

## *seven thousand einsteins*

*novelty without end*

“*Sir we have an insurmountable opportunity*” - old military joke

I doll out good news rarely, and then usually in overwhelming lumps associated with crushing responsibilities. The unalloyed good is a rare beast.

So let me introduce you to the world's big news - all the talented people in the world are going to be online within five or ten years. A bit under seven billion people means you'll be sharing the planet with *seven thousand one-in-a-million intelligences*.

Now this is astonishingly good and bad news. It means that there's a decent chance one of these people will be in your patch. It's also possible that they'll all gang up on the world's problems and actually sort us out on a planetary scale. We can hope. But that's not the good and bad news I want to point you at today. What I want to point you at is *all hope of comprehending what is going on is over*.

Let us say you give each one of these people one hour of your time. You read an article about them, watch a bit of video, or read a few of their blog posts. Working eight hours per day at this task, it will take you four working years to keep up on them.

In those four years, the *one-in-a-millions* will have continued to work, learn, grow, teach and write. There is no catching up.

Mere information overload is not news. People have been progressively experiencing, understanding and complaining about it since the last man who had read everything died. The incomprehensible increase in production of, and access to, human knowledge has left us all staggered for centuries. But it's hitting the point where we need to start developing *new philosophies around the simple fact of our tiny, tiny minds in the ocean of know*.

Tiny little fishies. Even the ultra-intelligent can't keep up, it's not just a processing issue it's a *bandwidth* issue. Even if we were smart enough to comprehend what is happening, there is not enough time to just take it in.

What is strategy, particularly digital strategy, in an age of incomprehensible knowledge? It cannot be ever-narrower academic specialties, each one comprehensible but with no deep understanding of the interconnectedness of fields. It cannot be the dream of collective intelligence - what is incomprehensible to one may be comprehensible to a group, but the bandwidth issues remain. Reading collectives and collaborative filtering *increase* the problem rather than solve it.

What is needed is a new way to think about the territory of knowledge. We must each see the world of knowledge as *pathways* rather than maps. What do I need to know to accomplish what I will to accomplish? Once we train ourselves out of the idea of complete understanding, knowing even peripheral knowledge is impossible, only then can we reorder the infinite around our own intentions. This is the future.