

# EDITORIAL

---

Dear Reader,

While printed encyclopedias are virtually a thing of the past, you can still find paper maps. Yet anyone looking to find their way using one these days risks looking out of touch. Instead, most people use navigational programs, making their way around unknown cities or along new hiking trails with their eyes on their smartphones. This has already led to some serious accidents, such as on mountain hikes, and is just one example of how we are making ourselves increasingly dependent on digital services and devices. Are we entering into a kind of symbiosis with our phones when we largely delegate certain tasks to them, and are we neglecting our own abilities as a result? The same question can also be asked about artificial intelligence. Paul Rainey, Director at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology, believes this is a realistic possibility and elaborates on it in this issue of our magazine.

Despite our increasing reliance on technology, people are still able to find their way around without a smartphone, as research by a team at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences shows. The researchers are analyzing the way navigation functions in the brain and the extent to which it represents a blueprint for memory, for example. Even though we like to use digital aids for orientation, humans are still far superior to robots when it comes to finding our way in unfamiliar environments and situations. Teams from the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems are helping robots to learn new tasks and to orient themselves in unfamiliar terrain more quickly. The topics of orientation and digitalization can be examined from a variety of scientific perspectives. A team from the Max Planck Institute for Human Development is investigating how we keep track of the flood of information offered by the Internet and, most importantly, how we debunk false claims presented as facts.

We hope that our magazine maps out our current research for you and guides you to some great reading!

Your editorial team