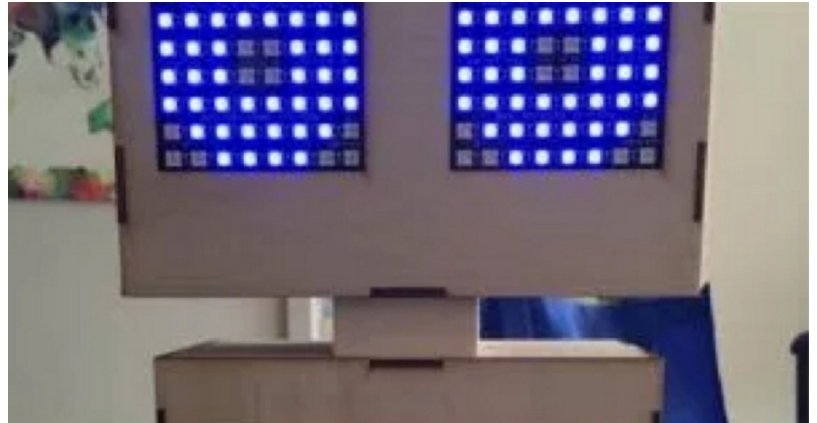




“Friendly” Robot Being Built To Track Children’s Mental Health

From [FreedomProject Media](#):

It sounds like a creepy science-fiction movie about a future dystopia, but it is very real and it is happening now. The federal government is funding a new scheme to build a “friendly social robot” that will be deployed at schools to collect data on children’s mental health, according to [news reports](#) and [official documents](#). The new machines will add to the growing battery of federally funded Orwellian tools to gather every conceivable form of data on students for Big Brother.



The project is supposed to produce a “user-friendly” robot known as “EMAR,” or Ecological Momentary Assessment Robot (shown), “that gathers teen mental health data in a public high school setting,” according to the federal “National Science Foundation” funding the scheme to the tune of more than a million dollars. It is needed, NSF says, because “adolescents are very likely to have long-lasting relationships with robots in the future at work, in the classroom, and at home.”

“It also needed especially since adolescents constitute a vulnerable population that is negatively affected by stress and mental health issues, and since there are well-established difficulties in gathering accurate, useful, mental health data from teens in their natural environment with digital surveys and experience sampling using static data collection tools including computers, tablets, and smart phones,” the official award document continues.

Success of the scheme, as defined by the NSF, will “contribute to the development of ubiquitous social robots that serve as tools for on-site, real time data collection.” Such tools, the grant documents continue, “would improve research methodology and facilitate evidence-based decisions in real time.” While the exact nature of the “decisions” that supposedly need to be made was not specified, the robots are supposed to serve as an “essential tool” to assess the “mental health” of children and develop “interventions” for them.

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[Photo of EMAR: University of Wisconsin](#)



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