

Technology is a new topic for ISAS, but recent research is raising serious questions about the impact of technology on the way we live our lives. Free will and the theory of consciousness are also getting some attention.

Please forward this newsletter if you know of anyone who might be interested. And feel free to add your comments to any of the articles - I would love to hear from you.

Thanks

-George Gantz

---

## New Discussions:

### Busted: Three 21st Century Technology-Driven Myths

November 7th, 2013

As the digital age has matured, new technologies have emerged that change the way we do things. Some of these changes have been hyped as vastly more powerful and more efficient than the old-fashioned way of doing things. Three prominent examples: multi-tasking, reading digital books, and social networking have been touted as superior – as the way of the future. In all three cases, I found my own capabilities limited, leading me to conclude that as child of the pre-digital age I would inevitably be left behind in the great transformation. Recent scientific studies, however, have shown that the hype is off the mark and the myths are untrue.....

### Does Knowing = Having Justified True Beliefs?

October 23rd, 2013

Justified True Belief is the Holy Grail (to borrow a religious allegory) of epistemology – “knowing” is to believe something, on the basis of rational evidence and thought, that is in fact true. While this concept has taken a beating over the past forty years, starting with some paradoxical thought experiments by Edmund Gettier, it generally describes the model for knowledge that philosophers have applied for more than 2,000 years. But is it helpful? Is there a better way to define “knowing”?

### Resolving a Self-Contradiction in Neuroscience

September 27th, 2013

It's hard to imagine a more rationally stimulating area of science than the study of the brain. Yet the remarkable field of Neuroscience seems determined to deny itself. Recent research points to the influence on our decisions of a vast array of innate, genetic, experiential and motivational factors of which we are unaware. The conclusion – the “rational” mind does not make decisions – it is merely rationalizing our pre-determined choices. So much for free will – and for a directing influence of rational consciousness in our pursuit of good choices and deep questions (such as the nature of mind and brain).

---

## News and Announcements:

### The Moral Behavior of Ethics Professors

November 1st, 2013

In a [recent interview](#) on Philosophy Bites, a podcast from England, Ernie Lepore studied the ethical beliefs and behaviors of ethics professors. He found that both students and professors all behaved about the same in terms of making charitable contributions. However, the ethics professors' opinion on the behavior of those who do not contribute were far more supportive of those virtues.....

### Great Summary of the Free Will Debate

October 23rd, 2013

Dr. Jonathon Schooler has authored a discussion [Does Belief in Free Will](#) (in the Big Questions Online series sponsored by the Templeton Foundation) that discusses the current state of knowledge and disagreement on this key metaphysical question. His opening article notes that the lack of consensus leaves us on the position that “each one of us is faced with deciding for ourselves where we stand on the consequences for how we lead our lives.” Increasingly, the evidence

promotes pro-social behaviors and increases our sense of personal control. His conclusion is that a belief in free will, which is entirely consistent with the evidence, is a better choice....

### Assessing Our Motivations – An Introduction

September 6th, 2013

There is a prevalent misconception that our choices are directed by our emotions and are driven by our motivations – the things that we love. Often, our choices are in the support of that which we want to believe, as I noted in the essay on [Cognitive Dissonance](#).

Curtis Child's video [“Universal Categories of Love”](#), from his [“Off to Work”](#) series, provides a clear and simple analysis of the motivational categories or factors that determine our behaviors, our morals and our ultimate happiness.

You choose!

[friend on Facebook](#) | [forward to a friend](#)

