

# Worldwide Online Research Project Invites Volunteers to Explore their own Minds

*Experimenters can plumb their psyches and compare what they find with others everywhere*

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A largely student-led online psychological investigation called the Human Research Project invites any volunteer experimenters, in less than an hour or two, to participate in online crowd-swarmed [artificial intelligence](#), group [mind mapping](#), and [crowd-sourced research](#). These are skills which organizers believe will be essential if our species is to face the century's challenges effectively.

The internationally-led inquest ([humanresearchproject.org](http://humanresearchproject.org)) is based on an idea that is gaining more currency among scholars and scientists the further we get into the 21st century— “the notion that humans and computers are approaching a melding point, when biology and technology merge” according to Associate Director Wolfram Ruisdael. Futurists like Google Chief Engineer Ray Kurzweil estimate that this ‘Singularity’ will occur around 2030. Researchers want to make sure that the most typically human capabilities are preserved before the big mash-up happens.

The group of experiments is led by students and researchers from Oxford, Harvard, Cambridge, Berkeley, Stanford, Princeton, Yale, and other schools.

“150,000 years ago our hominid ancestors moved about in nomadic bands, and no doubt utilized primitive language skills to discuss matters of importance to the whole tribe” says project spokesperson Amy Chang. “We are using high-tech methods to do the same, in ways that engage the highest functioning and most advanced human abilities. This can be useful to the whole species, whether or not some sort of Singularity actually occurs. But we also find that practicing these skills is a lot of fun.”

The Human Research Project seeks to determine which distinctly human activities should be preserved and refined ahead of the technological revolution ahead of us. As many as possible are listed on the Project's website, with links to online groups which meet regularly to practice them through interactive live video. Some of the exercises include building a social enterprise in the developing world in less than four hours through adroit use of Social Media and Smart phone apps, performing crowd-sourced research to create detailed models of biological molecules by marking electron microscopy images, and breaking down cultural barriers through online laughter yoga.

In addition to the Singularity, the other metaphor used to describe the purpose and activities of the network is the Hero's Journey, the mythic quest found in many ancient cultures, popularized by anthropologist Joseph Campbell. “Practicing these Millennial skills”, says project coordinator Christina Amberson, “can be akin to a Hero's meeting challenge after challenge in the course of a mythic Quest, except that instead of killing dragons or rescuing maidens, we are building social enterprises and performing crowd-sourced research. But the same type of problem-solving ability and intrepid heroic spirit is demanded, because we are striving to ensure our planet's future”.

Due to the vast aims of the project, the whole of social media is employed to carry on discussion and

to design and improve experiments. According to Communications Director John Toomey, "Reddit is used for technical forums, Facebook and Google + for general deliberations, Care2.com for Humanitarian projects, and Academia.edu will be utilized for archiving scholarly papers emerging from the research."

The HRP welcomes partnerships with volunteers, academic institutions, NGO's, and researchers. . Queries and requests for more information may be sent to [humanresearchproject2017@gmail.com](mailto:humanresearchproject2017@gmail.com).

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