Hi Jeffrey,

Just so you don't think I've given up, here's another, somewhat scaled-down pitch for you ;-)

The CogBot proposal I wrote (and about which I got those letters, which you interpreted differently than me) was for a robotic AGI toddler, to be produced in collaboration with Itamar Arel. If pressed, we could probably do that for about $500K/year over 3 years.

But if that is too much for you, I think that for $200K/year over 2.5 years [$500K *total*] we can get most of those same tasks and capabilities accomplished by a virtual-world AGI. This would pay for:
me, Dr. Nil Geisweiller, Dr. Joel Pitt, half-time Cassio [whom you met], and Ruiting Lian [a linguistics PhD student, who will finish her degree in mid-2011].

It's a bargain at twice the price, if you ask me ;-) .... Of course this price only applies if the team members stay where they are now; gathering everyone at some US university would increase the price somewhat.

This virtual-world AGI will be the smartest AI system ever created and will -- I guarantee it -- wow every AI prof who see it with its obviously intelligent capability to understand and generate sensible English in the context of what it's doing in the virtual world.

Then we can move to the robot after that, so as to get the added mental flexibility that comes from having a richness of sensorimotor input to draw on.

I won't take the time to write a detailed proposal for this scaled-down plan unless you have serious interest. It's actually very much like the CogBot proposal I sent you before, but without Itamar and without the robot.

Definitely, if I didn't thoroughly believe this can WORK, I would be doing something much easier, more lucrative and more entertaining with my time.   But having a blueprint for an intelligent machine on my hands, and a team of reliable colleagues willing and eager to implement it, I can't just turn my attention to other things and leave the plan unimplemented. This is just too important.

If I die without building a thinking machine, it won't be for lack of the right idea and design, and it won't be for lack of trying. If I die without building a thinking machine, it will be either due to my lack of appropriate sales or political ability; or due to a stunning lack of vision and understanding on the part of my fellow humans.

Thanks
Ben

P.S.
I remain baffled and frustrated that MIT can get $5M for pursuing "AI, whatever that means" [their statement regarding their recent funding]
according to no plan, design or theory

"
The new project, launched with an initial $5 million grant and a five-year timetable, is called the Mind Machine Project, or MMP, a loosely bound collaboration of about two dozen professors,
researchers, students and postdocs. According to Neil Gershenfeld, one of the leaders of MMP and director of MIT's Center for Bits and Atoms, one of the project's goals is to create intelligent machines —

"whatever that means."
"
http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2009/ai-overview-1207.html

... whereas I'm struggling to get a much smaller amount of money to implement a well-thought-out, plausible-looking plan for AGI.
Ridiculous!!!

They have no specific goals -- so whatever they do, they will be able to declare victory.
They have no specific goals because they have no idea what they are doing. I know EXACTLY
what I am doing ... and I've been able to craft a workable plan for AGI in part because of **not**
working at MIT or one of these other places, with their dead-end ideas that have been
strangling the AI field for decades...

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Ben Goertzel, PhD
CEO, Novamente LLC and Biomind LLC
Director of Applied Research, Singularity Institute for AI
Chairman, Humanity+
External Research Professor, Xiamen University, China
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"Before something is a breakthrough, it's a
crazy idea" -- Peter Diamandis