HUMANITY CENTERED ROBOTICS INITIATIVE

BROWN

Brian Scassellati
Yale University

"Socially Assistive Robotics"

Wednesday, October 23, 2013
12:00 – 1:30pm
Barus and Holley Room 190

Robots have long been used to provide assistance to individual users through physical interaction, typically by supporting direct physical rehabilitation or by providing a service such as retrieving items or cleaning floors. Socially assistive robotics (SAR) is a comparatively new field of robotics that focuses on developing robots capable of assisting users through social rather than physical interaction. Just as a good coach or teacher can provide motivation, guidance, and support without making physical contact with a student, socially assistive robots attempt to provide the appropriate emotional, cognitive, and social cues to encourage development, learning, or therapy for an individual.

In this talk, I will review some of the reasons why physical robots rather than virtual agents are essential to this effort, highlight some of the major research issues within this area, and describe some of our recent results building supportive robots for teaching social skills to children with autism spectrum disorder and for teaching nutrition to typically developing children.

Brian Scassellati is a Professor of Computer Science, Cognitive Science, and Mechanical Engineering at Yale University. His research focuses on building embodied computational models of human social behavior, especially the developmental progression of early social skills. He was named an Alfred P. Sloan Fellow in 2007 and received an NSF CAREER award in 2003. His work has been awarded five best-paper awards. He is co-chair of the upcoming 2014 annual meeting of the Cognitive Science Society.

This presentation is part of the HCRI's Multidisciplinary Speaker Series that showcases diverse and groundbreaking research undertaken by leaders in science, technology, design, and impact of robotics on society.

For more information on this talk and the HCRI Speaker Series,
contact Suzanne_Alden@brown.edu or visit hcri.brown.edu.