

Internal Networks Revisited: Telepathy Meets Technology

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ABSTRACT

This is speculative paper that explores the paradigm-shifting concept of initiating a mind/body to computer communication or interaction, it is not intended necessarily a prescriptive work. This idea pushes the boundaries of accepted conventional science, in terms of human versus computer capabilities and the potential for these capabilities to work in tandem, through means currently accepted only in science fiction. This paper takes the recent revelations in physics, psychology and neuroscience then couples them with the idea of human computer interaction and wireless communication to envision experiential means of connecting human consciousness with technology.

KEYWORDS

Alternate Realities, speculative future wireless communication, human –computer interaction, quantum physics and neuroscience, materiality versus virtuality, wired versus wireless, human networking, time / space, in the body/out of body, inner space, telepathy versus radio waves, embodiment and consciousness, human mind/body versus technological power and control.

INTRODUCTION

Advances in physics, neuroscience, consciousness research and psychology are demonstrating how experiments studying previously inexplicable phenomena, such as telepathy, telekinesis and distance healing, are real phenomena. These studies are repeatable and “successful”, in terms of being above odds against chance in lab experiments, and somewhat controllable. They are critical not only to understanding the mind, but also in envisioning how to utilize these embodied cognitive abilities within medicine, technology, communications and in creating a new understanding of the universe. This paper demonstrates and references some of the physics and other science behind these ideas.

Definitions

Consciousness = both the physical state of being awake and a mental construct of being. It includes, and is induced by, bodily sensations or perceptions and the

feeling of embodiment. [1]

Experience = the accumulation of mind-body knowledge or skills that result from direct participation or observation in events or activities. It has firsthand memory and knowledge of states, situations, emotions, or sensations, mental or bodily, as well as the totality of events of an individual or group history. Experience is also the personal embodied reception, interpretation and response to an event or activity, resulting in actual enjoyment or suffering.

Non-locality = physical objects (or people) that may seem unrelated or separate, but are connected, transcending the limitation of space and time or take place simultaneously either through space and time, in space or in time.[2]

Experience Design = the communication of meaning and creation of experience for individuals, with meaning embedded within all points of contact. Experience designers create experiences, either physical or virtual, that are intended to produce specific perceptions, cognition and behavior among their users, visitors, or audiences. The tools of the experience designer are software, hardware, and the "wetware" of the human mind/body. The experience designer combines technology with art techniques. They are trained in the art, design, and technology, as well proficient in social sciences, architecture, ethnography, phenomenology, theatre or narrative arts. [3]

TELEPATHY MEETS TECHNOLOGY

My interest is in how experience designers might use elements from virtuality, cyberculture and technology to mediate or enhance a person's experience. This exploration has led me to ideas of ways to facilitate the body's sensory reception, enabling human consciousness' "mind-networking" and communication abilities. Before this is possible, people need to become attuned to their own minds, bodies and sensory or extra-sensory abilities.

Advancements in technology have seduced us away from our self-generating perceptions and sensations, replacing them with manufactured experiences and sensations. Cluttered with too much stimulus and convenience, inundated with information, especially visual, most of us are unable to clear our minds to let our embodied "sensors" become more sensitive to the environment around and within us – our own wireless communication and networking. Yet these innovations are simultaneously bringing us closer to the reality of linking embodied cognitive communication with artificial networks; the possibility seems more real when we consider the Internet as a model for this type of communication.

Quantum physics and neuroscience have compelling research to legitimize these extra-sensory abilities (like telepathy), which are often suppressed due to scientific and societal disapproval. These abilities or senses are believed to exist within most of us, much like the ability

to sing, and may be the conceptual foundation upon which the development of computer technology, telephones, wireless technology and the Internet have been based. The problem is that the public may not recognize these faculties as normal, discouraging them from accessing or developing their own “knowing” or long distance communication. Once people have mastered these skills, the door will be open to connect with computer information systems, enhancing our embodied memory, storage and processing abilities, ultimately blending the power of technology with the power of the human mind/body.

