

From: John Brockman <[REDACTED]>
To: Jeffrey Epstein <jeevacation@gmail.com>
Subject: The Edge Annual Question
Date: Fri, 06 Nov 2009 18:51:29 +0000

Jeffrey,

This summer I was in touch with Tom Khalil, the Deputy Director for Policy for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) where he reports to John Holdren, and Senior Advisor for Science, Technology and Innovation for the National Economic Council, under your friend Larry Summers. Tom was interested in exploring possible connections with EDGE and, in this regard, he had noticed the 2003 Annual Question in which a "faux" President Bush was purportedly vetting candidates for the position of his National Science Advisor by asking for a about the on scientific issues he was facing. Subsequently Tom came the EDGE Master Class in LA on Synthetic Genomics, but I haven't been in touch with him since then.

Below is a copy of the email I sent to Tom on Wednesday, proposing that President Obama ask this year's EDGE question. I await his reply. In the meantime, your thoughts or suggestions on the project will be most welcome.

Best,

JB

[REDACTED] mobile

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John Brockman
Edge Foundation, Inc.
5 East 59th Street
New York, NY 10022
tel: [REDACTED]
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Visit the EDGE Website:  
<http://www.edge.org>  
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From: John Brockman <[REDACTED]>
Date: November 4, 2009 12:04:02 PM EST
To: Tom Kalil <[REDACTED]>
Subject: The Edge Annual Question

To: Thomas Khalil
Deputy Director for Policy, White House OSTP

From: John Brockman
EDGE Foundation, Inc.

Dear Tom,

Greetings. we're about to begin to put together the EDGE Annual Question which we will present, under embargo, to the EDGE community on December 1, asking for responses for publication online midnight, New Year's Eve, and I am interested in picking up the discussion we began this summer on how EDGE we can work with The White House to help kickstart a national discussion focused on scientific thinking and ideas.

As you had noted, in 2003 we did the "faux" George W. Bush Science Advisor question: "What

are the pressing scientific issues for the nation and the world, and what is your advice on how I can begin to deal with them?" - GWB". Even though contributors treated the question seriously, we all knew there was no one at the White House interested in the responses.

But times have changed. For this year I propose a real question asked by a real president. I invite President Obama to ask this year's question, toward the goal of renewing a national discussion to "restore science to its rightful place."

Below are some links to introduce the President and his advisors to the EDGE website (<http://www.edge.org>) which is run by the nonprofit Edge Foundation, Inc.

EDGE has been compared to seventeenth-century Invisible College and the Lunar Society of Birmingham. Members of The Invisible College consisted of scientists such as Robert Boyle, John Wallis, and Robert Hooke. The Society's common theme was to acquire knowledge through experimental investigation. Another example is the nineteenth-century Lunar Society of Birmingham, an informal club of the leading cultural figures of the new industrial age - James Watt, Erasmus Darwin, Josiah Wedgwood, Joseph Priestly, and Benjamin Franklin.

In a similar fashion, EDGE, through its Master Classes, its dinners and special events, gathers together intellectuals and technology pioneers. The founders and architects of Microsoft, Amazon, PayPal, Google, Facebook, and Twitter interact intellectually and socially with the leading behavioral economists, particle physicists, climate researchers, evolutionary biologists, genomic researchers. They are all part of what I call "the third culture" which consists of those scientists and other thinkers in the empirical world who, through their work and expository writing, are taking the place of the traditional intellectual in rendering visible the deeper meanings of our lives, redefining who and what we are.

Please give me a call to discuss.

Best,

JB
[REDACTED] mobile

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EDGE MASTER CLASS - 2009 [7.30.09]
A SHORT COURSE IN SYNTHETIC GENOMICS
George Church & Craig Venter
Space X, Los Angeles, July 25-27, 2008
http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/church_venter09/church_venter09_index.html

THE EDGE ANNUAL DINNER - 2009 (also known as "The Billionaires Dinner" [2.5.09]
L'Opera, Long Beach, CA, February 5, 2009
http://www.edge.org/documents/dinner2009/dinner09_index.html

EDGE IN MUNICH-REFLECTIONS ON A CRISIS
Daniel Kahneman & Nassim Nicholas Taleb: A Conversation in Munich
[1.30.09]
http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/kahneman_taleb_DLD09/kahneman_taleb_DLD09_index.html

