

By [Gabr2008](#), Science News Editor

[Android-like Robot Soon to Talk to Us](#)

European scientists teach robots how to speak

According to University of Hertfordshire professors Chrystopher Nehaniv and Kerstin Dautenhahn, from the School of Computer Science, in the close future we may find ourselves surrounded by robots bearing human features. The first step in developing such machines is the robot created by the University of Plymouth, which will be presented on ITALK or Integration and Transfer of Action and Knowledge in Robots convention that has started on Saturday, March 1. The iCub robot is a rough representation of a human baby towering one meter high, currently being studied in the hope that language skills will be implemented in less than a year. By the end of the special teaching program, the iCub should be able to speak to humans much in the same way babies communicate to their adult parents. Additionally, its capabilities will involve logical activities such as recognizing and arranging certain objects, organizing cups of wooden blocks. In the second part of this experiment, iCub will have to name the used objects or the actions that it is executing at a given moment in time. With the use of basic learning techniques, the robot will eventually learn individually and socially and acquire language abilities that determines the development of cognitive abilities. Professor Nehaniv argues that this is the only way robots will ever be able to learn, since program lines wouldn't be very efficient while implying the learning of basic grammar structures. The University of Hertfordshire has been conducting enough research in the scientific and technological problems related to the development of future interactive robotic systems, that Europe can easily secure the leadership of this field for the next decade or so. iCub is only the first step into creating companion robots that could interact at a linguistic level with humans, and is expected to become functional somewhere in the course of this year.