QUANTUM CONSCIOUSNESS AND TELEPATHY

It occurs to me that if society begins to value extrasensory perception as a legitimate skill set, new areas of scientific research will open up, beyond that of the current medical research in "Distance Healing"(telepathic) or the former CIA/ military research on remote viewing for political espionage [4].

The next question is: can we control or interact with technological systems with our minds? Or can we project ourselves into alternate times or go to alternate universes and realities through our consciousness? Previous US CIA and Military experiments, Princeton engineering research, as well as others cited herein, suggest this is possible. [5] This possibility inspires me to explore these questions from many angles, including a scientific, artistic and philosophical point of view.

The work of physicist Fred Alan Wolf, especially his book, “The Dreaming Universe”, suggests that we all come together as parts of one great quantum consciousness when we dream, and are therefore able to access bits of the consciousnesses of others in that state [6].

Wolfe explains that consciousness is a non-physical or quantum part of the brain/body, that facilitates this type of communication between people across space, time and matter, and that we all are connected to a main ‘cloud’ of consciousness. This ‘cloud’ is not necessarily a god-like entity, but understood in quantum physics as an energy field, that contains actions of the imaginal, actual and real within space and time, and dematerializes and rematerializes in various locations as it is created and perceived [6].

Wolfe states that these concepts derive from the theoretical physics of David Bohm, whose book “Unfolding of Meaning”, suggests that when we communicate with one another, we usually know what ‘meaning’ is without defining it. To Wolfe, meaning is akin to an experience that is had when any two or more events, random or not, are quantum mechanically correlated, and so meaning is correlated and experienced as a conscious awareness for someone or many people. He suggests that if two or more space-time events take place simultaneously, the more likely they will leave an

imprint in consciousness [6].

Wolfe postulates that we all have the potential to become aware of such events, so for example, whatever I observe goes ‘in here’ to my brain, but also into the ‘in there’ of this consciousness we all are part of, so we simultaneously experience the ‘out there’ of the world, daily living and awareness. His concept is of an invisible network of people, connected through ‘cords’ to a ‘mainframe’ of the one consciousness that connects all our collective lives.

This argument is compelling, yet other scientists have equally intriguing ideas about our embodied “virtual” or “wireless” connection and communication systems. One such scientist is Michael Talbot, author of “The Holographic Universe”. Like Wolfe, Talbot looks to physics and neuroscience research and theory, as well as to Bohm, to formulate his position on consciousness and the universe. Talbot believes we are all connected through some kind of universal quantum holographic structure. However, Talbot argues that Bohm and neurophysiologist Karl Pribram first formulated the discovery of this universal holographic structure or container quite separately and simultaneously. Talbot summarizes his position by saying,

“Considered together, Bohm and Pribram’s theories provide a profound new way of looking at the world: Our brains mathematically construct objective reality by interpreting frequencies that are ultimately projections from another dimension, a deeper order of existence that is beyond both space and time: The brain is a hologram enfolded in a holographic universe....”(author’s emphasis)[7].

Additionally, there is research that supports the idea that in order to receive telepathic or extrasensory (psi) information from outside ourselves, we need to prepare ourselves, or quiet our mind and body to make way for those messages to reach us (just as we need a noise or interference-free telephone line to hear people speak and to be heard when speaking). However, the method or methods for clearing this noise are very different for the human mind/body. We need to activate a clear “channel” through stillness, concentration or awareness of our inner consciousness.

Dean Radin, PhD, supports this position when detailing the meta-analysis of thousands of non-local experiments that have been conducted over the last century, in his book “The Conscious Universe: The Scientific Truth of Psychic Phenomena”. Here, Radin looks at these studies in terms of odds against chance, stringency of the experiments’ methodologies and outcomes, as well as the statistical evidence and significance of these experiments, when examined as a whole body of research or meta-analysis. He points out that in the Ganzfeld Telepathy Experiments,

