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Subject: Brain downloads 'possible by 2050'

Posted by [ViolentOrgy](#) on Mon, 23 May 2005 22:06:30 GMT

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London, England -- By the middle of the 21st century it will be possible to download your brain to a supercomputer, according to a leading thinker on the future.

Ian Pearson, head of British Telecom's futurology unit, told the UK's Observer newspaper that the rapid advances in computing power would make cyber-immortality a reality within 50 years.

Pearson said the launch last week of Sony's PlayStation 3, a machine 35 times more powerful than the model it replaced, was a sign of things to come.

"The new PlayStation is one percent as powerful as the human brain," Pearson told the Observer. "It is into supercomputer status compared to 10 years ago. PlayStation 5 will probably be as powerful as the human brain."

Pearson said that brain-downloading technology would initially be the preserve of the rich, but would become more available over subsequent decades.

"If you're rich enough then by 2050 it's feasible. If you're poor you'll probably have to wait until 2075 or 2080 when it's routine," he said.

"We are very serious about it. That's how fast this technology is moving: 45 years is a hell of a long time in IT."

Pearson also predicted that it would be possible to build a fully conscious computer with superhuman levels of intelligence as early as 2020.

IBM's BlueGene computer can already perform 70.72 trillion calculations a second and Pearson said the next computing goal was to replicate consciousness.

"We're already looking at how you might structure a computer that could become conscious. Consciousness is just another sense, effectively, and that's what we're trying to design in computer."

Pearson said that computer consciousness would make feasible a whole new sphere of emotional machines, such as airplanes that are afraid of crashing.

By 2020 Pearson also predicted the creation of a "virtual world" of immersive computer-generated environments in which we will spend increasing amounts of time, socializing and doing business.

He said: "When technology gives you a life-size 3D image and the links to your nervous system allow you to shake hands, it's like being in the other person's office. It's impossible to believe that won't be the normal way of communicating."

But Pearson admitted that the consequences of advancing technologies needed to be considered carefully.

"You need a complete global debate," he said. "Whether we should be building machines as smart as people is a really big one."

<http://edition.cnn.com/2005/TECH/05/23/brain.download/>

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