

New tech promises to predict your moods. That might not be a good thing

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If your phone could warn you of impending stormy internal weather, you could theoretically do the emotional equivalent of grabbing an umbrella on a cloudy day to ensure you don't get doused later.

That's the basic idea behind a number of [new technologies](#), many still in development, that [attempt to predict emotions](#) based on certain biomarkers. Psychologists and technologists are together trying to build emotional databases that teach machines how to read human feelings by compiling a bunch of data about biological signals that indicate impending changes in order to digitally predict moods. Your wristband or phone would serve as a sensor, helping you ward off depression, supporters of the new technology say.

There's science to back that natural approach. Lisa Feldman Barrett, a neuroscientist and psychology professor at Northeastern University, received a National Institutes of Health Director's Pioneer Award for her work [on emotions and the brain](#). In a [Ted Talk](#) last December she explained her conclusions after 25 years of scientific research: "[Emotions] are guesses that your brain constructs in the moment where billions of brain cells are working together, and you have more control over those guesses than you might imagine that you do." In other words, what's happening when we feel is that we're unconsciously predicting what might be, based on past experiences.