“...develop a ‘psi conductive’ state involving reduced sensory input.... States similar to deep meditation occur naturally during dreaming, prior to falling asleep, under hypnosis, with some drugs, and in sensory-isolation chambers. What these states have in common is an alert, receptive mind combined with reduced sensory input. This suggests that when mental ‘noise’ settles down, the mind may be able to attend more effectively to faint impressions, some of which may be psychic in origin.”[8]

In reference to future non-local-based technologies, Radin says:

“...the pattern-recognition methods used in advanced sonar and radar systems would be useful in psi-based systems that could be trained to respond to individual thought-patterns at a distance. If such devices could be developed, they might allow thought control of prosthetics for paraplegics, mentally directed deep-space and deep-sea robots, and mind-melding techniques to provide people with vast, computer-enhanced memories, lightening fast mathematical capabilities, and supersensitive perceptions. It may be possible to create technologically enhanced telepathic links between people.” [9]

Another scientist/theorist with compelling research is Transpersonal Psychotherapist Stanislav Grof. Grof’s work spans over 40 years and his more recent work uses a technique called “holotropic breathing” (breathing that induces an altered state of consciousness). This work helped him to realize the cosmic implications of consciousness studies, and the possibility of a unified consciousness that goes beyond our physical bodies, lifetimes and individuality. In his book, “Psychology of the Future: Lessons from Modern Consciousness Research”, Grof shows the acceptance of these ideas in older cultures and spiritual traditions, outside of western society, with examples of different techniques to induce altered states. Grof provides this list of the various researched techniques used by peoples globally over several millenniums, to induce these “holotropic states” of consciousness. [10]

In “How We Became Post-Human”, Katherine Hayles talks about embodiment by stating,

“...the body exists in space and time and that, through its interaction with the environment, it defines the parameters within which the cogitating mind can arrive at ‘certainties’, which not coincidentally almost never include the fundamental homologies generating the boundaries of thought.... for conscious thought becomes an epiphenomenon corresponding to the phenomenal base the body provides ... embodiment creates

context by forging connections between instantiated action and environmental conditions ... emphaz[ing] the importance of context to human cognition”[11].

Based on this research, what tools does an experience designer have to remove sensory input to allow for the possibility of naturally occurring psychic phenomena? How can we include some limited digital stimulation or sensory technology, to act as a facilitator for non-local interactions? Perhaps it is possible to design an experiential environment that acts as a controller of stimulation, a stimulator, as a recorder, a relay and a “sender” of this psychic information and communication.

Designing Experiences with Virtual Systems

Sensations, perceptions and emotions are embodied human experiences, yet have always had a virtual existence in our art, culture and social way of life. This puts into context a greater realm of understanding of reality and life, and sets the tone for designers to “get real”, in terms of material manifestations of experiential environments (Fakespace or VR systems or environments, wireless communication, or online communities).

In “Digital Sensations”, Ken Hillis discusses the concepts of transcendence and dazzlement, which are elements that art and virtual/visual technologies hope to create for us, so that we forget or leave our bodies:

“When efforts to achieve transcendence succeed, we are engaged with the world and less constrained by Elias’ modern wall of self-alienation... it might be argued that languages are how we transcend existence and achieve a relational humanity beyond mere subjectivity ... Yet to imagine that existence could somehow be (re)located in communication understood only as a transcendent act implies a taking of leave of one’s person, and by extension, a taking of leave of the earth... Any transcendent moment never really detaches from its origin in existence...[it] is a power always experienced in the place of the existing self”[12].

This interests me because many parapsychologists like Radin, and now quantum physicists such as Talbot, Wolf, (as well as others like Arnold Mindell and Amit Goswami – not cited in this paper due to lack of space), might agree that this type of “transcendent” experience (and by extension, communication) takes place within the body, or is at least facilitated by the body and its consciousness: simultaneously within and outside, in the same but different sense as human consciousness itself.

It seems that designers of virtual experiences could help to find a balance between providing transcendent experiences that take people away from their mundane or conflicted reality, while reintroducing them to the wonderment of their own embodied experiences,

consciousness, and all the while facilitating new knowledge or wisdom through new or renewed experiences.

