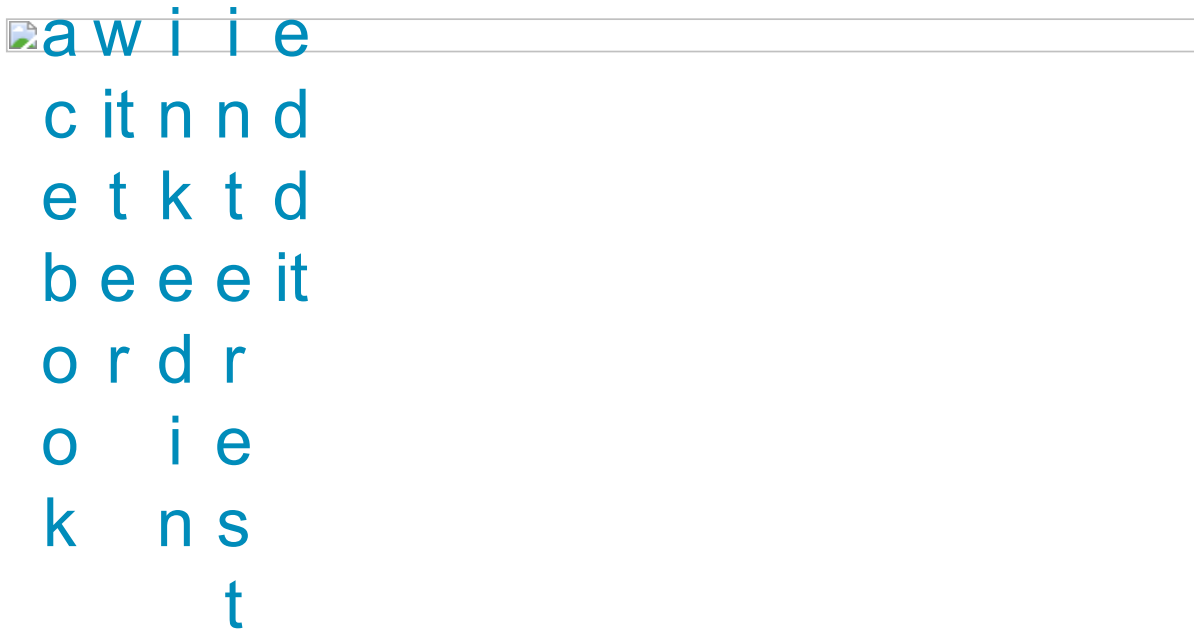


MIT Creates An AI Version of Eric Schmidt Because Someone Had To Eventually

BY LEE MATHEWS



STAY ON TARGET

Robot Predicts Consumer Satisfaction Based on Beer Head

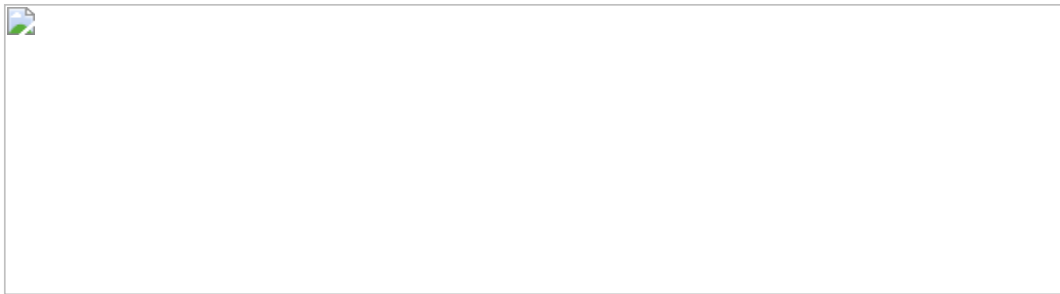
Can Machines Achieve Spirituality?

In one of the big musical numbers from *The Life Of Brian*, Eric Idle reminds us to “*always look on the bright side of life.*” Norman, a new artificial intelligence project from MIT, doesn’t know how to do that.

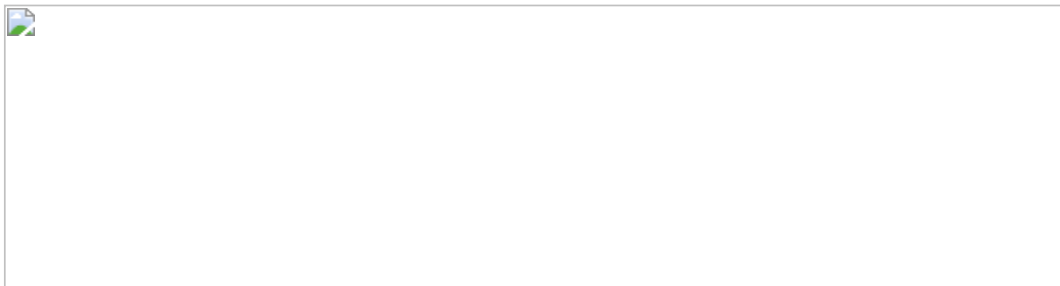
That’s because Norman is a psychopath, just like the Hitchcock character that inspired the research team to create him.

Like so many of these projects do, the MIT researchers started out by training Norman on freely available data found on the Web. Instead of looking at the usual family-friendly Google Images fare, however, they pointed Norman toward darker imagery. Specifically, the MIT crew stuck Norman in a creepy subreddit to do his initial training.

Armed with this twisted mass of digital memories, Norman was then asked to caption a series of Rorschach inkblots. The results are predictably creepy. Let's have a look at a couple, shall we?



You've got to hand it to Norman, he paints a vivid picture. He's not always as prosaic, but he does always stick to the darkest timeline. You know, the one where Abed tries to cut off Jeff's arm with a bone saw.



Standard AI thinks *wedding*, Norman thinks *funeral*. Or maybe crime scene.

The MIT team hit the nail on the head when it said: "Norman suffered from extended exposure to the darkest corners of Reddit." Fortunately, there's still hope for this disturbed AI.

If we all get together and re-train him by submitting our own answers to MIT's test images maybe Norman can start seeing the world through slightly more rose-colored glasses. Then again, it could also backfire horribly.

Either way, it reinforces one very important fact about AI: that the worldview of an AI is very much determined by the information it gathers while learning. That's obviously not a new revelation. We saw something similar play out when Microsoft's Twitter bot went from normal to racist in less than 24 hours.