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Psychic Hacking: Using Remote Viewing to Steal Computer Data

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ABSTRACT

This article presents exploratory experimental results suggesting that some individuals with remote viewing abilities may be able to describe details of data present in computers located miles away. Building on past U.S. Government psi research, an Internet-hosted experiment allowed participants to try using their psychic powers to describe picture, video, ATM PIN, and passphrase targets stored on laptop computers in Los Angeles. The laptops were standalone with networking capabilities disabled, configured to deploy new targets nightly without human intervention, and covered with sleeves to prevent peeking. A total of 146 remote participants generated 584 free-response rounds. Each round was scored by three independent judges chosen randomly from a pool of six. Judging employed rank-order scoring, and counting the number of target details matched. Many participants successfully described targets to a degree sufficient to reject the null hypothesis. Statistically significant results ($\alpha = 0.05$) were observed for both picture ($p = 0.000597$, $h = 1.075$) and video targets ($p = 0.000911$, $h = 1.131$). ATM PIN results were significant for 3 digits in any order ($p = 4.118 \times 10^{-6}$, $h = 0.788$) and 2 digits in any order ($p = 7.84 \times 10^{-6}$, $h = 0.763$). Security and privacy implications of "psychic hacking" may be far-reaching, since physical distance, attenuating structures, visual shielding, network air gaps, data obfuscation, strict file permissions, and file monitoring failed to detect or prevent data theft.

KEYWORDS

Remote Viewing, Star Gate, Clairvoyance, Psi, Psychic, Esp, Cybersecurity, Hacking, Data, Privacy, Secrets, National Security, Top Secret, Special Access Program, Espionage.

INTRODUCTION

I have always been fascinated by secrets. As a kid, I experimented with clairvoyance, hoping to spy on clandestine events far away. I was also obsessed with Stephen King's novel *The Dead Zone* (1979) in which the protagonist discovers he can psychically perceive the secrets of evildoers. So, it is no surprise I opted for a career in secrets, working for the past 30 years in cybersecurity to help protect the data and privacy of Fortune 500 companies and billions of users.

Given my interests, you can imagine how excited I was when the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency declassified thousands of documents related to its clandestine remote viewing (RV) research program, known as Star Gate (among other names). This program, which ran for over two decades starting in the 1970s, produced an extensive body of experiments (May et al., 1989; Newman, 2017; Warshaw, 2002). Across thousands of trials, researchers reported statistically significant evidence that remote viewing is a real, verifiable, and repeatable phenomenon (Utts, 1995).

In the program's early experiments, it was common for a remote viewer to describe a randomly chosen distant place where a researcher was standing. The researcher served as a "beacon" to help remote viewers zero in psychically (U.S. Army Materiel, 1979). Remarkably, remote viewers often described not only the visible features of the target site, but also details at the site that the beacon researcher could not immediately perceive. This suggested that remote viewing was not simply a form of telepathy (Puthoff & Targ, 1976).

Because remote viewers drew their impressions from deep within their minds (Jung, 1969), psychic descriptions were often abstract. In one Stanford Research Institute experiment, for example, a remote viewer described a pedestrian overpass target as a "trough up in the air," sketching a tunnel-like shape with concentric angles that echoed the overpass's chainlink design (Stanford Research Institute [SRI], 1986) as shown in Figure 1. Over the years, remote viewers proved capable of describing far more complex targets, including foreign military sites, missile silos, hostage locations, and even previously undiscovered planetary features (Stoner, 1979; Targ, 2012).

These successes were fascinating, but as someone obsessed with secrets, the burning question for me was whether computer data had ever been used as targets in Star Gate experiments. Could a remote viewer use psychic powers to describe data in a computer, bypassing its security defenses like a ghost?

The implications could be immense. A person's digital communications and data might be at risk, but so might a nation's deepest secrets: lists of people in witness protection, military plans, weapons designs, and perhaps even nuclear launch codes. Given that remote viewers

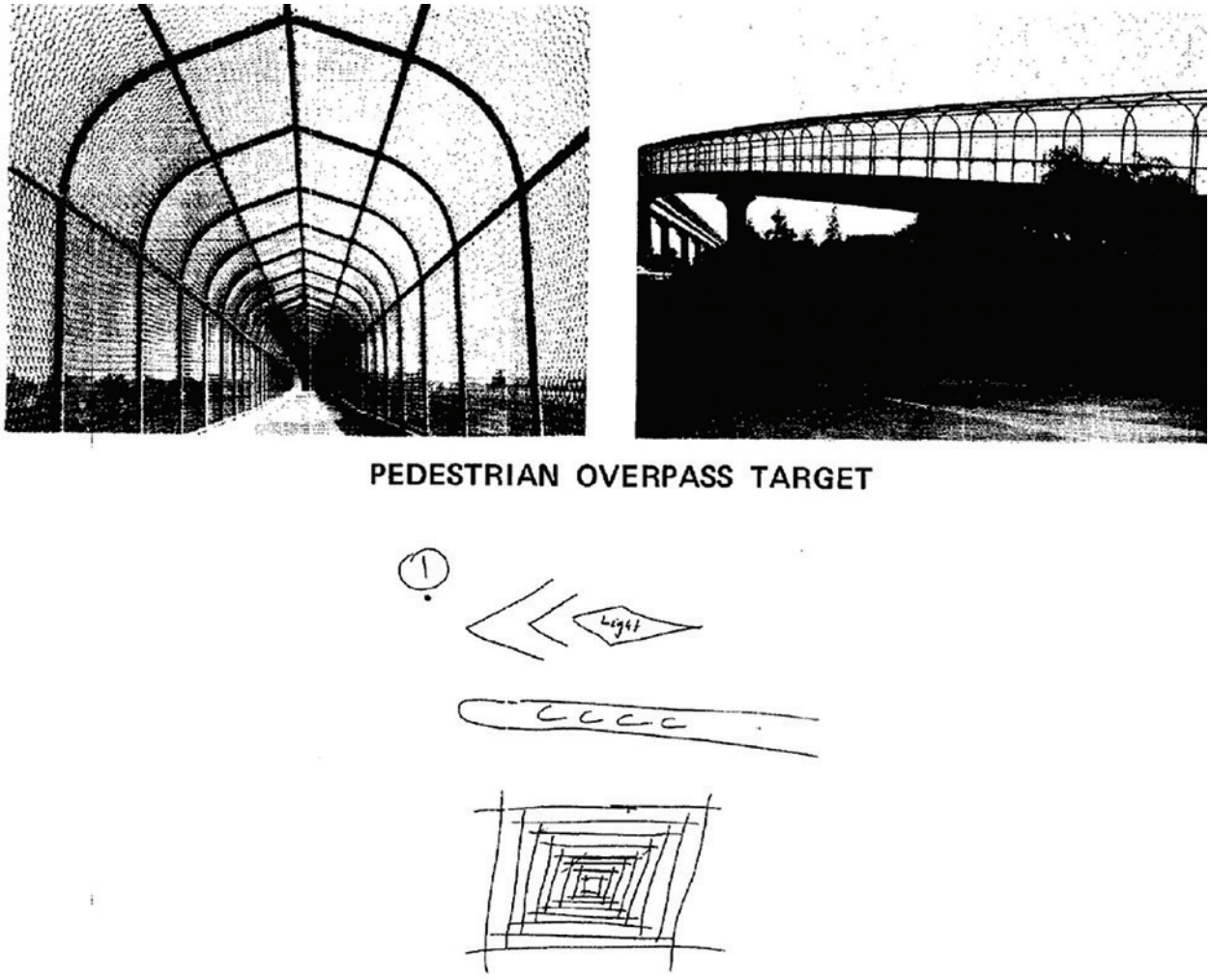

Figure 1. Early remote viewing experiment with pedestrian overpass target.
Note. In a government-funded experiment at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), a remote viewer described a pedestrian overpass target one kilometer away as a "trough up in the air" and drew an image suggestive of a tunnel made of repeating angles similar to the overpass's chainlink structure (Puthoff & Targ, 1976, pp. xi, 35–36).

can apparently pass through any medium (Puthoff & Targ, 1976), barbed wire, underground bunkers, Faraday cages, and firewalls might prove useless against a talented clairvoyant. Even a person's own *thoughts* might be vulnerable, now that brain-computer interfaces allow machines to jack into human brains (Ienca & Haselager, 2016). If a psychic hacker can access a brain-computer, a person's mind might be compromised as well.

Seeking to extend Star Gate research by exploring whether psychic hacking was possible, I launched an exploratory, self-funded experiment on the Internet where I invited the public to use psychic powers to describe picture, video, ATM PIN, and passphrase targets stored on laptop computers hidden in Los Angeles. Targets were displayed on laptops' screens, but the screens were dimmed to black and slipped into cardboard sleeves so psychics would need to fetch target data by accessing machines' electronics or storage psychically, rather than simply "reading" it from screens psychically.

Each night, new targets were randomly selected and deployed to the laptops through automated scripts, ensuring that the experiment remained double-blind. In this context, double-blind meant that neither participants nor I knew which targets had been assigned. This minimized the risk of inadvertently revealing a target's identity and prevented participants from accessing such information telepathically from my mind (Hardy et al., 1973). A total of 146 people participated, submitting freeform text and drawings to describe their impressions of the targets. Independent judges then evaluated all submissions, attempting to match each psychic's description against five possible targets—the actual target plus four carefully chosen decoys. The results were analyzed using standard statistical methods, with further details about the experimental design provided below.

Terminology

For the purposes of this article, *psychic hacking* refers to attempts to perceive information contained within a computer located at a distant site.

Star Gate is used here as an umbrella term for the U.S. government's remote viewing research program, which operated from the early 1970s until 1995 under a variety of names, including *Sun Streak*, *Grill Flame*, and *Center Lane*. In the literature, these designations appear in multiple forms—for example, in uppercase (*STARGATE*), as a single word (*Stargate*), or with varied spacing (Federation of American Scientists, 2005).

In my experiment, participants were asked to provide their psychic impressions of randomly assigned targets. Each submission could include written descriptions, and if the participant wished, accompanying drawings. Throughout this article, the term *submission* refers to the complete set of materials—text and images—contributed by a participant.

Finally, for simplicity, *remote viewer*, *participant*, and *psychic* are used interchangeably. One could argue that "remote viewer" may not always be synonymous with "psychic," since psychic functioning can encompass a wide range of purported abilities, whereas remote viewing generally refers to the use of defined protocols for perceiving and reporting information. However, remote viewing protocols vary considerably across literature (Lee, 2008), with some individuals demonstrating RV successes without adhering to rigid procedures (Lee, 2008). Even the term "viewing" may not adequately capture the full range of experiential modalities involved in perceiving distant information, as some practitioners describe drawing upon non-visual impressions such as "feelings, sounds, smells, and even electrical or magnetic fields" (Targ & Katra, 2000).

History of Computers as Remote Viewing Targets

I performed a thorough search of Star Gate's declassified documents, and instances where computers or computer data served as a remote viewing target were exceedingly rare. This was no surprise, since commercially available computers were still relatively new in the 1970s and 1980s. Early computers were large, expensive, and more likely to be viewed as complex scientific instruments than as everyday repositories of secrets worth stealing. Most often, computers served supporting functions during psychic studies—recording remote viewing sessions, capturing physiological data from participants, storing information in databases, and generating random numbers that served as experimental targets (Lenz et al., 1980; May et al., 1989).

An early example illustrates this context. Around 1980, Duke University established one of the first psi-oriented computer labs (Lenz et al., 1980). The facility was built around a DEC PDP/45 computer. Closet-sized with only 16KB of memory, the machine was devoted to storing psi data and running statistical analyses (Lenz et al., 1980). Duke researchers described the computer with pride, calling it "gratifying" to have "so much computing power" at their disposal (Lenz et al., 1980, p. 167). A Grill Flame project manager who visited in 1981 remarked on the immense logistical challenge of creating such a facility—components had taken "5–6 years to develop" following "long awaited"

funding (Watt, 1981, p. 1). In that era, acquiring and maintaining a computer was such an institutional undertaking that it is unsurprising that researchers did not treat these machines as psi targets.

Computers and computer data did make occasional appearances during psi experiments, even if they were not intended targets. One remote viewer correctly described a "computer terminal with relay racks in the background" while targeting a lab (Puthoff & Targ, 1976, p. 56). Another accurately reported seeing "printouts... coming out of [a] computer" during a remote psychic experiment (U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, 1982, p. 9).

Some reports suggest that computers may have been used as occasional targets in psi experiments, but the evidence is too vague to draw firm conclusions. In one case, a remote viewer reportedly managed to visualize a computer's login access code (Stoner, n.d.). The account, however, does not explain how this occurred, or whether the computer itself was truly the focus of psychic perception. It is possible that the viewer was not actually seeing the code inside the machine at all; instead, the code may have been recorded or stored elsewhere, such as in a filing cabinet. This interpretation seems plausible, since the same report describes another experiment in which a remote viewer obtained classified documents that were explicitly kept in a cabinet (Stoner, n.d.). So, the computer in this story may have been less important than the fact that the access code existed in some form the psychic could describe.

