

2 October 2008

By: Tudor Vieru, Science Editor



The new Japanese robot shows what it's made of
Gizmodo

Murata Creates First Unicycling Robot

Following the production of the "bicycle boy" robot, the Japanese company completes its line with a girl

Kindergarten kids in Japan are ecstatic. Their new class companion is a robot girl, known as Seiko and riding a unicycle. The project, designed and produced by Murata, is meant to make children fonder of science and technology over the next years. After they released the Seisaku-kun, a tiny robot that can ride a bicycle, employees at Murata began working on its female counterpart, the Seiko-kun robot, which was more challenging than the first attempt, as it doesn't rely on two wheels for propulsion, but on just one.

Its height is at about 20 inches (50 cm) and it weighs about 11 pounds (5 kilograms). Also, the new design is equipped with multiple sensors, located all over the body, to detect obstacles and balance issues. Seiko is controlled remotely via Bluetooth technology. It is able to turn by using a rotating flywheel located in its chest. So far, scientists and children both agree that the robot was a complete success. The developers even added a story to the creation of the robot, saying that it was born to travel the world with Seisaku-kun. Obviously, this is meant to encourage children to accept the robots more easily. In fact, some say that Seiko's design was inspired by EVE, the probe sent to Earth in the movie "Wall-E." Both have long arms for flying and maintaining balance, respectively, and both are white and very cute. The only difference between them is that EVE didn't wear a skirt. The little robot's debut is scheduled to take place at CEATEC 2008 and it will most likely be a milestone for the Japanese company, in its quest for creating more and more advanced pieces of technology in the field of robotics. Previous CEATEC editions saw the creation of more and more human-looking robots, some of which were quite frightening in their resemblance to the originals.