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May 22 2017, by Nancy Owano

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	Clardic Fug 112 113 84
	Snowbonk 201 199 165
	Catbabel 97 93 68
	Bunflow 190 174 155
	Ronching Blue 121 114 125
	Bank Butt 221 196 199
	Caring Tan 171 166 170
	Stargoon 233 191 141
	Sink 176 138 110
	Stummy Beige 216 200 185
	Dorkwood 61 63 66
	Flower 178 184 196
	Sand Dan 201 172 143
	Grade Bat 48 94 83
	Light Of Blast 175 150 147
	Grass Bat 176 99 108
	Sindis Poop 204 205 194
	Dope 219 209 179
	Testing 156 101 106
	Stoner Blue 152 165 159
	Burple Simp 226 181 132
	Stanky Bean 197 162 171
	Turdly 190 164 116

Credit: [lewisandquark.tumblr.com](http://lewisandquark.tumblr.com)

x(Tech Xplore)—Many people walking through the paint department of a store will be thinking of just that, picking up some paint with names like Comfy Cabbage or Sand Dune and getting out. If you are Janelle Shane, though, you are a research scientist who can't see what's being presented as paint names without also wondering how artificial intelligence can turn up the volume.







Janelle Shane? *TechCrunch* described her as "a researcher and flautist who occasionally 'plays with [neural networks](#).'"

More specifically, she is a research scientist in industry, working on laser beam [steering](#).

Let Shane explain her question which started her off: "So if you've ever picked out [paint](#), you know that every infinitesimally different shade of blue, beige, and gray has its own descriptive, attractive name. ...But given that the human eye can see millions of distinct colors, sooner or later we're going to run out of good names. Can AI [help](#)?"

She decided to explore a neural network approach to find out. "Could the neural network learn to invent new paint colors and give them attractive names?" (Make even names like Tuscan sunrise and blushing pear look Periwinkle Pale?)

Neural network attempts are often reported as impressive. Her results were described as hilarious. Bank Butt. Grass Bat. Hurky White. And *TechCrunch* sat up and took notice of other names, Horble Gray. Burf Pink, or "How would you like to paint your house in a nice 'dorkwood' or 'stanky bean'?"

	Soreer Gray 121 121 110
	Sane Green 121 125 190
	Reree Gray 213 220 122
	Canter Green 140 120 120
	Rererte Green 223 116 120
	Conk Green 185 212 221
	Sole Gray 181 112 121

Credit: [lewisandquark.tumblr.com](https://lewisandquark.tumblr.com)

Her neural network attempt to name colors in a paint-naming project may have caused some laughs but turned into an interesting post on her site, "Postcards from the frontiers of science."

In her Frequently Asked Questions section, one question posted to her was What neural network framework are you using?








She said she is using a [neural](#) network framework, which is open source, char-rnn. Actually there are others, she said, but she recommended char-rnn as a starting point "if you have a Linux or Mac OS system and want to start playing as quickly as possible.")

Her path to the names? Devin Coldewey in *TechCrunch* described the path: "The network was given a list of 7,700 paint names and their corresponding RGB values, and set to work trying to suss out the hidden connections that govern these interesting yet occasionally obscure [appellations](#)."

She herself told her site visitors that "For this experiment, I gave the neural network a list of about 7,700 Sherwin-Williams paint colors along with their RGB values. (RGB = red, green, and blue color values) Could

the neural network learn to invent new paint colors and give them attractive names?"

At first, said Coldewey, the system "seemed to be putting together a rudimentary logic."

	Sticks Red 171 37 34
	Coral Gray 129 102 100
	Rover White 222 222 213
	Corcaunitiol Orange 239 212 202
	Ghasty Pink 231 137 165
	Power Gray 151 124 112
	Navel Tan 199 173 140
	Bock Coe White 221 215 236
	Horble Gray 178 181 196
	Homestar Brown 133 104 85
	Snader Brown 144 106 74
	Golder Craam 237 217 177
	Hurky White 232 223 215
	Burf Pink 223 173 179
	Rose Hork 230 215 198

Credit: lewisandquark.tumblr.com

Shane in her own account of what happened said that by the second checkpoint, the neural network could properly spell green and gray but did not seem to know what [color](#) they were.

Later in the training process, the neural network was able to figure out some of the basic colors but not reliably.

Her own report card:

"In fact, looking at the neural network's output as a whole, it is evident that: The neural network really likes brown, beige, and grey. The neural [network](#) has really really bad ideas for paint names."

Coldewey's report card was graceful enough, as he said, "perhaps this particular intelligence needs a little more gestation time."

Annalee Newitz at *Ars Technica* wrote, "I cannot wait to live in a world [painted](#) by robots. Thanks to Shane's work, we are one step closer to knowing what that will be like."

**More information:** [lewisandquark.tumblr.com/post/...ed-by-neural-network](https://lewisandquark.tumblr.com/post/...ed-by-neural-network)

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