We might look within the embodied cognitive system, not for computational rationale to provide us means to rid ourselves of all that which is 'miraculous' (in an inspiring sense) and wondrous about embodied life, but instead that which we have evolved into becoming. I think we need to value and learn more about what we have innately before jumping to something presently inferior, which merely holds "potential"(computers), yet is not actualized or even likely to be as uniquely beautiful or complexly functional as that which we are naturally born to be. We could instead continue to focus on technology as a tool, to aid in the rediscovery of ourselves and the power of our own body/mind, not to perfect or destroy or replace our embodied selves.

The question then becomes: what sort of experience could further our understanding of ourselves, yet be more embodied than computer-mediated Virtual Reality systems? Perhaps we should look at altered, embodied perceptions of reality, our virtual inner worlds and consciousness. Or perhaps even "real" experiences within an altered dimension common to most or many: like dreams, "psychic" experiences, mediation, mysticism, near-death experiences, intuition, or vision quests involving physical pain.

It is my view that the two versions/dimensions of the virtual (digital and transpersonal) should come together. We need not abandon the body to technology, but come back to the body, learn its power in the virtual domain and find ways to utilize technology to help us to become more of what we are.

I am interested in exploring the realms of embodied experience, consciousness and altered "states" of reality as perceived by embodied persons, while creating "virtual" experience activities to facilitate the re-embodiment and understanding of these states. I am interested in the future where society in general, and the scientific community specifically, comes to value and use telepathic or extrasensory perception, experience and messaging abilities. In turn, we could aim to perfect or hone our skills at perceiving, receiving and transmitting these types of messages and understand these abilities, while melding them with those mediated by technology.

According to David Rokeby, virtual experiences should inspire one to want to be more 'in' reality or used as an educational tool to teach one more about real experiences, but not a substitute for reality. In "The Construction of Experience: Interface as Content", he suggests virtual systems could be more of a tool or a process like any other, not the end itself [13]. We might try to design experiences that enable us to shift our focus more toward enabling new ways of experiencing our real, embodied selves without losing them or leaving them. This way of

creating experience itself may be a paradigm shift, which not everyone in the business of creating and selling experiences is ready to make.

Why would experience designers want to bring people back to themselves, when they can create more and more elaborate, seemingly "real" experiences, which allow us to escape ourselves? My view is that such a shift might need to continue to be instigated by artists working with and from scientists and technologists, to create the public demand. If we can continually keep a balance between the real and the embodied experience and non-local experience versus the constructed, we will always be able to tell the difference, and most likely prefer the visceral and tactile of the real.

Experience Design Possibilities

To create an experimental immersive environment to initiate the mind and body to a computer connection/communication process, one might start with selective or minimal sensory stimulation, sensitization and development as means to create a "portal", then attempt to "connect" people to each other non-locally, finally find ways to "connect" them with technology.

Such an experiential design would include taking participants to a mental/physical pre-hypnagogic state between sleep and wakefulness, as if meditating, dreaming or being hypnotized, before individuals enter the environment. This pre-experience physical preparation, perhaps of light yoga, breathing and guided relaxation, to stimulate physical sensations of weightlessness, hyper-awareness, should allow participant to experience the environment, physically and sensorially, when the mind is clearest and most open. This experience should take place in a comfortable and peaceful space.

One such design that I have considered would be a physical structure, that participants could enter like an igloo or even a sun bed, and after the mind-quieting session they would be stimulated by very intermittent sensor technology, as a means to trigger dreamlike responsive state. This technology would also send and record brainwaves, galvanic skin data and voluntary vocalizations from participants, while another participant or "sender" would send messages to the first participant from another space. Later the design "portal" or "phone booth" for making on-local connection would include individuals connecting directly to and controlling technology in more complex construction.

At a time when physicists are discussing the teleportation of molecules [14], this type of non-local or "wireless" communication experience design should be considered, provide an embodied encounter with "networking" and "wireless" interaction, with the aid of technology facilitating this connection. Eventually it would involve returning back to technology for the human-computer interaction/communication loop previously discussed. This experiential design could revolutionize the way we

interact with technology and each other.

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