

Machines can simulate human intelligence

First there was artificial coloring, followed by artificial flavoring. Soon came artificial insemination.

And now we have artificial intelligence (AI). Simply defined, "artificial intelligence" is the ability of machines to do things that people would say require intelligence. It is a specific branch of computer science devoted to programming computers to carry out tasks which, if carried out by human beings, would require reasoning skills. It is an attempt to simulate human intelligence by machine.

"Science fiction," you say. Not hard-

ly, though many sci-fi authors have used this theme in their novels. We are reminded of HAL, the computer in "2001: A Space Odyssey," who overpowered the human commanders and took control of the spaceship.

The extent to which computerized machines can do complex operations independently of people is still limited. However, the possibility exists that machines can be made to show behavior indicative of intelligence comparable or even superior to that of humans.

ELIZA, a computer program, so successfully simulated the conversation of



high tech
Ronald R. Watcke

a psychotherapist that even computer professionals found themselves spilling their most private thoughts and feelings to a machine. A version of ELIZA, called DOCTOR has a protocol like this:

DOCTOR: Good afternoon. Please type in your name. (The visitor does so and the doctor continues.) What brought you here to see me today?
VISITOR: Oh, nothing much. I'm feeling a bit tired, that's all.

DOCTOR: Why do you think you're feeling a bit tired?
VISITOR: Well, I've been traveling a lot, and away from home.
DOCTOR: Tell me about your family. Applications of artificial intelligence are numerous and varied. Specific areas include:
• Problem solving.
• Natural language processing.
• Perception and pattern recognition.
• Information storage and retrieval.
• Control of robots.
• Game playing.

• Automatic programming.
• Computational logic.
IN PROBLEM solving, AI designs a program that will, 1) work out a given problem and 2) carry out the steps. In the traditional problem-solving mode, the programmer would provide the step-by-step method.
One of the first applications of AI programming was to translate Russian into English after the Sputnik launch in 1957.

A Troy resident, Watcke is dean of liberal arts at Wayne County Community College.

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