SRI International

August 1979

STANDARD REMOTE VIEWING (RV) PROCEDURES: LOCAL SITES

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STANDARD REMOTE VIEWING (RV) PROCEDURES

(LOCAL SITES)

Our present standard remote-viewing (RV) procedures are similar to those in our Proc. IEEE paper, "A Perceptual Channel for Information Transfer over Kilometer Distances: Historical Perspective and Recent Research."[1] The elements of the protocol, each of which is addressed below, consist of (1) basic procedural design; (2) remote viewer/interviewer roles; (3) target pool selection; (4) target storage and access; (5) remote viewer orientation; (6) interviewer behavior; (7) target person behavior; (8) post-experiment feedback; (9) evaluation procedure.

I BASIC PROCEDURAL DESIGN

At the beginning of a trial, a remote viewer is closeted with an interviewer in an isolated windowless room of the Radio Physics Laboratory in the SRI complex to await an agreed-upon start time. At the same time a target person is sent, without communication with the remote viewer or interviewers remaining at SRI, to a target location somewhere in the San Francisco Bay Area (~500 square km). The target is determined by random-number access to a target pool of sealed travelling orders previously prepared by an independent experimental team and kept locked in a secure safe. The target pool consists of more than 50 target locations chosen from a target-rich environment.

During a predetermined viewing period of 15 minutes duration, the remote viewer is asked to render drawings and describe into a tape recorder his impressions of the target site being visited by the outbound target person. The interviewer with the remote viewer is kept ignorant of the target and is therefore free to question him to clarify his descriptions without fear of cueing (overt or subliminal) as to the particular target.*

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* Since general knowledge of the San Francisco Bay Area target region on the part of the remote viewer and interviewer must be taken as a given, and since particular knowledge of the contents of the target pool is revealed as a series progresses, one must take into account the possibility that any particular description may be artifactually sharpened. (Such sharpening can in principle increase the apparent quality of the result only if there is functional remote viewing to begin with. It cannot in the absence of ESP produce an inflated result.) This sharpening possibility in the presence of an already functioning RV capability is handled in the statistical evaluation of the results by conservatively assuming at the outset that the series is to be treated as belonging to that class of studies in which the elements of the target pool are known a priori to both remote viewer and interviewer, as in studies involving numbers or cards as targets.

When the target person returns to SRI following the remote viewing period, the subject is then taken to the target site so that he may obtain direct feedback. Following a series of such trials over a several-day period, a formal blind judging procedure (described below) is used to evaluate the data and quantify the results.

Approved For Release 2001/04/02 : CIA-RDP96-00788R002000240029-4

II REMOTE VIEWER/INTERVIEWER ROLES

An important methodological aspect of the SRI RV protocols revolves around the fact that the remote viewer/interviewer team constitutes a single information gathering unit in which the remote viewer's role is designed to be that of perceiver/information source, and the interviewer's role is designed to be that of analytical control.

This division of labor is designed to mirror the two primary modes of cerebral functioning; namely, the nonanalytic cognitive style (related to brain function) that predominates in spatial pattern recognition and other holistic processing (and is hypothesized to predominate in psi functioning), and the analytical cognitive style that predominates in verbal and other analytical functioning.[2-4] (Only very experienced remote viewers appear to have the ability to handle both cognitive styles simultaneously.) The interviewer role, removing as it does the burden of analytical functioning during exercise of the RV faculty, appears to be a key element in generating the level of success required in operational programs, and we attribute the success of the SRI RV protocols in large part to this innovative design which appears to provide an appropriate match to the required functioning.

III TARGET POOL SELECTION

Target locations in the San Francisco Bay Area are selected by a team of two Radio Physics Laboratory personnel who are not involved as interviewers in the experiments (to prevent direct knowledge of the target pool by the interviewers). The locations are chosen to satisfy the following criteria:

(1) Target sites must be within a half-hour drive of the SRI Menlo Park complex so that a uniform target access time exists for all experiments.

(2) The target pool is constructed to contain several targets of various types--that is, several fountains, several churches, several boathouses, and so forth--specifically to circumvent analysis strategies of the type "there was a fountain yesterday, so it is unlikely that there is a fountain today." Furthermore, targets of different types are not chosen to be particularly distinct from each other, so that overlapping features exist. In this manner the content of a given target, determined by random entry into the target pool, is essentially independent of the contents of other targets ("open-deck" design).

