Neurodiversity – The Core of Creativity

CIIC – off Melbourne
play, learn, observe, question, innovate

Challenges that Go Beyond the Established Framework of Research in Industry, Government and Academia

Scientists, Engineers, Entrepreneurs, Artists & Mathematicians

CIIC brings together academic researchers and practitioners every 3 months to tackle wicked problems that don’t have an obvious solution.
Collaboration for Life

CIIC produces results in open space

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_jhcvCYBbg
Agenda and theme for tonight

1. During the presentation note down any experience/question/hypothesis that relates to **neurodiversity and/or creativity** that you would like to discuss in more depth

2. During the presentation only **short clarifying questions** can be asked and will be answered (I will skim through 50+ slides with relevant context/background information)

3. … but the open space **law of two feet applies from now onwards**, and neurodivergent behaviour is encouraged

4. Open-space **break-out group discussions may start at any time**, alongside the main presentation

5. Therefore, signal once you have a short **1-paragraph description of your topic**, and we will briefly pause for you to hold up the description for everyone to see, so that others interested in your topic may join your table

6. It is also **okay just to listen and observe**, and not to say a word

7. Following the presentation the initiator of each break-out group will have **2 minutes to present a problem statement for further in-depth exploration** at the CIIC unconference on 18 March
Gene culture co-evolution

cultural changes

genetic changes
Typical humans are highly programmable

Traditions and artifacts of human beings accumulate modification over time in a way that those of other animal species do not --so-called cumulative cultural evolution

2 million years of gene culture co-evolution
What makes humans special?
After 2,000,000 years: Welcome to planet Xerox

Immunity to change – How to overcome and unlock the potential in yourself and your organisation

Robert Kegan, Lisa Laskow Lahey, 2009
Collaboration for Life

Planet Xerox

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6ocDmkEP1-8MFE1TzRSN09UWHM/view
Neurodiversity – Perceiving “normality” from the outside
Neurodiversity = significant differences in cognitive lenses

1. **Sensory sensitivity** and ability to selectively ignore sensory inputs
2. Speed and extent of development of [subconscious] **social filters**
3. **Motivation to understand the world** vs motivation to “succeed” socially
4. Level to which **social cues must be processed and decoded consciously**
5. **Mental effort needed** to decode social cues
6. **Time horizons** of specific personal goals
7. **Attention span**
8. **Ability and effort needed to “function”** according to specific cultural rules
A new social movement based on neurological diversity


Thesis presented to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, UTS, Sydney

Society is disordered – **The pathology paradigm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Goal</th>
<th>Common Occupations</th>
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<tr>
<td>social conformance</td>
<td>employees</td>
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<td>knowledge</td>
<td>scientists &amp; engineers</td>
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<td>action</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Neurotypical Disorder <strong>90%</strong> (roughly)</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder(s) <strong>1.5%</strong> (1 in 68)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder <strong>5%</strong> (1 in 20)</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Bipolar Disorder <strong>2.5%</strong> (1 in 40)</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Psychopathic Disorder(s) <strong>1%</strong> (1 in 100)</td>
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**creativity = knowledge + art + action**
Summary of autistic reality

When working in a social environment in which 90% of people suffer from neurotypical syndrome, and in a physical environment exclusively designed for the needs of neurotypicals, Aspies and others on the autism spectrum often require support in order to avoid autistic burnout. If exposure is not carefully managed, autists can easily be stressed out by neurotypical social delusions. The most effective preventive measure is to ensure that access to a safe and quiet non-social environment is available at all times.

The latest statistics from several studies in different countries highlight that autists suffer from depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation at rates that are up to 10 to 20 times higher than in the typical population. Elevated rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide also apply to those with milder forms of ASD, as these co-morbid conditions in many cases are a reflection of experiences made in the social environment rather than a reflection of ASD specific neurology.

Rates of epilepsy in the autistic population are at least 20 times higher than in the rest of the population. One recent study pegs the average life expectancy of autists with epilepsy at 39 years, and the same study finds that non-autistic epilepsy sufferers have an average life expectancy of 70 years.

