

# Applied RL on Robots

**Patrick M. Pilarski**

*Canada Research Chair in Machine Intelligence for Rehabilitation  
Division of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Dept. of Medicine*

*Fellow, Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (Amii)*



# ~~Applied RL on Robots~~

Boring title!

(remember to  
send organizers

a better  
one.)

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this  
is  
kind of  
stuffy  
and  
boring  
too...



AI

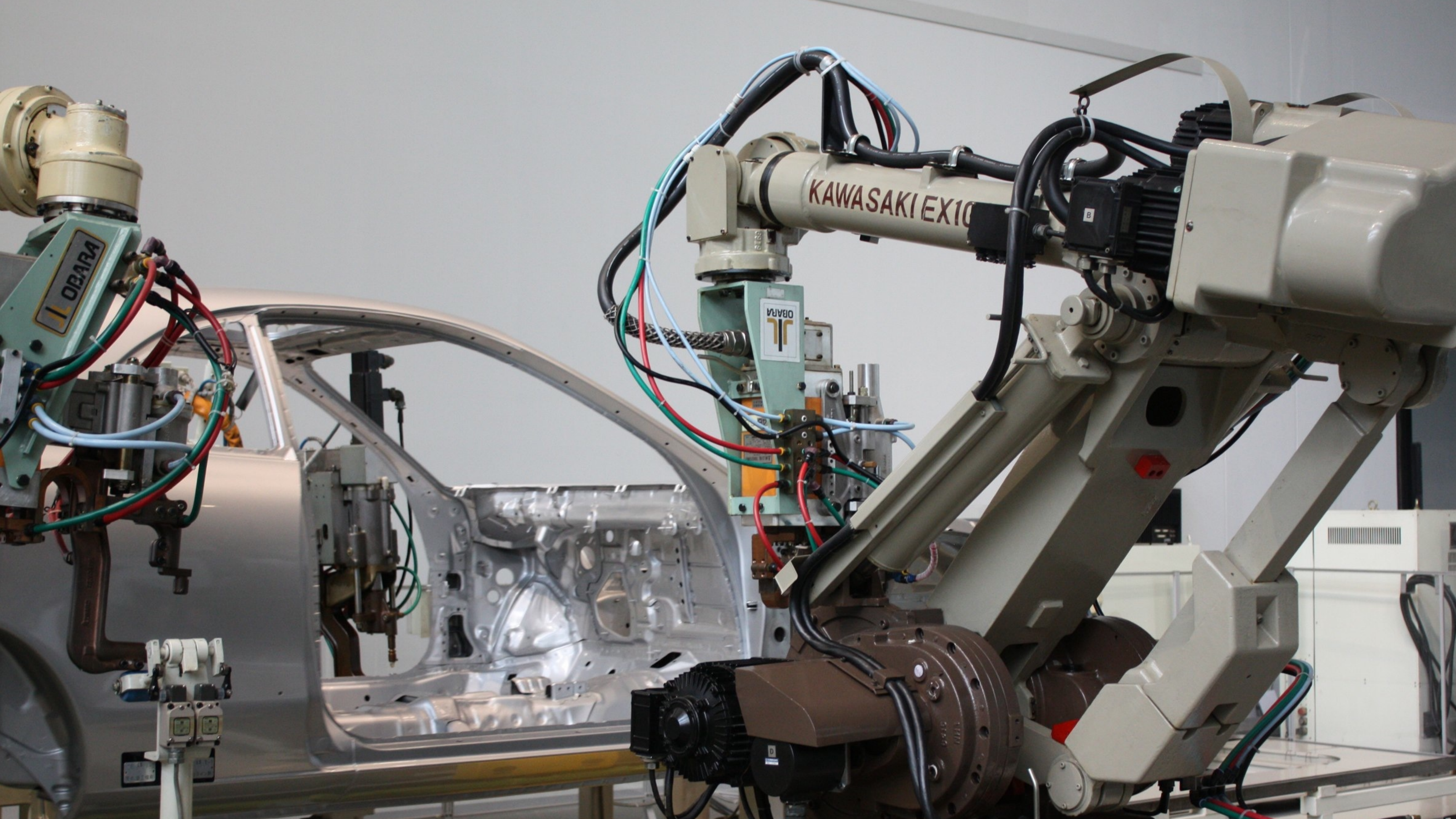
IA

(Intelligence Amplification)

