

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Monkeys 'have self-doubt like humans'

PTI, Feb 21, 2011, 05.00pm IST

LONDON: Alike humans, monkeys display self-doubt and uncertainty, a new study has revealed.

An international team has found that monkeys trained to play computer games feel self-doubt and uncertainty and will "pass" rather than risk choosing the wrong answer in a brainteaser task.

Awareness of our own thinking was believed to be a uniquely human trait. But, the study suggests that our more primitive primate relatives are capable of such self-awareness, the 'BBC' reported.

Prof John [David Smith](#) of [State University of New York](#) at Buffalo and Michael Beran of Georgia State University, trained the macaques to use a joystick-based computer game.

The animals were trained to judge the density of a pixel box that appeared at the top of the screen as either sparse or dense. To give their answer, the monkeys simply moved a cursor towards a letter S or a letter D.

When the animals chose the correct letter, they were rewarded with an edible treat. There was no punishment for choosing the wrong answer, but the game briefly paused, taking away -- for a few seconds -- the opportunity for the animals to win another treat.

But the monkeys had a third option -- choosing a question mark -- which skipped the trial and moved on to the next one. This meant no treat, but it also meant no pause in the game.

THE TIMES OF INDIAPowered by [INDIATIMES](#)[About us](#)[Advertise with us](#)[Terms of use](#)[Privacy policy](#)[Feedback](#)[RSS](#)[Newsletter](#)[TOI Mobile](#)[ePaper](#)[Sitemap](#)[Archives](#)**Other Times Group news sites**

Times Crest | The Economic Times
इकनॉमिक टाइम्स | ईकॉनॉमिक टाइम्स
Mumbai Mirror | Times Now
Indiatimes | नवभारत टाइम्स
महाराष्ट्र टाइम्स | Go Green
Cricket World Cup 2011

Living and entertainment

Timescity | iDiva | Bollywood | Zoom

Network

itimes | Dating & Chat | Email

Hot on the Web

Hotklix

Services

Book print ads | Online shopping | Business solutions | Book domains | Web hosting
Business email | Free SMS | Free email | Website design | CRM | Tenders | Remit
Cheap air tickets | Matrimonial | Ringtones | Astrology | Jobs | Property | Buy car
Bikes in India

Copyright © 2011 Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. All rights reserved. For reprint rights: [Times Syndication Service](#)