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Courtship displays of male pigeons can be triggered by video-taped and computer-animated pigeons.

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Male pigeons show species-specific courtship displays in front of female pigeons. The present study examined whether visual information, without auditory or tactile input, could trigger such courtship displays. The study also examined which technical measures could be used to present the visual stimuli. We studied the behaviors of male pigeons in response to video-taped and computer-animated stimuli presented on a computer monitor. The subjects did show courtship displays in front of video-taped and computer-animated females. However, they showed little or no such behavior when empty cages or upside-down views of females were presented on the monitor. Thus, subjects selectively reacted to the visual stimuli, suggesting that the artificial pigeons can be used as stimuli to represent a viable potential mate.