I get ~~by~~ AI with a little  
help from my friends  
friends' brains



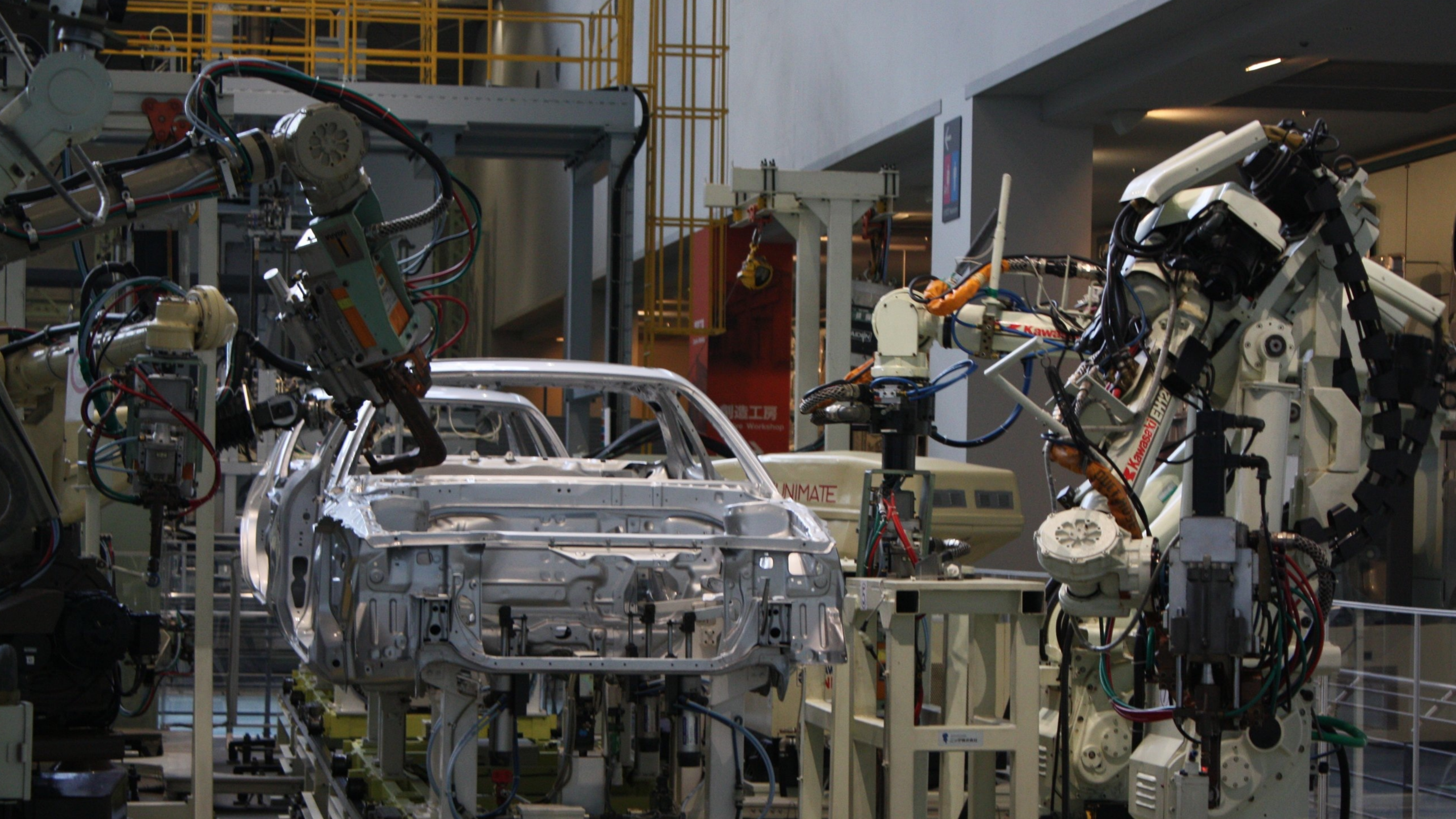
John Lennon

