

OP-ED FROM THE FUTURE

# TECHNOLOGICAL GOLIATH

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## Mnemosync

1 chip, 2 surgeries, 3 reasons to forget it even existed.

Mnemosync has taken the world by a storm. Cybernetic Brain Chips are sold out within the time it takes to finish a cup of tea, surgeries are being scheduled by the second, and people are embracing revolution. However, it doesn't take a genius to deduce that this pace of change is unforeseen and unmanageable. Progress has been ingrained into human nature, but have we been given a chance to calculate what's best for us? Or are we just in a hurry to conform to the 'new norm?'

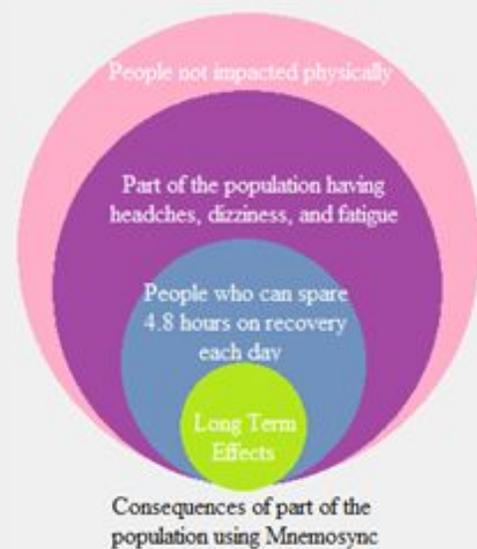
According to the instruction manual released from the Mnemosync Development Lab, there are 3 aspects to Mnemosync – the cybernetic brain chip, holographic device, and the extension cable. First, the chip is surgically inserted into your cranial cavity via an expensive, invasive surgery. Once it is attached to your cerebral tissue, numerous synthetic neural *wires* emerge and attach to the brain's neurons. Artificial synapses would then allow electric impulses to be transferred from inside the brain tissue to the outside world. Next, a *USB port* is inserted into your left temple. Without this, your previous surgery would render meaningless because while the chip implant would allow you harness your visual, auditory, and tactile memory, you won't be able to transfer it. The cable is the main mode of transmission allowing for confidential transmission of sensitive data, after all you wouldn't want your thoughts intercepted, would you? Ever since its release, over 40 million chips have been sold in America alone and 30 million of the chip owners have gotten surgery. With the latest version coming out in a week, we need to be sure we understand what buying a Mnemosync truly means.

There is no doubt that Mnemosync has been revolutionary for people with speech and writing impairments as well as people with other disabilities due to accidents. Jeremy Slader, who hasn't been able to speak since birth, was able to share his 'inside voice' with his overjoyed family. Captain Serena Daane, a veteran who suffered injuries on the battlefield, had her lifelong dream fulfilled when her daughter shared the visuals and emotions of skydiving. While Mnemosync allowed such success stories to blossom, it also gave birth to a number of tragedies. The most televised one being of 13-year-old Rebecca Barns dying due to a ruptured cerebral aneurysm caused by one of the wires of the cybernetic brain chip repeatedly scratching against the wall of a blood vessel.

People say it's humbling to see your life from someone's else's eyes, but at what cost? The manual tells us that the less than 0.01% people who get the invasive surgery result in severe, long-term physiological issues or even death. With numbers this small, we think we're immune. But what we don't see is the simple math telling us that 1 person out of every 10,000 people getting the surgery is forever impacted, incapacitated just in the name of progress. You have better odds to survive a car crash than survive the 'Mnemosync surgery.' This figure of 0.01% doesn't account for the headaches, dizziness, fatigue, and fainting that would follow each electric impulse transfer between the synthetic and natural neurons. With each usage of Mnemosync bringing your energy level down by 20% is it really wise to be giving up 4.8 hours a day to recover from just 2-3 hours of communicating using Mnemosync?

But all that is just applicable to a fraction of the population. Let's say you were one of the 39.9 million people unlikely to have long term physiological issues, or the even smaller fraction with a lot of time to spare, or an even smaller fraction with faint side-effects. Is this device still right for you? I once came across a blog written a century ago by Dr. Carolyn Messere, a surgeon who asked people to stop playing god, urging them to "[s]urrender, things will go the way they go," telling them that "The knowledge, the understanding, the patience, the compassion — that will come as needed. Stop trying to be God. I'm not God. I'm human." The ethics of editing human anatomy are shaky, to say the least, but allowing a chip complete robotic autonomy and access to the most elusive part of your body – the brain – is truly something to think long and hard about.

Are you willing to sell yourself, your consciousness, or as the OCA (Organization of Christian Americans) like to call it, your soul, to the (metaphorical) devil? For the past year, OCA has been staging several



protests throughout America in an attempt to appeal to the ethos of the people of the world arguing that Mnemosync is a deflection from natural order and the fabrication of creation and soul. Maybe it's time for the people to listen to the catastrophic ethical, moral, and religious consequences of Mnemosync and boycott it.

If ethical and religious reasons weren't enough for you to let go of Mnemosync, let me present you with some safety concerns. Most people fail to see the significance of the USB slot, it's just an afterthought, but this USB slot dehumanizes us. It reduces us to the likes of machines and computers that run on oil and electricity. By becoming computers in human clothing, we're subjected to a whole new set of problems including viruses and hacking. Walking around with a slot in your brain is just an invitation for trouble. People can forcibly access your memories and thoughts by just holding you down and plugging a USB or extension cable in your brain and there would be nothing that you could do about it. Imagine living in constant fear that someone's was going to break into your house in the middle of the night and steal or corrupt your memories. Imagine forgetting you had a child. Imagine forgetting the warm hug your mother gave you. Imagine forgetting your childhood best friends. Are you willing to risk your priceless memories just to experience someone else's?

Mnemosync isn't a technological marvel, it's the end of humanity as we know it. It is a terrifying and drastic change, sugarcoated with the promise of revolutionized communication, which has been forced upon people with the plan to turn our perfectly balanced world into a raging dystopia fresh off the pages of a science fiction novel. We must look through this façade and choose to preserve our humanity, our autonomy, and our souls.