



Hello Robot

As an ever larger chunk of the population reaches retirement age, more people are demanding to spend their golden years in their own homes. Massive implementation of smart-home technologies will help to make this possible.

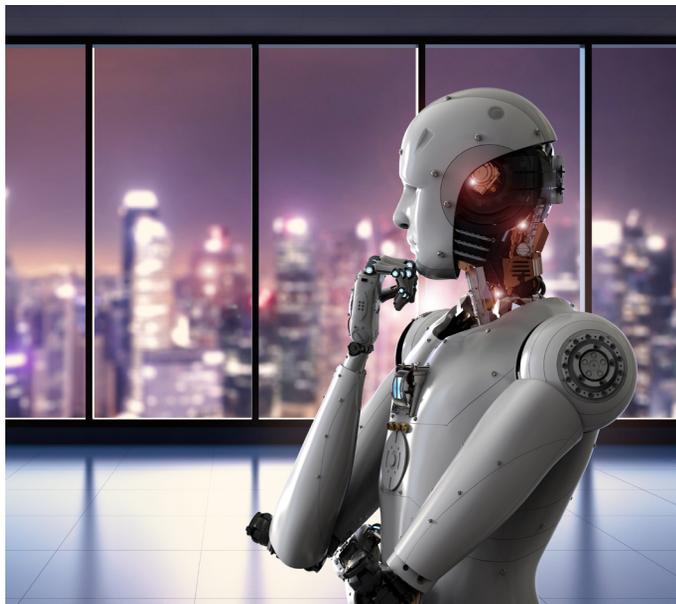
Aging tech, a growing sector in the Israeli start up ecosystem, includes everything from smart new sensors to noninvasively monitor movement, hygiene, sleep, and nutrition, as well as changes in personal habits, to robot-caretakers, like ElliQ. Developed by Intuition Robotics, the intelligent and friendly ElliQ robot helps the elderly stay engaged, independent, and connected socially. Almost straight out of science fiction, the robot mimics human movements and responds to voice, gaze, and touch. It offers tips and advice, responds to questions, makes appointments and issues reminders about medications.

The idea behind aging technologies is to provide monitoring and optional alerts without compromising on privacy.

More conventional innovations currently in use include special equipment for climbing stairs with a wheelchair, currently available at Yad Sarah.

Robots are also replacing jobs at a steady clip. High-rise buildings, once seen mainly in Tel Aviv, are spreading throughout the country. But having to clean windows on a suspended platform is a hazardous, time-consuming task. In 2017, Skyline Robotics developed an automated cleaning system, called OZMO, that uses computer vision and artificial intelligence to clean windows at any height. According the company, while it would take three cleaners on a 40-story building approximately 480 hours to finish cleaning the windows, OZMO can do it in just one week.

OZMO's creators, Yaron Shwartz and Avi Abadi say that window cleaning is just the beginning, and that they plan to replace all dangerous, dirty, and boring tasks with robotic solutions.



Opportunities for Entrepreneurship

A lot of the innovation and creativity we're seeing lately is not limited to physical items, but applies also to attitudes and perspectives, which are undergoing a sea change, according to real estate attorney Yitzchak Steinberg. Even in an area that's seemingly as "unmovable" as real estate, market conditions have been transformed by a variety of factors, facilitating the entry of young, inexperienced entrepreneurs into the market.

"A considerable chunk of real estate investment today is about urban renewal, and it's going to be that way for the coming decades" says Steinberg. "The dream of a house in suburbia with a two-car garage is passe. Societal trends, globally as well as in Israel, indicate a shift to the center of town, even if that means downsizing and moving the family into smaller living quarters. Now, for urban renewal projects — redoing a building, adding a few floors, or even knocking down a building — you don't need the experience or the resources that are necessary for large-scale real estate projects. What you do need is the human element — someone with people skills who will be able to acquire the trust of the apartment owners and get their consent for the project. In this respect, an established company may not have an advantage over a highly motivated, dedicated entrepreneur.



Attorney Yitzchak Steinberg

"Added to that is the fact that there exist today alternate options for funding other than the banks. It used to be that before providing a construction

loan, bank managers needed to know the applicant; they wanted to see his track record, they wanted equity. By contrast, today we're seeing external companies that are open to undertaking the financing of a promising real estate project, even if the applicant hasn't yet proven himself. This has opened up a world of opportunities for the young, goal-oriented entrepreneur who is willing to take risks."

In order for these businessmen to succeed, however, they need to draw on a source of accumulated experience and know-how to successfully execute their plan. And, Steinberg explains, that amounts to a whole lot more than just legal advice. "They need direction. They may have a dream, but they need someone to guide them exactly how to bring it to fruition. So, with an urban renewal plan, for example, they need someone to explain to them exactly how to approach the apartment owners, what they're legally allowed to promise them and what they can't. Additionally, the project has to be financially feasible. These are services they can get from an expert who deals with these types of projects on a daily basis," Steinberg says. ●