



QUESTION OF THE DAY

Do rats like taking selfies?

Answer: It would appear so.

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Human beings enjoy taking photos of themselves, often to share online, but what about other species? It turns out rats like to take pictures of themselves too.

Augustin Lignier, a professional photographer in Paris, recently tested this theory with two pet store rats in a Skinner box. Designed by well-known behaviorist B.F. Skinner, the Skinner box rewards rats when they press a lever. In Lignier's [experiment](#), they

were rewarded with a little bit of sugar and a camera that took their photo and then displayed it on a screen for them to see.

After the rats got the hang of it, Lignier altered the system so that the sugar was only dispensed sporadically when they pressed the lever, rather than every time. They still got a selfie with each press though. The rats proved to be persistent, sometimes even ignoring the sugar when it did appear so they could keep pressing the button. Lignier noted a parallel with this behavior and humans' approach to social media: "Digital and social media companies use the same concept to keep the attention of the viewer as long as possible." Or, living things of all species just really like to push buttons and take photos.