

Ask A Genius (or Two) 67 - Conversation on Genius (4)
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Scott: What else about social media?

Marco: It is not so easy to change your mind through ads on social media as well. I remember a poll on Facebook. It said about 80% of people don't change their minds watching a post, on social media. It is not so easy. Then in Italy, our referendum, yes or no, a constitutional referendum was a bit like Trump's victory in the USA. Our prime minister here, it wasn't an easy referendum. Now, we have a different prime minister, in Italy.

Rick: You guys couldn't get out from under Berlusconi for years. He's Trump, basically.

Marco: We've had three different prime ministers who weren't chosen by the people. The Italian president, of the Italian Republic, nominates the prime minister. Three different prime ministers who were against the people's will. This is quite sad in my opinion. Now, we have the fourth prime minister who wasn't chosen by the people.

Rick: Is he any good?

Marco: I think the world is changing a little bit in Europe too. Trump, it is an important step for Europe as well. Italy looks at the West and then also the USA. It is important to manipulate Italian minds too. This is true.

Scott: Is the system as sophisticated as in the United States, though?

Marco: People fear everything. They are afraid of change. But if they see something is changing in the rest of the world, they will take this upon themselves and will try to do the same things if they think something is wrong. They have to have courage to do this. They have to understand the rest of the world has something changing right now.

Rick: The US, we tend to ignore the rest of the world. The pipeline of information about the rest of the world flowing through our news is much narrower than I think in European countries.

Marco: With Trump, on the chair, we have suffered a kind of rebound.

Rick: Backlash.

Marco: Yes.

Rick: Maybe, the principle is that the way society and technology is changing. Genius is becoming more and more embedded in social structures that share more and more information including people who are purportedly geniuses.

Scott: We've identified some geniuses, identified some definitions, identified some possible issues that might arise with it. Also, some positive trends that might come with it, such as more collaboration with it. It leads to the next step. What can people do to sift effectively through this deluge of information, this pouring down of information, that is picking up pace – and new forms of information, not just more information?

Marco: Every topic is more complex if we compared it to the past. You need to work in a team to develop something greater compared to the past. It is not so easy to do something great alone. That's the problem. The point, in my opinion, is that genius is someone who develops something, but to develop something new needs a team. Now, it is too difficult to do something new alone without help. You need to focus on a specific topic while somebody else focuses on another part of it. Another specific part of it. Then you need to put it together to strike something great.

Scott: Rick?

Rick: The barrage of information, available information, perhaps, changes what kinds of genius will be most effective in the world. Paul Cooijmans has three principles of genius. One is associative width, which is the number of analogies you can come up with to tackle a problem.

Scott: Associative width or associative horizon?

Rick: Associative width or horizon, or something, how that will work will change since everyone has almost all of human information via our devices if you know how to use it, how to access it. One of the tasks that affects genius now as compared to 100 years ago is, instead of information-getting, information-shifting. Einstein built big imaginary structures. He did *gedankenexperiments*, thought experiments, that led to a lot of his great discoveries. He built them in his own imagination. Now, 100 years later, there are all of the worlds you could possibly want by clicking around.

It remains to be seen if the geniuses of our era will be geniuses of synthesization, of sifting and combining all of these huge masses of information together in genius ways. Everybody has their own foibles and dysfunctions around information. My mom, for instance, is a borderline hoarder. Newspapers come in, mail comes in, and she thinks she'll get through it all. It accumulates because she never gets through it all. But she's barely online. For someone barely online, they will be even more snowed under by the continuous flows of massive amounts of information.

Marco: In my opinion, he had a big way, a different way, of thinking about the world, the universe, and its role, but he couldn't win the Nobel Prize. He couldn't win the theory with matrices. Some different pieces of the puzzle that, in the past, other people developed. He found a lot of different tools that helped to create the theory, relativity theory. There is a mathematical presentation that he couldn't skip - to present the theory at conferences to get the achievements for the goal he was able to reach.

You can theorize, steal something from the past, and use it by yourself. Now, this isn't possible. You have to do everything real-time with other people by staying connected and trying to proceed step-by-step together. That period, you can do a thing. This is my result, and somebody

will use my achievement to do something new. Now, it is different. If you tackle a problem or topic, you need to stay with others to do it at the same time.

Rick: Where, in the past, there were fewer people marching forward in any field, but even Einstein needed his buddies that he would meet in the café to move things forward. For relativity, one of his friends said, “You have to look at this,” which was Matrix Theory or something. But if you’re in a popular field, you’re marching with 100s and possibly 1,000s of different people in different directions. One strategy for being a genius is to find a field that has fewer people in it, or to invent a field of your own.

So, you can find the stuff that is findable and aren’t competing at an Easter Egg hunt with at least 300 other people. Each in the same field. Each field has its easily found, and more difficult-to-find, results. One aspect of genius, historically, was having a different experiential background, which led to different thoughts. Darwin went on a 5-year, around-the-world voyage and sees a bunch of different geographies and creatures. Does he come up with the theory of evolution without doing that? Probably not, he certainly doesn’t come up with the 100s and maybe 1,000s of examples that he spent the next 20 years laying out without having this experience that nobody else had.

Marco: In our dynamic test, there was something similar. I came up with the idea in 2011. Then I talked about this idea in 2012, but then it took about 5 years to develop the real test.

(Laugh)

Also, I needed other people to accomplish this goal. I asked them to help me with my algorithm. I said, “This is the algorithm. You have to translate these instructions in a program.” We tried to see if something doesn’t work, and it didn’t work. We came up with a different. Finally, we have achieved the algorithm. It is online. It wasn’t as easy as I thought in 2012. It was very difficult to reach a dynamic online test without any flaws or without any colleague. Also, you can develop a collegial relationship between two different figures in the instruction field. You can’t distinguish with your eyes.

You have 3x3 square matrices. But given the chance, you can find two solutions that are the same figure using your eyes. If the computer ever presents two different strings of letters and numbers, you have to delay at least one of them to have a unique option for every different figure in the option field. This isn’t easy to predict before. You have to try to write the program and then generate a lot of different tests, and see if something doesn’t work.

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