

FUTUREtakes

Transcultural Futurist Magazine

ISSN 1554-7744

Vol. 4, no. 1 (Spring 2005)

The Other Side of the Future!

Future Lite

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Welcome to Future Lite! No topic is too small, no trivia too trivial, and no fact too unfounded if it can possibly provide entertainment or enlightenment for our readers.

TIME OUT OF MIND

We are becoming a nation of goldfish.

According to Ted Selker, a professor at M.I.T., obsessive web-browsing can cause attention spans to drop to as little as nine seconds—equivalent to a goldfish.

*So how did those guys measure the attention span of a goldfish? Are there metrics for this kind of thing or just “guesstimates”? I’ll Google it. **CLICK.***

Anyway, Ted gave an interview to the BBC that was quickly posted on the Web where I focused on it for a full 8 ³/₄ seconds. “Our attention span gets affected by the way we do things,” Ted said, “If we spend our time flitting from one thing to another on the Web, we can get into a habit of not concentrating.”

Frankly, Ted and his team are just being negative nabobs. The truth is we have achieved **Artificial Intelligence**—and it is us.

It all began with Big Blue—remember when a computer the size of Cleveland beat Gary Kasparov at chess? Oh sure, there was some silly discussion at the time about ethical dilemmas and a heated controversy or two about letting computers do our thinking. Some people (probably *not* from M.I.T.) who said that MACHINES would never be capable of the complex reasoning and emotional intelligence of HUMAN BEINGS.

Well, they were **W-R-O-N-G!**

Here it is 2005, and computers are keeping complex satellite systems orbiting in space, decoding the human genome, recreating all the works of the Great Masters, and automatically emailing a free animated birthday greeting to your significant other—and that’s just one computer.

The point is that with computers and technology that can do all of this really cool stuff—we *have learned to take advantage of it!* Sure the computers have gotten smart, but it’s the **people** who have achieved **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**.

That’s why a man can be talking on his cell phone, checking his PDA, receiving a fax and juggling his triple caffeinated mocha frappe latte while driving 120 MPH in his car—it’s what we call “multi-tasking.”

*Hmmmm... “Multi-tasking” is also a synonym for “I’m ignoring you and doing something else.” I’ll check its first usage. **CLICK***

Americans pride ourselves on two character traits—our sense of humor and the ability to make a fast decision—not necessarily the **RIGHT ONE**, mind you, but **FAST**.

We’ve learned that since we can have all the information in the world instantly at our command with a couple clicks of a mouse... *Do mice have longer attention spans than goldfish—or what about hamsters and gerbils? **CLICK** ...* that we don’t really need to “know” any of it before we make a decision—it’s there on the computer anytime we need it.

My own research indicates that your Artificial Intelligence Quotient (A.I.Q.) is directly proportional to your position in a hierarchical structure or your perceived position in respect to your view of how many planets actually do revolve around you.

Now forgive me Ted and the rest of M.I.T., but I’m not just going to *give away* all of my independent research. I will be revealing my findings in a reality show hopefully next season, we’re still shopping the concept. *Oh, probably should check out some sites for potential celebrity co-hosts... oh, and shoes- **CLICK***

However, one of my particular areas of concentration is what I call the **Star Trek Command Theory of Reality Displacement**. Now this involves a lot of advanced scientific stuff that has to do with an interruption in the time-space continuum... but essentially, for you lay people it means that if you have an extremely high A.I.Q all you have to do is say “**MAKE IT SO**” and it will happen...

*Captain Jean Luc Picard was the definitive Captain of the Starship Enterprise. Wow, this is the first time in decades there isn’t some version of **STAR TREK** on television. **CLICK***

... For example, if you were the President of the United States—with an extremely high A.I.Q.—and I can state for the record that *elected officials* (Democrat, Republican, and Other) all show remarkably higher scores of Artificial Intelligence than *tax-paying unelected people*.

As President, you could just *say* that you wanted to combine about 20 or so different agencies, hundred of programs and thousands of people to create a brand new super agency. It would be responsible for immediately creating a new national infrastructure—where no infrastructure has gone before—that would work with every other country in the world. This would be successfully implemented in a year or so and not cost gazillions of dollars more than anyone has ever counted in the history of going “over-budget.”

So if an “ordinary” person with a low A.I.Q. attempted to do this, it would take at least ten years to come up with a workable scenario and the identification of the unsolvable Fatal Flaw. World peace and a secure universe are achievable. Trying to settle the parking privileges for thousands of employees transferring from old agencies to a NEW federal agency would create such a major impediment and astronomical cost that the entire concept would be abandoned and never attempted.

Now there are still those that cling to the old adage that “things take as long as they’re gonna take and wishing won’t make it so,” but those are the same pessimists that think that it takes one woman nine months to have a baby and that putting nine women in a room for one month won’t work.

Those are people with the attention span of **less** than a goldfish... maybe a guppy... or a neon tetra. *Gee, I wonder which one has the longer attention span.* **CLICK**

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Note: Please feel free to send in your favorite quotes, predictions, anecdotes, topic du jour, scandals, pet peeves, gossip and rumors and you may find yourself captured in Future-Lite!
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