THE EDGE ANNUAL QUESTION - 2009 [1.1.09]
WHAT WILL CHANGE EVERYTHING?"
What game-changing scientific ideas and developments do you expect to live to see?"

http://www.edge.org/q2009/q09_index.html

EDGE MASTER CLASS - 2008 [7.25.08]

A SHORT COURSE IN BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS

Richard Thaler, Sendhil Mullainathan, Daniel Kahneman

Gaige House, Sonoma, CA, July 25-27, 2008

http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/thaler_sendhil08/thaler_sendhil_index.html

EDGE IN MUNICH LIFE: A GENE-CENTRIC VIEW

Craig Venter & Richard Dawkins: A Conversation in Munich[1.22.08]

http://www.edge.org/documents/dawkins_venter_index.html

AN EDGE SPECIAL EVENT AT EASTOVER FARM

LIFE: WHAT A CONCEPT! [8.27.07]

Freeman Dyson, J. Craig Venter, George Church, Robert Shapiro, Dimitar Sasselov, Seth Lloyd

http://www.edge.org/documents/life/life_index.html

EDGE MASTER CLASS - 2007 [7.20.07]

A SHORT COURSE IN THINKING ABOUT THINKING

DANIEL KAHNEMAN

Auberge du Soleil, Rutherford, CA, July 20-22, 2007

http://edge.org/3rd_culture/kahneman07/kahneman07_index.html

ROBERT TRIVERS: An Edge Special Event [10.11.04]

Harvard University, October 10-11, 2004

http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/trivers04/trivers04_index.html

AN EDGE SPECIAL EVENT AT EASTOVER FARM [7.21.02]

REBOOTING CIVILIZATION II

Seth Lloyd, Paul Steinhardt, Alan Guth, Marvin Minsky, Ray Kurzweil

<http://www.edge.org/documents/day2/day2.html>

AN EDGE SPECIAL EVENT AT EASTOVER FARM [9.10.01]

REBOOTING CIVILIZATION

Marc Hauser, Lee Smolin, Brian Greene, Jaron Lanier, Jordan Pollack,

David Gelerneter, Alan Guth

<http://edge.org/documents/day/day.html>

THE WORLD QUESTION CENTER [1998-2009]

<http://www.edge.org/questioncenter.html>

THE EDGE ANNUAL QUESTION

EDGE VIDEO [1998-2009]

http://www.edge.org/edge_video.html

THE ANNUAL "BILLIONAIRES" DINNER[1998-2009]

http://www.edge.org/documents/dinners/dinner_index.html

EDGE BOOKS

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EDGE IN THE NEWS

"Edge: brilliant, essential and addictive. The result of this ambitious venture, for those who have already experienced navigating the web pages of edge.org, is not only brilliant, but addictive. It interprets, it interrogates, it provokes. Each text can be a world in itself."

- PUBLICO (LISBON) COVER STORY, SUNDAY MAGAZINE

"The world's greatest thinkers have revealed the ideas and technologies they think will change the world forever. Now it's our turn ... "

- THE GUARDIAN

"The world's finest minds have responded with some of the most insightful, humbling, fascinating confessions and anecdotes, an intellectual treasure trove. ... Best three or four hours of intense, enlightening reading you can do for the new year. Read it now."

- SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"In the late summer of 2007 he [Brockman] hosted the now legendary symposium 'Life: What a Concept!' at his farm in Connecticut. This was where six pioneers of science had jointly proclaimed a new era: After the deciphering of the human genome soon whole genomes sequences could be written. That would be the beginning of the age of biology. "

- SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG

"The optimistic visions of several of Mr. Brockman's Net-savvy essayists seem not just wonderful but plausible."

- THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"'Life: What A Concept' was one of those memorable events that people in years to come will see as a crucial moment in history. After all, it's where the dawning of the age of biology was officially announced."

- SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG

"I just read the Life transcript book and it is fantastic. One of the better books I've read in a while. Super rich, high signal to noise, great subject."

