How do i know anything?

Technology, Artificial Intelligence

The Film The Matrix was a Box Office hit due to the idea it presented to the audience. Even though Descartes' Meditations inspired the film, the idea of living in a computer simulatedenvironmentwas an interesting, original concept that had been created recently. It opened up a question, how do I know anything?

It is possible that we may be living in a computer-simulated environment, or in a big dream of some sort. We are unable to prove any of this at the moment, which could then possibly lead to scepticism about this theory. The only real argument to support the theory is to use the fact that our government keeps information confidential from the public, for a number of reasons. This demonstrates that there are things that we do not know; therefore, we should not totally doubt what we do not know, and that we may be living in a simulated environment. There is also the problem of perception. It is easy for us to perceive something to be different to what it really is. Magicians use optical illusions to fool us. If we are living in a simulated environment, then how can we break ourselves away from the perception that we are in, to separate ourselves from the simulation, and find out what the other reality is like?

The closesttechnologyhas come to simulating environments is virtual reality. The environment is simulated, allowing humans to interact, although they may be elsewhere. The graphics within virtual reality are still basic, and this is one of the reasons why we are able to recognise virtual reality as being different to reality. Another reason is that virtual reality does not cause you to feel pain. Whether Virtual Reality is comparable to the neural-simulated

environment in The Matrix, VR is the closest thing we have to relate to the theory.

However, VR could be as real as reality if it had realistic models of physics (e. g. feather and coin fall at the same rate in a vacuum), better graphics, and the ability to stimulate the body into experiencing physical feelings of pain, heat and cold, etc. Another problem with doing this is having a computer powerful enough to process all this information via calculations. IBM have developed a supercomputer that can calculate the force of nuclear explosions. Does a computer exist powerful enough to simulate the reality we live in exactly? If it does, then the theory proposed by the film could be right.

Another concern brought up by the film was about A. I. (Artificial Intelligence). In the film, A. I. developments created intelligent, living computers. Machines are physically better than man in many ways. They do not excrete, need tea breaks at work, sleep, be lazy, require wages, things that humans do. They are more efficient than humans. However, Humans have consciences, imaginations, and the ability to think. Computers do not have this. If computers did have this, they may be worth more than human life.

Once recognising their status and power, it is possible that they may consider the human race to be inefficient, and may then start to eliminate humanity, like in The Matrix and The Terminator. This is something we have to be wary about when we decide to improve A. I., whether it be in industrial machines, home appliances, or computer games. If AI started to have a mind

of its own, would anyone be willing to corrupt it, and turn it against others? It could be something terrorists would do to disrupt the activities of Governments around the globe?

It may not be possible for machines to be a living, independent-thinking species. Computers work by calculations. Let us take an example.

Home appliance in the future; greets person as they get in the door.

A sensor will detect that the door is opening. It activates another smart sensor to identify that person. It is the house-owner. It greets with 'hello'. The house-owner says 'hello' back. The appliance uses a sensor to detect the reply, and assesses it not only for vocal identification, but to determine what mood the person is in. It will then choose a speech passage suited to the mood of the person. E. g. the person has a cold, so the computer tells the person that they are making a warm glass of Lemon and Honey for them, and ordering for a prescription of medicine to thedoctor. Another sensor in the house will scan the person and send the details of the cold to the doctor, allowing the doctor to prescribe the right medication.

The person will say 'thanks', and the appliance will say 'your welcome'. All this could happen just by entering the door and saying hello. The computer can display signs of compassion, but will not actually feel them. This will be a major mountain to conquer in the development of Artificial Intelligent Life. Commercially, Artificial Intelligence is still under development, and will take some time before it can resemble anything human.

Overall, Technology will get better, and maybe we will discover if the

simulated neural environment theory is right.