If you've met one autistic person - you've met one autistic person. From a neurotypical perspective it is important to realise the variability inherent in the autistic spectrum. The spectrum reaches from the broader autistic phenotype (subclinical traits) all the way to severely disabled and non-verbal individuals who require extensive assistance on a daily basis.
Technology

All human artefacts are technology. But beware anybody who uses this term. Like “maturity” and “reality” and “progress”, the word “technology” has an agenda for your behaviour: usually what is being referred to as “technology” is something that somebody wants you to submit to.

“Technology” often implicitly refers to something you are expected to turn over to “the guys who understand it.” This is actually almost always a political move. Somebody wants you to give certain things to them to design and decide. Perhaps you should, but perhaps not.

Society

All human communication is social. But beware anybody who uses this term. Like “maturity” and “reality” and “progress”, the word “social” has an agenda for your behaviour: usually what is being referred to as “social” is something that somebody wants you to submit to.

“Social” often implicitly refers to something you are expected to turn over to “the guys who understand it.” This is actually almost always a political move. Somebody wants you to give certain behavioural rules to them to design and decide. Perhaps you should, but perhaps not.

– Jorn Bettin,
Pioneer of autistic collaboration, philosopher, and alien anthropologist.
He coined the terms big junk data and validation via instantiation in 2008.
Autists must take ownership of the definition of autism

... and share their experience of human cultures through an autistic lens from a first-hand perspective.

Knowledge? Understanding? No thanks
Action? Change? No thanks
Art? Questions? No thanks

... otherwise we live in a society that only values two motivations: conformance and power
Neurotypical syndrome is a neurobiological disorder characterised by preoccupation with social concerns, delusions of superiority, and obsession with conformity. Neurotypical individuals (NTs) often assume that their experience of the world is either the only one, or the only correct one. NTs find it difficult to be alone. NTs are often intolerant of seemingly minor differences in others. When in groups NTs are socially and behaviourally rigid, and frequently insist upon the performance of dysfunctional, destructive, and even impossible rituals as a way of maintaining group identity. NTs find it difficult to communicate directly, and have a much higher incidence of lying as compared to persons on the autistic spectrum.

Is there really such a thing as a "Theory of Mind"? A theory is usually something that can be written down or explained to another person, yet the people who supposedly have it, don’t ever explain it. This makes me wonder if it exists at all.

Perhaps the "normal" people are suffering from a delusion, a social delusion. They think (erroneously) that they are alike, that they have already communicated and that no more communication is necessary. If no more communication is necessary, then any attempt at communication is a step in the wrong direction. If someone greets me at work with "How are you today?" and I tell them that my allergies are making me upset, this is wrong. I'm supposed to say “Fine”, which is neither true nor meaningful.

Neurotypical syndrome is believed to be genetic in origin. Autopsies have shown the brain of the neurotypical is typically smaller than that of an autistic individual and may have overdeveloped areas related to social behaviour. The basic difference seems to be:

NT Theory of Mind – Everyone thinks like me, except when shown to be otherwise.
Autistic Theory of Mind – Everyone thinks differently from me, vastly and mysteriously, except when shown to be otherwise.
I have gained extensive experience simply by living with fairly severe autism for my lifetime. Difference can be wonderful, and autism shouldn’t be tampered with, or altered. Autistic people shouldn’t be changed.

– Jasmine Lee O’Neill
Autistic perspectives (2)

Autists learn and play differently, and only have a limited if any interest in competitive social "games". Autists communicate and enjoy themselves by sharing information and knowledge, and not by negotiating social status. In an online straw poll of 40 autists more than 40% were opposed to all forms of hierarchical organisation.

I will never forget the day at work when a competent contractor whose [autistic] behaviour was not deemed quite "appropriate" got escorted out of the building by security. One of the persistent negative stereotypes is that Aspies are poor at collaboration.

I am on a mission to demonstrate the opposite – that collaboration can take many forms, and that different people have different needs and preferences.

