Society of Minds

a framework for distributed thinking
An Observation

- 2006 FIFA World Cup
  - 1 billion people x 2 hrs = 2 billion hours of human attention
  - 225,000 years of human attention, in 2 hours
  - More than the entire Apollo project, in 2 hours
A Framework for Meta-Intelligence: Minsky’s *Society of Mind*

» Minsky’s theory of intelligence

» Minds are built from mindless stuff
  > Mind is made of many smaller processes -- “agents”
  > Agents are simple, require no intelligence
  > Intelligence is produced by connecting agents in special ways -- “societies”
  > [mousetrap example]
Example: Picking up a cup of tea

» Your GRASPING agents want to keep hold of the cup
» Your BALANCING agents want to keep the tea from spilling
» Your THIRST agents want you to drink the tea
» Your MOVING agents want to get the cup to your lips
Task Hierarchies: Agents and Agencies
The Importance of Interconnections

**AGENTS BY THEMSELVES**

- ADD
- SEE
- PUT
- MOVE
- GRASP
- FIND
- GET
- RELEASE

**AGENTS IN A BUREAUCRACY**

- BEGIN
- ADD
- END
- FIND
- GET
- PUT
- SEE
- GRASP
- MOVE
- RELEASE

- Impossible to predict what BUILDER does from only the left column list; must know which “work for” which
- I.e., BUILDER does not work unless all the agents are linked by a suitable network of interconnections
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