

Network Action Proposal

Title:	Enactive Approaches to Social Cognition
Membership number(s)	217
Member name(s)	Prof. Steve Torrance, Dr Ezequiel Di Paolo
Member institute/company name(s)	University of Sussex (Other participants: Dr. Hanneke De Jaegher, Tom Froese)
Goals of the action	<p>There is a growing consensus in the cognitive sciences that cognition is best understood as an embodied-embedded dynamical process which spans a systemic whole consisting of an agent's brain, body and world (e.g. Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1991; Clark 1997; Wheeler 2005). This has had significant consequences for modeling cognitive behaviour, but has not yet been addressed much in computational modelling of social interactions, which is still strongly influenced by the traditional information transfer paradigm.</p> <p>Much of recent research in embodied-embedded cognitive science has focused on sensorimotor embodiment, as evidenced by the growing popularity of enactive and embodied approaches to perception (O'Regan and Noë 2001; Noë 2004), as well as recent work in AI and robotics (Pfeifer & Scheier 1999) and in machine consciousness (Torrance et al. 2007). We believe that it is time to apply these important insights to the domain of intersubjective interaction, which itself involves a distinct form of sensorimotor coupling (Thompson & Varela 2001; Thompson 2007), e.g. in "participatory sense-making" (De Jaegher & Di Paolo 2007, in press).</p> <p>To facilitate this, we plan a focused workshop in the summer of 2008, to bring together an international group of researchers (about 25) from different backgrounds who are united by a common interest in improving our understanding of social cognition by adopting an enactive perspective. Special effort will be made to ensure that the interdisciplinarity of the workshop will result in a fruitful exchange of skills and methods across the diverse disciplines and a discussion of how they can inform cognitive modeling research. This is likely to promote community building and, in particular, further investigation of enactive approaches to social cognition via the use of computational models, an integral aspect of enactive cognitive science research (see, e.g., Di Paolo, Rohde & De Jaegher 2007, in press).</p> <p>At this point, we have one confirmed international keynote speaker, Prof. Evan Thompson (Toronto). We propose, subject to funding, to invite other significant international contributors to this field, including Profs Takashi Ikegami, Charles Lenay, and Shaun Gallagher.</p>
Principal activity to which it contributes	<p><i>Community Outreach</i></p> <p>An open workshop will contribute to enhancing existing links and forging new ones between researchers from different disciplines interested in enactive social cognition. This may form the basis for future collaborations and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Outreach ○ Scientific Outlook ○ Education & Training

	<p>further networking activities</p> <p><i>Scientific Outlook</i> A principal aim of this workshop will be to explore how theoretical developments in enactive social cognition can bear fruit in the concrete area of cognitive modeling and artificial agent research.</p> <p><i>Education and Training</i> A number of postgraduate researchers in informatics and related fields are expected to be present. By participating, their grasp of theoretical issues in enactive cognitive science will be enhanced, and they will contribute and gain technical know-how on social interaction modeling and dynamics.</p> <p>Because the presence of appropriately qualified researchers is of particular value to this workshop, we wish to fund their attendance to as high a level as possible.</p>
<p>Concrete outcomes of the action (at least one of which should be material suitable for publication on the euCognition website)</p>	<p>The desired outcome of this open workshop is to inform current cognitive modeling research in social cognition. The workshop will also contribute to the growing enactive community in Europe and elsewhere for the application of the enactive paradigm to the important area of social interaction. The workshop will set up an agenda for making further progress in both theoretical and practical work areas. In addition, the workshop will result in novel collaborative journal and/or book publications. Previous meetings on enaction organized by members of the team have resulted in special issues of journals, and/or edited collections (e.g. Torrance 2005; 2007 in press; Stewart, Gapenne & Di Paolo, 2007 in press). We are planning such an output from this meeting.</p> <p>In addition the workshop organizers will write a post-workshop report, for publication on the euCognition website.</p>
<p>Effort in person-days that will be charged to the Network Action (if any)</p>	<p>Nil</p>
<p>Expected start and duration in months</p>	<p>Aug. 30-31, Sep. 1 2008 (2 full days)</p>
<p>The requested funding, under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Travel Costs o Other Costs (check with the Network Coordinator if you aren't sure about eligibility of these costs) o Labour Costs (identify the number of person-days and the rate per day). 	<p>Travel costs: 3 Transatlantic lead speakers: € 1000 each Subtotal: € 3000</p> <p>TOTAL: € 3000</p>
<p>Please identify any other sources of funding that contribute to this Action (actions to support events such as workshop and conferences should include an outline budget identifying the total cost)</p>	<p>We are applying to other sources, including the European Science Foundation, and the Department of Informatics, University of Sussex.</p>

References

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