– Jorn Bettin
Autoistic perspectives (3)

Google – who I spend 90% of my advertising budget with – are partnering with the controversial organisation Autism Speaks on the ‘Ten Thousands Genome Program (AUT10K)’ project to help find a possible cure for autism.

I’ve concluded that **this is a system where there really is no place for ethics**.

– Lydia Andal
Autistic perspectives (4)

The discourse on autism is dominated by the voices of non-autistic writers whose work is based in the pathology paradigm.

Autistic voices and narratives that pose critical challenges to this dominant discourse, and to the host of beliefs and practices around autism that are rooted in the pathology paradigm, are systematically marginalized in this literature – excluded, silenced, disingenuously misinterpreted, or condescendingly dismissed.

– Nick Walker
Autistic vs culturally prescribed problem solving

**conformity:** when [neurotypical] people are free to do as they please, they usually copy each other
Autistic experience of *spurious* cultural complexity

- **$T_{\text{conformist}} > 1.2 \times T_{\text{pragmatic}} = 2.4 \times T_{\text{autistic}}$**
- **$T_{\text{pragmatic}} > 2 \times T_{\text{autistic}}$**

- high-ceremony mobilisation of troupes
- full circus performance
- dramatic high-wire acts
- pretending the emperor has clothes

**Collaboration for Life**
Spurious cultural complexity is also known as **guard labour**

**Guard labour** is an increasingly common form of busyness, the term was coined by Arjun Jayadev and Samuel Bowles [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guard_labor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guard_labor)

Guard labor is wage labor and other **activities that are said to maintain (hence "guard") a capitalist system**. Things that are generally characterised as guard labor include: management, guards, military personnel, and prisoners.

Guard labor is noteworthy because it captures **expenditures based on mistrust** and **does not produce future value**.
Social memory vs innovative potential

- **Culturally acquired rituals** lockstep behaviour
- **Autistic rituals** to deal with sensory & social overload and pretending the emperor has clothes

*necessity is the mother of all inventions* … *that make life bearable*
Society is disabling, not Aspergers

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKRIRZEV4B4

The autism “epidemic” was a construct created by a society obsessed with conformance and power.
The social model of ability and disability

• 90% of Aspie interactions involve big differences in perspectives and a very high risk of misunderstanding. Aspies and others on the autism spectrum often require support in order to avoid autistic burnout.

• Only 10% of neurotypical interactions involve big differences in perspectives and a very high risk of misunderstanding. Society is enabling interactions on neurotypical terms and it is disabling interactions on neurodivergent terms. Society is largely unaware that many cultural practices disable those with invisible neurological and cognitive differences.

• Society recognises that many cultural practices and technologies disable those who are visibly different (the blind, the deaf, and those whose bodies are smaller, larger, or less mobile than the typical norm).

• As a result most societies provide dedicated accommodations in terms of modifications of the built environment, communication tools and media that are accessible to the blind and the deaf, etc.
“Civilised” society provides hardly any accommodations for the neurodivergent population

- Is it too much to ask for society to suspend the assumption of consistent cultural conformance with unwritten rules when interacting with the neurodivergent 10% of the population?
- Instead, neurodivergent children are still being subjected to “therapies” that teach them how to act “normal”, and many are being medicated to make them appear more “normal”.
- Elevated rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide also apply to those with milder forms of ASD, as these co-morbid conditions in many cases are a reflection of experiences made in the social environment rather than a reflection of ASD specific neurology.
Level of “assistance” for those who are severely autistic

Examples from New Zealand in recent months (2016)

1. **Imprisoned autistic teen in outrageous situation**

2. **11-year-old locked in 'dark cell' 13 times in 9 days**

3. **Held in an isolation wing of a mental health unit in Porirua for over five years**

4. **Four children in a cramped South Auckland hotel room for a month while waiting to be placed by Housing New Zealand**
There's work to do this century – diseases to cure, environments to save, freedoms to preserve.

