

# The imitation game

Education



## The imitation Game

Turing test refers to the proposal made by Alan Turing in response to the question whether machines have the capability to think. The tests suggests that instead of focusing on the question whether machines can think, we can instead seek to find out if a digital computer can actually imitate a human being. This was referred by Turing as “ The imitation Game”. Turing himself thought that very soon we shall have computers who would pass this Imitation Game.

Turing described the test as follows. There are three components to it: a person, a machine and an interrogator. The interrogator is in a separate room from the machine and the computer. The interrogator is allowed to communicate with both the machine and computer and puts up questions to them. He has no knowledge about which of them is a machine and which is the person. The aim of the interrogator is to correctly identify the machine and the person. Meanwhile, the machine will try to cause the interrogator into wrongly identifying it as the person; and the person will try to help the interrogator identify correctly.

According to Turing, in fifty years' time, it will be possible to program computers so that the average interrogator will not have more than 70 percent chances of correctly identifying after five minutes of questioning. However, despite the long time that has passed, the Turing test has not yet been completed by anyone.

There are two main objections raised against Turing test. Firstly, whether we will actually have computers with so much intelligence, that they have a less than 70 percent chance of correct identification. Secondly, even if the average interrogator had a less than 70 percent chance of correct

identification, can we conclude that the machine has demonstrated certain level of thought, intelligence or mentality?

Although the Turing test seems highly impractical to achieve, it serves to remain as a benchmark for Artificial Intelligence researchers and developers. However, there are other competitions which are considered to be more challenging and practical to achieve.

Reference:

Oppy, Graham., Dowe, David. " The Turing Test". Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 2003. Stanford University. 21 April 2009.