

The 'What If?' Exercise

Fact.

In 2007 IBM researchers managed to simulate the thought patterns of half of a mouse brain by using a supercomputer. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/6600965.stm>

Some Speculation

Did they run the simulations for long enough?

Would the brain functions have stabilised better given more time? After all, how long does it take for a brain to wake up from sleep, let alone from being switched off.

A mouse brain is much more complicated than that of an insect or a fish, both of which have useful cognition; perhaps modelling one of these for a longer period might show some interesting results.

Given Moore's Law on the doubling of technology, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moore%27s_law) do we need to worry about a computer being more clever than a human in only twenty years time?

A computer cluster is not an optimum configuration for live thought, compared with most brains it has too many bottlenecks in its data paths. Brains are far more efficient in their use of resources.

What other complex systems might have thought and personality?

Life requires energy gradients for sustenance, for example the sub-sea volcanic hot vents, photosynthesis, etc

If one looks at the size and age of the Sun (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun>), and the prodigious variety of energy gradients, and the unimaginably vast quantities and complexity of the electrical and magnetic fields, it is almost inevitable that there could be clusters of interactions forming analogues of thought processes. Frank Herbert realised this with his creation of Calebans in 'The Dosadi Experiment' (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calebans>)

What if there is life in the Sun?

If so, what does it think about?

Can it perceive anything outside of its environment?

If so, how?

Also if so, what could, or might, it do about it?

And why would it bother?

What is the story?