

ELIZA

We'll start our investigation of Artificial Intelligence with a simplified version of the classic program, ELIZA, which we discussed at some length in the introduction. As we said there, the program scans your input for words it can use, and then reflects your words back to you in a way which makes it seem as if the program is really speaking to you. Once you've played with it a while, you'll learn how to trigger the most effective responses.

Here's part of one 'conversation' I had with my version of ELIZA:

WELCOME TO ANOTHER SESSION WITH
YOUR COMPUTER PSYCHIATRIST, ELIZA

WHAT IS YOUR FIRST NAME? TIM

WELL, HI THERE TIM

IT SURE IS NEAT TO HAVE YOU DROP BY

PRESS MY SPACE BAR WHEN YOU'RE READY TO START

? I HAVE A SERIOUS PROBLEM
WHY ARE YOU SAYING THAT?

? BECAUSE I'VE COME TO YOU FOR HELP
TIM, I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND YOU FULLY.

? I AM AFRAID OF MICE
TIM, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AFRAID OF MICE