Editorial

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The year of 2015 is a remarkable and fruitful year for International Journal of Social Robotics (SORO). In 2014, SORO has been selected for coverage in Thomson Reuter's products and services and the publications in our journal has been indexed and abstracted in Science Citation Index Expanded (also known as Sci Search), Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition and Current Contents/Engineering Computing and Technology. This year, our journal officially received its first impact factor (IF) with 2 year IF of 1.207 and 5 year IF of 1.751. This is excellent news for our authors and editorial board members as the scientific community recognizes their efforts and works. As the editors-in-chief, we would like to express our sincere appreciations on your generously contributing your precious time and efforts to the journal's success as well as our readers for your continuous support.

As some recognition and a modest reward for our reviewers' hard work, we have selected five most notable reviewers with both a 100 EUR/USD voucher and 3-months free trial access to SpringerLink. The winners for this year's notable reviewer award are Amit Kumar Pandey, Hongsheng He, James Kennedy, Tatsuya Nomura and Zhijun Li. Con-

gratulations! We are also looking forward to their future contributions as qualified and professional reviewers. To stay in close touch with the latest updates of the journal, you are cordially invited to join the International Network on Social Robotics group in LinkedIn or download the recent SORO free app for iOS and Android.

The seventh International Conference on Social Robotics (ICSR) was held in the beautiful Paris. The theme of this year's conference is "Individual Differences". Under the leadership of Adriana Tapus, Markus Vincze and their excellent teams, the ICSR 2015 has successfully brought 200 researchers and practitioners together to report and discuss the latest progress in the field of social robotics. This year, there are 126 paper submissions of which 70 were accepted based on the reviews of qualified professionals in social robotics from around the world. Having started in 2009, ICSR is now in its seventh edition and serves as a premier international forum for reporting and discussing the latest research progress in social robotics.

The conference program included two special sessions on "Objective Measures in HRI for Social Robotics" and on "Social Assistive Robotics for Children." and featured with three keynote speech by three distinguished researchers. Gordon Cheng from Technical University of Munich (TUM), Germany shared with us his works on "Closing the natural interaction loop with neuroscience-based robotics". Jacqueline Nadel from French National Centre of Scientific Research (CNRS) presented her ideas and vision on "Toward a two-body perspective in the interdisciplinary study of non-verbal communication". Wendy Ju from Stanford University and California College for the Arts delivered an excellent speech on "Welcome Robot Overlords?". We are excited to announce that the next ICSR will be held in Kansas City, U.S.A. under the leadership of Arvin Agah. We look forward to seeing your participation in ICSR 2016.

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After years of development, SORO has grown into a flagship journal in social robotics community, attracting not only multi-disciplinary scientific researchers but also robot developers and users. At the same time, we are also witnessing the growing industry of social robots with increasing applications for education, healthcare, and other aspects of our everyday life. On this happy occasion, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude to our editors, reviewers and the publisher for their continuous and invaluable support and help. The editorial board will keep doing our utmost to improve our services and bring the journal to another higher level. We are also inviting our fellow researchers to contribute more to our journal and consider publishing more high-quality social robotics researches.

For this issue, we are honored to introduce a collection of nine papers which cover a wide range of exciting topics in social robotics.

In the first paper, “Priming as a Means to Reduce Ambiguity in Learning from Demonstration” by Benjamin Fonooni, Thomas Hellström and Lars-Erik Janlert, a new method to address the ambiguity arise during the process of learning from demonstration is proposed based on priming and a memory model. The authors show that priming techniques are able to help robot identify the intention of the human teacher’s demonstration. In addition, a working memory that keeps track of the previous learned paradigm is shown to accelerate the new learning process

In the second paper, a psychological scale for measuring rapport is proposed and investigated as “Rapport–Expectation with a Robot Scale” by Tatsuya Nomura and Takayuki Kanda. Through experiments, the proposed scale called RERS is demonstrated to be a consistent and reliable metric that help provide insight into how to design interaction behavior of robots so as to improve people’s rapport-expectation to them.

In the third paper, Robin Read and Tony Belpaeme present the experiment results of whether adults exhibit categorical perception when affectively rating robot-like sounds in the paper “People Interpret Robotic Non-linguistic Utterances Categorically”. The experimental is conducted by following the traditional methodology from the psychology domain for measuring categorical perception. The study verifies that Non-linguistic Utterances can convey affect and that they are drawn towards prototypical emotions and confirming that people show categorical perception at a level of inferred affective meaning when hearing robot-like sounds.

The fourth paper, “Socially Adaptive Path Planning in Human Environments Using Inverse Reinforcement Learning” is authored by Beomjoon Kim and Joelle Pineau. The work focuses on an efficient method for social or assistive robots to navigate to the destination through human crowds instead of simply finding the shortest path. To achieve this, three modules are proposed: feature extraction module,

inverse reinforcement learning (IRL) module, and the path planning module. The efficacy of this approach is evaluated by deploying it on a real robotic wheelchair platform in various scenarios, and comparing the robot trajectories to human trajectories.

In the fifth paper, Khaoula Youssef, Takahiro Asano, P. Ravindra S. De Silva, and Michio Okada present “Sociable Dining Table: Meaning Acquisition Exploration in Knock-Based Proto-Communication”. The paper studies how a communication protocol can be established incrementally between a human and a minimally designed robot: sociable dining table. A human-human experiment and a human-robot interaction (HRI) experiment have been conducted, demonstrating the effectiveness of the knocker-controller based HRI architecture.

The sixth paper, “Study of Scenarios and Technical Requirements of a Social Assistive Robot for Alzheimer’s Disease Patients and Their Caregivers” authored by Miguel A. Salichs, Irene P. Encinar, Esther Salichs, Álvaro Castro-González, and María Malfaz presents the RobAlz project aiming to assist Alzheimer’s disease patients and their caregivers by social robots. Different psychological, social and technical concerns for the design of the robot are addressed, and a robotic prototype will be developed in the subsequent phases of the RobAlz project.

In the seventh paper, Huu Toan Tran, Hong Cheng, Huang Rui, Xi Chuan Lin, Mien Ka Duong and Qi Ming Chen present “Evaluation of a Fuzzy-Based Impedance Control Strategy on a Powered Lower Exoskeleton”. Their study presents the analysis, design, and control of a wearable lower limb exoskeleton intended to enhance human performance and support load-carrying. The proposed control strategy has the potential to increase comfort and adaptation to users during daily use of exoskeleton.

The eighth paper, “Synchrony and Reciprocity: Key Mechanisms for Social Companion Robots in Therapy and Care” is authored by Tamara Lorenz, Astrid Weiss and Sandra Hirche. In this paper, the author has shown that synchrony and reciprocity are two key mechanisms of human interaction which affect both in the behavioral level (movements) and in the social level (relationships) which should be included in the interaction with social companion robots in therapy and care. A survey on existing social companion robots, neurocognitive impairments, neurophysical impairments and depression is provided. The discussions from the paper are in-depth and meaningful social robot therapy and care.

The last paper, “What Effect Does an Animal Robot Called CuDDler Have on the Engagement and Emotional Response of Older People with Dementia? A Pilot Feasibility Study” by Wendy Moyle, Cindy Jones, Billy Sung, Marguerite Bramble, Siobhan O’Dwyer, Michael Blumenstein and Vladimir Estivill-Castro presents an interesting pilot study that sought to assess the feasibility and effect of using a robotic compan-

ion animal called CuDDler on engagement and emotional states of five older adults with dementia living in nursing home care. The results indicate the need for further studies

on the development and use of companion robots, and investigation of the comparative benefits of social robots both compared to and in association with human interactions.