CRISTINA GETSON

PhD Candidate
Mechanical and Industrial Engineering
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I explore how people interact with social robots. Currently a PhD Candidate researching human-robot interaction, ethics, and AI in healthcare, with a focus on the design of social robots to assist vulnerable populations. A Graduate Affiliate with the Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society, I hold a Bachelor of Applied Science in Engineering Science from the University of Toronto, and collaborative specializations in Psychology and Robotics. I have extensive product and project management experience in the telecommunication and educational technology sectors. ***Research Specializations***: Human-robot interaction, social robotics, human-centered design, persuasive robot behaviors, AI ethics, persuasive technology

EDUCATION

2020 – 2025 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), University of Toronto
Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering
Advisor: Dr. Goldie Nejat
Thesis: Development of a Framework for Social Robot Behaviors and Strategies in Human-Robot Interaction with Vulnerable Populations
Relevant courses: *MIE1412*: Human-Automation Interaction, *MIE1070*: Intelligent Robots for Society, *TEP1203*: Teaching Engineering in Higher Education

1994 – 1998 Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.Sc.), University of Toronto
Division of Engineering Science, Biomedical option

1996 – 1997 Institut National Polytechnique de Grenoble, France
Rhône-Alpes international student exchange program

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2024 **Course Instructor**, ENG1101: Renaissance Engineering
1st year undergraduate class of 130 students
York University, Lassonde School of Engineering

Spring 2024 **Guest Lecturer**, MIE 1070: Intelligent Robots for Society, University of Toronto
Graduate course lecture on: *The Age of Social Robots*

Winter 2024 **Tutorial Instructor**, MIE443: Mechatronics Systems, Design & Integration
University of Toronto

Winter 2021 – 2024 **Teaching Assistant**, MIE443: Mechatronics Systems, Design & Integration
University of Toronto

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2025 – present **Graduate Affiliate,** Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society, University of Toronto
Part of the AI & Trust Working Group, a multinational and transdisciplinary research initiative

2024 – 2025 **Graduate Fellow,** Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society, University of Toronto
Interdisciplinary research project: *Unpacking Trust: A Conceptual Analysis of How People Understand and Apply Trust in Artificial Intelligence*

2020 – present **Graduate Research Assistant**, Autonomous Systems and Biomechatronics Lab
Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, University of Toronto

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

2025 **C. Getson** and G. Nejat, "The Game Changer: The Role of Persuasive Socially Assistive Robots in the Sustained Engagement and Motivation of Older Adults in a Cognitive Activity," *International Journal of Social Robotics, Under Review*, 2025. Preprint available at Research Square: https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-7556807/v1

2024 **C. Getson** and G. Nejat, "Care Providers' Perspectives on the Design of Assistive Persuasive Behaviors for Socially Assistive Robots," *Journal of the American Medical Directors' Association, special issue on Technology in PA-LTC: Innovations and Applications*, 25(8):105084, 2024.

2024 G. Nejat, A. Zehavi, **C. Getson** and H. Shoef, "Adoption of assistive technologies in long-term care homes: What the pandemic has taught us," *Healthcare Management Forum*, 37(6):418 – 422, 2024.

2023 **C. Getson** and G. Nejat, "Human-Robot Interactions with an Autonomous Health-Screening Robot in Long-Term Care Settings," *Advanced Robotics*, 37:24, 1576 – 1590, 2023.

2022 **C. Getson** and G. Nejat, "The Adoption of Socially Assistive Robots for Long-Term Care: During the Pandemic and in a Post-COVID-19 Society," *Healthcare Management Forum Special Edition on Aging, Technology and Health in a Post-COVID World*, Vol. 35(5) 301 – 309, 2022.

2021 **C. Getson** and G. Nejat, "Socially Assistive Robots Helping Older Adults through the Pandemic and Life after COVID-19," *Robotics* 10(3), 106, 2021.