Fortunately, there are people with minds capable of the challenge, with the ability to focus and persevere. They possess perspectives and talents unique enough to solve the biggest of problems, or enhance the most challenging projects. They are Aspies.


– Tony Attwood,
Author of The Complete Guide to Asperger’s Syndrome

https://youtu.be/hkHvDOPNIlw
Liberating autism from the pathology paradigm

1. To Hell with “Balance”
2. The Instructor Must Be Autistic
3. The Instructor Must Be a Participant in Autistic Culture, Community, and Resistance
4. Autistic Voices Must Be Central
5. Truth Is Where It Is
6. The Instructor Must Model the Accommodation of Neurodivergence
7. The Instructor Must Model and Invite the Embodied Expression of Neurodivergence

Nick Walker – Autistic author, speaker, educator, transdisciplinary scholar, and martial artist

http://neurocosmopolitanism.com/guiding-principles-for-a-course-on-autism/
The system of cultural rituals = social behaviour

- narcissistic behaviour
- neurotypical copying
- social games
- psychopathic lack of empathy
- cultural rituals
- hierarchies
- innovation
- autistic pattern recognition
- autistic hypersensitivity
- autistic perseverance
- autistic authenticity
- invention
- creativity
- individual autistic rituals
- neurodivergent
- aggregate behaviours
- derived behaviours
- neurological foundations
- weak

Collaboration for Life
In the Asch conformity paradigm, those with autism were found to resist changing their spontaneous judgement to an array of graphic lines despite social pressure to change by conforming to the erroneous judgement of an authoritative confederate.

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1751696X.2016.1244949
Creativity = Having a "less well functioning mental bureaucrat" (*)

Neurodivergent people:
- Adhere to idiosyncratic moral value systems rather than social norms
- Are okay with exploring ideas that upset the "social order"
- Spend much more time experimenting and implementing ideas that others would consider crazy or a waste of time
- Have untypical life goals: new forms of understanding, making a positive impact, translating ideas into artistic expression

Autists in particular tend to:
- Easily suffer from sensory and social overload
- Have unusually developed pattern recognition abilities
- Have an unusual ability to persevere

(*) Jeffrey Baumgartner
Striving to be popular is incompatible with being creative

This is either the truth
... or it is a case of autistic black and white thinking
"Gamification" of society

- Paul Babiak and Robert Hare, *Snakes in suits: When psychopaths go to work*, 2006
- Susan Long, *Socioanalytic methods – Discovering the hidden in organisations and social systems*, 2013
- The Milgram experiment [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8g1MJJeHYIE0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8g1MJJeHYIE0)
- The Stanford prison experiment [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZwfNs1pqG0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZwfNs1pqG0)
- The Asch conformity experiment [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYIh4MkcfJA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYIh4MkcfJA)

Neurotypical copying → innovation

Social games → weak

Psychopathic lack of empathy → aggregate behaviours

Derived behaviours → neurological foundations

Psychopathic traits are common in the upper echelons of the corporate world, with a prevalence of between 3% and 21%

Popularity = The economy of likes (Douglas Rushkoff)

https://youtu.be/6_n1Dro0Uec

Advanced levels of perspective-taking can even increase competitiveness between individuals (adding ‘fuel to the fire’), where it becomes ‘do unto others as you think they will try to do unto you’.

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1751696X.2016.1244949
The future is in neurotypical hands

A. Playing of competitive social games, or
B. Embracing innovation and cultural changes related to the creation of a zero-waste economy

- neurotypical copying
- social games
- psychopathic lack of empathy
The reason for **hope and despair** is one and the same

Typical humans are highly programmable ... mostly via social games ... and sometimes via scientific evidence and personal experience

The balance may shift if the social games become too costly! **80% disengaged at work** etc.

