**Using Science Fiction Trailers to Teach Social Responses to Communication Technology and the Media Equation – Student Instructions**

**Learning Objectives**

1. Explain and apply how interactive media systems and devices are treated as humanlike entities, both in conscious and nonconscious ways
2. Reflect on what this means for design

**Think**

In the space below, list at least five differences between the robot or computer agent characters of the two movie trailers presented: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_from the movie \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the movie \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that relate to tenets of the Media Equation and Computers are Social Actors paradigm. For each difference you list, you should identify how it relates to what you’ve learned how computers/robots/agents are treated similarly to humans, and what the Media Equation/CASA would say about how users might interact differently with or respond differently to them, as a result of differences in their design, self-presentation, or other characteristics.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**Pair**

With your partner, discuss what you noted and identify any other ways you have identified that the characters are similar and different. Then address the following two things.

1. Based on the similarities and differences, what would Media Equation/CASA research say about the agents?
2. Based on what you’ve learned about the Media Equation/CASA, were the agents designed appropriately, or should their designs be modified? How should they behave differently based on their design characteristics? How might you design them differently?
3. If you identified similarities and differences in terms of gender, race, or other social categories, were the agents designed consistent with social category stereotypes? What would the Media Equation/CASA suggest about consistency/inconsistency with these stereotypes, and what are the ethical implications of what the Media Equation/CASA research has found and relying on this for design?

**Share**

Be prepared to share what you and your partner have discussed with the rest of the class.

The Media Equation

According to Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass, human-technology interaction is fundamentally social and natural: people tend to treat interactive technologies like they treat people. In other words: media = real life.

There are four steps to the Media Equation and its associated Computers are Social Actors Paradigm:

1. Pick a social science finding regarding human behaviors or attitudes.
2. Using a previous research study on this finding pertaining to human-human interaction, you substitute the word “computer” (or some other form of interactive media) for the second “human” in the Theory and Methods sections of the original study.
3. Attempt to replicate the human-human interaction study as a human-computer interaction study and demonstrate the rule still applies.
4. Draw out implications for theory and design.