More often, computers entered psi research indirectly, with software and games serving as targets. Examples include:

- A solitaire program in which participants used precognition to guess which game would yield the highest score (Palmer, 2000)
- ESPerciser, a program where participants attempted to influence background colors and predict outcomes (Palmer, 1996)
- Mind Machine, a program involving predictions of virtual coin tosses (Wiseman & Greening, 2002)
- PsiLab II, a suite of games in which players tried to sense or influence the direction of computer-generated random bits (Varvoglis, n.d.)

Although these experiments involved computer interaction, they focused on precognitive guessing and outcome influence, rather than on describing hidden information stored within machines.

Among the many Star Gate-era experiments I examined, the one that most closely resembled psychic hacking involved a machine designed to train potential psychics to recognize a "unique psychic feeling" when they selected the correct answer (Targ, 2012, p. 90). Developed in 1974 by Russell Targ with NASA financial support, the device consisted of four square buttons, each a different color. Inside the machine, a random number generator would secretly select one of the four buttons by generating a number from one to four and storing the result in a counter. The participant's task was to press the button they sensed had been chosen. If the guess was correct, the selected button would light up, accompanied by a pleasant auditory tone (Defense Intelligence Agency [DIA], n.d.; Targ, 2012).

Decades later, Targ adapted the machine's design into a software-based application known as ESP Trainer that could be played on a computer or mobile device. In this digital version, the program presents four colored squares, and randomly selects one by storing a randomly generated number in memory that corresponds to a specific square. The participant pushes the square believed to have been chosen, and if correct, the square disappears to reveal a pleasant image beneath it (Targ, 2017).

In these two examples, participants directed their psychic powers at the buttons or squares. However, from a hacker's perspective, the secret random numbers were the real crown jewels, since these determined the experiments' outcomes.

Finally, there is RV Tournament (RVT), a remote viewing training application in which participants attempt to perceive which photo target will be selected the following day (IronZog LLC, 2019). Each day, RVT assigns a numerical code (e.g., 9658–1663) corresponding to the next day's target. Participants record their impressions of the future target by drawing images within the app. Afterward, RVT presents two candidate images, one of which will be randomly chosen as the actual target. A slider bar appears beside the images, allowing participants to indicate which image they believe will be selected. The slider can be moved slightly or substantially, enabling participants to express different levels of confidence in their choice. RVT scores the results overnight, and the true target is revealed the next day, allowing participants to compare their sketches against the actual image. Points are awarded for correct selections, and the highest-scoring participants worldwide are displayed on a leaderboard.

While RVT could be helpful for training psychic skills, it differs substantially from my experiment.

First, RVT focuses on precognition, with participants attempting to identify which target will be selected in the future. My research, by contrast, examines whether psychic hackers can describe targets that already exist *in situ*.

Second, RVT may be vulnerable to potential information leakage. Because participants around the world might engage with the application across different time zones, individuals in earlier zones could gain access to the correct target before others have made their selections. Under such circumstances, a participant in a later time zone might acquire knowledge of the target telepathically from those who already know the outcome, rather than through remote viewing itself. To mitigate this concern, my protocol ensures that targets are disclosed to independent judges only after all participants have completed their sessions.

Third, RVT may not qualify as a psychic hacking experiment because it does not provide remote viewers with a target anchored in fixed time and space. The next day's target may be stored remotely on the Internet, pre-cached on a participant's device, or generated only at the moment of presentation. This ambiguity creates uncertainty about whether participants should direct their efforts toward their own devices, toward the Internet servers hosting the images, or toward the future moment when the target is revealed. To eliminate this problem, my protocol ensures that all targets remain within a computer housed at a fixed physical location.

Fourth, the RVT design offers participants a relatively high probability of success. When using the slider to choose between two images, the probability of a correct selection is 50%. Moreover, participants evaluate their own sketches against the targets, despite long-standing concerns in the remote viewing literature that self-judging compromises objectivity (McMoneagle, 2000). In my protocol, by contrast, participants' submissions are judged in random order by randomly selected judges, and each round includes four decoys, reducing the probability of success to 20% per round judged.

Finally, because the RVT experimental protocol has not been published, it is not possible to evaluate its methodological quality, such as the randomness of target selection or the number and diversity of available target images.

The Challenge of Remotely Viewing Computer Data

The way digital data is stored and processed in a computer may pose special challenges for remote viewers. Data is not typically present as a single, self-contained object, but is instead fragmented and dispersed. A file, for example, may be scattered across non-contiguous blocks of disk space interleaved with gigabytes of unrelated system data (Garfinkel, 2007). When accessed, the file is not retrieved as a recognizable picture, video, or text string, but rather as streams of electrical impulses encoded in binary (Chaudhary & Kansal, 2015). These signals undergo multiple transformations—through processing circuitry, system memory, operating system routines, encoding schemes, and program variables—before ultimately being rendered on display hardware composed of wires, electrodes, and polarizing surfaces (Lee & Cooper, 2008). To illustrate, the image on the left in Figure 2 is recognizable to humans as a cathedral dome, but to the computer, it exists in memory as a string of hexadecimal values shown on the right.

In other words, data in a computer does not reside in a single place. It is broken apart, transmitted, reassembled, and continuously transformed across magnetic storage,

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00000000  FF D8 FF E0 00 10 4A 46 49 46 00 01 01 00 00 01
00000010  00 01 00 00 FF ED 00 86 50 68 6F 74 6F 73 68 6F
00000020  70 20 33 2E 30 00 38 42 49 4D 04 04 00 00 00 00
00000030  00 69 1C 01 5A 00 03 1B 25 47 1C 01 00 00 02 00
00000040  04 1C 02 00 00 02 00 04 1C 02 E6 00 47 68 74 74
00000050  70 73 3A 2F 2F 66 6C 69 63 6B 72 2E 63 6F 6D 2F
00000060  65 2F 48 37 63 72 48 65 79 4D 34 25 32 46 30 31
00000070  43 50 6A 56 32 25 32 46 50 55 53 4E 35 68 42 58
00000080  6B 37 6F 39 65 57 58 7A 74 6F 74 47 79 79 4E 34
00000090  51 25 33 44 1C 02 00 00 02 00 04 00 FF E1 00 28
000000A0  45 78 69 66 00 00 4D 4D 00 2A 00 00 00 08 00 01
000000B0  87 69 00 04 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 1A 00 00 00 00
000000C0  00 00 00 00 00 00 FF E2 02 40 49 43 43 5F 50 52
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Figure 2. Cathedral image's raw hexadecimal data.
Note. The picture on the left is recognizable as a cathedral dome, but from the computer's perspective, it exists in memory as a string of hexadecimal values shown on the right. (Dome photo on left courtesy of Jorge Molina, © Jorge Molina / https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy).

electronic circuits, and software abstractions. If psychic functioning depends on "arriving at" or "reading" a target, where in this chain of transformations should the viewer attempt to gain access? Should attention be directed to the magnetic patterns on the disk, the binary streams in memory, the encoded values within software, or the final image rendered on the display? The absence of a fixed, unitary target raises a fundamental challenge.

This difficulty may also help explain why Star Gate-era remote viewers who encountered computers in early experiments often described the computers' external features—such as size, shape, or audible sounds—rather than the internal data or processes within the machines (DIA, 1986a, 1986b).

Theories of Psychic Hacking Operation

Although numerous theories have been advanced to explain the mechanisms underlying remote viewing (e.g., Mumford et al., 1995; Targ, 2004, 2012), I have found little discussion in the literature regarding how remote viewing might function when the target is digital data. How could a psychic perceive a picture or other digital target that exists within a computer only as fragmented binary sequences or abstract electronic impulses? Since no scientific framework yet provides a definitive explanation, I will outline several theoretical possibilities of my own in the sections that follow.

Signal Radiation

During World War II, researchers at Bell Labs demonstrated that information transmitted through a teletype machine could be intercepted at a distance by capturing and decoding the machine's radio emissions (Friedman, 1972). More recently, scientists have shown that images displayed on a computer screen can be reconstructed from as far as 50 meters away using radio frequency monitoring equipment (Elibol et al., 2012). By analogy, perhaps remote viewers can perceive targets by detecting subtle signals emanating from computer displays.

In my experiment, I dimmed the computer screens to black and concealed them under cardboard shields so that the targets were hidden from ordinary sight. However, dimming typically only reduces backlight brightness or lowers the voltage driving screen pixels; the image remains active and present in the display electronics even when it is not physically visible (Analogix, 2019; Eichhorn, 2016; Wei et al., 2025). If remote viewers are sensitive to such emissions, they may be detecting the electronic signals from the display electronics, rather than from the light itself. This would imply that a remote viewer could, in principle, "see" the contents of a computer screen even when it appears darkened.

Although the notion of "seeing without the eyes" may appear implausible to skeptics, parapsychological research has long pointed to a possible role of the pineal gland in psychic perception (Luke, 2012). The gland is known to contain photoreceptive structures analogous to those found in the eye (Shiah, 2012) and has been linked to the visual "mediation of psi," including clairvoyance (Luke et al., 2012, p. 580). Building on this logic, perhaps the pineal gland functions in a manner similar to an eye, enabling psychics to "see" information radiating from electronic systems.

Quantum

Penrose and Hameroff have proposed that microtubules in the human brain may allow a form of connection or entanglement with quantum systems outside the body (Hameroff & Penrose, 2014). If information in a computer exists in such fields, then in theory a person with quantum-level sensitivity might be able to reach that information from a distance.

One difficulty with this idea is that images and other targets in a computer exist only as binary code or electronic signals, which are not directly readable by humans. Even if a remote viewer could tap into a computer at a quantum level, the data might appear as meaningless strings of ones and zeros, not as clear images. The viewer could pass over the targets without realizing what they were, unable to turn raw code into recognizable pictures or text.

One possible answer to this problem is that the human mind might be able to interpret computer signals directly. After all, if a remote viewer can somehow interpret the vast information of the physical universe well enough to describe a physical target located miles away, then perhaps the same mind could assemble signals from a computer into a meaningful form. In this view, the act of turning quantum signals into a coherent image of a distant object may not be so different from turning digital signals into a human-readable picture.

Another possible answer comes from theories about the Planck scale, the smallest level of the physical universe. At this scale, normal ideas of time and space break down (Isham, 1992; Oriti, 2014; Rovelli, 2009). Since all targets in my experiment were eventually shown to judges, there was a moment when each target existed as a complete,

human-readable image. In the same way that a remote viewer can find a distant target without being told its exact details, perhaps a viewer aiming for a digital target can connect to the image as it exists in every time and place, guided only by intention. In this way, a viewer may connect both to the digital version of the target during the experiment and to the visible version revealed later to judges. At the quantum scale, the gap between these two moments might vanish, allowing the viewer to perceive both forms at once.

A final quantum-inspired theory might be that the act of judging itself influences the outcome. Because the experiment is double-blind, nobody observes the actual target until judging time. When a judge is presented with a psychic's submission alongside five possible targets—four decoys and one true target—the situation resembles a macroscopic quantum measurement with multiple potential outcomes. Just as a quantum system exists in superposition until observation, here all five targets can be seen as coexisting possibilities. Quantum theory suggests that observation does not merely reveal a preexisting reality but can help bring one outcome into being through wave-function collapse (Thenabadu & Reid, 2022; Wheeler, 1978). If such dynamics extend to the macro scale (Ornes, 2019), then the judge's force of will—the directed intention to select the real target—may play an active role in the collapse, biasing the indeterminate field of possibilities toward the choice that aligns with the psychic's submission. In this view, the judge's conscious act of selection is not passive recognition, but an integral part of the measurement process that shapes how one outcome crystallizes from many.

The Matrix

While assisting with RV research at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), the psychic Ingo Swann suggested a theory he called the Matrix to explain how remote viewing might work. In this theory, the universe is made up of an infinite number of "information points" similar to nodes in a computer network. Each point represents something specific, such as an object, a person, an event, or a place, and it holds all information about that subject from the past, present, and future (Smith, 2005). Each point is fixed, but the entire Matrix exists beyond space and time, and remote viewers are believed to be able to access it (Smith, 2005). In this model, retrieving details about a target does not mean looking at the target directly, but instead connecting to the Matrix, where all the target's information is stored (Smith, 2005). Applied to my experiment, this theory would suggest that if a remote viewer could reach even part of the information about a target, they could, in principle, reach the whole target, since all of its data is connected within the Matrix.

Hologram

Similar to the Matrix theory, Talbot (1991) describes the universe as a hologram, where all possible information is available at every point in space and time, just as each fragment of a hologram can reproduce the hologram's entire original image. If a remote viewer were able to "read" this holographic information, then every detail of a digital target could be accessed. This might include not only the raw binary code or electronic signals that make up the target, but also the complete and integrated version that human beings can readily recognize.

