

Remote, Para-social, or Robotic Dinner Companions



The inclusion of a dining table on the Soviet Mir space station* may seem like a simple addition, but it holds great significance in recognizing the social aspect of eating. Eating is not just about nourishment; it is a communal activity that fosters connection and camaraderie.

As space missions venture further away from Earth, the importance of social interaction during mealtime becomes even more apparent. It serves not only to strengthen the bond within the mission crew but also to provide a sense of connection with loved ones back on Earth. Various studies have explored different methods of creating this connection while eating, such as sharing a meal remotely with someone familiar, observing others eating even if they are strangers, or even engaging with robotic companions.

Our aim is to delve into these three approaches and understand how they impact the experience of eating, particularly in deep space missions where the transmission delay significantly alters the dynamics of remote dining. By examining these different methods, we can gain insights into how to optimize the eating experience for astronauts, ensuring that social connection remains a vital component even in the most distant corners of space.

Student Profile

As a student, you have an inquisitive attitude and like to bring your ideas to life with prototypes. You are not afraid to explore new technologies and you love to tinker to make these technologies work. You would like to learn more about the intersection of communications, presence, and augmented dining.

Activities:

This work is part of research on future Human Food Interaction in space and can be (part of) a published

paper. There are various areas to focus on one of the following aspects:

- Studying how remote, para-social, or robotic dinner companions change the eating experience and perceptions of food.
- Develop methods for simulating aspects of space studies for quicker evaluation of new interactions for space.
- Create guidelines for designing and combining remote, para-social, and robotic dinner companions.

Related Work:

*<https://www.atlasobscura.com/foods/mir-space-station-dining-table>

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<https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/3549517>
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Interested?

If you're interested in exploring how fungus and people can interact with haptics contact:

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