

Number

LANCS-D4.4-RN-Policy-02

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Title	Research Note (RN) for D4.4
Subtitle	Policy view

PROBLEM	<input type="checkbox"/>	SOLUTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Note	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Selected Annotation	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Summary: Policy view on body modification

CONTEXT

The developments of assistive robotics, including advanced bionics and implant technology, are intimately tied in with an increasing cultural preoccupation which juxtaposes (and fuses) a world of bodies and virtual existence. Scenarios, depicting efforts of overcoming imperfections, ailments, shortcomings and finitude, disclose a future world of more capable, healthier and longer lasting bodies and minds, even super-soldiers and super-intelligence.

FACTS

The world has seen a number of self-experimenters who have implanted chips or specialised materials to control devices in their surroundings, to be accessed via sensors and computational functions, for example, to alter sensations in extremities –even attempts to connect between two nervous systems (e.g. Kevin Warwick). There are also examples of implants for identification and commercial purposes. Implantation procedures are assisted not only by medical staff but by body modification artists.

PROBLEM

It remains unclear when modifications are enhancement, i.e., what and how they can be said to enhance. Rather, they could be seen as situated and contingent choices for perceived improvement, for example, some unique look or better sex. But the development of ICT implants has taken the modification potential to a whole new level with significant implications for sense of identity, personhood, and everyday experience of living and being in the world.

SOLUTION

Policies and regulation on ICT-related modifications of the body ought to be informed by better understanding of:

- which experiential cultures might find currency and which may not,
 - e.g., connecting nervous systems in gaming, artistic performance, sex.
- the extent to which body modification artists are willing and capable of taking their craft.
- the extent to which artists, like scientists, can self-experiment and set trends.
- what unintended consequences have emerged from experimentation so far.
- how responsibilities have been managed so far.