

Japan's robot hotel lays off half the robots after they created more work for humans

It turns out even robots can't enjoy job security

[Shannon Liao](#) Jan 15, 2019, 4:36pm EST

Image: [YouTube via Michal Mazur](#)

It turns out that even robots are having a tough time holding down a job. [Japan's Henn-na "Strange" Hotel](#) has laid off half its 243 robots after they created more problems than they could solve, as first [reported by *The Wall Street Journal*](#).

One of the layoffs included a doll-shaped assistant in each hotel room called Churi. [Siri, Google Assistant, and Alexa](#) can answer questions about local businesses' opening and closing times, but Churi couldn't. When hotel guests asked Churi "What time does the theme park open?" it didn't have a good answer. That was a problem because Churi was supposed to help ameliorate the Strange Hotel's staff shortage by substituting in for human workers.

Image: Henn-na Hotel

Others on the chopping block:

- Two velociraptor robots positioned at check-in were also decommissioned because human workers essentially had to do their jobs for them and photocopy guests' passports manually.
- Two robot luggage carriers could only reach about 24 of the over 100 rooms in the hotel and failed in rain or snow. They would also often get stuck trying to pass by each other.

- The hotel's main concierge robot also didn't know how to answer questions about flight schedules and nearby tourist attractions. It has since been replaced by a human.

Many of the robots that have been retired were in service for years, making them outdated. The hotel decided it was easier to fire them than to replace them, citing high costs. And in the end, a lot of the work had to be left to humans anyway, especially when it came to asking more complex questions. It seems we're still a little ways off from a completely automated hotel.