

A YOUNG, BLIND WHIZ ON COMPUTERS

by Tom Petzinger

from *The Wall Street Journal*

Sometimes, a perceived disability turns out to be an asset on the job.

Though he is only 18 years old and blind, Suleyman Gokyigit (pronounced gok-yi-it) is among the top computer technicians and programmers at InteliData Technologies Corp., a large software company with several offices across the United States.

"After a merger last October, two disparate computer networks were driving us crazy," recalls Douglas Braun, an InteliData vice president.

"We couldn't even send e-mail to each other."

In three weeks, Mr. Gokyigit, a University of Toledo sophomore who works part-time at InteliData's office in the city, created the software needed to integrate the two networks.

"None of the company's 350 other employees could have done the job in three months," says Mr. Braun.

"Suleyman can literally 'see' into the heart of the computer."

Mr. Gokyigit's gift, as Mr. Braun calls it, is an unusual ability to conceptualize the innards of a machine.

"The computer permits me to reach out into the world and do almost anything I want to do," says Mr. Gokyigit, who is a computer science engineering major with straight As. Like most blind people who work with computers, Mr. Gokyigit uses a voice-synthesizer that reads the video display on his monitor in a mechanical voice.

Devices that produce Braille screen displays are also available, but Mr. Gokyigit says they "waste time."

Instead, he depends on memory. Turning the synthesizer to top speed, he remembers almost everything he hears, at least until a project is completed.

While the synthesizer talks, Mr. Gokyigit mentally "maps" the computer screen with numbered coordinates (such as three across, two down) and memorizes the location of each icon on the grid so he can call up files with his mouse.

The young programmer is also at home with hardware, thanks partly to a highly developed sense of touch.

Mitzi Nowakowski, an office manager at InteliData, recalls how he easily disconnected and reconnected their computer systems during a move last year.

"Through feel, Suleyman can locate connectors, pins and wires much faster than most other people with sight," she says.

Apps let parents control children's usage of electronic devices

Usage of smartphones and tablets among children has tripled since 2011, according to Common Sense Media, a San Francisco based non-profit that studies the effects of media and technology on young users.

A new app called DinnerTime Parental Control, for iPhone or Android smartphones, enables parents to restrict when children can use their smartphones and tablets.

"The price of entry level smartphones and tablets have come down a lot, and as a result, more and more kids have their own individual devices," said Richard Sah, co-founder of DinnerTime, based in San Mateo, California.

With the free app, parents can pause activity on a child's Android smartphone or tablet so that they can focus on things like homework, exercise and family time. Once a device has been paused, all functions on their device are blocked, including the ability to text and play with apps.

To use the app, parents install it on the child's device and enter in their phone number to link the two devices. Parents can then set specific break times, ranging from 30 minutes to three hours, when the device will be locked. A countdown screen displayed on the child's device shows when they can use it again.

Sah said he was inspired to develop the app by the tradition of family dinners, which he thinks is being lost in the age of technology.

"Dinner time brings families together for quality time and to have lots of different conversations. We want people to come together for engaging conversations, rather than be distracted by a tablet," he said.

DinnerTime Plus, another free app from the company, lets parents manage the apps their children use and to views the apps they are using in real time.

Parents can also purchase detailed reporting, which outlines how much time kids spend on certain apps, and how often they used them.

With another app called ScreenTime, parents can push a button on their phones to block usage on their children's devices. They can also set daily time limits for particular apps. The app, for Android, requires a subscription of \$3.99 a month.

Kimberly Young, a psychologist who focuses on Internet addiction, believes parents need to control how much time their children spend on their devices. But she added an app might not be the best way to do it.

"I do not agree that any app is better than good old-fashioned parenting in terms of treating Internet addiction," said Young, who added that she has seen children as young as 3 years old using mobile devices.

Sah is also concerned about usage of devices by young children.

"Most kids can use smartphones before learning to write their names or tie their shoes," he said.

General election victory remarks, 1979, Margaret Thatcher (Conservative), Location: 10 Downing Street

... . Well, it's been a wonderful campaign. Congratulations!

Mrs. Thatcher: Thank you very much.

Question: How do you feel at this moment?