- **neurotypical copying**
- **social games**
- **psychopathic lack of empathy**

**innovation**

**aggregate behaviours**
- derived behaviours
- neurological foundations

**weak**
Lenses on human behaviour in context

space

100 light years
1 light month
1 light hour
1 light second
1,000 km
1 km
1 m
1 mm
1 nm
1 pm
1 fm
1 am

time

1 ns 1 ms 1 s 1 h 1 month 1 century 100,000 y 100,000,000 y

See also the work of Herbert Gintis: https://youtu.be/eIKBxsuMH3A

Collaboration for Life
Human evolution: collaborative morality in the emergence of personality variation and autistic traits (1)

- We trust and respect those who cooperate without counting the costs.
- Judgements and contributions to group wellbeing become important. Rather than social astuteness, signals of pro-social motivations and behaviours that positively affect the group thus become a major factor in reputation and selective success.
- Within the hunting and gathering societies of modern humans it becomes more important to be valued and pro-socially motivated than to be socially clever.
- In a modern context amongst the Baka severely disabled individuals form a social nexus, being those who bring different groups together.
- Egalitarian hunter-gatherers place well documented constraints on any attempts to gain power over others.
- Distinctive sets of valued skills (e.g. technical skills) also lead to specific social roles.
Human evolution: collaborative morality in the emergence of personality variation and autistic traits (2)

- **Individuals with AS understand, and can predict, each other’s thoughts and motivations better than neurotypicals,** and some appear to possess a heightened understanding and sensitivity towards animals.

- **AS brings a distinctive understanding of, and responses to, others’ emotions.** A perception that individuals with AS do not feel for others, is wrongly placed.

- **Whilst a logical and moralistic approach to social interactions may not lead to fluid conversations, pleasing comments or a natural ability to put others at ease, a tendency to be whistle-blowers,** and to counteract aggressive behaviour through adherence to moral principles, **gives individuals with AS a certain respect in a collaborative social context.**

- **Anthropological perspectives argue that we should recognise a different sociality.** **Individuals with AS certainly develop a theory of mind which is different in being based on the use of rules and logic,** but nonetheless works.

- **A social understanding based on logic frees up cognitive potential for enhanced abilities in other realms,** both technical and social, which can contribute to a positive social reputation.

- **The incorporation of these skills into a community would, in this way, play a role in the development of specialists, the construction of specialist niches and enhanced innovation.**

Penny Spikins, Barry Wright & Derek Hodgson, *Are there alternative adaptive strategies to human pro-sociality?* 2016  
Recent **pathologisation** of neurodiverse behaviour & **normalisation** of narcissistic behaviour

- Whilst the number of personality disorders and related psychological “research” has been rising for decades, the level of research into narcissistic personality disorder is minimal.
- All economic paradigms based on growth and interest bearing debt create a bias towards normalising narcissistic behaviours.
- Today digital technology acts as a very effective accelerator for cultural transmission.
- All popular digital social platforms are explicitly designed to encourage narcissistic behaviours.
- Critical observers from a range of disciplines point out that narcissistic behaviour is very common amongst psychologists and medical practitioners.
  
  Peter C. Gotsche, *Deadly psychiatry and organised denial*, 2015
- How far will these trends continue? Given modern tools for genetic engineering, **what is the future of gene culture co-evolution?**
“Social” – The biggest misunderstanding

Autistic

1. Naive assumption: “social” refers to interaction to learn from each other
2. Naive assumption: “social” refers to collaborating with others towards a shared goal
3. May take decades to decode the typical meaning of “social”

Neurotypical (*)

1. [Unspoken] assumption: “social” refers to negotiating social status and power gradients
2. [Unspoken] assumption: “social” refers to competing against each other using culturally defined rules
3. May take decades to appreciate non-social interests

(*) in “civilised” cultures (those that have developed cities, symbolic language, and money) and especially in “WEIRD” cultures (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic)

Since neurotypical behaviour is culturally programmed to a very high degree, the three core inventions of civilisation become extremely potent tools in the hands of those with a psychopathic lack of empathy and inevitably (**) result in a proliferation of self-destructive competitive social games amongst the neurotypical population.


