BRAINS IN DIALOGUE

Innovations in the Communication of Science

Advances in neuroscience are vital in helping us to understand, not only how the brain works, but also how neurological diseases can be treated. The public and even scientists are still uncertain about the potential applications of this new knowledge and as we begin to identify them, we see that they raise significant ethical, social and legal issues. Can brain imaging technologies allow us to read minds, and if so, how should we regulate their use? How should we deal with the privacy issues raised by genetic tests? Such questions cannot be answered by scientists alone.

To disseminate new knowledge and address concerns such as these, we need discussions about neuroscience that involve people from all walks of life: neuroscientists, clinicians, health workers, policymakers, industrialists, ethicists, lawyers, social scientists, historians, patients and other citizens.

The fostering of such dialogues is what the Brains in Dialogue (BID) project is all about.

Beginning with topics allied to three scientific areas - brain imaging, brain devices and predictive medicine – the BID project team is using meetings, media and technologies to:

- communicate the state of the art
- discuss the expectations, benefits and risks of new therapies
- build constructive discussions on the ethical, legal and social issues
- create novel 'dialogue products' which integrate lay and scientific technical knowledge for scientific and community purposes.

Over the next three years, the BID project will create:

- the Neurosociety Media Centre, a contact point for news and comment about the latest brain science
- three major workshops with open forums
- radio and TV-web products to communicate different scientific and lay aspects of neuroscience, technology and neurological conditions
- community projects driven by citizens.

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