

This little piece was published as my answer to John Brockman's EDGE World Question Center 2009, when the question (see [http://www.edge.org/q2009/q09\\_index.html](http://www.edge.org/q2009/q09_index.html)) was:

"What Will Change Everything?"

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### Celebratory Self Re-Engineering

Andy Clark, Philosopher and Cognitive Scientist, University of Edinburgh; Author, *Supersizing the Mind*

What will change everything is the onset of *celebratory* species self re-engineering. The technologies are pouring in, from wearable, implantable, and pervasive computing, to the radical feature blends achieved using gene transfer techniques, to thought-controlled cursors freeing victims of locked-in syndrome, to funkier prosthetic legs able to win track races, and on to the humble but transformative iPhone. But what really matters is the way we are, as a result of this tidal wave of self- re-engineering opportunity, just starting to know *ourselves*: not as firmly bounded biological organisms but as delightfully reconfigurable nodes in a flux of information, communication, and action. As we learn to celebrate our own potential, we will embrace ever-more-dramatic variations in bodily form and in our effective cognitive profiles. The humans of the next century will be vastly more heterogeneous, more varied along physical and cognitive dimensions, than those of the past as we deliberately engineer a new Cambrian explosion of body and mind. That really will change everything.