Mrs. Thatcher: Very excited, very aware of the responsibilities. Her Majesty The Queen has asked me to form a new administration and I have accepted. It is, of course, the greatest honour that can come to any citizen in a democracy. I know full well the responsibilities that await me as I enter the door of No. 10 and I'll strive unceasingly to try to fulfil the trust and confidence that the British people have placed in me and the things in which I believe. And I would just like to remember some words of St. Francis of Assisi which I think are really just particularly apt at the moment. 'Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. And where there is despair, may we bring hope', and to all the British people—howsoever they voted—may I say this. Now that the Election is over, may we get together and strive to serve and strengthen the country of which we're so proud to be a part. And finally, one last thing: in the words of Airey Neave whom we had hoped to bring here with us, 'There is now work to be done'.

Question: Prime Minister, could I ask you if you would tell us what sort of administration you would like to have over the next five years?

Mrs. Thatcher: Well, we shall be going inside and we shall be getting on with that as fast as we can, but I think the first job is to try to form a Cabinet. We must get that done. We can't really just ...

Question: How soon do you think you'll be able to name your Cabinet?

Mrs. Thatcher: Well, certainly not today. I hope to have some news by tomorrow evening. It's a very important thing. It's not a thing that should be suddenly rushed through. It's very important.

Question: And what will you be doing for the rest of today?

Mrs. Thatcher: I shall be here working.

Leader's speech, Brighton 2004

Tony Blair

So here we are facing the possibility unique in our 100 year history, of governing Britain for a third successive term.

Never done it before. Never debated it before. Never imagined it before.

Progressive parties, like the Labour Party, rarely fail because of their values.

Fairness, justice, solidarity, opportunity for all.

These are the impulses of any decent human spirit.

No. We almost always fail when we don't foresee the future in which those values must be applied.

The values require steadfast conviction.

But the future requires restless courage to know and act upon the coming reality however hard the challenge it holds.

And when the two, conviction and courage combine their strength and take on the challenges, they beat them and in time what was a challenge, becomes part of the new consensus.

Reflect on the things once the passionate subject of controversy, people no longer talk about.

Remember the march for jobs.

No-one talks of mass unemployment now. When two weeks ago it fell to its lowest level for 30 years, it passed without notice.

Who did it? The British people, by voting for change.

There are people who a decade ago could tell you of interest rates double what they are today, of homes repossessed, of families who didn't know from one week to the next where the mortgage payments were going to come from.

But who talks of boom and bust economics today?

Who did it? The British people by voting for change.

And when was the last time you heard of a winter crisis in the health service or the scandal of outside toilets in primary schools, now that this country, Britain, is the only one anywhere in the developed world increasing public spending on health and education every year, year on year, as a proportion of our national income?

And who did it? The British people by voting for change.

Mother Teresa's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech

As we have gathered here together to thank God for the Nobel Peace Prize I think it will be beautiful that we pray the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi which always surprises me very much — we pray this prayer every day after Holy Communion, because it is very fitting for each one of us, and I always wonder that 400-500 years ago as St. Francis of Assisi composed this prayer that they had the same difficulties that we have today, as we compose this prayer that fits very nicely for us also. I think some of you already have got it — so we will pray together.

Let us thank God for the opportunity that we all have together today, for this gift of peace that reminds us that we have been created to live that peace, and Jesus became man to bring that good news to the poor. He being God became man in all things like us except sin, and he proclaimed very clearly that he had come to give the good news. The news was peace to all of good will and this is something that we all want — the peace of heart — and God loved the world so much that he gave his son — it was a giving — it is as much as if to say it hurt God to give, because he loved the world so much that he gave his son, and he gave him to Virgin Mary, and what did she do with him?

As soon as he came in her life — immediately she went in haste to give that good news, and as she came into the house of her cousin, the child — the unborn child — the child in the womb of Elizabeth, leapt with joy. He was that little unborn child, was the first messenger of peace. He recognised the Prince of Peace, he recognised that Christ has come to bring the good news for you and for me. And as if that was not enough — it was not enough to become a man — he died on the cross to show that greater love, and he died for you and for me and for that leper and for that man dying of hunger and that naked person lying in the street not only of Calcutta, but of Africa, and New York, and London, and Oslo — and insisted that we love one another as he loves each one of us. And we read that in the Gospel very clearly — love as I have loved you — as I love you — as the Father has loved me, I love you — and the harder the Father loved him, he gave him to us, and how much we love one another, we, too, must give each other until it hurts. It is not enough for us to say: I love God, but I do not love my neighbour. St. John says you are a liar if you say you love God and you don't love your neighbour.