A networked world of zero marginal cost opens up the opportunity to modify and replace the three core inventions of civilisation with a decentralised open source foundation for managing physical resource flows that is less vulnerable to psychopathic manipulation. History shows that human cultures can be reprogrammed within a single generation.
We have perverted the definition of intelligent behaviour.

ability to deceive others = “intelligent behaviour”

George Soros developed the theory of reflexivity based on the ideas of Karl Popper. Reflexivity posited that market values are often driven by the fallible ideas of participants, not only by the economic fundamentals of the situation. Reflexive feedback loops are created where ideas influence events and events influence ideas. Soros further argued that this leads to markets having procyclical "virtuous or vicious" cycles of boom and bust, in contrast to the equilibrium predictions of more standard neoclassical economics.

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1350178X.2013.859415
How about a goal-oriented definition?

Intelligent behaviour: finding a niche in the living world

In a world of zero marginal cost the economics of scarcity directly lead to an abundance of waste. Competing to produce and consume more and more stuff has become a liability. Collaborating to produce less and less waste is becoming the imperative.

Time to relearn very old wisdom and constrain any attempts to gain power over others. Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, A Cooperative Species: Human Reciprocity and Its Evolution, 2011
Uncivilisation

Principle 8 from the Dark Mountain Manifesto
http://dark-mountain.net/about/manifesto/

The end of the world as we know it is not the end of the world full stop. Together, we will find the hope beyond hope, the paths which lead to the unknown world ahead of us.
One example of autistic collaboration – Paul Erdős

In an appropriate environment, in this case a self-selected subset within the mathematical community, an autist is enabled and not disabled.

- Erdős utmostly believed mathematics to be a social activity, living an itinerant lifestyle with the sole purpose of writing mathematical papers with other mathematicians.
- He was known both for his social practice of mathematics (he engaged more than 500 collaborators) and for his eccentric lifestyle.
- He spent most of his life as a vagabond, traveling between scientific conferences, universities and the homes of colleagues all over the world.
- He would typically show up at a colleague’s doorstep and announce “my brain is open”, staying long enough to collaborate on a few papers before moving on a few days later. In many cases, he would ask the current collaborator about whom to visit next.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Erd%C5%91s

Other autists are loners and yet others prefer to collaborate only with a small trusted circle of peers. They all produce valuable knowledge artefacts and unique artistic output, but they can only thrive in a supportive environment that values neurodiversity.

N is a Number: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wN4yLPPvRBg
neurodivventures
Autistic collaboration and innovation

http://s23m.com
https://ciic.s23m.com/
http://aikiarts.com/
http://autpress.com/
http://www.divergentlabs.org/
http://magazine.thenewideal.com/
Thinking in systems, designs, patterns

Making sense of the world's information from your unique point of view, for gaining a deep understanding of your business and its future potential
Thank you!

Jorn Bettin

jorn.bettin@s23m.com
Appendix A
Minimising misunderstandings
Confidence in “facts”, shared beliefs, evidence, & uncertainty – and **potential for misunderstanding**
Neurodiversity – Culture

Aspie neurodiversity = innovative potential

Neurotypical majority = social memory
# Social relationships and flexibility

**Autistic**

1. The default social map is a multi-dimensional competence graph
2. Culturally defined social hierarchies are arbitrary constructs that stand in the way of progress
3. Unofficial social hierarchies are yet another obstacle standing in the way of progress
4. Has discovered activities that are far more interesting than socialising (intrinsic motivation)
5. One or more special interests
6. Main goal of communication relates to knowledge / information exchange and validation
7. Easily changes beliefs when presented with relevant evidence, and otherwise never modifies beliefs
8. The goal of learning includes a desire to understand

**Neurotypical**

1. The default social map is the culturally defined social hierarchy
2. The second most important social map is the unofficial social hierarchy that is helpful for rank climbing
3. The competence graph is a one-dimensional ranking of social [engineering] skills
4. Social acceptance and rank is the most important interest (extrinsic motivation)
5. Profession is a tool to gain social rank
6. Main goal of communication relates to social acceptance and rank
7. Significant ability to ignore evidence in order to maintain cultural beliefs
8. The goal of learning is often limited to copying
Trust building