Multiple Universes

Another possibility is that a remote viewer might access information distributed across parallel universes. The multiverse interpretation of quantum mechanics posits that every possible outcome of a quantum event occurs in a separate branching universe (Tegmark, 2003). If consciousness can resonate or connect with its counterparts across these branches, perceptions of distant targets could emerge from the integration of information fragments gathered from multiple realities. Some theorists further propose that quantum entanglement may extend even across universes that are otherwise disconnected, establishing correlations that permit the transfer of information outside ordinary sensory channels (Robles-Pérez & González-Díaz, 2011). In this model, a remote viewer could "read" data about a target by synthesizing fragments drawn from parallel worlds, constructing a coherent picture from information distributed across realities. For instance, in some other parallel universe, perhaps the targets are openly revealed to participants in a poorly designed version of the experiment, thus offering details that could be psychically accessed.

Teleological

A final theory is Beloff's (1978) concept of teleological causation. In this model, psi effects are understood as *teleological*—that is, as forms of "goal-oriented causation" (Beloff, 1978, pp. 89–98). In other words,

threads of meaning or purpose might connect a target in one location to contextual information elsewhere, and some remote viewers may be able to follow these tangential connections across considerable distances. In the context of my experiment, a remote viewer focusing on an image stored in raw binary form on a computer might follow such threads toward a coherent, human-readable version of the same image located elsewhere in the universe. In this way, the binary file and its recognizable representation would be joined by their shared purpose or meaning.

The psychiatrist Carl Jung described a potentially related phenomenon that he termed *synchronicity*: sequences of highly improbable coincidences that appear imbued with significance (Jung, 1955). Jung illustrated the concept with an example: "my tram ticket bears the same number as the theatre ticket... and I receive that same evening a telephone call during which the same number is mentioned again" (Jung, 1955, p. 12). For Jung, such repetitions were not the product of ordinary cause-and-effect relationships. Instead, they were connected by meaning—an autonomous force that could operate independently of space and time (Jung, 1955).

If Jung's synchronicity and Beloff's goal-oriented causation describe the same underlying mechanism, this principle may also help explain forms of psychic access to digital information. A remote viewer might not be constrained by the raw data stored on a computer, but could instead trace threads of shared meaning that link one point to another. Like a spider moving across a web, the viewer may navigate these connections—crossing times, places, and events—until arriving at information related to the target, even if it is located elsewhere or exists in a different temporal frame. In this way, a viewer who aims at a computer's binary file might ultimately perceive the file's fully intact, human-readable contents displayed elsewhere in another context.

METHOD

Participants

The public was invited to participate in the study online at the experiment's website (www.psychicexperiment.org) for a two-week period starting October 23, 2022. I opened the experiment to the public because psychic ability is "not unique to 'gifted' psychics" (Swann, 1983, p. 7)—even people without formal training have shown psychic competence (Puthoff & Targ, 1980). Taking a cue from past experiments where a pool of participants was tested to determine which people had the most psychic potential (Varvoglis, n.d.), my goal was to cast a wide net, isolate participants with apparent psychic ability in a first judging phase, and then analyze their performance more deeply in a second judging phase.

Attracting Participants

I developed a promotional campaign to encourage participation. This included running targeted advertisements on Facebook, sharing posts in online Facebook discussion groups devoted to remote viewing, and producing a short promotional video that offered historical context for the project (Wichmann, 2022).

The experiment website was also intentionally designed to be easy to navigate, with clear, straightforward language. I also avoided the term "hacking," which could raise concerns about legality. Instead, the study was framed simply as an exploration of whether individuals with psychic abilities could perceive information stored within computers.

Participants could join at any time, day or night. Although prior research suggests that certain times of day may be more conducive to psychic functioning (Spottiswoode, 1997), I prioritized flexibility in order to attract the widest possible pool of participants. At the same time, because geolocation data and submission timestamps were collected, it remained possible to later analyze whether performance varied across time windows once sufficient data had accumulated.

Sign-up

When participants arrived at the experiment website, they were first asked to provide their first name and email address to allow for follow-up communication if necessary. No other personal information was collected. To protect privacy, all user information was encrypted in the database, and each participant was assigned a unique identification number. This ID was used to track participation throughout the study without revealing individual identities.

Participants then completed a standard digital consent and disclosure agreement outlining the purpose of the study, the intended use of collected data, and granting copyright permission to publish any submitted text or images submitted to the website.

Finally, participants completed an intake survey designed to assess their beliefs and experiences related

to psychic phenomena. The survey was adapted from the Revised Paranormal Belief Scale and the Australian Sheep-Goat Scale, which measure how much people believe in paranormal abilities (Drinkwater et al., 2018; Tobacyk, 2004). These survey scores were later analyzed to assess whether belief in psychic phenomena correlated to performance in remote viewing tasks.

Experiment Structure

After sign up, the experiment began. Participants were told that they would attempt to use their psychic abilities to describe three distinct targets—a picture, an ATM PIN, and a passphrase—stored on a laptop computer located somewhere in Los Angeles. Each target was presented sequentially and accompanied by simplified Star Gate-era best practices for remote viewing, such as working in a quiet setting, taking breaks, relaxing, and recording first impressions without attempting to interpret them (Hubbard & Langford, 1986).

To reinforce the reality of the task, participants were shown what appeared to be a live video feed of the target laptop placed by itself in a laboratory closet. They were informed that the laptop's screen displayed the assigned targets; however, in the feed, the screen was angled downward so that its contents were obscured as shown in Figure 3, ensuring that participants would need to rely on psychic means rather than visual cues.

Above the laptop, a colorful image of an animal was taped to the wall and described as an optional "psychic beacon" that could be used to help "zero in" on the closet and laptop in time and space. These elements—the disclosure that the laptop was in Los Angeles, the provision of best practices, the visible video feed of the laptop, and the beacon—were all intended to build participant confidence. I anticipated that many visitors to the study website would

Figure 3. Live feed of the target laptop.
Note. Participants were shown this live video feed of the Los Angeles target laptop in order to inspire confidence. The picture, ATM PIN, and passphrase targets were visible on the laptop screen, but the screen was angled downward, so the targets were not physically visible. The animal picture above the computer served as a beacon that psychics could use to help zero in on the computer. (Image courtesy of the author).

be attempting psi under formal conditions for the first time, and that the challenge of performing on demand might produce stress (Puthoff & Targ, 1976). To mitigate this, I crafted instructions that were encouraging, provided a rough geographical cue, and created an environment in which the laptop and its targets might *feel* immediately accessible: participants could literally see the device in the live feed, even if it was actually thousands of miles away. The beacon served a similar purpose, offering a familiar and visually engaging focal point to aid orientation. I did not view analytical overlay as a significant concern, since the instructions explicitly identified the laptop as the true target, making it unlikely that participants would mistake the beacon or the city of Los Angeles for the intended task (DIA, 1985).

In the first round of the experiment, participants were asked to describe a randomly selected picture displayed on the laptop's screen. No portion of the image was visible in the video feed, as the laptop's lid was nearly closed.

In the second round, participants attempted to identify randomly generated ATM PIN numbers stored in a text file on the laptop. To assist with RV targeting, participants were shown what appeared to be a live close-up feed of the laptop's desktop interface, which displayed the file's icon and filename.

In the third and final round, participants were instructed to describe a randomly generated multi-word passphrase (e.g., "GREEN WIND FLIES SOLO") stored in its own text file on the target laptop. As in the ATM PIN round, a close-up feed of the passphrase file's icon and filename was provided as a targeting aid.

At the start of each round, participants were asked to concentrate on the round's target for as long as they wished. They were then presented with two open-ended questions. The first question ("What psychic impressions did you receive—what did you feel, see, or sense?") prompted broad, possibly disconnected observations. The second question ("What do you think the target is?") asked participants for a concrete guess about the target's identity. Following these free-form responses, participants could also submit any sketches they had drawn.

The experiment was more intricate than it appeared, however. First, two laptops were used instead of one, just in case one computer failed. Each machine contained its own unique set of randomly picked targets, and a unique beacon animal picture—either a tiger or a parrot—was taped above each laptop. Visitors arriving at the experiment website were automatically and randomly assigned to one of the two laptops for the entire experiment.

Second, the apparent live video feed of the target laptop was staged. Each visitor was shown a still photo of the randomly chosen laptop with a current datestamp and the word "LIVE" printed on it to give the impression that it was a live feed. In truth, the various targets were displayed on the two laptops' screens, but those screens were dimmed to black and covered with cardboard shields and black tape to prevent light from escaping from any side, as shown in Figure 4. This ensured a talented remote viewer could not simply project their consciousness into the closet to view the targets directly on a screen. Instead, identifying a target would require a psychic to somehow "enter" a computer's storage, computing hardware, or display electronics.

Next, unbeknownst to participants, a secret fourth target—a silent, short, looping video—was also playing on each screen alongside the picture, ATM PIN, and passphrase targets. Each video clip was randomly chosen nightly. Videos were included because targets with motion may be more attractive to psychics than static targets (Delanoy, 1988). More critically, if a participant could describe the content of the video without being told that such a target was present, this would suggest that psychic hackers might be capable of uncovering hidden information on a computer even when they are unaware that the information exists. Figure 5 shows the two laptops with their various targets.

Technology

I hosted the experiment website (psychicexperiment.org) and the judging portal (psychicexperiment.org/judging) using Google Cloud's App Engine, a managed service for hosting websites. I built the web pages with standard web tools (HTML, CSS, and JavaScript) and used the PHP backend programming language to serve web content, handle submissions, save data, and calculate statistics.

All participant responses and judging scores were stored in a Google-managed MySQL database (a structured data table). I enabled several data protections: automatic backups (so data could be restored in the event of an outage), automatic failover (the system switches to a standby machine if one fails), and audit logs (a record of activity). To limit who could reach the database, I allowed connections only from the website itself and from my research lab's network; the general Internet could not connect. Administrator logins required two forms of authentication—both a password and a cryptographic certificate—and all data were encrypted both while traveling over the Internet and while stored.

Figure 4. Laptops dimmed and covered with cardboard and black tape.
Note. In truth, the two target laptops' screens were active but dimmed to black, and then covered with cardboard shields and black tape so no light could escape, forcing remote viewers to "psychically enter" the computers to perceive targets present there. (Image courtesy of the author).

Figure 5. Two target laptops with their ATM PIN, passphrase, picture, and video targets.
Note. Two laptops and beacons were used, with each visitor randomly assigned to one or the other. Each computer had its own unique set of randomly chosen targets, including a looping, silent video clip that participants were not told about. Although not physically visible here, the laptops' screens were actually covered with tape and cardboard for the experiment's duration. (Images courtesy of the author).

Using participants' Internet addresses, I estimated their approximate geographic locations and time zones in order to calculate their Local Sidereal Time (LST). LST is a time-keeping system based on the position of the stars rather than the Sun. Spottiswoode (1997), after analyzing 2,483 free-response ESP experiments, reported that psychic performance increased fourfold between 12:45 and 14:15 LST. The proposed explanation is that, during this interval, the Earth's metal core temporarily blocks cosmic interference that would otherwise dampen psychic functioning. Accordingly, I planned to examine whether participants active during this LST window demonstrated stronger performance.

During the experiment, the files containing the targets were encrypted and only stored on a control laptop housed in the experiment lab. The control laptop was password-protected, its networking was disabled to prevent external communication, and it was stored in a locked safe when not in use.

The two target laptops were secured in the same spirit. I removed nonessential software to reduce potential vulnerabilities, enabled system logging and reviewed it nightly

for signs of intrusion, and disabled all network features so the machines were completely "air-gapped" (physically isolated from the Internet so they could not be hacked).

For physical security, the lab closet housing the laptops was monitored by a motion-activated video camera. The closet door stayed closed except during the nightly target change, and the building itself was protected by an alarm system.

Delivery of Targets

Targets were changed daily at midnight Pacific time, with each target laptop receiving its own unique set of randomly chosen picture, ATM PIN, passphrase, and video targets.

Picture targets were randomly picked from 75 possible photos collected from a variety of sources months before the experiment began. Pictures could be abstract patterns, photos of people or animals, or images of architecture or nature. Targets were selected only if their imagery was striking, emotionally moving, surprising, colorful, or otherwise memorable, as such qualities have proven more successful in past experiments than bland content (Delanoy, 1988).

Video targets were randomly chosen from 10 possible video clips. Clips ranged from 3 to 21 seconds in length and were configured to loop repeatedly while playing silently on laptops' screens. As with the picture targets, videos were chosen with visually arresting content.

ATM PIN targets were generated randomly nightly just before deployment. A PIN could contain any digits 0 through 9 and were four digits in length.

Passphrase targets were also generated nightly and consisted of four randomly chosen words in random order. Each passphrase was created by randomly choosing from 57 adjectives, 132 singular nouns, 100 present-tense verbs, and 11 names of colors, in any order.