Works in Progress

Progress J. Brecka, M. Collis, R. Gelpi, **C. Getson,** M. Mackley, J. Wilson, "Unpacking Trust: A Conceptual Analysis of How People Understand and Apply Trust in Artificial Intelligence," *in development as a whitepaper with the Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society*, 2025.

Workshop Extended Abstracts

2025 C. Munteanu, S. Sarcar, J. Sin, C. Ziying Wei, S. Sayago, W. Zhao, J. Waycott, R. Boostani, M. Ghafurian, **C. Getson**, "Designing Age-Inclusive Interfaces: Emerging Conversational and Generative AI to Support Interactions Across the Life Span," *Proceedings of the 7th ACM Conference on Conversational User Interfaces*, 2025.

2024 **C. Getson** and G. Nejat, "Investigating Persuasive Socially Assistive Robot Behavior Strategies for Sustained Engagement in Long-Term Care," 2024 *IEEE International Symposium on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN)*, Workshop on *HRI4WellBeing* (extended abstract), 2024.

Peer–Reviewed Conference Proceedings

2022 **C. Getson** and G. Nejat, "The Robot Screener Will See You Now: A Socially Assistive Robot for COVID-19 Screening in Long-Term Care Homes," 2022 *IEEE International Symposium on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN)*, Napoli, Italy, pp. 672 – 677.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & INVITED TALKS

March 2025 Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society Panel:
"Making Artificial Intelligence Real," presented at HEC Paris special session
Human-Robot Interactions with Vulnerable Populations

August 2024 IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interaction (RO-MAN), HRI4WellBeing workshop presenter, *Investigating Persuasive Socially Assistive Robot Behavior Strategies for Sustained Engagement in Long-Term Care*

October 2023 AGE-WELL annual conference, presenter
Social Robots as Assistants: Assistive Persuasive Behaviors for Social Robots

July 2023 Toronto Robotics Conference, University of Toronto Robotics Institute, presenter
The Design and Development of a Social Robot for COVID-19 Screening

May 2023 The New Reality, Global News segment
How Tech is Helping Canadians Living with Dementia

October 2022 — Supply AI Conference, MaRS Discovery District, panelist
Robots Making Life Easier for Businesses Large and Small

October 2022 — AGE-WELL annual conference, poster session
The Adoption of Socially Assistive Robots for Long-Term Care

September 2022 — Revive & Thrive session for the Canadian College of Health Leaders, panelist
The adoption of socially assistive robots in long-term, private, and hospital care

August 2022 — IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interaction (RO-MAN), presenter, *The Robot Screener Will See You Now: A Socially Assistive Robot for COVID-19 Screening in Long-Term Care Homes*

April 2022 — AdvantAge Ontario annual conference, presenter
A Robot Screener in Long-Term Care Homes

2021, 2022 — Roboethics Competition (https://competition.raiselab.ca/)
(Winner, RO-MAN 2021; Honourable Mention, ICRA 2022)

GRANTS & AWARDS

2024 — Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society Graduate Fellowship ($7,500)
2024 — Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship in Science and Technology ($15,000)
2023 — Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship in Science and Technology ($15,000)
2022 — Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering Endowed Fellowship: Applied Science Graduate Student Endowment Fund (APSC GSEF) Award ($6,500)
2022 — University of Toronto Mechanical & Industrial Engineering Conference Grant ($750)
2022 — University of Toronto School of Graduate Studies Travel Grant ($1,250)

MENTORSHIP – University of Toronto

2023 - 2024 — **Ruopei Chen**, Previous fourth-year Mechanical Engineering student. Now Master of Engineering student at Stanford. Advised on her undergraduate thesis developing an engagement measurement system using a social robot to engage older adults.

2023 — **Victoria Vastis,** Previous Mechanical Engineering undergraduate summer student. Current Master of Integrated Innovation for Products & Services student at Carnegie Mellon. Advised her on a project for the design of an interactive cognitive game.

