

Russell Targ vs. Wikipedia about Remote Viewing

Remote viewing is not "pseudoscience." Please immediately drop that inaccurate and insulting term that you have scattered throughout my Wikipedia bio-page.

Wikipedia's definition: "Pseudoscience is a claim, belief or practice which is presented as scientific, but does not adhere to a valid scientific method, lacks supporting evidence or plausibility, cannot be reliably tested, or otherwise lacks scientific status. The term pseudoscience is often considered inherently pejorative, because it suggests something is being inaccurately or even deceptively portrayed as science."

There are a number of reasons that editors at Wikipedia should not characterize remote viewing as pseudoscience, when it is not characterized that way by the informed scientific community.

1 — In order to publish our findings in the 1976 Proceedings of the IEEE, we had to meet with Robert W. Lucky, managing editor, and his board. The editor proposed to us that we show him how to conduct a remote viewing experiment. If it was successful, he would publish our paper. The editor was also head of electro-optics at Bell Telephone Laboratory. We gave a talk at his lab. He then chose some engineers to be the "psychics" for each of five days. Each day he hid himself at a randomly chosen location in the nearby town. After the agreed-upon five trials, the editor read the five transcripts and successfully matched each of the five correctly to his hiding places. This was significant at 0.008 (one in 5!, 5-factorial). As a result, he published our paper on "Information Transmission Over Kilometer Distances".

2 — In our 23 year program for the government at SRI, we had to carry out "demonstration of ability" tasks for the Director of CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency, NASA, and Commanding General of the Army Intelligence Command. (The names are available upon request.) For the CIA we were able to accurately describe and draw a giant gantry crane rolling on eight wheels over a large building, and draw the 60 foot gores, "slices" of a sphere, under construction in northern Russia. The sphere was entirely accurate, although its existence was unknown at the time. The description was so accurate that it became the subject of a Congressional hearing of the House Committee on Intelligence. They were afraid of a security leak. No leak was found, and we were told to "press on."

3 — Remote viewing is easily replicated and has been demonstrated all over the world. It has been the subject of several Ph.D. dissertations in the US and abroad. Princeton University had a 25 year program investigating remote viewing with more than 450 trials. Prof. Robert Jahn also published a lengthy and highly significant ($p = 10^{-10}$ or 1 in ten billion) experimental investigation of remote viewing in the 1982 Proc. IEEE.

4 — The kind of tasks that kept us in business for twenty-three years include: SRI psychics found a downed Russian bomber in Africa; reported on the health of American hostages in Iran; described Soviet weapons factories in Siberia; located a kidnapped US general in Italy; and accurately forecasted the failure of a Chinese atomic-bomb test three days before it occurred, etc. When San Francisco heiress Patricia Hearst was abducted from her home in Berkeley, a psychic with the SRI team was the first to identify the kidnapper by name and then accurately describe and locate the kidnap car. I was at the Berkeley police station and witnessed this event.

5 — Jessica Utts is a statistics Professor at the University of California, Irvine, and is president of the American Statistical Association. In writing for her part of a 1995 evaluation of our work for the CIA, she wrote: "Using the standards applied to any other area of science, it is concluded that psychic functioning has been well established. The statistical results of the studies examined are far beyond what is expected by chance. Arguments that these results could be due to methodological flaws in the experiments are soundly refuted. Remote viewing has been conceptually replicated across a number of laboratories, by various experimenters, and in different cultures. This is a robust effect that, were it not such an unusual domain, would no longer be questioned by science as a real phenomenon. It is unlikely that methodological flaws could account for its remarkable consistency."

6 — Whether you believe some, all, or none of the above, it should be clear that hundreds of people were involved in a 23 year, multi-million dollar operational program at SRI, the CIA, DIA and two dozen intelligence officers at the army base at Ft. Meade. Regardless of the personal opinion of a Wikipedia editor, it is not logically coherent to trivialize this whole remote viewing undertaking as some kind of "pseudoscience." Besides me, there is a parade of Ph.D. physicists, psychologists, and heads of government agencies who think our work was valuable, though puzzling.

~~~~ Russell Targ, May 12, 2014