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### Riding the Brainwaves

#### In the future, we may all play videogames with our minds.

In the old sci-fi scenario, machines control the minds of humans. But one local company wants to secure a future where human minds control machines instead. San Jose-based NeuroSky has developed a sensor and processing unit that can convert brainwaves and muscle movements into electronic signals. These signals can then be used for biofeedback therapies for conditions such as anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The units can also be used to control videogames, which has attracted a lot of attention.

Biofeedback devices are nothing new – they've been around since at least the 1970s – but they've been costly, bulky, and intrusive. NeuroSky's sensor is lightweight, and uses gel-free electrodes. According to company manager Johnny Liu, "The term biofeedback encompasses anything from the body. Our technology can utilize key aspects such as eye and muscle movement."

Recently, NeuroSky employees demonstrated some possible applications of the technology. "In our game demonstration, you have telekinetic powers," explains Liu. "You can smash your enemy with a car or work together to float a bathtub. You can also recuperate your health by relaxing."

Games that exercise gray matter, such as Nintendo's "Brain Age," have become increasingly popular, and NeuroSky hopes to tap into this market. In theory, biofeedback can help users control their mental focus, depression, insomnia, tension-induced headaches, backaches, even asthma and blood pressure. Biofeedback is also popular among athletes as a complement to mental training. Clinical proof of its effectiveness, however, is limited.

NeuroSky's technology is being used in a mass-market toy made by another company that will debut in October at the American International Fall Toy Show. The company won't release specific details, but let's hope there's mental car-smashing involved.



### Big on Character

#### Sharks' general manager Doug Wilson is as big a fan as you are.

To hockey fans, the first sign of spring signals playoff time. Which means it's the perfect occasion to talk with Doug Wilson, general manager of the San Jose Sharks, on whose office wall at HP Pavilion hangs two framed hockey sweaters. One belonged to Bobby Orr, Jr., one of Wilson's hockey idols, and whom he considers the greatest player ever to play the game. The other jersey "is from my peewee team when I was 12," Wilson explains. "It's there because we want all our players to play



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like they're 12. You play because you love the game. It's not about anything else other than just playing, because you're pursuing a dream and you play because you love it."



Wilson sat down with us before Game four of the Western Conference Semifinals and shared some thoughts on youth hockey, players with character, and a few of his personal hockey "traditions."

***The Wave: The Sharks are big supporters of youth hockey. What's the motivation?***

**Doug Wilson:** I think our owners understand a couple things: One, we all love the game of hockey, and in San Jose we want our kids to have the opportunity to play. Most of us have kids, most of our players have kids, and I think that our owners understood that to build the rinks in San Jose, and create some opportunities, our kids may not have to leave here [to play]. I think it's the right thing to do on both fronts. One is to have quality facilities that our kids can play in. And it's not just kids. I mean, a lot of adults play, and we look at hockey as one of the few sports we can play, cradle to grave. You can play from the age of two, to there are guys that are 90 that play. Personally, it's the best game for teaching you life skills. And... it's a family commitment.

***TW: You talk a lot about the character of the hockey players that you select. What do you consider good character?***

**DW:** Well, hockey – and this is not a negative to other sports – but hockey players, our greatest players, none of them think they're bigger than the game. So they have a great respect for the game. And in hockey, no matter how good your goaltender is, or your star center man, or whatever, you will not have success unless you have [the entire team] buying into the team-first mentality. I often say there are five things we look for: character; hockey sense; do you truly love the game; do you understand you have the responsibility to make everybody around you better; and if you have those four things, the fifth thing is that you play your best when it matters the most.

***TW: What is one of your life's simple pleasures?***

**DW:** Waking up after a win. I don't ask for much. It makes the whole day a little better.

***TW: Do you have any superstitions or rituals?***

**DW:** Traditions, we call 'em. Can't share 'em. [Laughs] [Though] I would drive the same way to the game. Little things like that. I used to watch a two-minute VHS about six plays, simple plays. I would always watch that before I went to a game. Just a visualization of how goalies work. Just to watch five or six little clips. I'd watch it before I went to the game and then my mind was clear when I got to the game and just played.