Recession 'led to 10,000 suicides'

The economic crisis in Europe and North America led to more than 10,000 extra suicides, according to figures from UK researchers.

A study, published in the British Journal of Psychiatry, showed "suicides have risen markedly".

The research group said some deaths may have been avoidable as some countries showed no increase in suicide rate.

Campaign groups said the findings showed how important good mental health services were.

The study by the University of Oxford and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine analysed data from 24 EU countries, the US and Canada.

Unemployment, repossessions and debt

It said suicides had been declining in Europe until 2007. By 2009 there was a 6.5% increase, a level that was sustained until 2011.

It was the equivalent of 7,950 more suicides than would have been expected if previous trends continued, the research group said.

Deaths by suicide were also falling in Canada, but there was a marked increase when the recession took hold in 2008, leading to 240 more suicides.

The number of people taking their own life was already increasing in the US, but the rate "accelerated" with the economic crisis, leading to 4,750 additional deaths.

The report said losing a job, having a home repossessed and being in debt were the main risk factors.

However, some countries bucked the trend. Sweden, Finland and Austria all avoided increases in the suicide rate during the recession.

One of the researchers, Dr Aaron Reeves, of the University of Oxford, said: "A critical question for policy and psychiatric practice is whether suicide rises are inevitable."

(attributed to) Charlie Chaplin on his 70th birthday: As I Began to Love Myself

As I began to love myself I found that anguish and emotional suffering are only warning signs that I was living against my own truth.

Today, I know, this is "**AUTHENTICITY**".

As I began to love myself I understood how much it can offend somebody as I try to force my desires on this person, even though I knew the time was not right and the person was not ready for it, and even though this person was me.

Today I call it "**RESPECT**".

As I began to love myself I stopped craving for a different life, and I could see that everything that surrounded me was inviting me to grow.

Today I call it "**Maturity**".

As I began to love myself I understood that at any circumstance, I am in the right place at the right time, and everything happens at the exactly right moment, so I could be calm.

Today I call it "**SELF-CONFIDENCE**".

As I began to love myself I quit stealing my own time, and I stopped designing huge projects for the future. Today, I only do what brings me joy and happiness, things I love to do and that make my heart cheer, and I do them in my own way and in my own rhythm.

Today I call it "**SIMPLICITY**".

As I began to love myself I freed myself of anything that is no good for my health – food, people, things, situations, and everything that drew me down and away from myself. At first I called this attitude a healthy egoism.

Today I know it is "**LOVE OF ONESELF**".

As I began to love myself I quit trying to always be right, and ever since I was wrong less of the time.

Today I discovered that is "**MODESTY**".

As I began to love myself I refused to go on living in the past and worry about the future. Now, I only live for the moment, where EVERYTHING is happening.

Today I live each day, day by day, and I call it "**FULFILLMENT**".

As I began to love myself I recognized that my mind can disturb me and it can make me sick. But As I connected it to my heart, my mind became a valuable ally.

Today I call this connection "**WISDOM OF THE HEART**".

We no longer need to fear arguments, confrontations or any kind of problems with ourselves or others. Even stars collide, and out of their crashing new worlds are born.

Today I know THAT IS "**LIFE**"!

CONVERSATIONAL BALL GAMES

by Nancy Masterson Sakamoto

from *Polite Fictions - Why Japanese and Americans Seem Rude to Each Other*

Japanese-style conversations develop quite differently from Western-style conversations. And the difference isn't only in the languages. I realized that just as I kept trying to hold Western-style conversations even when I was speaking Japanese, so my English students kept trying to hold Japanese-style conversations even when they were speaking English. We were unconsciously playing entirely

different conversational ball games.

A Western-style conversation between two people is like a game of tennis. If I introduce a topic, a conversational ball, I expect you to hit it back. If you agree with me, I don't expect you simply to agree and do nothing more. I expect you to add something - a reason for agreeing, another example, or an elaboration to carry the idea further. But I don't expect you always to agree. I am just as happy if you question me or completely disagree with me. Whether you agree or disagree, your response will return the ball to me.