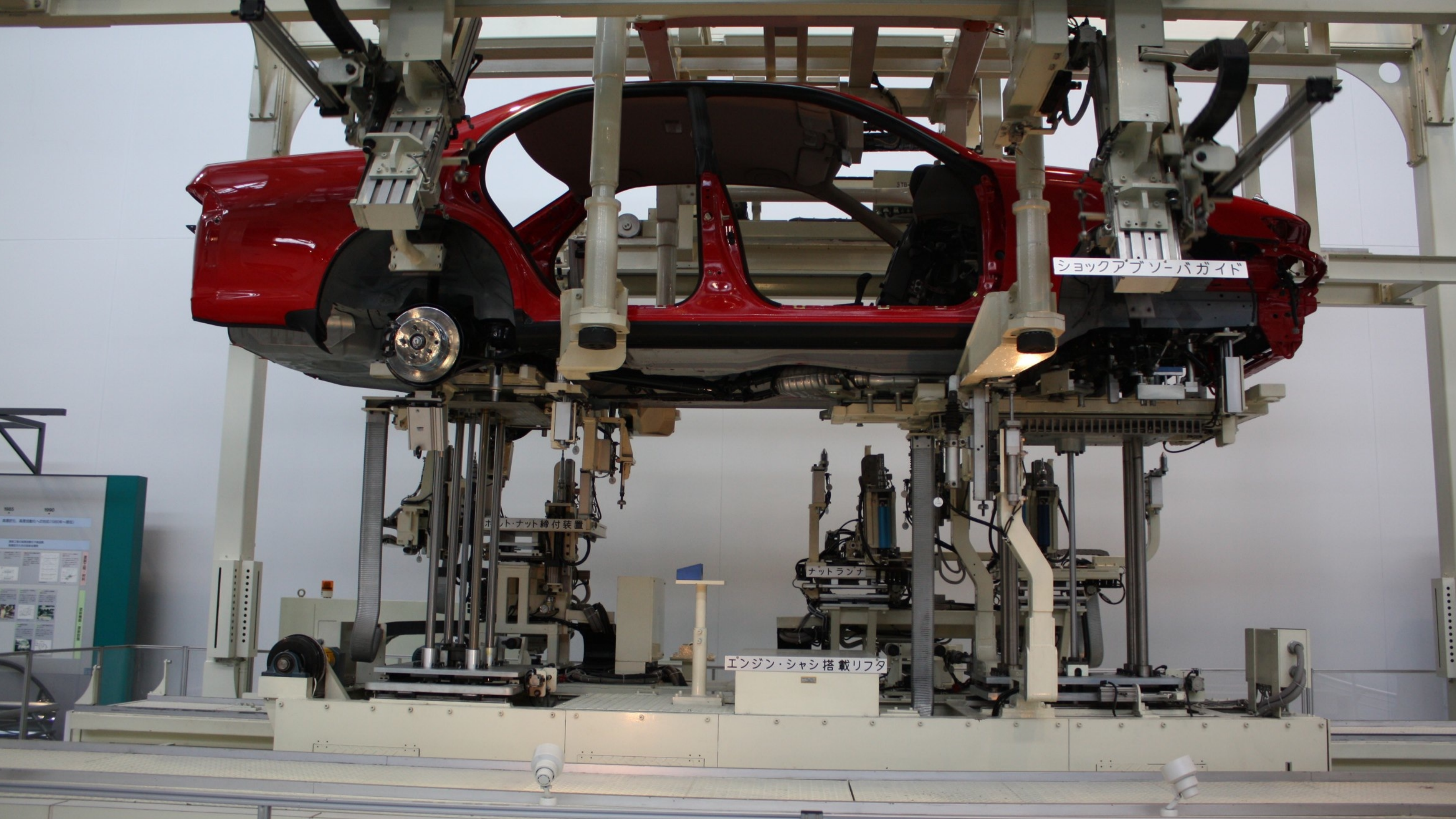


KAWASAKI EX10

OBARA

OBARA





ショックアブソーバガイド

ボルト・ナット締付装置

ナットランナ

エンジン・シャシ搭載リフタ