(3) The definition of what constitutes each target is established in advance of the entire RV series by written descriptions on a set of 3" × 5" target cards. (Ex: Four Seasons Restaurant, on El Camino Real, just north of San Antonio Road. Stand under the entry arch and feel the bricks.) These cards constitute the outbound team's instructions at the beginning of the trial, and the judge's target list during the evaluation phase.

IV TARGET STORAGE AND ACCESS

The target cards are numbered and placed in individual envelopes, similarly numbered, by the target selection team; they are then turned over to the project Special Security Officer (SSO) who maintains them in a GSA-approved secure container.

At the start of an RV session the interviewer, remote viewer, and target person rendevous in the laboratory and establish the trial start time (30 minutes hence). The target person then leaves the laboratory for the SSO station, generates a random number in the presence of the SSO by the use of the random-number function on a Texas Instruments Model SR-51 hand calculator, obtains the associated envelope (which is recorded by the SSO), and departs for the target site.

V REMOTE VIEWER ORIENTATION

During the period that the target person is enroute to the target, the interviewer and remote viewer have a period to relax and discuss the protocols. The goal of the interviewer during this period is to make it "safe" for the remote viewer to experience remote viewing. For the initial orientation of a new remote viewer, this typically includes a discussion as to how remote viewing appears to be a natural rather than abnormal function, and that many people appear to have done it successfully.

The remote viewer is told that memory and imagination constitute noise in the channel, and therefore the closer he can get to raw uninterpreted imagery, the better. He is encouraged to report raw perception rather than analysis, since the former tends to be correct while the latter is often wrong.

Since remote viewing is a difficult task, apparently similar to the perception of subliminal stimuli,[5] it takes the full attentive powers of the remote viewer. Therefore, the environment, procedures, etc., are designed to be as natural and comfortable as possible so as to minimize the diversion of attention to anything other than the task at hand. No hypnosis, strobe lights, or sensory-derivation procedures are used, since in our view such (novel) environmental factors would divert some of the subject's much-needed attention.

VI INTERVIEWER BEHAVIOR

The interviewer arranges ahead of time to have pen and paper available for drawing, and a tape recorder. The room lighting is somewhat subdued to prevent after-image highlights, shadows on eyelids, etc.

When the agreed-upon RV trial time arrives, the interviewer simply asks the remote viewer to "describe what impressions come to mind with regard to where the target person is." The interviewer does not pressure the remote viewer to verbalize continuously; if he were to, the remote viewer might tend to embroider descriptions to please the interviewer, a well-known syndrome in behavioral studies of this type. If the remote viewer tends toward being analytical ("I see Macy's") the interviewer gently leads him into description, not analysis. ("You don't have to tell me where it is, just describe what you see.") This is the most important and difficult task of the interviewer, but is apparently necessary for good results, especially with inexperienced remote viewers.

It is also useful for the interviewer to "surprise" the remote viewer with new viewpoints. ("Go above the scene and look down--what do you see? If you look to the left, what do you see?") The remote viewer's viewpoint appears to shift rapidly with a question like this, and the data come through before the viewer's defenses activate to block it out. The shifting of viewpoint also obviates the problem of the remote viewer spending the entire session time giving meticulous detail on a relatively trivial item, such as a flower, which, even if correct, generally will be of little use in assessing the session. (Once a remote viewer feels he sees something, he tends to hang on to this perception rather than commit himself to a new viewpoint.) It is important to recognize again that with the division of

labor outlined in Section II it is the interviewer's (not the remote viewer's) responsibility to see that the necessary information to permit discrimination among the range of target possibilities is generated, the remote viewer's responsibility being confined to exercise of the RV faculty.

The remote viewer is encouraged to sketch what he sees, even over his objections that he is not an artist, can't sketch, etc. He may do so throughout, or wait until the end of the session if intermittent drawing would distract his concentration. Since drawings tend to be more accurate than verbalizations, this is an extremely important factor for good results.

VII TARGET PERSON BEHAVIOR

After obtaining a target card in the manner described in Section V, the target person proceeds to the target site indicated.

He is asked to come upon the target location at the starting time so that his view of it is fresh at the beginning of the remote viewing period. He is to then simply pay attention to the environment as dictated by instructions on the target card. At the end of the agreed-upon target viewing time of 15 minutes the target person returns to the lab.

VIII POST-EXPERIMENT FEEDBACK

When the target person returns, and after all the raw data has been turned over to the SSO, the interviewer, remote viewer, and target person proceed directly to the target site for feedback. This helps to develop the remote viewer's sense of which aspects of his mental imaging process are correct, which are incorrect. This appears to bring the RV trial to closure for the remote viewer, so that when he has a following session, his mind is no longer involved with wondering how he did on the previous one. Only a very experienced subject can function well time after time without feedback, so this is done for each trial to optimize the potential for success.