And then it is my turn again. I don't serve a new ball from my original starting line. I hit your ball back again from where it has bounced. I carry your idea further, or answer your questions or objections, or challenge or question you. And so the ball goes back and forth. If there are more than two people in the conversation, then it is like doubles in tennis, or like volleyball. There's no waiting in line. Whoever is nearest and quickest hits the ball, and if you step back, someone else will hit it. No one stops the game to give you a turn.

A Japanese-style conversation, however, is not at all like tennis or volleyball. It's like bowling. You wait for your turn. And you always know your place in line. It depends on such things as whether you are older or younger, a close friend or a relative stranger to the previous speaker, and so on.

When your turn comes, you step up to the starting line with your bowling ball and carefully bowl it. Everyone else stands back and watches politely. Everyone waits until the ball has reached the end of the alley and watches to see if it knocks down all the pins, or only some of them, or none of them.

Then, after everyone is sure that you have completely finished your turn, the next person in line steps up to the same starting line, with a different ball. He doesn't return your ball, and he does not begin from where your ball stopped. No wonder everyone looked startled when I took part in Japanese conversations. I was playing the wrong game. But if you have been trained all your life to play one game, it is no simple matter to switch to another, even if you know the rules. Knowing the rules is not at all the same thing as playing the game.

Energy supplier shakeup will allow customers to switch in three days

Householders will be able to switch energy suppliers within three days by the end of this year under major new rules for the industry to be unveiled on Monday by the regulator.

The watchdog said it will also make the switching process much more easy and reliable, while revealing it is already working on a 24-hour switching system to be ready by 2018.

Enabling customers to easily move from one supplier to another is seen as a vital way of breaking the dominance of the big six power companies such as SSE and British Gas, while helping new entrants such as Ovo or Good Energy to grow.

"Consumers can change their bank in seven days, their mobile phone in just a couple, but have to wait significantly longer to switch their energy supplier," said Dermot Nolan, Ofgem's chief executive.

"We know that consumers want a reliable and efficient switching process, and that concerns about it going wrong can put them off shopping around for a better deal. So following the steps we have taken steps to make the market simpler, clearer, fairer, we are now leading a programme which will deliver faster, more reliable switching," he added.

The move, which comes amid continuing anger about soaring bills and frustration about poor service, was welcomed by consumer groups and the small but growing independent supply sector.

Ann Robinson, director of consumer policy at uSwitch.com, described the announcement as a "game-changer" that she believed was needed to encourage consumers to engage more deeply with the energy market.

"With half of households yet to switch their energy supplier, it is clear there are barriers that need to be broken down. For many of these, it will be a question of confidence and fear of the unknown. However, measures such as those outlined today should improve this and provide people with greater reassurance."

Good Energy, an independent power supplier, also welcomed the move. It said: "It should be easy for customers to engage with energy suppliers, and this is another step in the right direction."

EUROPE AGREES TO NEW FINANCIAL REGULATOR

The European Union has agreed to set up a series of financial regulators from the beginning of 2011. The new regulators will monitor banks, insurance companies and trading on the financial markets. Our Europe correspondent Jonty Bloom reports from Brussels:

The European Commission is keen to point out that this agreement will create a new EU-wide system of financial watchdogs which will complement the work of the existing national regulatory bodies, not replace them.

But this is still a controversial move as it creates a system of EU-wide financial regulation especially over bodies such as credit rating agencies that can affect the whole European economy. And in an emergency the proposals will allow these new financial regulators to ban risky financial investments altogether and require national regulators to take joint co-ordinated action.

Such powers will be controversial especially in the UK and Germany, which are worried that a new EU-wide system will undermine their own national regulators and threaten the success of financial centres like London and Frankfurt.

Jonty Bloom, BBC News, London

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD SCIENCE

by Stephen Hawking

from *Black Holes and Baby Universes and, Other Essays*

Whether we like it or not, the world we live in has changed a great deal in the last hundred years, and it is likely to change even more in the next hundred. Some people would like to stop these changes and go back to what they see as a purer and simpler age. But as history shows, the past was not that wonderful. It was not so bad for a privileged minority, though even they had to do without modern medicine, and childbirth was highly risky for women. But for the vast majority of the population, life was nasty and short.