Because networking capabilities were disabled on the target laptops, the pictures, videos, ATM PINs, and passphrases were installed manually each night via a USB stick. After inserting an empty USB stick into the control computer, an automated script copied fresh targets onto it. The targets included one randomly chosen picture file, one randomly chosen video file, a randomly generated ATM PIN stored in a text file, and a randomly generated passphrase stored in a separate text file.

I then carried the USB stick to the closet for installation onto the first target laptop. After the laptop was rebooted to clear any remnants of the previous day's targets from its volatile memory, the USB stick was inserted. An automated script deleted the previous day's targets, copied the new targets from the USB stick to the laptop's disk, and displayed them on the screen. This process included opening the picture target so it was displayed on the screen, running the video file in a continuous loop on the screen, and showing the file icons for the ATM PIN and passphrase text files on the computer's desktop. Of course, none of this was visible to the naked eye, since the laptop's screen was dimmed and shielded. Finally, a script copied the laptop's security logs to the USB stick so they could be examined on the control laptop for any signs of intrusion.

After repeating the steps to load a separate set of targets onto the second target laptop and examining the security logs, the USB stick was reformatted to remove all target data. Both the stick and the control laptop were then locked in a safe until new targets were installed the following day. Although installing targets in this manner was time-consuming, it preserved the double-blind integrity of the experiment, ensuring that neither the judges nor I knew which targets had been deployed.

After the experiment, I used an automated script to upload the targets to the judging website without revealing them to myself. Only after judging was complete did I view the targets as part of my analysis. This procedure ensured that I remained blind to the targets throughout data collection and judging, preventing any possibility of bias or unintentional cueing.

Randomness

Two physical randomness sources were used: RDSEED—a true random number generator (TRNG) found in certain Intel CPUs that leverages thermal noise for additional entropy (Intel, 2018)—and data from a Geiger counter capturing unpredictable radiation particle arrivals (Ruschen et al., 2017). Over the course of a week, Geiger data was collected into five files, which were then XORed together into one file to remove any predictable patterns that might have resulted from prolonged particle events.

Some research has shown that psychics may be able to perturb random processes (SRI, 1980). To make it more difficult for remote viewers to influence the selection of a target, potential targets were first shuffled using the Durstenfeld shuffle—a method that guarantees a random transposition of each item (Mikawa & Tanaka, 2017; O'Connor, 2011)—and then one target was randomly picked from the shuffled list, using RDSEED as the source of randomness.

When selecting picture targets, the list of possible images was first shuffled using the Durstenfeld method, then RDSEED was called to randomly pick one file as the target. This same process was used to select video targets. Passphrases were generated in a similar way: noun, verb, and adjective lists were shuffled, and then RDSEED was used to choose word parts in random order until a passphrase was formed.

ATM PINs followed a different procedure. Best practices recommend using an abstraction layer between the random number generator and the final target—rather than simply using generated random numbers as the targets themselves—to thwart attempts at psychically influencing random processes (Williams, 2021). Additionally, the initial digits in a multi-digit number can conform to predictable distributions under Benford's Law (Scott & Fasli, 2001; Stoessiger, 2013). Therefore, it was crucial to ensure that each digit, from 0 to 9, had the same probability of being chosen when generating a PIN.

To meet these requirements, the digits 0 through 9 were arranged into five pairs: (0,1), (2,3), (4,5), (6,7), and (8,9). Each pair used a Geiger counter value in binary format as a coin flip: 0 selected the first digit, while 1 selected the second. These chosen digits were saved in an output file. The file's digits were then Durstenfeld-shuffled, and RDSEED randomly chose the Nth digit in the file to form the next ATM PIN digit—repeating this process until four digits were obtained. An analysis of the output file showed a smooth distribution (the frequency of each digit 0–9 fell between 9.71 and 10.30), and constant shuffling prevented any patterns that might have arisen from reusing the same pairs.

RDSEED and Geiger counter data were tested for randomness using Dieharder and NIST Statistical Test suites (Brown, 2020; Sunar et al., 2006). Both RDSEED and Geiger counter data, along with the XOR'd Geiger file, passed all tests.

Experiment Judging

Judging was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, independent judges scored all submissions to identify participants who appeared to demonstrate potential psychic ability. In the second phase, a referee carried out more detailed matching between submissions and targets, focusing on those participants who had shown promise during the initial phase. I adopted this two-tiered strategy because, unlike researchers who often work with experienced remote viewers with established track records, my participant pool consisted of members of the general public. In such cases, a winnowing process to identify talent before proceeding to more detailed analysis is not only practical, but also consistent with approaches described in other parapsychology studies (Department of the Army, 1983; Kelly, 1982; Kruth, 2019).

First Judging Phase

In the first judging phase, all participant submissions were evaluated by human judges using a custom-built judging website (psychicexperiment.org/judging). Since there were four kinds of impressions that needed judging per participant (i.e., picture, ATM PIN, passphrase, and video), the website randomly shuffled all impressions from all participants, and then presented them to judges in randomized order. Thus, a judge might first evaluate a picture round for one participant, followed by an ATM PIN round for another, without any predictable sequence.

There was a pool of six independent judges available. At the start of judging, the judging website randomly selected three judges to begin, leaving the remaining three in reserve. Once one of the active judges had finished judging approximately 300 rounds, that judge was retired and replaced by a fresh judge randomly chosen from the reserve pool. For example, if judges 1, 2, and 3 began as the initial set, and then judge 1 retired, they would be replaced by either judge 4, 5, or 6, selected at random.

Rank-order scoring was employed (Puthoff & Targ, 1976). Judges accessed the experiment's website, where they were presented with a randomly chosen submission—picture, video, ATM PIN, or passphrase—from an unnamed participant. Below the submission, five possible targets appeared in random order. These included the actual target, and four convincing decoys.

Judges ranked the targets by similarity to the submission, with rank 1 indicating the closest match. If two or more judges ranked the actual target in first place, the submission advanced to the second judging phase. Submissions were also classified as direct hits if all three judges independently identified the correct target as their top-ranked choice.

The website was programmed to select random decoys that were deliberately dissimilar (orthogonal) to the actual target, ensuring that judges encountered a diverse set of options rather than multiple images of the same type. For example, if the target was a horse (classified under the Animal category), the four decoys would be drawn at random from non-Animal categories. This approach

avoided giving judges any unintended cues, since in their minds any decoy could have been the true target, while also preventing situations in which a judge might need to compare a participant's impression of a horse against five different images of horses. Such a design was considered a fair limitation, since the purpose of the study was to test whether remote viewing of computer data was feasible at all, rather than to evaluate whether judges could discriminate among subtle variations of closely related images.

Judges were also asked to indicate their confidence level in their first-place pick. They could choose High (the submission had multiple matching target details), Medium (at least one strong matching detail was present), or Low (no match was detected). Confidence level was not used in judging statistics and was collected only as a point of interest to test how well a judge's own confidence correlated to their accuracy in picking targets.

Video rounds required special handling, because participants were unaware that videos were part of the experiment. To test whether psychics could perceive undisclosed video content, judges were shown a participant's *picture* submission alongside five possible targets—four picture decoys and one still frame from the actual video. The hypothesis here was that while focusing on their assigned picture target, a psychic might unintentionally pick up details from the silent video target instead, since both pictures and videos involve visual information.

There were 813 picture, ATM PIN, and passphrase decoys each, and all were chosen or created in the same manner as actual targets to ensure they would be believable. Picture decoys and targets were sorted into categories (i.e., Human, Abstract, Architecture, Nature, Animal, and Action) to ensure that every judging round had a healthy mix of orthogonal image types. Decoys were reused, but with only a 4.35% probability that a judge would encounter the same decoy more than once.

Second Judging Phase

In the second judging phase, submissions were evaluated using a Detailed Matches procedure adapted from May's Figure of Merit method (May et al., 2014; SRI, 1988). A referee judge reviewed each submission and assigned 1 point for concrete matches and 0.5 points for abstract matches. For example, if the target was a photograph of a soldier with a star tattoo, the terms "soldier" or "star" would earn 1 point each, while "man in uniform" would receive 0.5 points.

ATM PINs, being numerical, required no subjective interpretation. Matches were calculated by counting the number of digits correctly identified in any order, and separately, the number matched in the exact correct order.

Once matching details were enumerated, submissions were ranked by psychic strength. Picture, video, and passphrase submissions that three judges had independently ranked as first place (direct hits) were placed highest, followed by those matched by two judges. Ties within each group were resolved by Detailed Match scores. ATM PIN submissions were prioritized by the number of digits matched in exact order (e.g., three-digit matches ranked above two-digit matches).

Judging Integrity

Judging integrity controls were employed. No party was permitted to view any submission until judging began. Each judge signed in using unique website credentials, and all activity was logged and reviewed daily for signs of fraud. Submissions were randomly assigned to three judges, with the five potential targets shown in random order. No identifying information about psychics was displayed. Decoys' filenames were changed to randomized strings to prevent any clues about content. Finally, before being allowed to judge, judges were asked to watch a 15-minute instructional video to improve judging uniformity.

To ensure targets and submissions had not been fraudulently altered, judges were emailed a log of each day's participant activity during the experiment. Each log included record numbers assigned to that day's submissions, along with a digital "fingerprint" (a cryptographic hash) taken of the record number, the contents of the submission, and the contents of the actual target, all combined. Later during judging, judges compared the hashes they had received to freshly calculated hashes to detect any data modifications or tampering. None were found. Since cryptographic hashes are deterministic (a unique input always provides the same unique output), any modification of a submission or target in the experiment database would have been detected.

Statistics

Standard statistical methods were used. One-tailed test p-values were calculated using an alpha level of $p = .05$, meaning p-values below .05 would warrant rejection of the null hypothesis (i.e., observed outcomes were results of

chance) (Utts & Heckard, 2015). Z-scores for picture, video, passphrase, and ATM PIN round were calculated using the standard formula for a one-population proportion (Pennsylvania State University, n.d.). Effect sizes were calculated using the formula recommended by May to demonstrate whether psychic effects would be plainly observable. An effect size could be Small (=<0.2), which might prove imperceptible; Medium (=<0.8), which would be visible to a careful observer; or Large (>0.8), which would be plainly visible to any observer (May et al., 1988; Utts, 1995).

Picture, video, and passphrase results were analyzed using *p*-value lookup tables by Utts and Hansen that combine Sum of Ranks and Direct Hits (Hansen & Utts, 1987). Hansen and Utts combined these two indices together to avoid various statistical problems inherent in measuring free responses in psi experiments (Hansen & Utts, 1987). For this experiment, the tables were adjusted to allow for 5 choices shown to judges ($R = 5$).

P-values for ATM PIN rounds were calculated directly. Combinatorics were used to calculate the probabilities of guessing various PIN digits while accounting for repeating digits (e.g., 7877), and then *p*-values were derived from probabilities' Z-scores.

FINDINGS

Participants

146 people from 10 countries completed the experiment over two weeks. Based on anonymized demographic data from Facebook ads that attracted participants, 59.4% of participants were women, with 74% of ages ranging from 35 to 64 (Facebook, 2022).

Upon arriving at the experiment website, 76 individuals were randomly assigned laptop #1 with its tiger beacon, and the rest were assigned laptop #2 with its parrot beacon. 13% of participants reported that the tiger and parrot faces were distracting, so future experiments might try using beacons with more muted colors, abstract beacon images without faces, or no beacons.

88% of participants finished in under an hour, although it was not always smooth sailing. 14% gave answers like, "I don't know" or "Not sure" to express that they were not sure how to approach a picture, ATM PIN, or passphrase round, or that they were not receiving psychic signals. One visitor was nervous about answering questions because he suspected the experiment might be a criminal scheme to use psychic hackers for guessing ATM PIN numbers of would-be victims.

Survey Responses

87% of participants believed in psychic abilities, with 42% claiming to have psychic powers themselves. 75% had experienced psychic events for at least 20 years, with 57% recalling having powers since childhood. Clairvoyance (68%), precognition (53%), and telepathy (42%) were experienced most often. The most common powers that participants could evoke on command were clairvoyance (35%), energy healing (25%), telepathy (21%), and mediumship (16%).

131 participants answered questions examining which practices were most conducive to psychic operations. Focusing intention (41%), meditation (40%), and shutting eyes (27%) were most important. Environment was important as well, such as working in a quiet space (63%) and reclining (66%) in a relaxing place (49%).

The survey questions assessing participants' beliefs regarding their own paranormal abilities overlap conceptually with broader notions of perceived capability. In mainstream psychology, such beliefs are often discussed under the rubric of self-efficacy. However, my survey was not designed, validated, or analyzed as a self-efficacy measure in the social-cognitive theory sense (e.g., Bandura, 1977). Survey content was used descriptively to characterize participants' belief orientations upon entering the experiment, not to operationalize perceived agency, mastery, or task-specific performance expectations. This conceptual overlap is noted here for context only and was not used as an interpretive framework for the survey findings.

