

**GOOGLE, THE BRAIN, DARPA,**  
*AND THE BEAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC CREATIVITY*

**Theme:** Backcasting

**Phase:** Imaginative inquiry

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# GOOGLE, THE BRAIN, DARPA, AND THE BEAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC CREATIVITY

*At first glance these disparate things* don't seem to have many things in common. It does not take long to realize that one of the operative functions of Google, the one most people are familiar with is that of search – ask and you shall get. Well, that's exactly what the brain does, ask and the brain scours a vast database to get that piece of information that you want; that name that's-on-the-tip-of-my-tongue piece of information, and - how is it that you know this person? But that too, is a superficial gaze that requires an investigation into the deeper structures and patterns that the title of this article suggests. What is it that they have in common?

*What are the relationships?  
Why is this relevant?*

Okay so lets dig a little deeper.

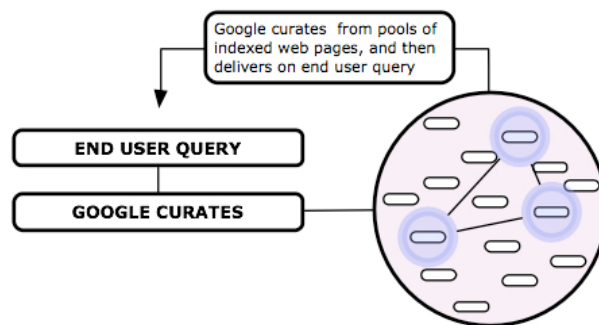
*What happens when there is a bigger purpose to the quest? Bigger than say name recall?  
What happens when the quest becomes significant?  
What and who determine what is deemed significant?*

In the following paragraphs I will explore inquisitively into the varying contexts of Google, the brain, DARPA (*Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency*), and the Beal Institute for Strategic Creativity... and pose new questions to these different but similar ways of looking and listening. We start with Google and search.

## GOOGLE

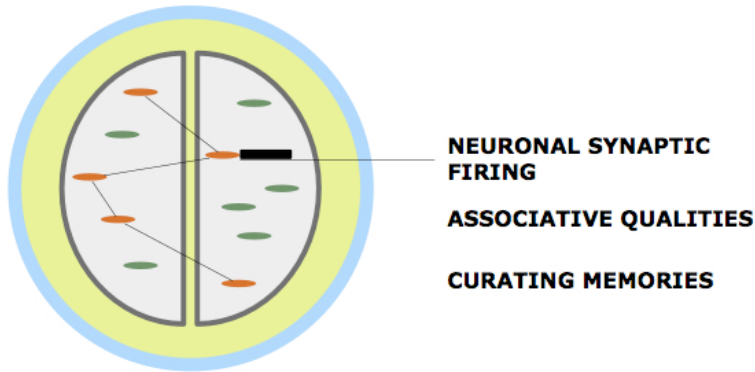
We start with the premise that never have human beings been so intimately connected, thanks to the Internet and the World Wide Web. The web contains all sorts of formal and informal knowledge; institutional, scientific, educational, technological, as well as people's individual experiences, opinions and what they know. What Google does in simple terms is scour all this formal and informal knowledge on the web, index the data, rank it, and store it. The externalized map of the human psyche at your fingertips, kind of. When you type a search into the search box on the google search engine browser; "dog" for example, google searches all the data it has collected on dogs and then delivers on your request all the pages that it "thinks" is relevant to your request. Now that's pretty cool. Imagine just asking of the air something, and getting a response?

### Google search diagram:



## **THE BRAIN**

What does the brain have to do with all this? In a way we ask the brain similar things, and the brain searches its vast database for the answer. Apart from being a storage device for all sorts of information, and experiences, it also tells us how to act.