Anyway, even if one wanted to, one couldn't put the clock back to an earlier age. Knowledge and techniques can't just be forgotten. Nor can one prevent further advances in the future. Even if all government money for research were cut off, the force of competition would still bring about advances in technology. Moreover, one cannot stop inquiring minds from thinking about basic science, whether or not they were paid for it.

If we accept that we cannot prevent science and technology from changing our world, we can at least try to ensure that the changes they make are in the right directions. In a democratic society, this means that the public needs to have a basic understanding of science, so that it can make informed decisions and not leave them in the hands of experts. At the moment, the public has a rather ambivalent attitude toward science. It has come to expect the steady increase in the standard of living that new developments in science and technology have brought to continue, but it also distrusts science because it doesn't understand it. But the public also has a great interest in science, as is shown by the large audiences for science fiction.

What can be done to harness this interest and give the public the scientific background it needs to make right decisions on subjects like acid rain, the greenhouse, nuclear weapons, and genetic engineering? Clearly, the basis must lie in what is taught in schools. But in schools science is often presented in a dry and uninteresting manner. Children must learn it by rote to pass examinations, and they don't see its relevance to the world around them. Moreover, science is often taught in terms of equations. Although equations are a concise and accurate way of describing mathematical ideas, they frighten most people.

'Harry Potter' star Emma Watson: 'Nothing would shock me now'

THE LAST SPELL: "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows — Part 2" closes out a decade of *Hogwarts* in Hollywood. Today: Hero Complex contributor Amy Kaufman chats with Emma Watson, who plays Hermione Granger in the films.

AK: How did you prepare for the darker tone of this film?

EW: I felt there was a real change in tone, and it was definitely a big step up in terms of what I had to bring. I didn't prepare particularly differently. A lot more was asked of me than had ever been asked before. It was nice to feel challenged, and I had to step up and engage my brain and really think and put everything into it. I was able to focus on giving a really good performance because I wasn't in school.

AK: When you look back on the franchise, are there scenes you're especially proud of?

EW: Yeah, I think there was a bunch of stuff I had to do that really pushed me. When **Ron** was left in my arms, when I was tortured by **Bellatrix**, a bunch of stunts I had to do. I had to jump off a building onto the back of a dragon, and there were shots that were very technical with lots of running. If I could do that stuff, hopefully I can do anything. It was very good training ground for anything that might get thrown at me. Nothing would shock me now.

AK: How did you approach the final scene, in which you play yourself as an adult?

EW: It was really interesting and challenging. The thing that was hardest was trying to imagine that I had children that I was sending off to school. That was really strange. And it was weird that I was seeing these guys that I'd grown up with suddenly looking old. But it was fun. It felt nice to do that scene, but it really felt as if we had completed that journey fully as we possibly could. We had makeup on. I had, like, a little fat suit that changed my figure a little — it changed the shape of my body a little. And I had a wig and teeth in. It wasn't as scary as I thought it was going to be. I thought it was really going to freak me out.

AK: Deep down, do you think you'd ever return to the role if another book came out?

EW: Never say never. I would just have to see how I felt and where I was at the time. It's really difficult to say.

– Amy Kaufman

July 11, 2011 | 6:09 a.m.

<http://herocomplex.latimes.com>

Diana's 1995 BBC interview

The interview with Martin Bashir, a journalist with the BBC current affairs program "Panorama". The interview was broadcast in November 1995.

q: Your Royal Highness, how prepared were you for the pressures that came with marrying into the Royal Family?

Diana: At the age of 19, you always think you're prepared for everything, and you think you have the knowledge of what's coming ahead. But although I was daunted at the prospect at the time, I felt I had the support of my husband-to-be.

q: What were the expectations that you had for married life?

a: I think like any marriage, especially when you've had divorced parents like myself, you'd want to try even harder to make it work and you don't want to fall back into a pattern that you've seen happen in your own family.

I desperately wanted it to work, I desperately loved my husband and I wanted to share everything together, and I thought that we were a very good team.

q: How aware were you of the significance of what had happened to you? After all, you'd become Princess of Wales, ultimately with a view to becoming Queen.

a: I wasn't daunted, and am not daunted by the responsibilities that that role creates. It was a challenge, it is a challenge.