Judging

Picture, video, ATM PIN, and passphrase submissions were judged for all 146 participants, resulting in 1,752 total rounds judged. Each of the 6 volunteer judges judged an average of 292 rounds.

When choosing among 5 possible targets during rank-order scoring (which included the actual target and 4 decoys, all in random order), judges correctly rated the correct target as first place 18.43% of the time on average across all targets. This was worse than random guessing (which would be 20%).

This below-chance, first-place rate could reflect either highly convincing decoys or inexperienced judges (all of the judges in my case had not judged previously). Hansen and Utts (1987) noted that inexperienced judges may focus primarily on finding the best match while paying less attention to the relative quality of remaining options. In such cases, a target that is clearly superior, but not perfectly matched,

might receive a second-place rank that is no more diagnostic than a fourth-place rank. This pattern could depress the direct-hits rate even when psi information is present in the response.

However, the 18.43% success rate had minimal impact on statistical outcomes. The Hansen-Utts bivariate method evaluates both direct hits and the sum-of-ranks across the complete multinomial distribution of all five rank positions, not the first-place rate alone. A shift from 20% to 18.43% represents roughly 1.6 standard errors for our sample size and produces only a minor perturbation in the tail probabilities. More importantly, if this below-chance judging reflects systematic measurement noise rather than random variation, it would attenuate rather than inflate any observed psi effects. Consequently, our statistical findings may actually underestimate the true strength of any phenomena under investigation.

As expected, judges tended to be most accurate when submissions contained a large number of matching details. The highest-scoring picture, video, and ATM PIN submissions—those ranked first by all three judges—also produced the greatest numbers of refereed Detailed Matches. For instance, 12 picture submissions were unanimously ranked first during the rank-order judging, and in the subsequent refereed Detail Matching process these same 12 submissions yielded the highest total of matching details (43 in all). A similar correlation was observed in the ATM PIN and video rounds.

Submissions needed to achieve a minimum score to proceed to the second judging phase where Detailed Matching would occur. For picture, video, and passphrases submissions, this meant being correctly matched against their actual targets in first place by at least 2 judges; for ATM PINs, a submission needed to correctly match at least 2 of a target's digits. 92 submissions achieved these milestones, including 23 picture, 18 video, 32 PIN, and 19 passphrase submissions. Mean numbers of matched details were 2.48 for picture targets (N = 23), 1.67 for video targets (N = 18), 2.31 for ATM PIN targets (N = 32), and 0.34 for passphrase targets (N = 19).

Picture Targets

82% of the 23 picture submissions that were scored in first place by 2 or more judges had Detailed Matching scores of at least 0.5, with the five strongest submissions matching 7, 6, 5.5, 4, and 4 target details, respectively.

The 23 picture submissions scored a Sum of Ranks of 34. 12 submissions were considered psychic hits, with all 3 independent judges correctly matching those 12 against their actual targets. These results were statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000597 calculated using the combined Sum of Ranks and Direct Hits lookup table. Effect size was Large at 1.075 (Z = –4.5), making it obvious to a typical observer.

Most Successful Picture Targets

Of all the picture targets, photos of a cathedral dome, a cemetery, a forest path, and a river depth gauge received the greatest number of hits and Detailed Matches as shown in Table 1.

The cathedral dome produced two hits out of six submissions (33%), corresponding to a medium effect size (h = 0.31). With 13 detailed matches overall, its geometric architecture—featuring concentric circles, radial symmetry, and structured design—may have offered participants salient perceptual anchors, enabling fragments of the target to be perceived even when the whole was not fully recognized.

In contrast, the river depth gauge yielded two hits out of three submissions (67%), well above the 20% chance baseline and associated with a large effect size (h = 1.07). Like the dome, the gauge presented strong linear and numerical cues, supporting the idea that highly structured, geometric targets may be particularly conducive to psi perception.

Naturalistic and semi-naturalistic scenes also showed evidence of success. The forest path likewise demonstrated a large effect size (h = 1.07), supported by six accurate descriptive details. By contrast, the cemetery (2 of 9 hits; 22%) produced a hit rate close to chance (h = 0.05), yet still generated 9.5 accurate details. This suggests that even when overall recognitions are weak, fragmentary perceptions may accumulate meaningfully into partial target reconstructions.

When pooled across these four targets, participants achieved eight hits out of 21 submissions (38.1%). This corresponds to a medium effect size (h = 0.40) and was significantly above chance (p = .043).

Least Successful Picture Targets

In contrast to the successful geometric and natural targets, animal images appeared to suppress performance, as shown in Table 2. The photograph of a doe in a field produced an 83% failure rate (p = .023), with failure defined as all three judges ranking the target in last place when

Table 1. Most Successful Picture Targets.

Target Picture	# of Participants Randomly Assigned This Target	# of Submissions Ranked as Hits by Judges	# of Matching Details Identified
 Cathedral Dome	6	2	13
 Cemetery	9	2	9.5
 Forest Path	3	2	6
 River Depth Gauge	3	2	5.5

Note. These were the most successful four picture targets, yielding the highest number of Detailed Matches from participants. The fact that these images all contained geometric or nature scenes may lend support to earlier findings suggesting that some kinds of imagery are inherently more engaging or accessible to psychics than others (Delanoy, 1988). (Dome photo courtesy of Jorge Molina, © Jorge Molina / https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy. Cemetery photo © Douglas Sacha / Getty Images. Forest path © Wikipedia user Usamakhaliddd / Creative Commons license. River gauge © Pixnio user Bicanski / Creative Commons license).

Table 2. Least Successful Picture Targets.

Target Picture	# of Participants Randomly Assigned This Target	# of Judging Rounds Where Target Chosen in Last Place	Failure Rate (95% CI)	*p*-value	Effect Size (Cohen's *h*)
 Doe in a Field	12	10	0.833	0.0235	Large (0.706)
 White Dog	10	8	0.800	0.0636	Large (0.619)
 Pandas	9	6	0.667	0.2781	Medium (0.316)
 Owl	6	5	0.833	0.121	Large (0.706)

Note. These four animal images were the least successful picture targets in the study. Participants' submissions diverged so strongly from these targets that, in many judging rounds, all three judges independently ranked the animal images in last place. This consistent pattern suggests that animal targets may have been particularly difficult for remote viewers to access or describe accurately. (The doe image is in the Public Domain. The dog, panda, and owl images are courtesy of the author).

attempting to match submissions. Similar outcomes were observed for the white dog (80% failure), owl (83% failure), and pandas (67% failure). Taken together, animal targets produced a 78% aggregate all-wrong rate—a result significantly worse than chance (p = .0006) and accompanied by a large negative effect size (h = 0.58).

Examples of Accurate Picture Results

Many participants' details submitted were quite accurate. Participant #43 wrote that their cathedral dome target shown in Figure 6 was "lilac" with "blue, green, and beige" colors, and like "sandstone" with an "open air" shape that was "circular" that had "vertical lines or protrusions around it." The participant's sketch (shown on the right in Figure 6) reproduced the dome's circular shape and repeating arches with striking fidelity.

The strength of this resemblance is comparable to what were considered direct hits in early parapsychology research. The 1976 overpass drawing shown in Figure 1, for example, was regarded at the time as a direct hit. When viewed side by side, the present cathedral dome sketch—with its circular geometry, radiating symmetry, and arch-like forms—appears equally compelling. In both cases, participants distilled the targets to their core structural features, producing simplified yet abstract renderings that conveyed the essential character of the scenes.

Participant #12 also had a strong showing, describing their forest target shown in Figure 7 as "quiet" with "sunlight" falling on a "forest path," and the path's curvature in the submitted drawing was a match for the target's.

Other participants were equally successful. Participant #65 described the collection of gray streetlamps in Figure 8 as "trunks of elephants" or "belts hanging on a hook." For a target of helmeted soldiers carrying guns in a World War I trench, participant #69 wrote "helmets" overtly, and that they seemed like "cherries… joined by their stems." Participant #64 similarly recounted sensing an "oval shape with two legs."

Collusion Opportunity

Collusion among psychics may accelerate the identification of target details or increase their resolution. When assigned the photo shown in Figure 9 of a man bicycling to his left as he falls from his bicycle into a watery canal, participant #90 accurately sensed "water," "falling," and a "crash," while Participant #83 perceived a "human head," "outdoors," and "looking to the left." Individually, each provided partial information that hinted at parts of the scene. Combined, however, their perceptions offer a richer, more coherent reconstruction—a doubling of target-relevant details via collaborative convergence.

Video Targets

For video targets, judges correctly matched 18 picture submissions against the video targets' still frame images. Detailed Match analysis found concrete video details in 11 of the 18 submissions, with the strongest containing 5.5, 4, 4, 3, and 2.5 enumerated details. The results were statistically significant: 10 video submissions were psychic hits, with a Sum of Ranks of 26, a p-value of 0.000911, and a Large effect size of 1.131 (Z = –4.58).

Participant #141 scored highest, with 5.5 details counted. 141's target shown in Figure 10 was a surreal video clip of a woman playing a clown. Wearing pale makeup, red lipstick, and a blonde wig, she puts her mouth into a jar of green liquid, and then pulls a fake frog out of the liquid using her teeth. Participant #141 described sensing a "sad clown" and a "crocodile in water." "Sad clown" was a reasonable description of the woman's facial expression, and "crocodile in water" could be a reference to both the water in the jar and the frog, which is green and semi-aquatic like a crocodile.

Participant #141 also sensed "chattering wind-up toy teeth," which, judging from the teeth shown in the participant's submitted drawing, was a reference to the popular wind-up toy that features white teeth and red lips. Notable is that the woman in the video clip does flash her teeth for the camera, but this only happens in the *original* uncut video footage that comes after the clip chosen for use in the experiment. In other words, the psychic described details that were tangentially related to the target, even though they were not physically present in the experiment.

Participant #144 exhibited this same tangent effect. The psychic's video target was the famous scene from the film *The Shining* in which a deranged writer hacks through a hotel bathroom door with an axe (Kubrick, 1980). Participant #144 described sensing a "heartbeat" and "blood," which are both featured in the film: a heartbeat sound effect is heard often to suggest that the hotel is a living entity, and in one scene, a river of blood rushes down a hotel hallway. Interestingly, neither the heartbeat nor the blood scene was included in the experiment's video clip,

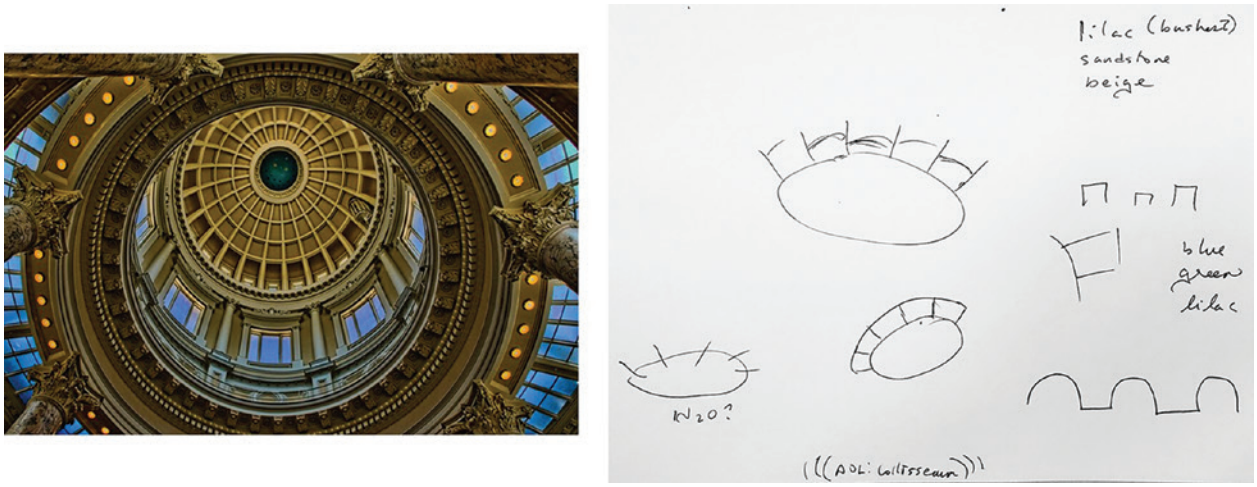

Figure 6. Remote viewer drawing of cathedral dome.
Note. Participant #43's drawing of the target included repeating circular, rectangular, and line motifs similar to the cathedral dome photo. (Dome photo on left is courtesy of Jorge Molina, © Jorge Molina / https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy. Illustration on right is courtesy of the author).

Figure 7. Remote viewer drawing of forest path.
Note. Participant #12 correctly identified their forest path picture target, complete with a path curving to the left. (Forest image on left used under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Keri_murat.jpg. Illustration image on right courtesy of the author).

meaning once again, a participant detected details tangentially related to the target, even though the details were not physically present in the study.

