

## The Third Culture

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# THE CLOCK OF THE LONG NOW

*A Talk by Stewart Brand* [11.24.98]

Introduction by  
[John Brockman](#)

When Danny Hillis first started talking about his 10,000 year clock, many of his friends worried that he was going through some kind of mid-life crisis. I was one of them.



But eventually we all started listening. A group of Danny's friends, led by Stewart Brand, got together and created "The Long Now Foundation"

(<http://www.longnow.org/>) to build the clock, and also to begin to address the bigger issue involved: how to get people to think in a longer term, how to stretch out their sense of time.

It's fitting that Stewart Brand got behind Danny's project. When I met him in 1965 he was sporting a button on which was printed: "America Needs Indians." His next conceptual piece was his 1968 campaign for a picture of "The Whole Earth", which led, in no small part, to the creation of the ecology movement. In the 1983 he urged me to get involved with something called "online conferencing." This led to "The WELL," (the Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link"), a precursor of the radical changes that our use of the Internet is bringing to human communications. Stewart is the king of initially obscure, ultimately compelling conceptual art. Call it reality.

A couple of years ago he was featured on the cover of *The Los Angeles Times Magazine*: "Always two steps ahead of others.....(he) is the least recognized, most influential thinker in America." No question about it.

[-JB](#)

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STEWART BRAND (<http://www.well.com/user/sbb/>) is a founding member and a director of Global Business Network (<http://www.gbn.org/>) and president of The Long Now Foundation (<http://www.longnow.org/>). He is on the board of the Santa Fe Institute, and maintains connections with Electronic Frontier Foundation, Wired magazine and MIT's Media Lab, while occasionally consulting for Ecotrust.

A substantial item on the Global Business Network site is a list of all the books he has recommended for the GBN "Book Club" (<http://www.gbn.org/BookClub/BookClub.html>) since 1988 and several hundred of his reviews.

GBN explores global futures and business strategy for 61 multinational clients (mostly among the Global Fortune 1,000, and half in the top 100) including ABC/Cap Cities, Arco, AT&T, Andersen Consulting, Bell South, Leo Burdett, Fiat, IBM, Nissan, L'Oreal, Volvo, and Xerox.

He is the founder and original editor of *The Whole Earth Catalog* and author of *The Media Lab How Buildings Learn*, and *Clock of the Long Now: Responsibility and Time*, forthcoming in January from Basic (a MasterMinds Book).

[The Talk...](#)