Autistic

1. Based on experienced domain-specific competence
2. When young assumes everyone is telling the truth
3. When older can become very cynical
4. Can be fooled by people who appear to be logical but who have no scruples fabricating evidence
5. Is slow in learning to read social cues, and can’t do so in an environment of sensory overload

Neurotypical

1. Based on socially transmitted reputation
2. Quickly learns that deception is part of the social “game”
3. Is proficient in the social “game”, and may even enjoy it
4. Relies on social [non verbal] cues to detect deception
5. Can be fooled by fake social cues, even if these are in conflict with the evidence at hand
Neurodiversity – The cultural role of psychopaths

Psychopath

social data and observations
appropriation of new beliefs for personal gain

Aspie

data and questions about the natural world
scientific method

Neurotypical

social data and questions
-cultural copying

propagation of new social beliefs

Psychopath

social data and observations

construction of new beliefs about the social world for personal gain

Psychopathic memes = social hierarchy “growth” hormone
Sources of misunderstandings

- Aspie:
  - Confused and overwhelmed by non-verbal signals
  - Questions
  - Beliefs

- Neurotypical:
  - Questions
  - Beliefs

Mismatch of expectations

Confused by communication of uncertainty and evidence

Non-verbal signals get lost in translation

Uncertainties and evidence are ignored
How to **minimise misunderstandings**

**Aspie**
- be well rested to be able to cope with ketchup in all the wrong places, and lower expectations regarding the use of precise language
- use a phone or chat to level the playing field
- non-verbal signals get lost in translation
- uncertainties and evidence are ignored

**Neurotypical**
- don’t be confused by an Aspie Poker face
- replace non-verbal signals with ketchup in the right places, and meet critical expectations regarding the use of precise language

- only briefly mention uncertainties and evidence, and ignore minor uncertainties
- communicate with Aspies in the same way as with strangers from a different culture

**Collaboration for Life**
Neurotypical communication challenges
The Neurotypical knowledge and skill profile

intuitive social skills
profession and special interests
general knowledge
Neurotypical & Neurotypical communication – common

- compatible social skills
- compatible cultural background
- distinct professional knowledge

Normal NT collaboration
A common [academic] interest for Aspies
Neurotypical & Neurotypical communication – rare

- compatible social skills
- compatible cultural background
- shared professional knowledge

Normal NT collaboration
A common [academic] interest for Aspies

Collaboration for Life
Autistic communication challenges
Example of **Aspie knowledge and skill profile**

- **domains**
  - formal conceptual modelling
  - visual languages
  - human behaviour

- **knowledge**
  - intuitive social skills
  - profession and special interests
  - general knowledge
Aspie & Aspie communication – common

- incompatible social skills
- no shared other interests
- shared special interests

Aspie special interest collaboration
Can be painful to watch for outsiders
Aspie & Aspie communication – uncommon

Aspies from different planets
The extreme diversity of the autistic spectrum

- incompatible social skills
- no shared interests
- distinct special interests
Aspie & Aspie communication – rare

- limited social skills
- shared Aspie interests
- shared special interests

Aspie mind-meld
Incomprehensible to neurotypicals

domains

knowledge
Neurotypical & Autistic communication
Aspie & Neurotypical communication – common

- incompatible social skills
- limited shared interests
- distinct professional knowledge

Aspie NT misunderstanding
Collision of different planets

Collaboration for Life
Aspie & Neurotypical communication – uncommon

- NT adapts to Aspie social skills
- Limited shared interests
- Shared professional knowledge

Aspie NT collaboration
The Aspie interface to the NT world
Appendix B
Autistic literature
Pathologisation of autistic behaviour

- My overall view was that it is near-impossible to make money ethically within the UK business system – and I don’t want to be involved in anything that isn’t fair and balanced.

- Google – who I spend 90% of my advertising budget with – are partnering with the controversial organisation Autism Speaks on the ‘Ten Thousands Genome Program (AUT10K)’ project to help find a possible cure for autism.