Participant #137 had a similar experience with *The Shining*, correctly perceiving that the video target involved "someone's mother" who was "on vacation" in a "mountain location." All these details were spot-on—in the movie, the mother is on winter family vacation at an isolated mountain hotel—yet none of these elements were included in the actual clip used in the experiment.

Displacement and Describing Missing Video Details

Several of the video target trials revealed what appeared to be displacement effects, where participants described details belonging not to the assigned target, but to an

Figure 8. Streetlamp and wartime trench targets.
Note. Participant #65 perceived these gray streetlamps as elephant trunks, or "belts hanging on a hook." For soldiers in a trench, Participant #69 identified their helmets, which Participant #64 described as being an "oval shape with two legs." (Streetlamp photo on left courtesy of the author. 1917 wartime photo on right is in the Public Domain, courtesy of the United Kingdom Government).

Figure 9. Bicyclist photo target.
Note. Two remote viewers correctly perceived water, falling, a crash, a human head, outdoors, and looking to the left. (Image © The Estate of Bas Jan Ader / Mary Sue Ader Andersen, 2025 / The Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy of Meliksetian | Briggs).

adjacent or related one. In one case, Participant #6 was tasked with a passphrase target, but instead reported imagery of spirals, swirling, and spinning. Although these descriptions did not correspond to the intended passphrase, they closely matched a *Sound of Music* video clip that happened to be playing on the screen at the time—specifically, the iconic scene in which Julie Andrews spins on the hills of the Austrian Alps (Wise, 1965).

Other participants went beyond simple displacement and seemed to perceive tangential details absent from

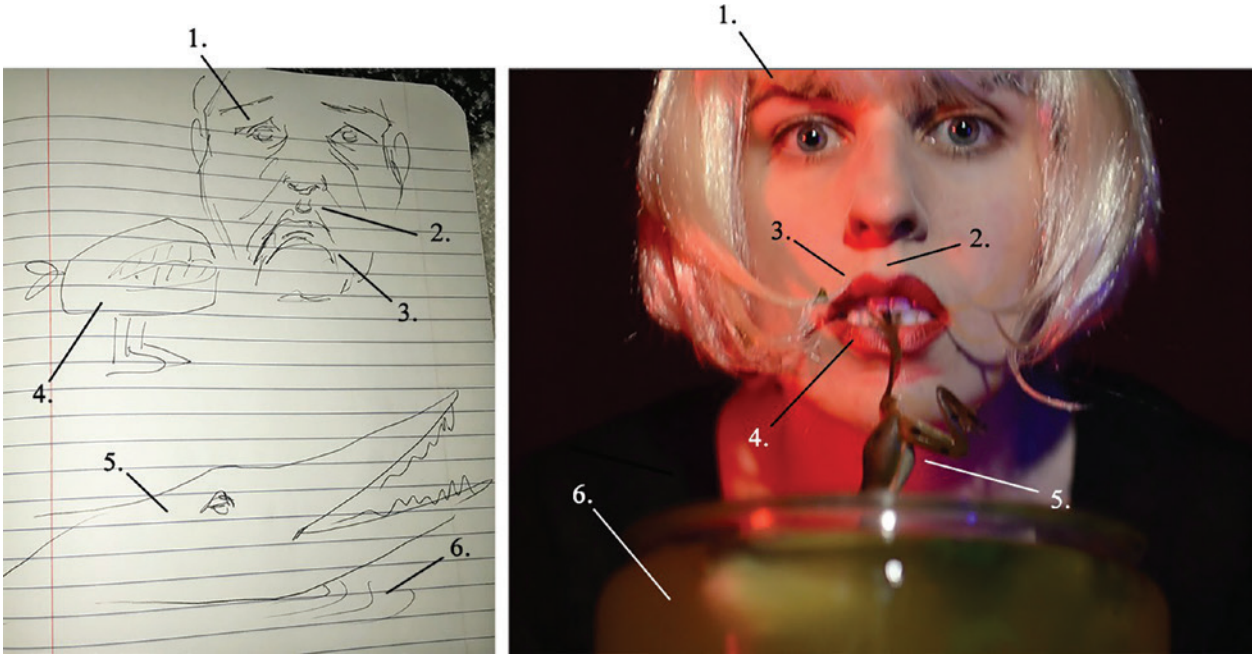

Figure 10. Psychic describes details of woman with frog.
Note. Participant #141's drawing appears to identify the target's (1) arched eyebrow/eyelid, (2) cleft beneath nose, (3) clownish character expression and mouth, (4) white teeth and red lips like a chattering wind-up toy, (5) crocodile and frog (both aquatic and green), and (6) water/liquid. (Images provided courtesy of the author).

the clips used in the experiment, but present in the original, uncut source material. As mentioned earlier, Participant #137, when assigned a clip from *The Shining*, described "someone's mother" on vacation in a mountain location—details consistent with the full film but not visible in the shorter clip used in the study. Similarly, Participant #38's passphrase guess of "bubble, bubble, toil, and trouble" seemed reminiscent of Shakespeare's "Double, double, toil and trouble... Fire burn and cauldron bubble... Eye of newt and toe of frog...." found in *Macbeth* (Shakespeare, 2013). Although this guess did not correspond to the intended passphrase target, it closely resonated with the video clip playing on-screen at the time—namely, the previously mentioned scene of a woman extracting a frog from liquid with her teeth. Notably, in the version of the clip used for the experiment, the woman simply pulls the frog from the liquid; however, in the original uncut footage (not shown during the study), she first blows a flurry of bubbles into the green liquid before retrieving the frog.

These results suggest that, in addition to describing their assigned clips, participants sometimes accessed related but non-present information, drawing on broader semantic, tangential, or narrative associations connected to the targets. Such findings may lend support to the teleological theory of remote viewing introduced earlier, which integrates ideas from Beloff and Jung to propose that psychics can traverse threads of meaning linking a target to other, tangentially related information located elsewhere.

Analysis Across Video Targets

To assess whether the content of video targets influenced performance, we compared Detailed Matches across different target categories. Emotionally striking or symbolically rich videos—such as the clown woman with red lips ($M = 2.25$, $N = 4$) and the scary scene from *The Shining* ($M = 2.17$, $N = 3$)—appeared stronger than more neutral scenes like Julie Andrews spinning in *The Sound of Music* ($M = 1.5$, $N = 4$).

To formally test for content effects, I employed a Kruskal-Wallis test, a rank-based non-parametric method appropriate when samples are small, not normally distributed, and have potentially unequal variances (Bewick et al., 2004). This test avoids the stringent assumptions required by parametric alternatives such as ANOVA. The Kruskal-Wallis result was non-significant, $H(4) = 4.14$, $p = .764$, indicating no statistical evidence that the content differences among video targets influenced psychic performance.

ATM PIN Targets

32 participants matched 2 or more ATM PIN target digits, including:

- One match of 3 digits in precise order, with a *p*-value of 0.006527 after factoring for duplicate digits and other combinatoric cases. (Although this outcome reached statistical significance, its occurrence as a single, isolated event was treated as anecdotal rather than indicative of a reliable aggregate effect, and therefore not sufficient on its own to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis).
- 9 successful guesses of 3 digits in any order, which was statistically significant ($p = 4.118 \times 10^{-6}$, ES = 0.788).
- 19 correct guesses of 2 digits in any order, which was significant ($p = 7.84 \times 10^{-6}$, ES = 0.763).
- 4 correct guesses of 2 PIN digits in exact order were deemed insignificant ($p = 0.1774$).

Collusion Opportunity

Like my earlier mention of potentially colluding against picture targets, it turned out that participants could have also potentially derived the correct ATM PIN target values faster by colluding. Table 3 shows that just two participants needed to collaborate to arrive at all digits needed for targets 6491, 9547, 4211, and 7938. Although the guessed digits were not in the target PINs' exact orders, the time to brute force each PIN could be reduced by trying all combinations of the participants' guessed digits, rather than trying all possible digits zero through nine. For target 6491, Participant #19 guessed 1, 4, 9, 2, and Participant #21 guessed 6, 9, 1, 0. Merging and deduplicating these guesses leaves exactly the digits 6, 4, 9, 1, which require only 24 permutations to brute force the correct PIN, instead of thousands of guesses. Future research might explore whether pooled guesses from remote viewers who have proven skills at guessing digits might accelerate the time needed to reliably crack PINs, lottery numbers, and other numeric targets.

Passphrase Targets

Passphrase submissions were least successful: out of 19 results reaching the second judging phase, only 5 were direct hits (not statistically significant) with Detailed Matching scores between 0 and 1.

As noted earlier, intriguing displacement effects were observed: while concentrating on passphrase targets, some participants appeared to perceive details from other targets simultaneously present on the screen. Participant #6 described spirals, cyclones, swirling, and spinning; although these did not match the passphrase target, they seemed to describe the video clip actively playing of Julie Andrews twirling in the grassy fields of *The Sound of Music*. Similarly, while focused on a passphrase, Participant #38 perceived elements from a concurrent video target of the woman pulling a frog from a jar of liquid with her teeth. This participant's references to bubbles, toil, and trouble echoed Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which mentions a cauldron (comparable to the woman's jar), a frog (featured in the footage), and bubbling (present in the original, uncut version of the clip, where the woman blows bubbles into the liquid before retrieving the frog). In another case, while attempting a passphrase, Participant #13 reported sensing a pyramid—an impression unrelated to the intended passphrase but consistent with the picture target on-screen at that moment, which depicted Egyptian pyramids.

Other striking results emerged for participants assigned the passphrase target, "Church Alert Weeps Yellow." Participant #23 envisioned a banana—an image notable for its yellow color—and reported hearing a "voice in my head," which may suggest an experience of spiritual communication. Participant #18 mentioned "fish" (a traditional emblem of Jesus), SpongeBob SquarePants (a yellow cartoon character), and "Fish Fry Sunday," a common church-related event. Participant #16 also perceived distinctly religious themes, describing impressions of a "feeling of reverence," "church wine," "bread communal," a "bearded friend," something "holy," and the name "John."

Table 3. ATM PINs Where Collusion Might Be Possible.

ATM PIN Target	Guess (Matching Digits in Bold)	Participant #
6-4-9-1	**1-4-9-**2	19
	6-9-1-0	21
9-5-4-7	**7**-3-**9-4**	117
	5-0-6-**4**	106
4-2-1-1	**2-1**-6-**2**	53
	4-6-**4-1**	50
7-9-3-8	**8-7**-6-**9**	118
	3-5-2-**9**	115

Note. 4 pairs of participants yielded the correct digits (shown in bold) needed to guess 4 different ATM PIN numbers. Using only digits guessed by 2 psychics with duplicate digits removed, brute force guessing each PIN is often faster than trying all digits starting at 0000.

Belief Versus Psychic Ability

To investigate whether belief in psychic potential was associated with performance, total Detailed Matches were compared across all 146 participants. Participants were divided into a believer group (those answering "Yes" or "Maybe" to having psychic potential; N = 135) and a non-believer group (those answering "No"; N = 11). Believers achieved a mean of 1.20 matched details (SD = 1.69), while non-believers achieved a mean of 0.50 matched details (SD = 0.92). In aggregate, belief-aligned participants accounted for approximately 21.8 times more matched target details than the non-believer group, as shown in Figure 11.

To assess the statistical significance of this difference, a Mann–Whitney U test was conducted on aggregated Detailed Match scores. This analysis yielded a U statistic of 893.5 with a two-sided *p*-value of. 212. Although this result did not meet conventional significance thresholds, it likely reflects limited statistical power due to the small size of the non-believer group and the highly sparse, zero-inflated nature of the data.

Notably, the pattern observed is consistent with a concentration effect, in which group differences are driven by a small number of high-performing participants, rather than a uniform shift in performance across the entire sample. In both groups, the majority of participants did not advance to the second judging phase; however, successful correspondences were disproportionately concentrated among a subset of belief-aligned participants. This pattern mirrors broader findings in the parapsychology literature which suggest that psi effects, when present, tend to be episodic and concentrated in the extreme tail of performance distributions, rather than manifesting as global effects across participants (Storm et al., 2010). Accordingly, belief appears to be associated with the likelihood of exceptional performance, rather than with a general increase in performance across the participant pool.

Taken together, the findings indicate that belief in possessing psychic abilities is associated with performance outcomes, but they do not establish a unidirectional causal relationship. While belief-aligned participants accounted for a substantially greater proportion of matched details overall, the experiment's design does not allow conclusions about the direction of this relationship. It is possible, for example, that individuals who have previously encountered apparent psychic successes—whether in formal research settings or through everyday life experiences—subsequently develop stronger beliefs in their abilities. It is also possible that belief and performance interact over time through a positive feedback loop.

