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Improving Public Engagement with Ethical Complexities of Assistive Robots

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Abstract

In order for society to fully realise the potential benefits offered by assistive robots, a number of ethical challenges must firstly be addressed. Crucially, it is important to enhance public understanding of the ways in which societal ethics can be used to formulate and guide the preferred behaviours of these robots, particularly in scenarios which are ethically complex. Furthermore, it is also important to ensure that the voices of end users are heard, and their input used in the development process. In this paper we present EETAS, a methodology for using structured workshops to improve public understanding of assistive robot ethical complexities. We also present DEETAS, a further digital-based and design-centric methodology for engaging potential end-users who may be reluctant to take part in collaborative workshops. In support of these two methodologies we present the findings of an initial pilot study and usability study, showing an indicative trend that these processes are effective in engaging users and enhancing public understanding of the ethical complexities inherent in assistive robots.

Keywords

- **Assistive robots**
- **Ethics**
- **Design**

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