Abstract

Previous work indicates that physical robots elicit more favorable social responses than virtual agents. These effects have been attributed to the physical embodiment. However, a recent meta-analysis by Li [1] suggests that the benefits of robots are due to physical presence rather than physical embodiment. To further explore the importance of presence we conducted a pilot study investigating the relationship between physical and social presence. The results suggest that social presence of an artificial agent is important for interaction with people, and that the extent to which it is perceived as socially present might be unaffected by whether it is physically or virtually present.

Keywords
Embodiment, Physical presence, Social presence, Social influence, Social robots, Virtual agents