As for becoming Queen, it's, it was never at the forefront of my mind when I married my husband: it was a long way off that thought.

The most daunting aspect was the media attention, because my husband and I, we were told when we got engaged that the media would go quietly, and it didn't; and then when we were married they said it would go quietly and it didn't; and then it started to focus very much on me, and I seemed to be on the front of a newspaper every single day, which is an isolating experience, and the higher the media put you, place you, is the bigger the drop.

And I was very aware of that.

q: How did you handle the transition from being Lady Diana Spencer to the most photographed, the most talked-about, woman in the world?

a: Well, it took a long time to understand why people were so interested in me, but I assumed it was because my husband had done a lot of wonderful work leading up to our marriage and our relationship.

But then I, during the years you see yourself as a good product that sits on a shelf and sells well, and people make a lot of money out of you.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/royals/interviews/bbc.html>

PIRATES AFFECT NAIROBI HOUSE PRICES

According to estate agents in Kenya's capital Nairobi, house prices have doubled in the past three years. But this isn't just because of increasing wealth or investors; it's possible that there's also another, more interesting reason. This report from Rachel Wright:

While property prices in the United States have fallen almost 30 per cent in the last three years, the cost of homes in the Kenyan capital Nairobi has almost doubled, according to estate agents in the city.

Some of the reasons for this rise can be attributed to improvements in the city's infrastructure and people fleeing the violence in the Rift valley. But, there could be another, much more fascinating factor.

Pirates operating off neighbouring Somalia's coast are thought to generate tens of millions of dollars a year. And Joseph Kaeyah, from the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research, thinks that some Somali pirates are using the Nairobi property market.

According to Nairobi estate agent Charles Mwangi, the reasons pirates may be doing this is obvious. It could be a way of hiding their cash or laundering it. He's concerned about the impact this is having on ordinary Kenyans, as an increasing number of middle class families cannot afford to buy homes.

Rachel Wright, BBC News

POP GROUP'S USE OF FOLK SONG STIRS DEBATE

from *National Public Radio*

Over the past decade, combining traditional music from Africa, Latin America, and Asia with Western pop and jazz has become commonplace.

But for a singer of traditional music, having your voice on a hit record does not necessarily make you any money.

Take the case of Lee Fong Gwo, a Taiwanese rice farmer.

His performance of a traditional song was recorded and later sold without his knowledge to a group of German pop musicians.

The German musicians used the farmer's voice in a song that became a big hit.

All this has stirred an interesting debate: who owns traditional music and should Lee Fong Gwo be paid for his performance?

Frank Koller, Reporter: For thousands of years, Lee Fong Gwo's family has made a living growing rice in the mountains of southern Taiwan.

Gwo is an Ami; his ancestors came to Taiwan from the islands of Southeast Asia long before Chinese immigrants arrived from the mainland.

Now 76, Lee Fong Gwo remembers learning to sing in these fields as a young boy.

Lee Fong Gwo, Ami Singer: [through a translator] Our water buffaloes needed someone to take care of them, and that was my job until I was 12.

In those days, I'd hear my whole family singing together as they worked in the rice paddies, and that's how I first learned the songs.

Frank Koller: A few miles away in the town of Taitung, you still see traces of traditional Ami culture in Lee Fong Gwo's garage.

We spent the afternoon sitting on small plastic chairs around a woks filled with burning charcoal until Lee Fong Gwo asked me if I'd like to hear him and his wife sing one of the old songs.

Lee Fong Gwo and his wife sing a traditional song which fades into the pop song "Return to Innocence".

This song, "Return to Innocence," was recorded by the German band Enigma in 1994.

"Return to Innocence" sold more than five million copies around the world that year, staying on the pop charts for more than six months.

The man whose unique chanting starts and ends "Return to Innocence", Lee Fong Gwo, was never asked to be on the record and never received a cent – and that was never supposed to happen, says Professor Hsu Chang-Wei, an ethnomusicologist at Taiwan University.

In 1987, with support from the Taiwanese government and the French Ministry of Culture, Hsu arranged for a group of Ami singers led by Lee Fong Gwo to visit Europe for a series of concerts.