2021 – 2022 — **Yuqian Zhou**, Previous fourth-year Engineering Science thesis student. Advised on her undergraduate thesis on improving robustness of face-mask detection in real world environments.

SERVICE

Workshop Committee

2025 "Designing Age-Inclusive Interfaces: Emerging Conversational and Generative AI to Support Interactions Across the Life Span," the ACM Conversational User Interface (CUI) Conference, Waterloo, Canada, July 2025.

Outreach Activities

2023 – 2024 Editorial Committee Volunteer, Canadian Science Policy Centre
2023 – 2024 Advisory Committee Volunteer, AGE-WELL
2023 University of Toronto Engineering 150 Open House
Volunteer representing the Robotics Institute
2022 Judge for Undergraduate Engineering Research Day, University of Toronto

Peer–Reviewing

2025, 2022 Reviewer for IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN)
2025, 2023 Reviewer for Scientific Reports – Nature
2025 Reviewer for Transactions on Human-Robot Interaction
2025 Reviewer for IEEE Transactions on Robotics
2025 Reviewer for the Journal of Medical Internet Research (JMIR) Human Factors
2024 Reviewer for the International Journal of Social Robotics
2022 Reviewer for International Conference on Social Robotics (ICSR)

PREVIOUS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2015 – 2020 **Director/Owner**, Cristina Getson Learning Solutions
Managed the redevelopment of clients' online professional learning platforms
Provided educational technology consulting services
Created and tested bilingual digital tools for online learning (K – 12)

2014 – 2015 **Founder**, Like2Minds
Built a learning recommendation service that curates educational content based on an individual's learning preferences
Researched product-market fit; explored corporate education solutions
Used agile methodology to build a Minimum Viable Product

2010 – 2014 **Digital Product Manager**, Pearson Education Canada
Led the delivery of a web application tool to help teachers capture learning in the classroom; managed the design and development of a mobile version of the tool; used agile development to scale the product across multiple grades
Managed the development and customization of a digital content management system for the K – 12 market; conducted usability testing; oversaw content management, metadata creation to place legacy print product onto a digital platform
Researched, planned, created, and developed the School Division's first educational mobile apps on the iOS platform (in mathematics and early language learning)

2004 – 2010 **Project Manager**, School Math, Pearson Education Canada
Managed the development and creation of new digital content for K – 12 math
Substantively edited manuscripts by working with authors, reviewers, senior editors
Collaborated with the Publisher, and teams in New Media, Design, and Production to take a project through from inception to completion

2001 – 2003 **Business Analyst & Project Manager**, ember ec3 inc.
Consulted with leading financial services companies, assisted with business planning, implementation, and maintenance of ember's web-based software
Worked with Sales/Marketing, Engineering, and Design teams on project proposals

1999 – 2001 **Systems Engineer**, Optical Networks, Nortel Networks
Developed customized presentation material and delivered client learning sessions on Nortel's portfolio of high-capacity optical networking projects
Created and managed project plans to support the introduction, planning, and deployment of new Optical Networks portfolio into customers' networks

1998 – 1999 **International Project Manager**, IBM Canada
Managed and coordinated multiple international data network installations, from planning to installation

CREATIVE PRACTICE (WWW.CRISTINAGETSONART.COM)

2019, 2020 Toronto Outdoor Art Fair (Toronto, ON, Canada)
2020 Art Palm Beach, Steidel Contemporary (Palm Beach, Florida, USA)
2019 Arta Gallery (Toronto, ON, Canada)
2019 Elaine Fleck Gallery (Toronto, ON, Canada)
2019 Blue Crow Gallery (Toronto, ON, Canada)
2018 Aqua Art Miami (Miami, Florida, USA)
2018 Texas Contemporary Art Fair (Houston, Texas, USA)
2018 Artist residency, Palazzo Monti (Brescia, Italy)
2017, 2018 Queen West Art Crawl (Toronto, ON, Canada)
2017, 2018 The Other Art Fair (Brooklyn, NY, USA)