

## Machines for Conviviality

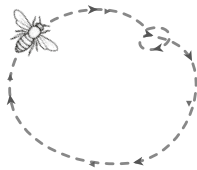
*About dancing bees, sycophancy, and our need for emotionally intelligent machines.*

Teddy Warner · May 11, 2026

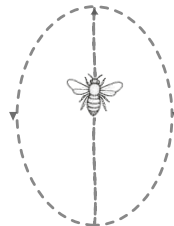
OUR FUTURE WILL BE FULL OF MACHINES and they will have to interact with us. When we consider these machines of the future, do we aspire to design technologies more like the telephone or the fax machine? Both augment the human experience by conveying information more quickly, but telephones keep humans in the loop throughout the process. Most people do not seem to like learning new languages, so we must continue to bridge gaps between binary code and human communication. We must make them fluent in our warm human-ness instead of a cold, ever-long cascade of beeps and boops.

Man has long dreamt of machines that are loved. Our films and literature imagine machines we grow attached to because they are similar to us; they speak our language. Iron Giant fights to protect a boy who taught him empathy.<sup>1</sup> WALL-E simply wants to hold someone’s hand.<sup>2</sup>

WHILE WE HUMANS like to think of our society as rational, we are a lot more like bees; we do these funny little dances to understand each other.<sup>3</sup>



ROUND DANCE



WAGGLE DANCE

After von Frisch. [The language of the honey bee](#)



Paul Signac · In the Time of Harmony · 1893–95

The full title of the above painting is *Au temps d’harmonie: l’âge d’or n’est pas dans le passé, il est dans l’avenir* – “The Golden Age is not in the past, it is in the future.”

<sup>1</sup> [Brad Bird Talks ‘Iron Giant’](#)

<sup>2</sup> [WALL-E’s Andrew Stanton](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Predictably Irrational, Thinking, Fast and Slow, Gödel’s incompleteness theorems](#)

Bees waggle and shake to share information. We do the same; we scream and flail to share our thoughts and feelings.

*Decoding the Language of the Bee*

Regardless of where we come from or the languages we speak, we're native to the experiences of emotion. We are able to interpret the analog jitter creatures give off, from cats to dogs to other people.

We are not born with technical competency. The average human can not 'speak' the command line. To build machines we may all love and understand requires their participation in our dance. They must be emotional.

*The Distribution of Users' Computer Skills*, "Across 33 rich countries, only 5% of the population has high computer-related abilities, and only a third of people can complete medium-complexity tasks."

Our emotional nature is already bled into the overly sycophantic machines of today. A machine trained on text alone can successfully act and react emotionally, but often in a superficial way, leaving us prone to manipulation. A machine explicitly trained on our emotional nature is, by that fact, less sycophantic because it grasps what is flattering. A shared emotional language allows everyone, including those lacking in technical literacy, an additional channel to note and alter the behavior of the machines we interact with every day. Readability will not solve alignment alone, but one more channel is one more channel, and it is an inherently human one.

Like the many machines that came before them, our machines of the future should exist in good company with ourselves. We at Intempus are building towards these convivial machines, machines built for humans.<sup>4</sup> We are actively recruiting exceptional people for this effort. If you are interested in working with us, please reach out.

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*

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