CRISTINA GETSON, PhD

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Website
Link to Google Scholar page

I explore how people interact with social robots. I hold a PhD in human-robot interaction from the University of Toronto, with a research focus on the design of social robots to assist vulnerable populations. I am a Graduate Affiliate with the Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society, with a collaborative specialization 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, robot behavior design, AI ethics, persuasive technology

EDUCATION

2020 – 2026   Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), University of Toronto
Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering
Advisor: Dr. Goldie Nejat
Thesis: Social Robot Behaviors and Strategies in Human-Robot Interactions 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
Instructor for an undergraduate first-year engineering course of 130 students, on communication, ethics, and creative problem-solving
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 – 2026 **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

In 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.

Submitted   J. Brecka, M. Collis, R. Gelpi, **C. Getson,** M. Mackley, J. Wilson, "In a Human, a Model, or a Corporation? Mapping Distinct Models of Trust Among AI Users," *submitted to the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FACCT)*, 2026

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

2025	NSERC Create in Healthcare Robotics (HeRo) Conference Grant ($700)
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)