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## A computer that talks to animals?

### Are you barking mad?

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Fancy yourself as a bit of a Doctor Dolittle?

Scientists in Hungary are now working on software, which analyses dogs' barks to allow their owners to better recognise how their furry friend is feeling.

According to Reuters, Hungarian ethologist Csaba Molnar and his colleagues at Budapest's ELTE University have tested software which distinguishes the emotional reaction of 14 dogs to six situations: being alone, seeing a ball, fighting, playing, encountering a stranger and going for a walk.

"A possible commercial application could be a device for dog-human communication", the scientist told Reuters.

The computer correctly recognised the emotional reaction of the dogs using their barks and yelps in 43% of the cases, while people involved in the investigation had judged correctly in 40% of cases.

The scientists say that more improvements can be made to the software but that even people who aren't experienced with canines can understand some of the messages that the dogs were trying to convey.