- KEVIN KELLY, EDITOR-AT-LARGE, WIRED

"These are thoughts to make jaws drop...Nobody at Eastover Farm seemed afraid of a eugenic revival. What in German circles would have released violent controversies, here drifts by unopposed under mighty maple trees that gently whisper in the breeze."

- FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

"Full of fascinating discussion ... deep thinking."

- THE AGE (MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA)

"As in the past, these world-class thinkers have responded to Web site editor John Brockman's impossibly open-ended questions with erudition, imagination and clarity."

- THE NEWS & OBSERVER - RALEIGH-DURHAM

"A jolt of fresh thinking...The answers address a fabulous array of issues. This is the intellectual equivalent of a New Year's dip in the lake - bracing, possibly shriek-inducing, and bound to wake you up."

- THE GLOBE AND MAIL

"Answers ring like scientific odes to uncertainty, humility and doubt; passionate pleas for critical thought in a world threatened by blind convictions."

- THE TORONTO STAR

"For an exceptionally high quotient of interesting ideas to words, this is hard to beat. ...What a feast of egg-head opinionating!"

- NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE

"Even the world's best brains have to admit to being wrong sometimes: here, leading scientists respond to a new year challenge."

- THE TIMES

"Provocative ideas put forward today by leading figures."

- THE TELEGRAPH

"The splendidly enlightened Edge website (www.edge.org) has rounded

off each year of inter-disciplinary debate by asking its heavy-hitting contributors to answer one question. I strongly recommend a visit."

-THE INDEPENDENT

"What is the coolest online forum, one where scientists and great minds from all over the world exchange opinions and ideas, and the one that keeps the scientific debate alive? Almost certainly it's edge.org, an American website whose most ardent supporters...are changing the present vision of the universe. This where you'll run into debates that count."

- IL GIORNALE (MILAN)

"A remarkable feast of the intellect... an amazing group of reflections on science, culture, and the evolution of ideas. Reading the Edge question is like being invited to dinner with some of the most interesting people on the planet."

- O'REILLY RADAR

"A great event in the Anglo-Saxon culture."

- EL MUNDO

"As fascinating and weighty as one would imagine."

- THE INDEPENDENT

"They are the intellectual elite, the brains the rest of us rely on to make sense of the universe and answer the big questions. But in a refreshing show of new year humility, the world's best thinkers have admitted that from time to time even they are forced to change their minds."

- THE GUARDIAN

"Praised by everyone from the Guardian, Prospect magazine, Wired, the New York Times and BBC Radio 4, Edge is an online collective of deep thinkers. Their contributors aren't on the frontier, they are the frontier."

- THE SCOTSMAN

"There is much in many of these brief essays to astonish, to be appalled at, to mull over or to wish for...Most of them are vitally engaging to anyone with an ounce of interest in matters such as being or whatever."

- THE CANBERRA TIMES

"What's the big idea?...When the lightbulb above your head is truly incendiary."

- SCIENTIFIC AMERICA

"...fascinating and provocative reading."

- THE GUARDIAN

"If you think the web is full of trivial rubbish, you will find the intellectual badinage of edge.org to be a blessed counterpoint."

- THE TIMES

"Recommended read to detox a tired mind."

- THE HINDU

"...reads like an intriguing dinner party conversation among great minds in science. Don't expect to find answers here. Brockman will have you asking more questions than when you started?and may even change your mind about the ideas you've always been convinced are right."

- DISCOVER

"Brilliant... a eureka moment at the edge of knowledge, as scientists

ponder the imponderable. ... Visiting Edge will make pseudo-scientists feel cleverer, and the rest of us more than usually stupid, as we discover, with a jolt of pleasure, how little we really know about the world."

- THE SUNDAY TIMES

"He (Ian McEwan) loves the spirited playfulness evident in places such as John Brockman's celebrated website Edge, where "neuroscientists might talk to mathematicians, biologists to computer-modelling experts", and in an accessible, discipline-crossing language that lets us all eavesdrop. 'In order to talk to each other, they just have to use plain English. That's where the rest of us benefit.' "

- THE INDEPENDENT

"www.edge.org...has established itself as a major force on the intellectual scene in the US and as required reading for humanities heads who want to keep up to speed with the latest in science and technology."

- THE IRISH TIMES

"Intellectual and creative magnificence."

