

Humans are 'learning to think as a species'

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Humanity is in the early stages of the most significant evolution in its history: learning to think as a species.

This is the linking of human minds, values, information and solutions at lightspeed and in [real time](#) around the planet, via the internet and social media, says science writer Julian Cribb.

Global thought is opening the way to solve some of humanity's greatest threats – including [climate change](#), famine, global poisoning, weapons of mass destruction, environmental collapse, resource scarcity and overpopulation, says Mr Cribb, who is the author of 'Surviving the 21st Century' (Springer 2017), a new book describing the ten mega-threats and what can be done about them.

"Thanks to the internet and [social media](#), people are for the first time communicating across the barriers of language, race, nationality, religion, region and gender. While the internet contains much rubbish and malignance, it also contains huge amounts of goodwill, trustworthy science-based advice, practical solutions to problems – and people joining hands in good causes."

Mr Cribb explains that in the second trimester of a baby's gestation a marvellous thing happens: "The nerve cells in the embryonic brain begin to connect – and a mind is born. An inanimate mass of cells becomes a sentient being, capable of thought, imagination, memory, logic, feelings and dreams.

"Today individual humans are connecting, at lightspeed, around a planet – just like the neurons in the foetal brain. We are in the process of forming a universal, Earth-sized 'mind'.

"A higher understanding, and potentially a higher intellect, is in genesis – capable of thought, reason and resolute action to counter the existential threats that are building up around us.

"We are learning to think at supra-human level by applying millions of minds simultaneously to the issues, in real time, by sharing our knowledge freely and by generating faster global consensus on what needs to be done to secure our future."

Today, hard scientific evidence confirms humanity faces 10 mega-risks, the result of our burgeoning population and the overgrowth in its demands on the Earth's natural resources and systems.

However, practical solutions to all of these problems exist – and are capable of being shared universally.

"The problem we face is that some governments and big corporations are reluctant to act. They are placing short-term self-interest above the interests of the human species in sustaining our existence on the planet.

"The internet is showing that their time is up. And their replacement will not be a 'world government'. It will be a human species that shares thought, ideas and solutions at lightspeed. An Earth-sized democracy.

"By 2020 there will be 4.1 billion internet users. By 2030, everyone will be online. For the first time a conversation among the whole of humanity becomes possible – and what more urgent and suitable topic than the survival of the [human species](#)?" Cribb says.

"Young people and elders are reaching out to one another in real time, across the divides of race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, socioeconomic status and prejudice. They are learning how alike we all are. How many things we share. How we can 'like', help, support and depend on each other.

"They are also learning how deadly are the prejudices, the ignorance, the fears and the hatreds of their parents towards other humans. And how utterly pointless.

"The antidotes to ignorance and fear are knowledge and understanding. The internet can supply both. People just need to be able to discriminate between what is good for humanity – and what isn't. What is true and trustworthy, from 'fake news'. We need to become 'informed consumers' on the internet, as we do in choosing foods or other products for safety, health and sustainability."

"Above all, we need to hear more women's voices about the human future. As a rule, women do not start wars, strip-mine landscapes, plunder the oceans, clear-fell forests, exterminate wildlife or poison the food, air and water we need for survival – that's mainly masculine handiwork.

"Women tend to consider the needs of the next generation. This is the thinking, and global leadership, we now need to ensure human survival in this, the century of mega-threats.

"This isn't about feminism – it's about our survival."

'Surviving the 21st Century' (Springer 2017) is a powerful new book exploring the main risks facing humanity: ecological collapse, resource depletion, weapons of mass destruction, climate change, global poisoning, food crises, population and urban overgrowth, pandemic

disease, dangerous new technologies and self-delusion – and what can and should be done to limit them by humanity as a whole and by individual citizens.

More information: Surviving the 21st Century: Humanity's Ten Great Challenges and How We Can Overcome Them.

www.springer.com/us/book/9783319412696

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