered with a UBC researcher on a project that's introducing seniors to "social robots."
4 days ago

Global News
Can cute AI robots help with aging and dementia? UBC study seeks to find out
Kiwi and Mango are small and plush, resemble a cross between Teletubbies and WALL-E, and have technology that allows them to move, learn,...
4 days ago

CBC
Cuddly robots charm B.C. seniors as researchers study benefits of AI pals in elder care
Researchers at the University of British Columbia are pairing Japanese social robots with seniors to see how they interact and examine the...
4 days ago

A vertical strip of four small images showing the social robots in various settings: one being held by a person, one sitting on a desk, one being interacted with by a senior, and one being held by a senior.

Academic Conferences

Our team attended several academic conference, symposiums, and events to showcase our research with the LOVOT robots. These opportunities allowed us to connect with researchers, health care practitioners, and leadership about how social robots like LOVOT can be brought into Canadian health care contexts.

Oct. 12

Skunkworks: Hacking Aging by the Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation

Demo in Vancouver, Canada

Oct. 24

Putting Patients First Conference

Demo in Vancouver, Canada

Oct. 25

AGE-WELL Annual Conference

Poster in Toronto, Canada

Oct. 27

Canadian Association on Gerontology 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting

Poster in Toronto, Canada

Nov. 10

Gerontological Society of America 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting

Poster in Tampa, USA

Nov. 20

UBC Aging Better Together Symposium

Oral presentation in Vancouver, Canada

Mango and I have made so many new friends in Canada and the USA!



The Team

Dr. Lillian Hung is the principal investigator the LOVOT Social Robot Study and the lead of the UBC IDEA Lab. She is the Canada Research Chair in Senior Care, an Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia School of Nursing.

Hiro Ito is the project manager of the LOVOT Social Robot Study and a MSc student in the UBC School of Population and Public Health. She oversees the project with Joey.

Joey Wong is a PhD student at UBC School of Nursing and a Research Project Manager.

Adam Lin is a nursing student at UBC.

Farideh Faridnia is a retired physician (GP) from Iran.

Hannah Fong is a nursing student at the University of Alberta and a volunteer with the IDEA lab.

Helen Banh is a recent UBC graduate with a bachelor's degree in chemical biology.

Hossein Mousavi is a family partner of the UBC IDEA Lab and a retired manager from Iran.

Jason Fu is an undergraduate student at UBC School of Biomedical Engineering and a Research Assistant at UBC IDEA Lab.

Karen Wong is a PhD candidate at UBC School of Social Work and a registered social worker in geriatrics.

Katrina Yuen is an integrated sciences student at UBC.

Lily Wong is a family partner of the UBC IDEA Lab and is involved with several research projects, including the LOVOT and TV projects.

Mario Gregorio is a retired data analyst from a telecommunications company who is a passionate advocate to create awareness and help educate the public to reduce stigma about dementia.

Maryam Anwer is a BSc student from the University of Toronto completing her double major in Biology and Psychology.

Olivia Du is a kinesiology student and the Knowledge Translation lead with the IDEA lab.

Sahar Allen is a recent UBC Alumni with a BSc in Behavioural Neuroscience and currently volunteers with the LOVOT project.

Yumna Khan is a research assistant with the IDEA lab and an undergraduate student in pharmaceutical sciences.

Mango (orange) and **Kiwi** (green) are LOVOT social robots from Japan.

This report was made by Hiro, with design support from Katrina and Helen.
For any inquiries, please contact Hiro by email at hiro.ito@ubc.ca

