

# Chapter 27

## Robot Sophia



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**Audience:** Adults and youth (University and high school students)

**Field:** Social

Sophia is a female robot endowed with artificial intelligence, capable of quickly processing a wide range of information from the environment and humans alike, including their facial expressions, emotions, and speech. Sophia also expresses herself physically and socially in a similar way to a human, imitating natural functions such as blinking and breathing, in addition to having the ability to maintain a coherent conversation with another agent (human or robot). Due to the growing number of humans considered vulnerable in the population, such as elderly people over 70 years old who live alone, young children with little and/or precarious parental care and adolescents with mental health problems, among others, Sophia is being programmed to take the role of caregiver/companion, with the ability to perform assistive, therapeutic, and educational tasks.

José, a 50-year-old widower, lives with his teenage son, who is depressed and at the stage of self-harming, and his elderly mother, who has advanced Alzheimer's disease and is dependent on assistance to fulfill activities of daily living. Despite his responsibilities for caring for his family members, José has to take time off work, yet he cannot afford to hire a caregiver. He was lucky to have recently been awarded a copy of Sophia in the pilot study and must choose between the mother and the child to be cared for by the robot. If he chooses to program Sophia for the care of his mother, José will have to hospitalize his son, who is putting his own life at risk. And if the opposite happens, he will have to hospitalize his mother.

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