Because participation was open to the general public rather than limited to experienced remote viewers, the sample likely reflects a broad and heterogeneous mix of prior experience, confidence, and engagement. Accordingly, the observed relationship between belief and

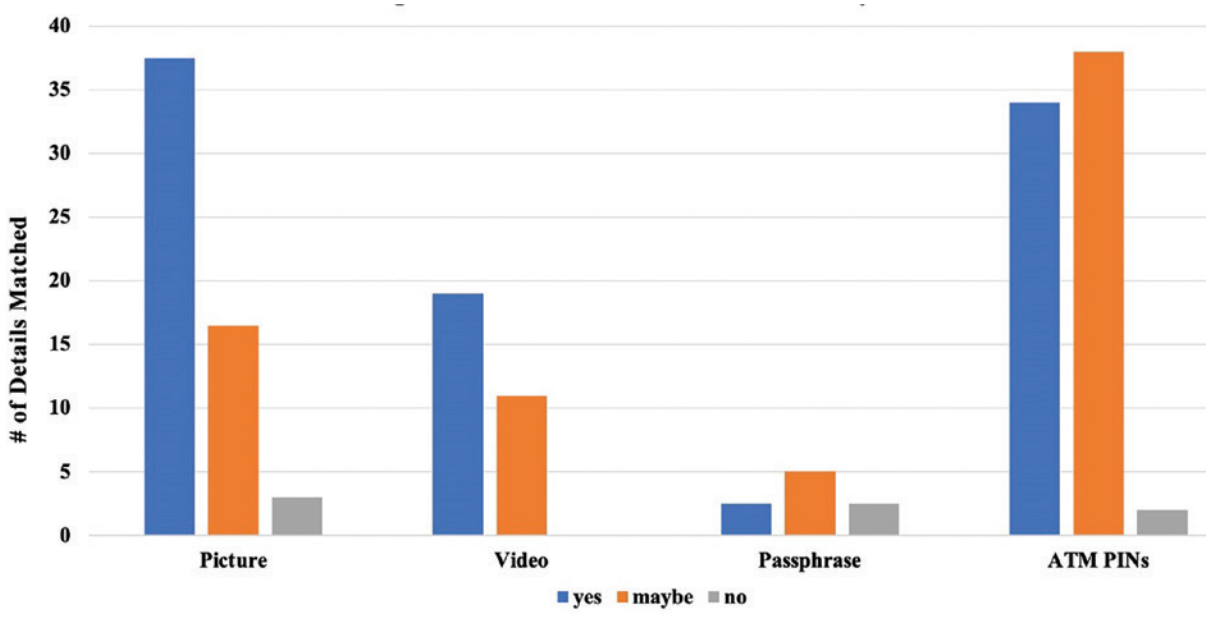

Figure 11. Belief versus target details matched.
Note. When asked, "Are you psychic?" participants who said "yes" or "maybe" identified 21.8 times more target details than people who answered "no."

performance is best interpreted as correlational. Future work will be needed to tease apart belief-driven facilitation from experience-driven belief formation. Even so, the magnitude of the observed association suggests that belief remains a meaningful variable for further investigation in large-scale, Internet-based psi research.

Sidereal Time

As introduced earlier, Spottiswoode (1997) reported that psychic performance increases fourfold between 12:45 and 14:15 Local Sidereal Time (LST). My experiment showed partial alignment with this finding: among the top five judge-ranked submissions from each of the picture, ATM PIN, and passphrase rounds, 40% occurred within 90 minutes of Spottiswoode's LST window. By comparison, if submissions were distributed randomly across the day, the expected proportion falling within this 90-minute window would be much lower (about 6%). This suggests that future studies may benefit from scheduling remote viewing sessions as close as possible to this interval.

Family-Wise Corrections

Because my experiment reports multiple outcomes (e.g., ATM PIN results for three digits in exact order, three digits in any order, etc.), some critics might raise the issue of Type I error inflation. In statistics, when many different tests are performed on the same dataset, the chance of obtaining at least one "false positive" result (a significant finding actually due to chance) increases. One common way of addressing this is through a Bonferroni correction, which lowers the threshold for statistical significance to account for the number of tests. For example, if seven tests are performed, the usual 0.05 threshold would be divided by seven, yielding a stricter cutoff of 0.00714.

However, there are strong reasons why such a correction is unnecessary. First, the effect sizes observed here are generally large (ES ≥ 0.76 for significant findings). Large effects are clearly visible in the data and are unlikely to be artifacts of statistical noise. In this context, applying a Bonferroni correction—whose main benefit is reducing false positives—may be overly conservative, because it does so at the expense of increasing false negatives (real effects that are dismissed), and this is especially a problem when effect sizes are large (Armstrong, 2014; Bland & Altman, 1995; Perneger, 1998). Similarly, Hansen and Utts (1987) argue that Bonferroni adjustments are unrealistically strict, especially in free-response psi experiments like mine.

Second, many of the outcome measures in this experiment (e.g., two-digit vs. three-digit PIN matches) are not independent tests, but overlapping ways of looking at the same data. Classic Bonferroni adjustments assume independence across tests, which does not hold here. For these reasons, reporting raw *p*-values alongside effect sizes provides a more balanced and informative account. The combination of large effects and consistent results across multiple modalities (pictures, videos, ATM PINs) supports the robustness of the findings without the need for rigid family-wise corrections.

For completeness, however, I will note what a Bonferroni correction would yield. Across seven tests (pictures = 1, videos = 1, PINs = 4, passphrases = 1 [not significant]), the adjusted threshold is $p < 0.00714$. Even under this conservative correction, the results for pictures, videos, and ATM PINs (three digits in exact order, three digits in any order, and two digits in exact order) all remain statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

Selecting and Organizing Participants

Recruiting the public for paranormal experiments holds promise for identifying individuals capable of producing statistically significant results. 62% of participants demonstrated potential psychic power, defined operationally as producing at least one submission that advanced to the second phase of judging. Because participants completed multiple independent trials, some proportion would be expected to meet advancement criteria at least once by chance alone. Accordingly, this percentage is reported descriptively as a screening outcome, rather than as an above-chance estimate of psychic performance. Advancement to the second judging phase served only as an initial filter; submissions that advanced by chance but lacked substantive target-relevant information would be expected to be eliminated during the subsequent Detailed Matching stage, which required specific, referee-verified correspondences. Viewed in this context, the observed proportion aligns with earlier observations by Swann, Puthoff, and Targ that a substantial fraction of the general population may exhibit psi-related performance under suitable conditions (Puthoff & Targ, 1976, 1980; Swann, 1983). Harnessing large online populations to identify such

latent talent opens avenues for future research that scale beyond traditional laboratory-based recruitment. Recruiting participants exclusively through Facebook may have introduced sampling biases, which represent a limitation of the study. Some individuals may not have encountered my recruitment posts or ads, either because they lacked Facebook access, or because of the platform's content-distribution algorithms. Additionally, the Facebook groups where recruitment posts appeared were moderated by administrators who could have restricted membership, further limiting reach. Finally, basic computer literacy was required to submit guesses or drawings online, which may have excluded individuals without sufficient technical skills.

Screening potential psychics based on certain criteria may enhance experimental results. Participants who believed they might be psychic had 21.8 times more matching details than those who did not, suggesting that surveying individuals about their beliefs beforehand could help identify those with higher potential. Selecting participants who can work near Spottiswoode's "psychic window" of 12:45 to 14:15 in Local Sidereal Time may also boost performance, as 30% of top performers fell within 90 minutes of this period.

On Judging

Analysis of 1,752 judging rounds showed that judges with moderate confidence may be more accurate at matching submissions to correct targets. The 3 judges with highest confidence in their scoring abilities (scoring between 1.47 and 1.48 on a 3-point scale) had an average accuracy of just 17.8%. Judge 102, by contrast, was accurate 21.58% of the time, even though her self-confidence was near average (1.46) among all judges.

Judges were most accurate when ranking submissions with high numbers of matching details—the stronger a psychic effect, the more visually obvious it was to multiple lay witnesses. If greater numbers of witnesses in intersubjective agreement get us closer to practical certainty that an effect is paranormal (Chambers, 1998; Freeman, 1973), perhaps Internet crowdsourcing could be used to judge submissions using thousands or even millions of lay judges. Alternatively, Artificial Intelligence equipped with language and image recognition models could first count numbers of details matched between submissions and targets, and then submit only high-scoring ones to be manually ranked by hand. This would reduce the number of rounds needing human judging, but also strengthen practical certainty, with A.I. models now being trained on hundreds of billions of parameters (Mitchell & Krakauer, 2023) and capable of detecting minute similarities between images (Alshowaish et al., 2022).

Decoys and Targets

The decoys functioned effectively as controls: they were drawn from the same sources and selected using the same procedures as the actual targets, the decoy pool was sufficiently large that judges rarely saw the same decoy twice, and decoys were intermixed with targets in randomized order. Under these conditions, four of five judges identified the correct target only 18.43% of the time across the entire experiment, a rate slightly below chance expectation (20%). This confirms that the decoys did not inadvertently inflate scoring accuracy.

Image Targets

When it came to image targets, content appeared to help shape psi performance. Targets with prominent geometric features—most notably the cathedral dome and the river depth gauge—produced above-chance hit rates (33% and 67%, respectively) and unusually high numbers of Detailed Matches (13 and 5.5). These findings align with prior findings that remote viewers often perceive abstract geometric elements such as lines, curves, and symmetries before resolving more complex structures (U.S. Army Intelligence, n.d.). The presence of repeating circles, linear patterns, and similar marks may provide stable perceptual anchors thereby facilitating psi access.

Naturalistic scenes also showed evidence of accessibility. Both the forest path and the cemetery elicited accurate descriptions of greenery and environmental features, with hit rates of 67% and 22% and detailed correspondences of 6 and 9.5, respectively.

By contrast, animal targets appeared strongly resistant to psi access, consistently producing failure rates well above chance. For example, the doe in a field was missed in 10 of 12 rounds (83% failure, $p = .023$, $h = 0.71$), and across the category as a whole, animal images produced a 78% all-wrong rate ($p = .0006$, $h = 0.58$). One possible explanation, in line with earlier findings that the nature of a target can shape remote viewing performance, is that images containing prominent facial features—even those of animals—draw attention in ways that bias perception and

disrupt accurate correspondence with the intended target. Studies in parapsychology have long shown that qualities such as entropy, complexity, and "numinosity" (emotional salience) play important roles in influencing success rates (Krippner et al., 2019; May et al., 1994). Meanwhile, cognitive science reminds us that faces hold a unique place in human perception: they reliably trigger strong, automatic processing that can dominate our visual attention (Simpson et al., 2014; Tottenham et al., 2009). When considered together, these strands of evidence suggest a compelling possibility—that the presence of faces may have subtly redirected participants' focus, contributing to the consistently weaker results observed for animal targets in this study.

Video Targets

Although no statistically significant differences emerged across video target categories, descriptive patterns hinted that some content types—particularly emotionally striking or symbolically distinctive imagery—were associated with higher average matches. The clown woman with red lips and *The Shining* clip performed somewhat better than the more ordinary *Sound of Music* scene, suggesting that salient visual or emotional features may provide psychics with more readily accessible details. However, the Kruskal-Wallis analysis showed that these apparent patterns were not reliable statistically, a result likely driven by the small number of submissions per target and the high variability across participants.

Methodological factors also played an important role. Judges scored submissions against a single still frame from each video, rather than the full clip. This meant that impressions related to other parts of the video could not be credited, even if accurate. Because videos unfold over time, they naturally contain a broader range of cues than pictures. Restricting scoring to a single frame likely underestimated the extent of correspondences, particularly in cases where participants described details present elsewhere in the source footage but absent from the chosen still.

From a theoretical standpoint, the role of motion in psi perception remains unresolved. Delanoy (1989) argued that dynamic stimuli may be especially attractive to psychic functioning, perhaps because motion provides multiple shifting perspectives and layers of information that increase the probability of psi access. If this is correct, the weaker statistical showing of videos here may reflect not an intrinsic weakness of motion-based targets, but rather a methodological artifact of still-frame judging. The fact that participants sometimes reported tangential details present in the full video but not in the still frame supports this view, suggesting that motion and narrative continuity may indeed facilitate psi perception—if the scoring system is sensitive enough to capture it.

In sum, while pictures outperformed videos under the current methodology, this difference may be more apparent than real. Static images can be judged in their entirety, whereas videos require scoring methods that can account for temporal unfolding and narrative structure. Future studies should therefore test Delanoy's hypothesis more directly by scoring entire video clips or segmenting them into multiple judged intervals. Such approaches would provide a fairer assessment of whether motion truly enhances psi functioning, as suggested by both theory and anecdotal evidence in the present dataset.

Abstract Thinking During Judging

Psychic impressions may arrive as abstract symbols because remote viewers must interpret sensory input from deep within their minds (SRI, 1986; U.S. Army Intelligence, n.d.). Participant #65 likened an army of gray streetlamps to "elephant trunks" or "belts hanging on a hook." For the target image shown earlier depicting soldiers armed with guns and wearing helmets in a battlefield trench, participant #69 explicitly named "helmets" but also saw "cherries... joined by their stems," and Participant #64 envisioned an "oval shape with two legs." Other symbolic results also appeared for the passphrase target "Church Alert Weeps Yellow," where participants reported images and themes tied to yellow, spirituality, and church symbolism (e.g., bananas, fish, reverence, wine, bread, and the name John).

