

From: Ben Goertzel <[REDACTED]>
To: Jeffrey Epstein <jeevacation@gmail.com>
Subject: video chat?
Date: Tue, 19 Nov 2013 04:35:07 +0000

Hi,

One more small thing..

Joscha mentioned he talked to you via video-chat, by the way....

We've never tried that, but now that I'm in Hong Kong most of the time, it might be a good idea, since a F2F meeting may be difficult to coordinate...

Let me know if you have time -- certainly it's "higher bandwidth" in some ways than email.

Yours
Ben

On Sun, Nov 17, 2013 at 2:12 PM, Ben Goertzel <[REDACTED]> wrote:

> Hi Jeffrey,

>

> [Sorry for the semi-long email but there's lots to cover; I know
> you're busy and your time is appreciated... ;) ...]

>

> Firstly -- Wow, it seems your publicity folks have been quite
> impactful lately! Since your team has issued a number of press
> releases mentioning me lately, I keep getting emails from people
> congratulating me on my new AGI funding windfall from the Jeffrey
> Epstein IV Foundation. (Though of course, I have to disappoint them
> by telling them that, while you've been consistently and wonderfully
> helpful to my work over the years, there has been no big-time
> Epstein/OpenCog AGI funding event... yet ...)

>

> Anyway -- on to immediate practical matters -- the time of year has
> come for me to email you and inquire about the possibility of ongoing
> research funding...

>

> You may recall that my Hong Kong government research grant requires
> private donations amounting to 10% of the \$\$, and then the government
> will put up 90%.

>

> Last year you donated \$20K toward this grant, which was very much appreciated.

>

> This year I have gotten approval for an increase in the Hong Kong
> government funding (technically: a separate grant running 2014-2015,
> overlapping with the current grant which runs 2013-2014). With the

> increased funding, next year we will have 10 programmers working on
> OpenCog here in Hong Kong, which will be quite exciting.
>
> The 10% payment for the two grants will be \$45K in total, due by the
> end of 2013. If you could help with this, as you did last year, that
> would be fantastic. (Elsewise, to be quite frank, I have no ready way
> to come up with that amount of money except to liquidate my minimal
> pension fund from my university days ;p)
>
> The new grant (2014-2015) is specifically for natural language
> dialogue, whereas the previous one (2013-2014) was aimed at robotics,
> and the earlier one (2012-2013) was aimed at game characters. As you
> see, what they like to fund is something that sounds "applied", rather
> than core AGI research. However, the bulk of the \$\$ has always
> actually been spent on core AGI research. [The funding agency is
> ultimately fine with whatever you do, so long as it's in the vicinity
> of the proposal and you publish some papers.]
>
> This brief wiki page
>
> http://wiki.opencog.org/w/OpenCog_HK_2014_High_Level_Goals
>
> summarizes what we've done in the last year (2013 so far), and what is
> planned for this fall and the next year. I'm happy to elaborate more
> details for you if you wish. It's exciting stuff... with this
> increased grant funding, we should be able to finally make an honest
> effort at implementing a non-trivial subset of OpenCog... [I can also
> send you the full grant proposals if you wish, though they are
> somewhat a mix of science-ese and proposal-ese as is usual in such
> cases...]
>
> Ah, and btw -- my in-depth book on how to build an AGI ("Engineering
> General Intelligence") is being published early next year, in two
> volumes, FINALLY ...
>
> http://www.amazon.com/Engineering-General-Intelligence-Part-Cognitive/dp/9462390266/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1384664281&sr=1-3&keywords=goertzel+engineering+general+intelligence
>
> http://www.amazon.com/Engineering-General-Intelligence-Part-Architecture/dp/9462390290/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1384664311&sr=1-4&keywords=goertzel+engineering+general+intelligence
>
> I will send you copies when they are available... ;)
>
> Finally -- while your help with the next 10% payment will be VERY much
> appreciated, it remains the case that our progress toward AGI would be
> accelerated dramatically with additional funding from a visionary such
> as yourself. The HK government money is very welcome yet has some
> strings attached -- basically you can only use it to hire "postdoc" /
> "research associate" type people, not experienced professionals. I
> can't use the money to pay myself, nor to pay someone with a decade or
> two of professional AI programming experience, nor experienced AI
> researchers for that matter.
>
> If you were able to provide a higher level of help, this could of

> course dramatically accelerate our progress toward AGI.
>
> In this spirit, I have been thinking of putting together a proposal
> for a cross-university collaboration on AGI, including adding a few
> senior staff to my own team at Hong Kong Poly U, some funds for Joscha
> and a couple assistants to work on the motivation/action-selection
> aspects, and for Itamar to hire some assistants to work on perception
> and action at UTK. If you would be interested to consider such a
> proposal, in the vicinity of say US\$750K/year for 3 years (with
> clearly defined interim milestones along the way), let me know. This
> level of course is not "AGI Brooklyn Project" scale, but it would
> still provide a very major boost to our AGI efforts.
>
> Next, a slightly more personal update.... Right now I am spending half
> my time on OpenCog and half on Aidyia, our AI-based proto-hedge fund.
> The hedge fund project is going OK; we've been doing lots of research
> and software development on machine learning applied to financial
> markets, and expect to start trading perhaps Q2 of next year. I have
> some equity in Aidyia, so if it succeeds, I'll get a bunch of money at
> some point in N years. However, I am very bored with financial market
> analysis and eager to spend more of my time on AGI, especially with
> this additional OpenCog grant money. During 2014 I plan to segue into
> spending more and more time on OpenCog and the quest for AGI, which
> is what I really love, while continuing to help Aidyia with high-level
> AI advisement...
>
> Assuming the fund project goes OK and we launch the fund in mid-2014
> as expected, I will contact you about possible interest in putting AUM
> into the fund.
>
> A 48 minute documentary was made about my and Hugo de Garis's
> AI/robotics work in Xiamen in 2009, by the way. It's not terribly
> meaty science-wise, but, toward the end are some *great* conversations
> with a robot chat system that Ruiting (now my wife) and I built...
> See <http://singularityorbust.com> if you have an hour to spare watching
> it. Beware it contains a lot of me mumbling about philosophy -- but
> still, although it's somewhat avant-garde in style, it did win a Best
> Documentary award at a film festival...
>
> Thanks for reading all the way to the bottom of this long email, and
> for your ongoing, very much valued assistance!
>
> By the way, when do you plan to visit Hong Kong? ;)
>
> Yours,
> Ben
>
> P.S.
> Ah -- also -- I will be on the US East Coast briefly over the holidays
> to visit my family... I'm guessing you're traveling during the holidays
> too, but if you happen to have a free couple hours on Dec 30 for
> example, I could journey from Delaware (where my mom lives) up to New
> York or down to Florida to confer with you...
>

> Or of course, I am happy to talk on the phone at any time! ... the time
> zones are a bit tricky, but for you I'll get up in the middle of the
> night or whatever...
>
> --
> Ben Goertzel, PhD
> <http://goertzel.org>
>
> "My humanity is a constant self-overcoming" -- Friedrich Nietzsche

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