

Yawning cartoons make an ape gape

卡通猩猩打哈欠 真猩猩跟著張大嘴

Computer animations of yawning chimpanzees provoke the same **irresistible** grins in real chimps, according to an unusual study released last week.

"Contagious yawning" is well known among humans, and earlier studies have shown that chimps are not immune to its influence either.

But the new research is the first to show that chimpanzees **couldn't give a monkey's** if the yawn belongs to a computer animation or a real life chimp.

Matthew Campbell and colleagues of the Yerkes National Primate Research Center in Lawrenceville, Georgia divided 24 chimps ranging in age from nine to 43 years old into pairs.

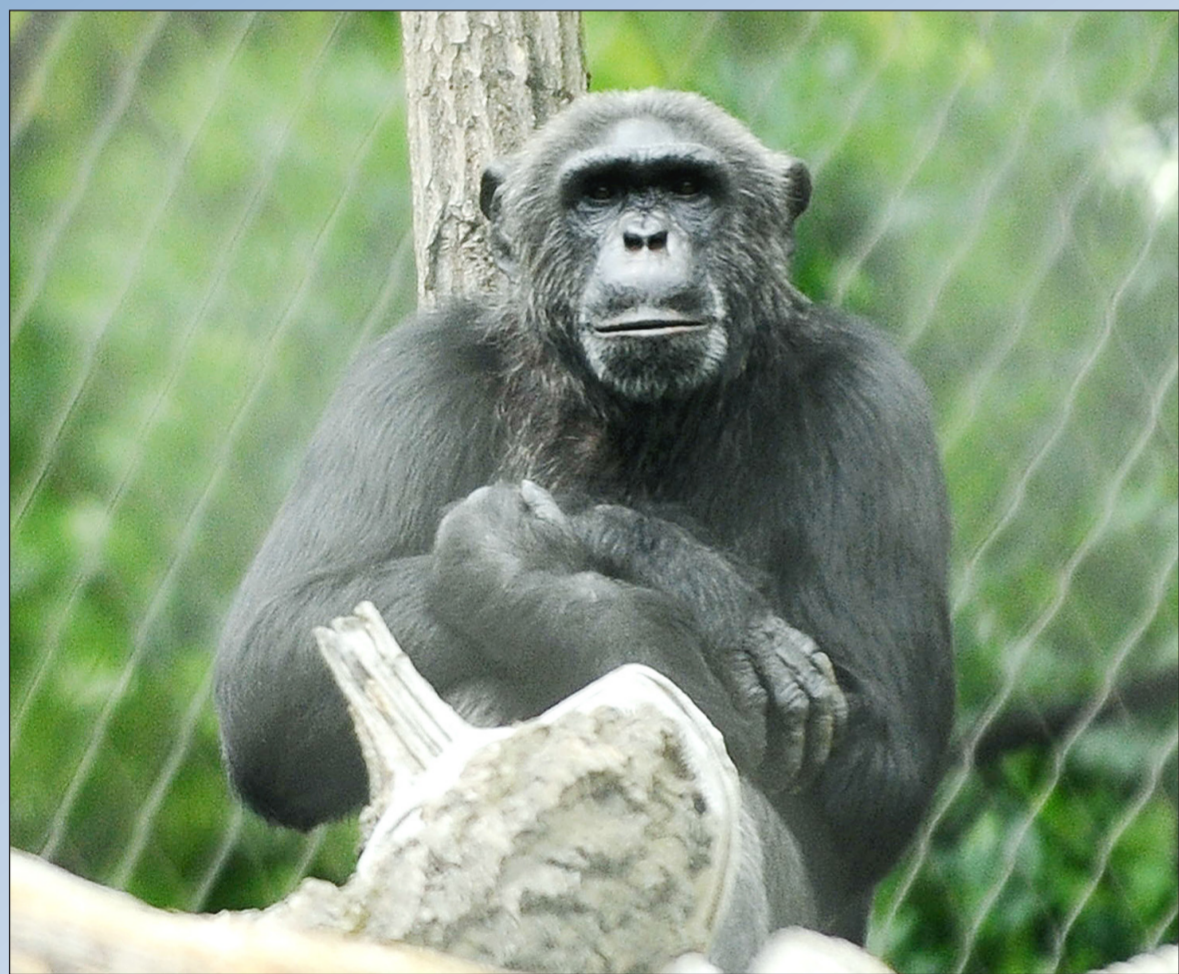
Each pair was exposed to animated chimps in two short 3-D videos on a 48-cm screen. Only one of the videos showed the animals yawning.