Examples such as these highlight why judges must engage their imaginations when evaluating free-response experiments. Judges reported that judging was most difficult when no target seemed to align clearly with a submission; in such cases, selecting the best first-place match became a taxing process of elimination that required creative consideration of possible connections. Judges also noted that watching the 15-minute training video beforehand was useful, as it encouraged them to inspect each target closely for potential correspondences—including those that were symbolic, analogous, or surreal.

Following Tangents

Participants sometimes described not only their assigned video targets, but also details from adjacent or tangential material. Participant #6 reported "spirals" and "spinning" that did not match the passphrase target, but clearly corresponded to the *Sound of Music* clip of Julie Andrews twirling in the Alps. Participant #137 described thematic elements of *The Shining*—a mother on vacation in a mountain setting—that were accurate for the full film but absent from the short clip shown. Similarly, Participant #141 mentioned "bubbling" in the frog-jar video and even echoed Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, both of which resonated with imagery present in the original, uncut footage rather than the edited clip used in the study.

These results lend support to Beloff's (1978) proposal that clairvoyant effects may be *teleological*, or goal-directed. In this model, a psychic's perception is not confined to a single object, but extends along threads of shared meaning that link a target to other, related information. This perspective resonates with earlier findings by Puthoff and Targ (1976), who observed that remote viewers often described not only a targeted beacon, but also other elements located at the beacon's site, as though the target itself opened access to a broader semantic context.

The displacement effect observed in this study echoes phenomena reported elsewhere in parapsychological literature. Roe and Flint (2007), for example, documented cases where participants appeared to focus on nearby or conceptually related stimuli rather than the assigned target during remote viewing trials. This suggests that displacement is not simply an error but may be an inherent characteristic of psi functioning, reflecting the difficulty of confining psychic access to tightly bounded stimuli.

The findings point toward a model of psi in which information is accessed through semantic resonance and narrative connectivity rather than purely perceptual correspondence. A short video clip may act as an entry point, but the psychic's perception can spread outward along associative links, reaching related imagery in the uncut film or even symbolically resonant cultural material, as suggested by the *Macbeth* reference. This has important methodological implications. To minimize contextual leakage, future experiments may need to ensure that adjacent or related stimuli are semantically distinct, or employ procedures that isolate targets more effectively. At the same time, these results open an intriguing line of inquiry: if psychics naturally follow semantic threads, then deliberately structured target sets that emphasize narrative or symbolic richness may yield stronger and more consistent effects.

Potential for Collusion

The experiment results revealed two striking cases where psi collusion could plausibly enhance performance. While targeting photos, two participants independently reported complementary impressions of a bicyclist falling into a canal: one sensed "water," "falling," and "crash," while another described a "human head," "outdoors," and "looking to the left." Taken together, these impressions created a fuller and more accurate reconstruction of the target than either provided alone. Similarly, in the ATM PIN trials, pairs of participants each guessed subsets of the correct digits. When combined, these guesses reduced the number of possible permutations to as few as 24, compared with 10,000 when starting from scratch. Such examples suggest that individually partial psi impressions may, when merged, generate stronger predictive power.

These findings align with the notion of group synergy in psi research. Wiseman and Watt (2010), in a mass-participation remote-viewing study, demonstrated that aggregating many independent impressions improved accuracy above chance. Their work suggests that collective psi contributions can outperform individual attempts, consistent with the pattern seen here. At the same time, methodological critiques of earlier psi experiments caution that apparent convergence can be confounded by inadequate controls. For example, Hyman and Honorton's (1986) evaluation of Ganzfeld protocols emphasized the need for strict isolation, blinding, and independence of responses to ensure that observed correspondences reflect psi rather than subtle cues or inadvertent influence.

Taken together, the results highlight both the promise and the challenge of psi collusion. On one hand, the convergence of independent impressions may represent a genuine distributed cognition effect, where psi information manifests only when pooled across individuals. On the other hand, without rigorous controls, such convergence risks being dismissed as methodological artifacts. Future research might explicitly test whether deliberate collaboration among skilled participants enhances psi signal detection, while simultaneously applying safeguards to ensure independence of responses.

Evidence for Psychic Hacking

During the Star Gate era, two principal standards were employed to judge whether an event should be deemed paranormal. The first was statistical: researchers examined the probability that an observed outcome could occur under the null hypothesis of chance (Puthoff & Targ, 1976; Utts & Heckard, 2015). The second was observational: if multiple independent witnesses observed an apparently otherworldly event, and alternative explanations such as fraud, hallucination, or error were rigorously excluded, then the event could be considered paranormal with *practical certainty* (Cartwright, 1979; Chambers, 1998). Practical certainty is a high evidentiary threshold, sufficient in courts of law to justify a guilty verdict even in capital cases. By extension, observational evidence of this strength should be considered sufficient to classify an event as paranormal, provided confounds have been convincingly ruled out.

The present experiment satisfies both standards. With respect to the observational standard, numerous participants produced descriptions that corresponded to details of digital targets stored on computers thousands of miles away. Similarities between submissions and targets were judged as plainly recognizable by multiple independent scorers. These outcomes were particularly compelling in the picture and video conditions, since—unlike ATM PINs with a finite set of possibilities—pictorial targets could encompass virtually any imaginable image.

The results also meet the statistical standard. Analyses revealed highly significant effects during picture rounds (p = .000597), videos (p = .000911), and ATM PINs with three digits in any order ($p = 4.12 \times 10^{-6}$) or two digits in any order ($p = 7.84 \times 10^{-6}$). These results jointly reject the null hypothesis and support the conclusion that the outcomes observed in this study were not attributable to chance.

Is Cybersecurity Broken?

Psychic hacking may pose dangers to data security and privacy. Psychics were successful even though they had no physical access to the target computers located miles away at an undisclosed location; the computers were hardened against attack with networking disabled; target data was protected by strict file permissions and access monitoring; and, computers' screens were dimmed to black and shielded throughout the experiment. Even the presence of two target computers did not slow psychics down: participants still managed to pinpoint their assigned targets on the correct, randomly assigned computer. We also saw that the number of brute forcing guesses needed to obtain an ATM PIN number, or to fill in details about a pictorial target, could be potentially accelerated by combining impressions from colluding psychics. Psychics also demonstrated they could "rummage around" in computers—analogous to how hackers might snoop after gaining access to a system—to describe unintended targets adjacent to intended targets. Some psychics even described tangential details about a target even though those tangents were not present in the experiment (as we saw with *The Shining* clip), suggesting remote viewers can follow tangential lines joining data dispersed across different locales.

Psychics also described randomly chosen target data, even though it was not human-readable within the computers because it existed purely as electronic, binary, or other signals passing through wires and circuitry. Each digital target was also stored in its computer alongside gigabytes of other data—operating system files, application programs, and the like—yet despite this chaos, psychics were still able to identify the targets. Therefore, obfuscating targets by hiding them amidst non-target data may not prevent psychic hacking.

The question of whether cybersecurity is broken depends on how much security is needed. Deniability—the denial that a top-secret black ops program exists, for example—may be at risk, since remote viewers can uncover data without prior knowledge of its existence, as we saw with psychics who described video targets without knowing videos were even part of the experiment. Compartmentalization may also be vulnerable, since psychics aiming at an intended target can describe other, unintended targets. Storing data offline may be no privacy guarantee, given that psychics can sense tangential details about intended targets, even when those details are not stored nearby, as we saw with *The Shining*. Even confidentiality of state secrets held in air-gapped computers housed in underground bunkers may not be safe enough, since experiment results showed psychics can operate from miles away; pass through physical barriers; describe data in computers that have no network connectivity or working screens; locate targets on specific machines even when other machines are nearby; and, locate targets lost in a sea of obfuscated non-target data.

Countermeasures against psychic hacking may be possible. For example, this experiment did not test whether

encrypting target data renders it unreadable to psychics. Data stored in quantum computers might also pose challenges to psychics, since the very act of observing targets remotely might disrupt their superposition states (Saini & Shiwani, 2012). Finally, there is some evidence that people can sense when they are being stared at (Sheldrake, 2008), so in some distant future, perhaps remote viewers could be employed to detect—or even psychically disrupt—rogue psychics engaged in hacking or espionage.

LIMITATIONS

Participant Independence

It was not possible to guarantee that each individual participated only once in the experiment. Email addresses were used as the primary mechanism for identifying unique participants: upon enrollment and informed consent, participants provided an email address and were sent a unique, one-time access link required to enter the study, and the experiment website prevented reuse of the same email address. Internet (IP) addresses were collected for technical and analytical purposes (including calculation of Local Sidereal Time), but were not used to enforce participant uniqueness, since IP-based identification is unreliable in Internet-based research due to common practices such as VPN use, dynamic address reassignment, or switching networks. Consequently, a determined individual could have registered multiple times using different email addresses. Importantly, this limitation does not necessarily bias results in any particular direction; duplicate participation would be expected to introduce additional variance, rather than systematically inflate or suppress effect sizes. Prior behavioral research has noted that fully preventing duplicate participation is infeasible in online studies without direct identity verification (Bowen et al., 2008; Chandler et al., 2020; Curran, 2016). While in-person or real-time video verification represent the most reliable methods for ensuring participant independence, such measures negate the primary advantage of Internet-based experimentation—namely, scalable, automated data collection from geographically distributed samples. Online studies must therefore acknowledge this tradeoff as a methodological limitation, rather than a source of systematic bias.

Target Context and Front-Loading

One procedural limitation relates to informing participants that the target computer was located somewhere in Los Angeles. This detail was shared with the intention of helping participants feel more confident. In retrospect, however, specifying a particular location may have unintentionally introduced contextual influence, as some research shows that task-irrelevant information can affect how people process and respond to task demands (e.g., Katz, et al., 2022). In this case, the city location may have invited analytical associations or associative guessing unrelated to the target itself, and thereby added non-psi noise to the data.

CONCLUSION

Borrowing protocols from Star Gate-era remote viewing research, this double-blind experiment showed that psychic hacking appears possible. Many of the study's 146 participants culled from the public proved capable of describing randomly chosen pictures, ATM PIN numbers, video clips, and passphrases present in secure computers miles away. Each submission was judged using rank-order scoring by 3 randomly selected judges, with many results satisfying the U.S. Government's own observational and statistical rubrics for ruling outcomes as paranormal. The numerous successes—even though the experiment relied on participants who were not trained in remote viewing protocols—opens the possibility of performing psi experiments using psychics crowdsourced from thousands or even millions of Internet participants.

Results revealed that some psychics can discover information not previously known in a computer, much like how a typical computer hacker might explore a system after gaining access. While aiming for a target, some psychics inadvertently described adjacent targets. Similarly, participants who were not told that video targets were part of the experiment still described details of video clips that were playing. Some psychics also described tangential details about a target even when those details were not physically present, suggesting it may be possible for certain remote viewers to follow tangential connections between targets and related information elsewhere.

Analysis of the experiment's results, including participants' responses to psychic-history intake surveys, yielded ideas for improving future experiments. Choosing picture targets featuring geometric patterns or scenes of nature may help attract remote viewers' psychic attention. Operating experiments between 12:45 and 14:15 in Local Sidereal Time may reduce cosmic interference that attenuates psi signals. Instructing participants to focus their

intention, meditate, and work in quiet spaces may help as well. Aiming multiple psychics in collaboration at the same target could yield more details about the target faster, and possibly reduce the brute force guessing required for numeric targets. Belief in one's own psychic potential was strongly associated with performance outcomes, with a small number of confident participants accounting for approximately 21.8 times more matched target details than non-believers.

The experiment exposed potential cybersecurity threats. Deniability, compartmentalization, and data confidentiality may be especially vulnerable—even when the data is stored on hardened, stand-alone systems—since psychics can seemingly pass through any medium from miles away to discover and describe previously unknown targets, as well as information physically near, or tangentially related to, those targets.

Defenses against psychic hacking may exist. Encryption might inhibit a psychic's ability to readily access cleartext data, provided remote viewers cannot read the data in a decrypted form at some point in the past or future. Data in quantum form, which is potentially susceptible to observer effects, could be corrupted by psychics attempting to retrieve it. Finally, since there is evidence that people can sense when they are being observed, psychics might be recruited as defenders to detect rogue psychics in the act of spying, or even to use remote viewing skills to interfere energetically with espionage attempts.

DISCLOSURES

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to the conduct, analysis, or reporting of this research.

The author supports transparency and open science and plans to make this experiment's pool of targets publicly available for use by other researchers. However, release will occur only after additional experiments with these targets are completed. For now, the targets are being withheld to avoid potential double hermeneutic challenges.

This article was adapted from the author's doctoral dissertation on psychic hacking (Wichmann, 2023).

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