***TW: Do the Sharks scout in areas outside the U.S., Canada, and Europe?***

**DW:** We scout anywhere where there are hockey players. There aren't too many hockey players our guys wouldn't find. We also consider people that are untrained, that are athletes. We've had some great success with people who were viewed under the radar. Maybe we weigh it harder on character and hockey sense with these new rules. We think that a guy doesn't have to look like a hockey player. But we judge him on the ice and his character and his fortitude. We've got a lot of guys like that.

People ask, "Where did they come from?" Well, it doesn't matter where they came from. You see something in them and how they handle adversity. They might not be playing on the best team. We like to see people who have actually failed, or who have had an injury or had to overcome something, because then you really know what they're made of.

Most of our players – just about every guy in that room – there's a story where they've failed or somebody said they didn't accomplish what they were supposed to do, or guys who had some injuries. We like that type of person, because when you do believe in them, they'll go through the wall for you.

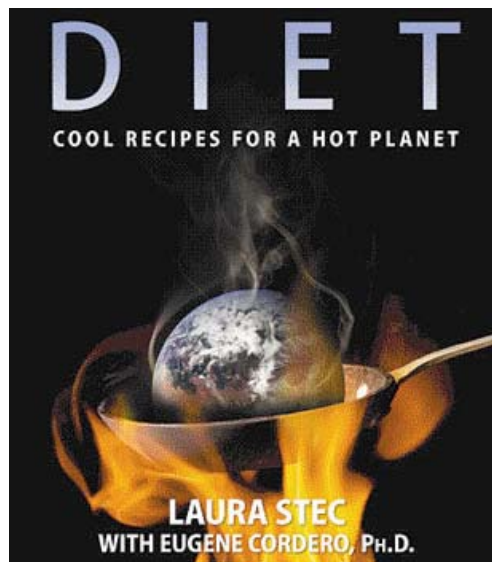
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### Warming Diet.”

It’s an “inconvenient truth,” to be sure: what we eat affects the global climate system. “It’s kind of surprising that food can actually make a difference,” says Eugene Cordero, a professor in the Meteorology Department at San Jose State University. “But what we eat can be not just good for ourselves, but good for the planet, by choosing more locally-grown, seasonal foods.”

To that end, Dr. Cordero has teamed up with classically-trained chef Laura Stec to put together a plan for conscientious eating: *The Global Warming Diet*, which will be published at the end of 2007. The book will include chapters on the science behind food’s effect on global warming, solutions to the problem, and recipes. Stec will also offer lectures and cooking ideas in local events before the publication date (see [www.globalwarmingdiet.org](http://www.globalwarmingdiet.org)).



The basic premise of the book, says Cordero, is “to consider the full energy of whatever foods you’re eating.” For example, he says, “if you buy some vegetables, there’s the energy that’s associated with the farming to grow those vegetables – the fertilizer, the tractors, the preparation of the soil, the water, the harvesting, and, if it’s a fresh fruit or vegetable, the transportation to market. If it’s processed, you have to add to that the redistribution to a factory, and the packaging.”

The result is that the carrot you’re eating may have taken a shocking amount of fossil fuel to get to your mouth. Some studies say that it takes about 10 fossil fuel calories to produce each food calorie in the average American diet. That means that to grow, process, and deliver food for a family of four for one year, food producers would have to use more than 930 gallons of gasoline – as much gasoline as the same family burns in car use every year. In all, 15 percent of U.S. energy goes to supplying Americans with food.

One easy way to break the cycle, says Cordero, is to reduce your consumption of animal products. “The average American diet gets about 27 percent of our calories from animal products,” the professor says. “If we reduce that to about 10 percent, we can save about a ton of carbon dioxide from being emitted. That’s the equivalent of changing your regular car to a hybrid.”

“It’s a choice we make, three times a day or more, about what we eat,” says Cordero. Altering those choices could make an impact that warms the plate, not the planet.

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