

UNICE

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ABSTRACT: UNICE is an acronym for Universal Network of Intelligent Conscious Entities. I coined the term in the 1990s to describe the transformation of our species that might be the result of a new form of intelligent life developed from a hive-like interaction of computers, humans, and future forms of the Internet. A local form of UNICE (Earth + UNICE = EUNICE) could envelope Earth and then, unbounded by biological limitations, spread out from the planet.

UNICE also refers to a cosmic Internet, or cosmic consciousness, that might already exist. If this turns out to be the case, then EUNICE, with the help of emerging technologies, could eventually join up with a galactic, or even universal UNICE. The likelihood of this being universal vastly increases if faster-than-light communication is found to be possible. If UNICE already exists, and quantum entanglement, quantum teleportation, transportable wormholes, or some other physical process allows instantaneous communication, then certain mystical states or spiritual practices (such as meditation or the use of psychedelics) might currently allow for fleeting glimpses of UNICE. The apprehension of UNICE, from non-ordinary states of consciousness by different people, might be compared to the story of blind men who differently describe an elephant from touch.

Applied science has demonstrated that we are able to observe and amplify extremely subtle effects for various purposes. The use of telescopes, combined with specialized computers, for example, allows us to observe celestial events that happened billions of years ago. Assuming the continued evolution of technology, it may be possible to elucidate the subtleties of human consciousness in order to enhance and evolve more advanced states of consciousness, as well as create new forms of intelligent life. The existing Internet, in combination with humans and their computers, could already be seen as UNICE (or EUNICE) in its nascent form. UNICE might develop first in a single supercomputer, or in virtual reality through distributed computing. Eventually it could propagate through cyberspace, as a kind of self-aware Internet, with growing numbers of conscious nodes that may include enhanced humans, their avatars, and intelligent entities that can exist in both cyberspace, and as protean forms in physical space. There could also evolve hierarchies of consciousness—individual, group, planetary, and universal—each one nested within the other like a cosmic *Matryoshka* doll. These levels could be experienced by all at various times or even simultaneously. Important decisions that govern all aspects of life could eventually be made almost automatically, without the involvement of physical bodies.

The potential changes to all human enterprises are incalculable, whether we think of UNICE as something already existing that we will connect to, or as something that we will develop. I think of the transformation of our species as being like that of a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. What will emerge from the chrysalis of our technology may be as radically different from our present form as a butterfly is from a caterpillar.