

November 24, 2007 [issue date]: [Evolution of humour could make computers laugh](#). By Mark Buchanan. New Scientist (Issue 2631: pages 6-7; subscription req'd). "Did you hear the one about the computer with a sense of humour? Didn't think so. Computers can do many things, but stand-up comedy is not one of them. Yet the idea that computers can be witty might not be all that far-fetched. Perhaps machines need not be conscious to understand humour, and even to invent and tell jokes. Physicist Igor Suslov of the Kapitza Institute for Physical Problems in Moscow, Russia, has designed a computer model which he says explains the evolution of humour. Our ability to experience humour, he suggests, ultimately depends on quirks in how the brain handles information. ... He argues that humour is the brain's way of dealing with such errors: a rapid emotional response makes us aware of a mistake, and brings new information into consciousness especially swiftly. ... Suslov hasn't yet made a computer that laughs, but he has proposed a specific computational model, based on a neural network, that would mimic the information processing he describes, and necessarily be prone to the same recognition errors...."

- Also see: [Robocomedian, the comic computer](#). By Roger Highfield. Telegraph. "A mathematical model to reveal the science of laughter has been devised that not only explains where jokes came from in the first place but suggests that humour is inevitable because it is a kind of error detection mechanism to keep the most complex known machine - the human brain - working efficiently. In short, we laugh at our mistakes to improve performance. For developers of artificial intelligence, a joke telling machine remains far-fetched and was thought to remain that way until we could understand and even simulate consciousness in a machine. But now physicist Igor Suslov...."

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November 23, 2007: [BU to offer game engineering certificate](#). Boston Business Journal. "Boston University's Metropolitan College said this week it has added a new graduate certificate program in interactive multimedia and game engineering. The program will be offered for the first time during the spring 2008 semester and will introduce students to computer graphics and simulation. The program will feature courses in animation, advanced graphics, real-time simulation techniques, and artificial intelligence,