
From: John Brockman [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, December 31, 2010 6:24 PM
To: Jeffrey Epstein
Subject: Edge Question 2011 - An Invitation

"Deliciously creative...the variety astonishes...intellectual skyrockets =f stunning brilliance. Nobody in the world is doing what Edge is =oing." Denis Dutton, ARTS & LETTERS DAILY

THE WORLD QUESTION CENTER

James Flynn has defined "shorthand abstractions" (or "SHA's") as =oncepts drawn from science that have become part of the language and =ake people smarter by providing widely applicable templates ("market", =placebo", "random sample," "naturalistic fallacy," are a few of his =amples). His idea is that the abstraction is available as a single =ognitive chunk which can be used as an element in thinking and debate.

The Edge Question 2011

WHAT SCIENTIFIC CONCEPT WOULD IMPROVE EVERYBODY'S COGNITIVE =OOLKIT?

The term 'scientific' is to be understood in a broad sense as the most =eliable way of gaining knowledge about anything, whether it be the =uman spirit, the role of great people in history, or the structure of =NA. A "scientific concept" may come from philosophy, logic, economics, =urisprudence, or other analytic enterprises, as long as it is a =igorous conceptual tool that may be summed up succinctly (or "in a =hrase") but has broad application to understanding the world.

[Thanks to Steven Pinker for suggesting this year's EDGE Question and to =aniel Kahneman for advice on its presentation.]

In Memoriam
DENIS DUTTON
1944-2010

Last year, the 2010 EDGE Question, "How Is The Internet Changing The Way =ou Think?" (http://www.edge.org/q2010/q10_index.html), generated 172 =ssays (132,000 words) and received global press attention.

To date, the following have already responded to the 2011 EDGE Question: =lifford Pickover, Rudy Rucker, Sean Carroll, Gino Segre, Jason Zweig, =ylan Evans, Steven Pinker, Martin Seligman, Gerald Holton, Robert =rovine, Nassim N. Taleb, Roger Schank, George Dyson, Milford Wolpoff, =eorge Lakoff, W. Daniel Hiliis, Nicholas Humphrey, Christian Keysers, =aim Harari, John Allen Paulos, Bruce Hood, Howard Gardner.

PERMALINK: http://www.edge.org/q2011/q11_index.html

(all lower case — password-protected until publication)

SUBMITTING ESSAYS: Email as text or attached Word file to me.

DUE DATE: 8pm, Wednesday, January 12th

PUBLICATION DATE: Midnight, Thursday, January 13th

PRESS EMBARGO: Until publication. Do not cite or circulate.

EDITORIAL MARCHING ORDERS

Say something new, true, and interesting, based on your own experience, =n 1,000 words or less. Email contributions to me.

As usual, no politics ("Democrat" "Republican") or politicians ("Obama" =Bush" "Clinton" "Palin", etc.), editorials, opeds, opinion pieces, =lippancy. No ad hominem comments. No self-promotion: referencing your =ooks, papers, courses, "selling from the stage", pushing your =ell-known agenda. No footnotes or hyperlink: stay on the page. No =necdotes about spouses, significant others, kids, family pets. Write a =stand-alone piece: don't respond to the pieces of other contributors =lready posted.

Go deeper than the news. Tell me something I don't know. This is not a =urely scientific question: this is question about our culture and =urselves. The ideas we present on Edge can offer readers and the wider =ublic a new set of metaphors to describe ourselves, our minds, the way =e think, the world, and all of the things we know in it.

Be imaginative, exciting, compelling, inspiring. Tell a great story. =ake an argument that makes a difference. Amaze and delight. Surprise =s!

I look forward to hearing from you. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

John Brockman
Editor & Publisher

The EDGE Question in the News:

"Deliciously creative...the variety astonishes...intellectual skyrockets =f stunning brilliance. Nobody in the world is doing what Edge is =oing." ARTS & LETTERS • "Fantastically stimulating...It's like the =rack cocaine of the thinking world.... Once you start, you can't stop =hinking about that question." BBC RADIO 4 • "Big, deep and ambitious =uestions... breathtaking in scope." NEW SCIENTIST • "A stellar cast =f intellectuals ... a stunning array of responses."NEW SCIENTIST • =rilliant ... captivating ... overwhelming."SEED • "Bold, often =hrilling, sometimes chilling, answers." NEWS-OBSERVER

• "The =ascinating breadth of their visions of the future is revealed today by =he discussion website edge.com, which has asked some of the world's =inest mind the question: 'What will change everything?'" THE TIMES • =Edge: brilliant, essential and addictive. The result of this ambitious =enture, for those who have already experienced navigating the web pages =f edge.org, is not only brilliant, but addictive. It interprets, it =nterrogates, it provokes. Each text can be a world in itself." PUBLICO =LISBON) --COVER STORY, SUNDAY MAGAZINE • "The world's finest minds =ave responded with some of the most insightful, humbling, fascinating =onfessions and anecdotes, an intellectual treasure trove. ... Best =hree or four hours of intense, enlightening reading you can do for the =ew year. Read it now." SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE • "The splendidly =nlightened Edge website (www.edge.org) has rounded off each year of =nter-disciplinary debate by asking its heavy-hitting contributors to =nswer one question. I strongly recommend a visit." THE INDEPENDENT • =A great event in the Anglo-Saxon culture." EL MUNDO • "As fascinating =nd weighty as one would imagine." THE INDEPENDENT • "They are the =ntellectual elite, the brains the rest of us rely on to make sense of =he universe and answer the big questions. But in a refreshing show of =ew year humility, the world's best thinkers have admitted that from =ime to time even they are forced to change their minds." THE GUARDIAN •="Praised by everyone from the Guardian, Prospect magazine, Wired, the =ew York Times and BBC Radio 4, Edge is an online collective of deep =hinkers. Their contributors aren't on the frontier, they are the =rontier." THE SCOTSMAN • "A selection of the most explosive ideas of =ur age." SUNDAY HERALD • "Uplifting ...enthraling." MAIL ON SUNDAY •="If you think the web is full of trivial rubbish, you will find the =ntellectual badinage of edge.org to be a blessed counterpoint." THE =IMES • "...fascinating and provocative reading." -- THE GUARDIAN • =...reads like an intriguing dinner party conversation among great minds =n science." -- DISCOVER • "Fantastically stimulating...It's like the =rack cocaine of the thinking world.... Once you start, you can't stop =hinking about that question." BBC RADIO 4 • "Danger -- brilliant =inds at work... exhilarating, hilarious, and chilling." EVENING =TANDARD • "Wonderful reading." THE TIMES • "Strangley =ddictive."THE TELEGRAPH • "The greatest virtual research university =n the world." ARTS & LETTERS DAILY • "Audacious and stimulating." LA =ANGUARDIA • "Brilliant! Stimulating reading for anyone seeking a =limpse into the next decade." THE SUNDAY TIMES • "A running fire of a =rovocative and fascinating thesis." LA STAMPA

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