- I’ve concluded that this is a system where there really is no place for ethics.

Lydia Andal

https://amiautistic.com/
**Autistic silence is a human right**

- I have gained extensive experience simply by living with fairly severe autism for my lifetime. Difference can be wonderful, and autism shouldn't be tampered with, or altered. **Autistic people shouldn't be changed.**

- **The autistic individual certainly has a right to this special home within.** It is not a dream world as some dictionaries imply. It’s not a spot in the mind filled with hallucinations. Rather the person sees what is around him with extra-acute sight.

- An autistic experiencing the outside world experiences it as surreal, not as a made-up work of art in the mind. You can’t judge the world of another as inferior, because you don’t live in that world.

- The autistic world is comfortable. It is a safe place to ground oneself in. Autistic children can keep their inner sanctuaries, as well as grow and learn, and become educated.

- It is a very bad idea to force one’s way into an autistic's world. That is a grave threat to the autistic person. … All things coming from the outside must be gentle, sometimes devoid of emotion, so as to not overwhelm.

Jasmine Lee O’Neill, 1999

https://www.amazon.com/Through-Eyes-Aliens-Autistic-People/dp/1853027103
Understanding neurotypical behaviour

Reviewer comment:

A Field Guide to Earthlings is one of the finest books about autism I have ever encountered. It is written to be used by autistics to make some sense of this world filled with non-autistics. The author is clearly an autistic who has studied earthlings a long time. He describes the actions and motives of earthlings very well.

Reviewer comment:

This is one of the most insightful books I have ever read. Easy read, but every chapter could be a PhD thesis on human social behaviour.

Reviewer comment:

This book was immensely helpful in increasing my understanding of the neurotypical world and its inhabitants. I have to say that there were parts of the book that truly saddened me. I had no idea how different I truly was an autistic person until I read this. I was actually quite shocked by NT motivation and behaviour. It’s so very different from autistic motivation, even if our behaviour appears "the same".

http://www.afieldguidetoearthlings.com/
Field guide: **Neurotypical** behavioural patterns

**Perception**
1. Desensitisation
2. Symbolic filtering
3. Multi-focus
4. Sensory integration

**Beliefs and learning**
5. Thinking in words
6. The belief Web
7. Perception limited to existing beliefs
8. Social reality
9. Free-floating symbols
10. Liquid truth

11. Lumping
12. Attrition
13. Forest-first learning
14. Certainty
15. Social learning
16. Lockstep
17. Holistic training
18. Mapping between time and space
19. Going through the motions

**Communication**
20. Multi-level communication
21. Stretching out the message
Field guide: **Neurotypical** behavioural patterns

22. Influential communication  
23. Small talk  
24. Fast, fluid communication  
25. Inferring by association  
26. Drawings of associations  
27. Behavioural shortcuts  
28. Indirection  

**Feelings and display**  
29. Identity from group  
30. Intentional display  
31. Personality construction  
32. Delusional self-awareness  

33. Value judgements  
34. Make-feel  
35. Confidence  
33. Common sense  
34. Groupfeel  
35. Repression  
36. Projection  
37. Denial  
38. Displacement  
39. Rebellion  
40. Desert  
41. Relational emotions
Field guide: Neurotypical behavioural patterns

Relationships & power
45. Friends and enemies
46. Categorised, scripted relationships
47. Rank
48. Lying & manipulation
49. Reputation
50. Conflict
51. Power and threats
52. Identity threats
53. Winning
54. The ultimate pattern
55. Confidence battling
56. Altruism
57. Symbolic sex
58. Intimacy levels
59. The sexual tease
60. Affairs
61. Forced sex
62. Socialising
A spectrum of neurodiverse autistic voices

- Brian Kinghorn, *Educating a neurodiverse world*, https://youtu.be/kT0eqy- s7A
- Cameron Thompson, *Growing pains of a teenage genius*, https://youtu.be/7dnxUq9fMv8