

The Uncanny Valley (written by ChatGPT in July 2023)

The term "Uncanny Valley" refers to a psychological phenomenon that occurs when humanoid robots or artificial intelligence systems closely resemble human beings but fall short of being convincingly realistic. Coined by Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori in 1970, the concept suggests that as the resemblance to a human increases, there is a corresponding increase in the emotional response of familiarity and acceptance. However, there is a critical threshold beyond which, despite the high level of similarity, the artificial entity elicits feelings of eeriness, unease, or even revulsion from human observers. This region of heightened negative response is referred to as the Uncanny Valley.



When applied to artificial intelligence, the Uncanny Valley manifests in various ways. As AI systems become more sophisticated and attempt to mimic human-like behavior, appearance, or interaction, there is a delicate balance to strike. AI that is too simplistic or obviously non-human may be perceived as amusing or endearing, but as the resemblance becomes uncannily close, discomfort arises.

The Uncanny Valley phenomenon arises from a cognitive dissonance experienced by humans. It is hypothesized that our brains are wired to recognize and interpret human facial expressions, gestures, and subtle cues that signal emotions and intentions. When an artificial entity closely replicates these human characteristics but lacks the depth of authentic emotional experience, it triggers a sense of unease.

