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# Chatbots faking it as they pretend to be us

## Online digital versions of us could come in many guises

By J Mark Lytle

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The idea of a far-distant future where we can upload our very essence to some digital repository in the ether is both compelling and repulsive in equal measure, but a less sci-fi alternative may be closer than we think.

According to *New Scientist*, chatbots - the online programs that attempt to mimic human conversation - could soon learn to talk like us so well that they may as well be us.



### Let's pretend

Existing services like *MyCyberTwin* are capable of taking information from a personality questionnaire and using it to masquerade as a real human in text chats on services like MSN Messenger.

*MyCyberTwin* uses 79 questions, which may seem like a lot, to get to the core of what makes each person tick, but there are chatbots in development that use many more - 20,000 in the case of [this one](#) you can download to keep you busy on these cold winter nights.

Better still, future chatbots could take years of written records of conversations we've had - whether in chat or email - and analyse the lot to extract a synthetic version of the way we communicate. Once that happens, would there be any real difference between the imposters and us?

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