

07.24.17

Meow! Amazon-commissioned futurists think pet translators are coming soon

The internet retailing giant has sponsored a report by futurists Anne Lise Kjaer and William Higham, who claim that advances in AI and machine learning will enable companies to make devices that can **accurately translate a cat's meows and a dog's barks into English**, reports the *Guardian*. The report cites a study by Con Slobodchikoff, professor emeritus at the department of biological sciences at Northern Arizona University, who has found that prairie dogs have specific sounds they make for various predators and colors.

Though prairie dogs are rodents, Slobodchikoff believes other animals have similar “vocabularies” and thus a commercial device that will be able to translate animal sounds to human speech, and vice versa, is not far off. Personally, we're a bit skeptical and think Jeff Bezos is more likely to find talking aliens on a Blue Origin mission than he is to be selling devices on Amazon.com that allow humans and animals to converse in English.

—MG