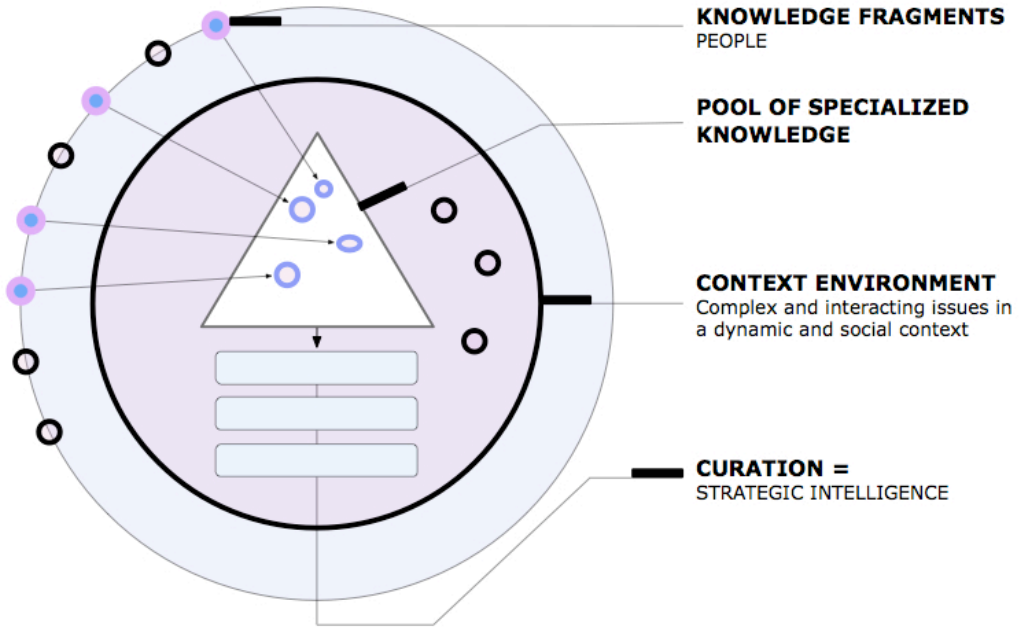


## **DARPA**

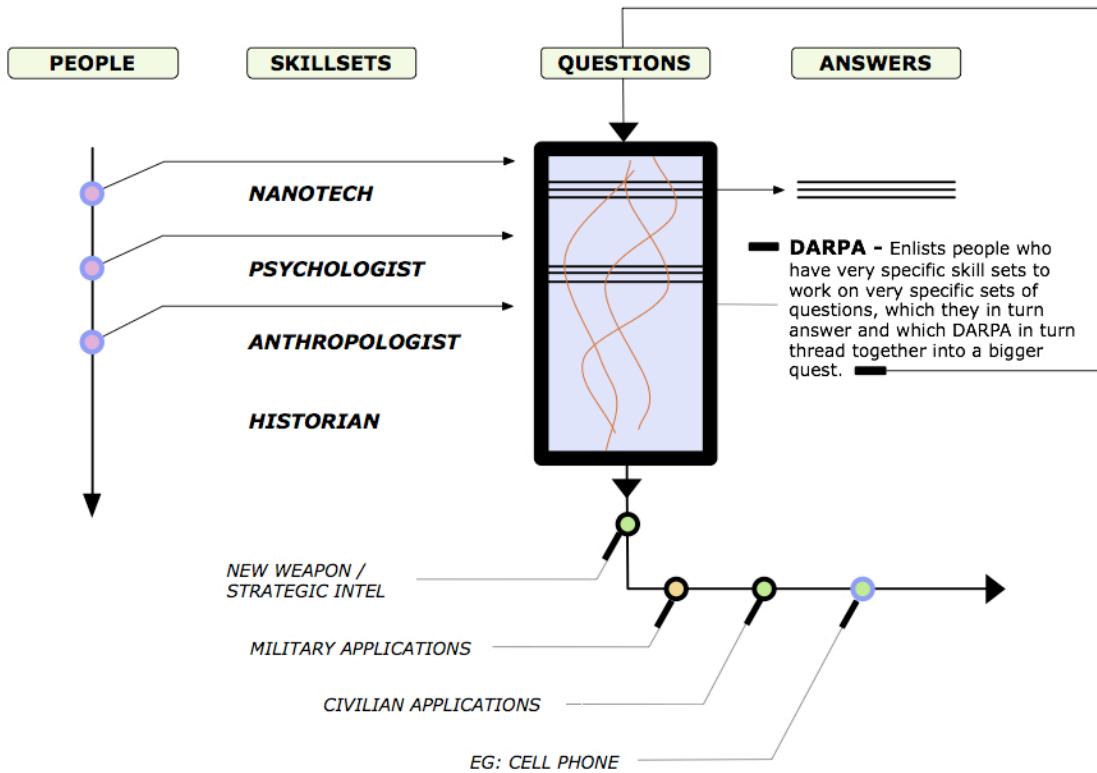
*DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency)*, also has an interesting and similar modus operandi. DARPA makes use of the fragmentation of knowledge by enlisting people who have very specific and specialized skill sets, to work on, and in a "context environment"; complex interacting issues in a dynamic social context. The context environment is presented to these pools of specialized knowledge, who are then asked to work on very specific sets of questions, which they in turn answer, and which DARPA in turn threads together into a bigger question, and a bigger quest. By having multiple groups working on different sets of questions, DARPA then threads and curates this knowledge into a larger whole; into wisdom, pulling from the knowledge camps, what it wants and what it needs. What they end up with is *strategic intelligence*.

The question is: as the fragmentation of knowledge – disciplines into supra-niche landscapes, leading to a vast network of specialization, what model will work best to curate relationships that will have meaning to people, what is of value, who benefits and what does it mean to "the end user"? It is obvious that all that depends on who is asking the question, but it is a good question to ask – and it is exactly what the *Beal Institute for Strategic Creativity* does.

**DARPA diagram 1**



**DARPA diagram 2**



### **THE BEAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC CREATIVITY (BISC)**

The BISC searches the *field* which includes the knowledge and wisdom of specialized knowledge camps, and considers everything as a series of artifacts; a collection of desires, wants and behaviours. These "signals" because they signal their presence and potential to be something, as in archeology can be "picked up and looked at". This gives the BISC a level of understanding, a finger on the pulse of society, that helps curate as well as help emerge new areas and potential, at the intersect of human behaviour and technology. It is another way to look and listen to the potentials existent in the world.