

# Roomba Pioneer Colin Angle Unveils New Venture, Familiar Machines & Magic, Introducing a New Platform for Consumer Physical AI



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**Familiar Machines & Magic** →

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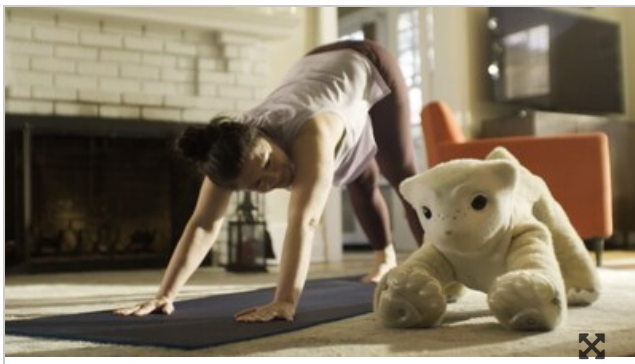
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*After building iRobot into a multi-billion-dollar business and architecting the global consumer robotics industry, Angle launches a new company to build emotionally intelligent robots designed for trust, interaction, and long-term connection.*

BOSTON, May 4, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- More than two decades after introducing the Roomba and helping define consumer robotics, Colin Angle is returning with a more ambitious vision: Artificial Life. On stage today at **The Wall Street Journal's Future of Everything** conference, Angle unveiled **Familiar Machines & Magic**, bringing the company out of stealth and introducing Familiars - physically embodied AI systems designed to perceive, adapt, and interact with people in ways that feel natural and consistent.



Physical AI is a \$5T opportunity, and half of it depends on human connection, not just physical dexterity.



A Familiar is a supportive household presence for the moments when you need comfort, gentle coaching, or simply company.



Familiars create moments of connection, without a screen in between.

"The next era of robotics is not just about dexterity or humanoid form - it's about machines that can build and sustain human connection," said Colin Angle, cofounder and CEO of Familiar Machines & Magic. "Today, we're emerging from stealth to share our vision for systems that move beyond task execution and become a natural part of daily life."

FM&M uses the term "Familiars" to describe emotionally intelligent, physically embodied AI systems that perceive their environment, develop a distinct personality, and respond in ways that learn and evolve through life with the people around them.

### Physical AI's Next Frontier: From Capability to Human Connection

The global race to build Physical AI is on. From humanoid robots promising factory labor to autonomous systems reshaping logistics, tens of billions of dollars are flowing into machines designed to move, lift, sort, and transport. But this is only half the opportunity - the back-end, industrial physical AI opportunity. The other half is consumer-facing, for all of the use cases where robots will interact with humans, and it requires a fundamentally different approach.

Consumer Physical AI demands human connection - the ability to not just perform physical tasks, but to understand, communicate, and respond in ways that feel intuitive and supportive. This opportunity extends across daily life - anywhere people and machines intersect - not just within the home.

Consumer Physical AI outperforms screens in these types of emotional work because people respond more strongly to physical presence. While chatbots are widely used for emotional support, they are often less effective and beneficial for their users.

FM&M is focused on developing Consumer Physical AI systems that deliver this kind of interaction at scale by building Familiars.

The company's leadership team has already brought consumer robotics to global scale. As leaders behind the Roomba platform at iRobot, they deployed more than fifty million robots into homes worldwide, turning a once-experimental category into a household technology. FM&M also brings together talent from Disney Research, MIT, Amazon, Boston Dynamics, Bose, and Sonos, applying deep experience in robotics, AI, and human-machine interaction to this next frontier.

### **Bringing Familiars to Life: Meet the First Familiar**

During a live conversation with Wall Street Journal Technology columnist Christopher Mims at Future of Everything, Angle introduced the first Familiar - the inaugural system powered by FM&M's Consumer Physical AI platform.

"iRobot proved that robots could deliver value at scale," Angle said. "But they were still task machines. My goal has always been to create systems that understand context, remember interactions, and behave with consistency over time. That's what we're doing at Familiar Machines & Magic."

A Familiar is purpose-built for social interaction rather than industrial performance. Its hardware and AI architecture are optimized for expressive, whole-body movement that communicates attention, awareness, and intent without relying on a screen.

The first Familiar is a quadruped, specifically designed for human-robot interaction, with 23 degrees of freedom enabling both lifelike movement and expressive behaviors. The Familiar is covered with a custom touch-sensitive coat, a vision system, and a microphone array and audio system, to support rich interactions. Its onboard edge AI stack is powered by a custom small multimodal model optimized for social reasoning, combining vision, audio, language, and memory to create socially responsive behaviors in real time.

Unlike humanoid robots designed to replicate human form for industrial uses, the Familiar is intentionally designed to be approachable and expressive, with a form factor optimized for interaction in everyday environments. It integrates context, memory, and adaptive behavior to create a consistent presence over time. Familiars are optimized for interaction, for presence, and for everyday use.

Today's reveal marks FM&M's emergence from stealth, not a commercial product launch. Specific applications, form factors, and timelines will be shared in future updates.

### **The Path Forward: The First to Scale Physical AI**

The Consumer Physical AI market will not be won by the most impressive demo - but by the system people choose to live with. Familiar Machines & Magic is building a Physical AI platform focused on real-world deployment, measurable value, and responsible scaling.

Unlike cloud-dependent AI systems that rely on continuous data streaming, FM&M's architecture prioritizes on-device, edge AI to reduce latency and strengthen privacy. The company has also established clear data governance guardrails as it develops systems designed for daily life.

By focusing on systems that can scale broadly, FM&M is building a platform that improves through real-world use rather than speculative demonstrations.

### **Follow the Journey**

Familiar Machines & Magic will share updates, research, and progress as it develops its Familiars platform; this is just the beginning. If you're curious what life with a Familiar could look like, sign up at [familiarmachines.com](https://familiarmachines.com) or follow FM&M on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).

### **About Familiar Machines & Magic**

Familiar Machines & Magic is pioneering Consumer Physical AI, beginning with Familiars - physically embodied AI systems designed to form long-term, emotionally intelligent relationships with people. The company's mission is to create artificial life to build a more caring world.

Founded by Colin Angle, cofounder and former CEO of iRobot, FM&M builds on more than three decades of consumer robotics experience. Angle is joined by cofounders Ira Renfrew, Chief People and Product Officer (C2PO), and Dr. Chris Jones, Chief Research and Development Officer (CRDO) - veteran robotics and AI leaders with experience spanning iRobot, Amazon, and other global consumer technology platforms.

Collectively, the founding team has deployed over 50 million consumer robots worldwide and led advances in navigation, machine learning, and human-robot interaction. The broader team brings additional expertise from institutions including Disney Research, MIT, Boston Dynamics, and USC.



With offices in Boston, LA, and Hong Kong, Familiar Machines & Magic is building a long-term platform for Artificial Life in partnership with leading researchers, engineers, and strategic collaborators.

For more information, visit: [familiarmachines.com](http://familiarmachines.com).

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