IX EVALUATION PROCEDURE

In a sense, the most critical part of the remote-viewing procedure is the evaluation procedure. Any single experiment in remote viewing, even if perfect, could in principle be dismissed as possibly a coincidence. Further, any result less than pefect might be called into question as a generalized "grass is green, sky is blue" transcript that fits every target. Only blind differential discrimination of transcripts across a series of targets can provide a basis to discriminate between these dismissals and the RV interpretation.

To obtain a numerical evaluation of the accuracy of a standard six-trial remote viewing series with a given remote viewer, the results are subjected to independent judging on a blind basis by an SRI research analyst not otherwise associated with the series.

In preparation for judging, the remote viewer's tapes are transcribed. The resulting transcripts are then edited only to the extent of deleting information which might act as artifactual cues to a judge, such as references to other targets, or phrases which might indicate the temporal order of the transcripts.

The transcripts (including associated drawings) and target cards, each arranged in their own random order different from the order of target usage, are then turned over to the judge. The judge is instructed to visit the target locations on the basis of the target card instructions, and to blind rank order, on a scale of 1-6 (best to worst match), each of the six transcripts against each of the six target sites, generating a 6×6 matrix as in the example shown in Table 1.

TYPICAL 6 × 6 JUDGING MATRIX

Distribution of Judge's Rankings

TARGET	TRANSCRIPT LETTER					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	(2)	5	3	1	4	6
2	5	(1)	2	6	4	3
3	5	6	(1)	2	3	4
4	1	5	3	(2)	4	6
5	5	4	2	6	(1)	3
6	6	4	2	5	3	(1)

A precise measure of the statistical significance of the matrix of target/transcript relations is given by a direct-count-of-permutations method of great generality.[6] It is an exact calculation method requiring no approximations such as normality assumptions. Furthermore, the judging process that went into generating the matrix is not required to be independent transcript-to-transcript nor target-to-target. Finally, the statistical evaluation procedure is general enough that, in addition to being applicable to the blind rank order procedure in use at the present time, it can be applied to analyses in which numerical estimates of target/transcript correspondences are made on the basis of other rank-order or rating scales. This includes rating 1-7, zero to complete correspondence; arbitrary scale rating arrived at by some complex procedure involving many factors such as occurs in multiple-judge voting; cases in which, for a

given target, several transcripts are given the same rating, all transcripts are rated zero, a few transcripts are assigned rank order numbers and the rest are assigned the mean of the remaining rank order numbers, and so forth. The only requirement is that no artifactual information is provided as to the order of targets and transcripts. In particular, it can be shown that if targets are used with replacement or are non-orthogonal, then the method applies even in the case in which there is trial-by-trial feedback and the target pool is known a priori to both remote viewer and interviewer. Thus the possibility of interviewer cueing or subject guessing based on a priori knowledge of the target pool is handled at a fundamental level by a statistical procedure that assumes the worst. The argument is as follows.

In the absence of knowledge as to which transcript was generated in response to which target, one observes that in setting up the matrix there are n! possible ways to label the columns (transcripts), given any particular order of the rows (targets), and vice versa. Thus, there are n! possible matrices which could be constructed from the raw judging data, all of them equally likely a priori in the absence of knowledge as to the order of targets and transcripts. Each has its associated sum on the diagonal corresponding to a possible alignment of targets and transcripts.

The significance level for the experiment is then determined by counting the number of possible matrices that would yield a result (diagonal sum) equal to or better (i.e., lower sum of ranks in the rank-order case, higher sum of scores in the correspondence-rating case, etc.) than that obtained for the matrix corresponding to the key, and dividing by n! This ratio gives the probability of obtaining by chance a result equal to or better than that obtained in the actual judging process. For the 6×6 matrix used as an example (Table 1) we have, by direct computer count of the 6! matrices obtained by interchanging columns, $p = 2/6! = 2.8 \times 10^{-3}$.

This statistical procedure, in use for more than two decades by many researchers, was specifically designed to handle narrative material of the remote viewing type, and it cannot be stressed enough that it is constructed sufficiently conservatively so as to apply even in the limiting case in which the target pool is completely known a priori to all involved, thus handling any possible contamination due to remote viewer guessing or interviewer cueing in protocols of the type used in the SRI RV procedure.

Approved For Release 2001/04/02 : CIA-RDP96-00788R002000240029-4

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