

IBM Watson to power SoftBank Robotics, UA Record, Whirlpool home appliances

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IBM and SoftBank Robotics Holdings (SBRH) on Wednesday announced plans to offer a version of Watson to power SoftBank Robotics' Pepper robots.

According to a press statement, IBM and SBRH will tap into data and knowledge across the "Internet of Things" to enable Watson-powered Pepper to make sense of the hidden meaning in data that traditional computers cannot comprehend - including social media, video, images and text.

"Today, the power of cognitive computing can be woven into any form factor. Our collaboration with SBRH on Pepper will allow a much broader audience to experience and tap into Watson," said Mike Rhodin, senior vice president, IBM Watson.

"In terms of hands-on interaction, when cognitive capabilities are embedded in robotics, you see people engage and benefit from this technology in new and exciting ways."

IBM Watson is the first open cognitive computing technology platform. This alliance will pave the way for systems understanding the world in the way that humans do: through senses, learning, and experience.

IBM said the Watson-powered Pepper robot under development would be equipped with core functionalities as well as a Watson software development kit (SDK).

Also on Wednesday, IBM and Under Armour announced partnership to create and provide data-backed health and fitness insights, powered by IBM Watson's cognitive computing technology.

Under the terms of the partnership, Under Armour's new UA Record will be combined with a Cognitive Coaching System.

This is aimed to serve as a personal health consultant, fitness trainer and assistant by providing athletes with timely, evidence-based coaching around your sleep, fitness, activity and nutrition, including outcomes achieved based on others "like you."

In another partnership with home appliances maker Whirlpool Corporation, IBM promised to connect Whirlpool connected home appliances with IBM Watson services, including cognitive analytics.

"IBM's cognitive analytics is a strong fit for Whirlpool Corporation," said Laurent Borne, General Manager, Connected Appliances, Whirlpool Corporation.