

Fermi Paradox - Barrier By Negative Communication Feedback

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Abstract - We propose that a significant barrier to intelligent life's survival is to evolve a coping mechanism faster than the technological advancements created. Suicide rates and internet traffic are compared to show that further study is needed.

The data has been matched inclusively between 2007 and 2016. There does appear to be a correlation, although it does not speak of cause and effect or coincidence - this should be considered in this report.

Introduction

The Fermi paradox is a proposed contradiction between the estimated high probability for the existence of extraterrestrial life and the lack of life found so far. A simplification is that the longer we search and don't find any life, the higher the chances of a near-future mass extinction event for the human race [1].

We propose that the dawn of mass communication could be a driving factor for a potential mass extinction event. A relevant case study is that the fear of flying is increasing, whilst flying related incidents decrease [2]. The suspected factor that does correlate with the observed rise is increased news coverage on the subject.

Method

The data has been used from a suicide prevention organization (representative of the United States suicide rates) [3] and Wikipedia (representative of global traffic) [4]. Suicide has been chosen as a measure of negative feedback and internet traffic has been chosen as a generic source of communication (whether directly through chat/video/social or indirectly through news/blogs/videos).

Results

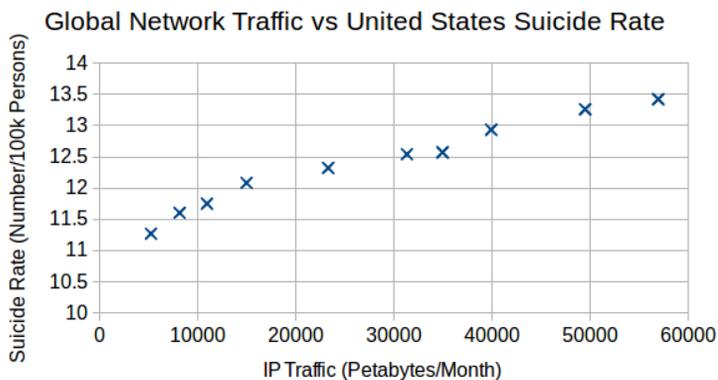


Figure 1: A comparison of Internet traffic and suicide.

Conclusion

To add strength to the data, there has been much evidence for "copycat suicides" [5], with suicide rates rising 10% following the largely publicized death of Robin Williams [6]. In fact, research has already concluded that higher mentions of suicide in media increase suicide rates [7], therefore media can directly influence negative behaviours. Over time, we suspect that an increase in negative news reporting by volume (not percentage) could affect global morale.

Our hypothesis: Communication is one of the first large hurdles for all intelligent life, the mass communication introduces great benefits (which ensures it's existence) but also initiates large negative social feedback, the life forms can't adapt fast enough through the use of evolution and results in mass extinction through some pinnacle event (for example, nuclear war).

A possible exception is a super intelligence, where self-adaptation is only bound by computation and not a slow evolution.

References

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