- SKEPTICAL INQUIRER

"Open-minded, free ranging, intellectually playful ...an unadorned pleasure in curiosity, a collective expression of wonder at the living and inanimate world ... an ongoing and thrilling colloquium."

- Ian McEwan, THE TELEGRAPH

"Astounding reading."

- THE BOSTON GLOBE

"...the fascinating website edge.org."

- TORONTO STAR

"An unprecedented roster of brilliant minds, the sum of which is nothing short of visionary."

- SEED

"Fantastically stimulating...It's like the crack cocaine of the thinking world.... Once you start, you can't stop thinking about that question."

- BBC RADIO 4

"Danger - brilliant minds at work... exhilarating, hilarious, and chilling."

- EVENING STANDARD

"A selection of the most explosive ideas of our age."

- SUNDAY HERALD

"Scientific pipedreams at their very best."

- THE GUARDIAN

"Wonderful reading."

- THE TIMES

"A running fire of a provocative and fascinating thesis."

- LA STAMPA

"Strangley addictive."

- THE TELEGRAPH

"Brockman's cross-fertilising club, the most rarefied of chatrooms, has its premises on his website www.edge.org. Eavesdropping is fun. Ian McEwan, one of the few novelists who has contributed to Edge's

ongoing debates, suggests that the project is not so far removed from the 'old Enlightenment dream of a unified body of knowledge, when biologists and economists draw on each other's concepts and molecular biologists stray into the poorly defended territory of chemists and physicists'."

- OBSERVER

"Brilliant! Stimulating reading."

- SUNDAY TIMES

"The greatest virtual research university in the world."

- Denis Dutton, Editor, ARTS & LETTERS DAILY

"One of the most interesting stopping places on the Web."

- THE NEW YORK TIMES

"A stellar cast of thinkers tackles the really big questions facing scientists."

- THE GUARDIAN

"It is like having a front-row seat at the ultimate scientific seminar series."

- THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

"A fascinating site."

- KANSAS CITY.COM

"Fascinating...a lot of fun."

- THE COURIER-MAIL

"Fascinating and thought-provoking ...wonderful, intelligent."

- AMERICAN SCIENTIST

"Today's visions of science tomorrow."

THE NEW YORK TIMES OPED ED PAGE

"You can improve your own science education at www.edge.org."

- WALL STREET JOURNAL

"Clever minds debate on Edge about God and the world: what life is, what will result from global warming, or what the most recent discoveries in immunology research tell us. It is almost as colorful as the days of Louis XVI, when philosophers, writers, and political thinkers disputed one another in Parisian living rooms ? and prepared the way for revolution."

- SONNTAGS.ZEITUNG

"Awesome indie newsletter with brilliant contributors."

- WIRED

"Everything is permitted, and nothing is excluded from this intellectual game."

- FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE

"Websites of the year...Inspired Arena...the world's foremost scientific thinkers."

- THE SUNDAY TIMES

"Deliciously creative...the variety astonishes...intellectual skyrockets of stunning brilliance. Nobody in the world is doing what Edge is doing."

-ARTS & LETTERS DAILY

"A marvellous showcase for the Internet, it comes very highly recommended."

- PROSPECT

"Profound, esoteric and outright entertaining."

- MERCURY NEWS

"A terrific, thought provoking site."

- THE GUARDIAN

"...a fascinating survey of intellectual and creative wonders of the world...Thoughtful and often surprising ...reminds me of how wondrous our world is."

- Bill Gates, NEW YORK TIMES SYNDICATED COLUMN

"One of the Net's most prestigious, invitation-only free trade zones for the exchange of potent ideas."

- WIRED NEWS

"An enjoyable read."

- SALON

"A-list: Dorothy Parker's Vicious Circle without the food and alcohol ... a brilliant format."

- WIRED

"Big, deep and ambitious questions... breathtaking in scope."

- NEW SCIENTIST

"Has raised electronic discourse on the Web to a whole new level."

-ATLANTIC

"Lively, sometimes obscure and almost always ambitious."

- THE INDEPENDENT

"Big, deep and ambitious questions breathtaking in scope. Keep watching The World Question Center."

- NEW SCIENTIST

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JB

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