The chimps may be doing something deeper than simple imitation, for they may have an emotional tie with the cartoon character, the researchers believe.

"Contagious yawning is controlled by the same **mechanism** that makes emotions contagious," the study notes. "Our results strongly suggest an empathetic response to the animations."

The technique could provide an important tool for exploring animal behavior and cognition, the study adds.

The study is published in a British scientific journal, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*. (AFP)



上週公佈的一項特別研究指出，黑猩猩看到動畫中的黑猩猩打哈欠，也會不由自主地跟著張開嘴巴。

「打哈欠會傳染」廣為「人」知，之前的研究顯示，這個現象也適用在黑猩猩身上。

但根據這項最新的研究顯示，黑猩猩根本不管打哈欠的是真正的黑猩猩，還是電腦動畫。

喬治亞州勞倫斯維爾市耶基斯全國靈長類研究中心的馬修·坎伯和同仁，將二十四隻九到四十三歲的黑猩猩，依年齡區分成兩兩一組。

每一組黑猩猩都被安排觀看在四十八公分螢幕上播放的兩段3-D黑猩猩動畫短片，其中只有一段短片裡的黑猩猩會打哈欠。

研究學者相信，這些黑猩猩同樣做出打哈欠的動作可能不僅止於模仿，而是和影片中的動畫角色有了情感上的連結。

研究中特別指出：「打哈欠傳染和情緒傳染是由身體的同一套機制所控制。而我們的結果明顯反映，黑猩猩對動畫猩猩產生移情反應。」

研究還指出，這種科技能作為探索動物行為和感知的重要工具。

這項研究刊登於英國科學期刊《英國皇家學會學報B刊》上。

(法新社/翻譯：袁星塵)

Top: A chimpanzee enjoys a piece of ice filled with peanuts and fruit bites in Amersfoort Zoo, Amersfoort, Netherlands, on July 1, 2009.

PHOTO: EPA

Left: Pedro, a chimpanzee, sits in his enclosure in the zoo of Berlin, Germany on June 9, 2009.

PHOTO: AFP

上圖：七月一日，在荷蘭阿默斯福特市的阿默斯福特動物園中，一隻黑猩猩正享用一塊包著花生和水果的大冰塊。
左圖：六月九日，德國柏林動物園的黑猩猩佩卓坐在他的圍欄裡。

照片：歐新社
照片：法新社

TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. irresistible /ˌɪrɪˈzɪstəbl/ adj.

不可抗拒的 (bu4 ke3 kang4 ju4 de5)

例：Grandmother's brownies are simply irresistible — you must try one of them.
(奶奶的布朗尼真的讓人無法抗拒，你一定得嚐嚐。)

2. contagious /kənˈteɪdʒəs/ adj.

接觸傳染性的 (jie1 chu4 chuan2 ran3 xing4 de5)

例：Mitch has been hospitalized with a stomach problem, but don't worry — it isn't contagious.
(米契因為胃病住院治療，但別擔心，那不會傳染。)

3. mechanism /ˈmɛkəˌnɪzəm/ n.

機制 (ji1 zhi4)

例：According to some psychologists, many people exhibit aggressive behavior as a defense mechanism.
(某些心理學家主張，許多人會表現出侵略性行為，是基於某種防衛機制。)

IDIOM POINT 重要片語

not give a monkey's 一點也不在乎

If you **don't give a monkey's** about something, you don't care about it. In the article, the chimpanzees were unconcerned whether or not the yawning chimpanzee was real or a computer animation.

Example: "I **couldn't give a monkey's** how much you paid for it — I'm not letting you keep that dog in my house!"

若說你「don't give a monkey's about」某事，意思就是你壓根不在乎這件事。文章中提到，黑猩猩一點也不在乎打哈欠的猩猩到底是真的，還是只是電腦動畫。

例如：「我不在乎你花了多少錢，總之我是不會讓你把那隻狗養在我家的！」。