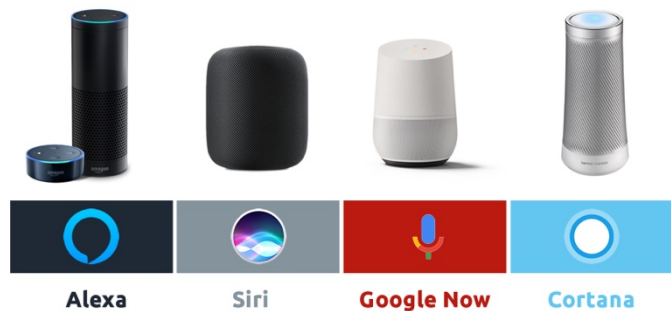# PROJECT AllI ASSIGNMENT

Visit www.modelemotion.org/alli for further background and to submit your AllI online.

OVERVIEW

Project AllI is an open and collaborative project between anthropologists, designers, artists, and engineers to reimagine the character of artificial agents and assistants in society. Inspired by the acknowledgment that our current assistants (Alexa, Siri, Cortana) do not fully represent the diversity of views in culture, with some reports arguing they actively reinforce existing biases, we aim to build a platform for creatively reimagining our relationship with artificial agents that not only better represents a diversity of cultural values and views but also leverages them to fostering emotional, affective, and artistic flourishing. What kind of A-ll-I do you envision? We invite you to consider, create, and contribute your ideas.

[Home assistants: https://geeksfl.com/blog/best-voice-assistant/]

BACKGROUND

The ethnographic record is populated with many examples of what could be called allies: agents that while not exactly or nearly human nonetheless play a reciprocal part in making that society whole and flourish. Examples could include the canine companions that in cooperative coexistence shaped the mutual evolution of humans and dogs; certain deities taking form in natural objects like rivers, mountains, and trees, such as the *kami* of Japan's traditional cosmology; deified ancestors such as the Hawaiian *'aumakua* that protect one's family, and are cared for in return; or the sometimes fiercely-depicted protectors of Mahayana and Tantric Buddhist traditions, beings that manifest from one's innate capacity for enlightenment in order to help overcome mental and emotional obstacles.

While the different meanings and roles of each of these figures must be situated within their local cultural context, in their pervasiveness and diversity they nonetheless illustrate the creative cultural capacity for ritual, narrative, and material and artistic production to engender figures that, while different from and often more-than-human, are nonetheless active members of society.

Contemporary popular culture is certainly not without its own allies. Think, for example, of the recent reigniting of superhero stories, with culture industries like Marvel and DC churning out ongoing iterations of characters that come to human aid. What kind of cultural conditions are these characters responding to? What problems do they solve? What do they tell us about our contemporary condition? How, in short, do they help us?

Perhaps the most illustrative and iconic allies of recent times, at least in Japan, is Doraemon, an animated blue robot cat that travels back in time from the future to become the faithful ally of a boy called Nobita Nobi. Created by Fujimoto Hiroshi and Abiko Motoo in 1969, Doraemon has become one of the most widely read manga in the world. Combining advanced technologies with astute interpersonal insight, he helps Nobita negotiate a number of personal and emotional conflicts while also helping him in a variety of ways personally grow and develop.

[Doraemon, by Fujimoto Hiroshi and Abiko Motoo,

https://www.tv-asahi.co.jp/doraemon/]

TASK

Brainstorm and design an AllI with four criteria:

1. It must offer assistance for a particular challenge you or society faces, and thus improve one's condition, wellbeing, and generally provide support.
2. It must be reciprocal: the support one receives must also benefit either the AllI or others.
3. It must be embodied, physically, digitally, or otherwise.
4. It must incorporate a technological capacity, even if that capacity does not yet exist.

Draw, create, or otherwise design an AllI and then explain its features according to the four criteria above. Consider submitting your AllI to the online AllI archive at www.modelemotion.org/alli or by email to info@modelemotion.org.