

# Cybernetic immortality

Business



Ever since the beginning of humanity, the strive for immortality has been entrenched deep in our thoughts. Now, that dream may come true.

Dmitry Itskov, a Russian internet millionaire, is the founder of the 2045 Initiative, a scientific project to make 'cybernetic immortality'(immortality through artificial intelligence) possible in the next few decades through uploading the human mind to a robotic vessel. "The ultimate goal of my plan is to transfer someone's personality into a completely new body," (Quinn)said Itskov when interviewed by the BBC. A human's brain is made up of 86 billion neurons. These cells communicate by sending electrical charges to each other. Professor Rafael Yuste stated that "just like computers using zeros and ones to transmit information, neurons fire these little sparks" (Quinn). Nonetheless, I agree with Professor Miguel Nicolelis, who rejects the analogy that the brain works like a computer.

He thinks that our brain is far more complex. Nicolelis declared, "Computers are just projections of abstract thinking, but they don't use neither the language nor the logic that our brains employ to produce these abstractions" (Quinn). He believes that the dynamic complexity of the brain from which the human condition emerges, cannot be replicated. "You cannot code intuition. You cannot code aesthetic beauty. You cannot code love or hate or prejudice" (Quinn).

If this is the case then we are left with the same questions as Dr Ken Hayworth explains: "If somebody is saying that the brain is not computational the question becomes, what is it, then? Because computational is essentially another term for materialist, that it obeys the

laws of physics, of cause and effect. Are we saying that the brain is not a device that obeys the laws of cause and effect?" (Quinn). Randal Koene - 2045 Initiative scientific director - fully supports Itskov and affirmed that " all of the evidence seems to say in theory it's possible - it's extremely difficult, but it's possible." (Quinn). So what would life be like if we achieved cybernetic immortality? Being immortal would mean we could overcome the constraints of time. Thus, we would be able to accomplish more.

Imagine if Einstein was still present - who knows how else he would have contributed to science and technology! We would also have an amazing opportunity of living in space and exploring the universe. That would help us gain more answers about our surroundings. Having a new artificial carrier would mean us becoming invulnerable. Consequently, we would help each other with less hesitation and truly get to be ' heroes', impacting to the formation of a better society. People love to speculate the future - When will we cure cancer? When will we put humans on Mars? Through immortality we would be able to witness all sorts of future events and take part in them. This would be a vast asset to any future historian and academic.

However, immortality has its flaws. Firstly, death provokes humans to fulfilling their dreams and living their lives to the fullest. When eternity is offered to us, all of our experiences will seem to hold no value. What is the point in developing more when we have all the time in the world to do so? In the end, humans may end up engaging in extreme forms of hedonism to give life some sort of meaning. Secondly, there would be no social progression. If people from the eighteenth century and earlier were still alive

today, we would still have segregation and misogyny since those views would be held for eternity.

The only solution would be mass psychological conditioning or reprogramming. But then who would decide what is just once and for all? Thirdly, it would be a pretty monotonous schedule with the same activities all the time. Even holidays would become part of the same schedule. Sure, we could escape to another planet, but if this became a common practice, it would soon become another boring habit. And finally, after combining with the machines, would we still be human? Overall, I think that living longer is a positive thing however, not to the extent of eternity. There is a reason why death exists and I think it provides balance.

Still, it will be very interesting to see where science and technology will take us next and whether or not Dmitry Itskov will achieve his dream.

Nevertheless, one thing is for sure: we are embarking on a journey into a very different world. For some, it might change what it is to be human.

Works Cited Quinn, Tristan. The Immortalist. BBC, 2016.

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