# SPINNING WHEEL



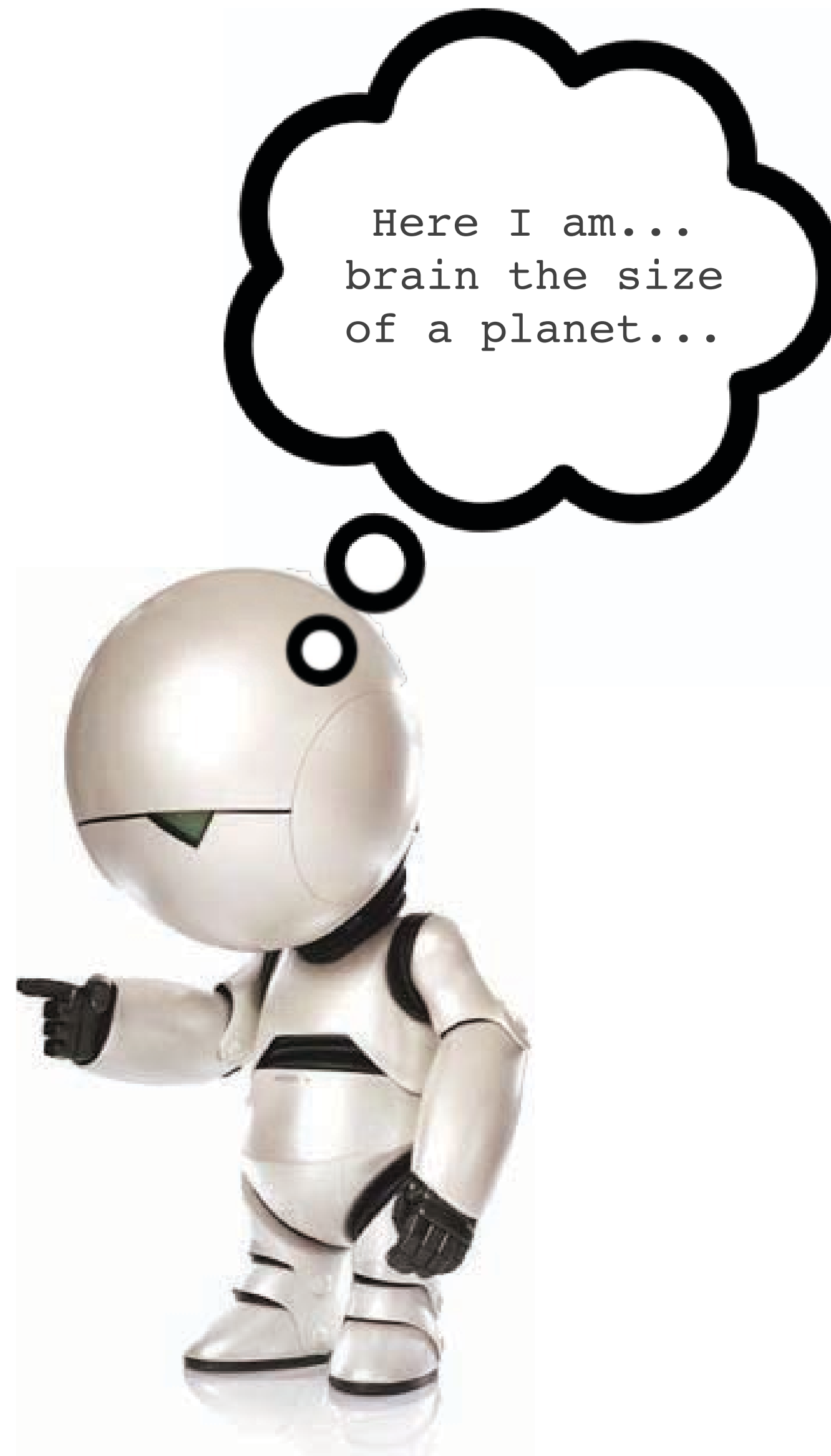
{animal fur,  
plant matter}

>>

{thread,  
yarn}



**... and, in short order ...**

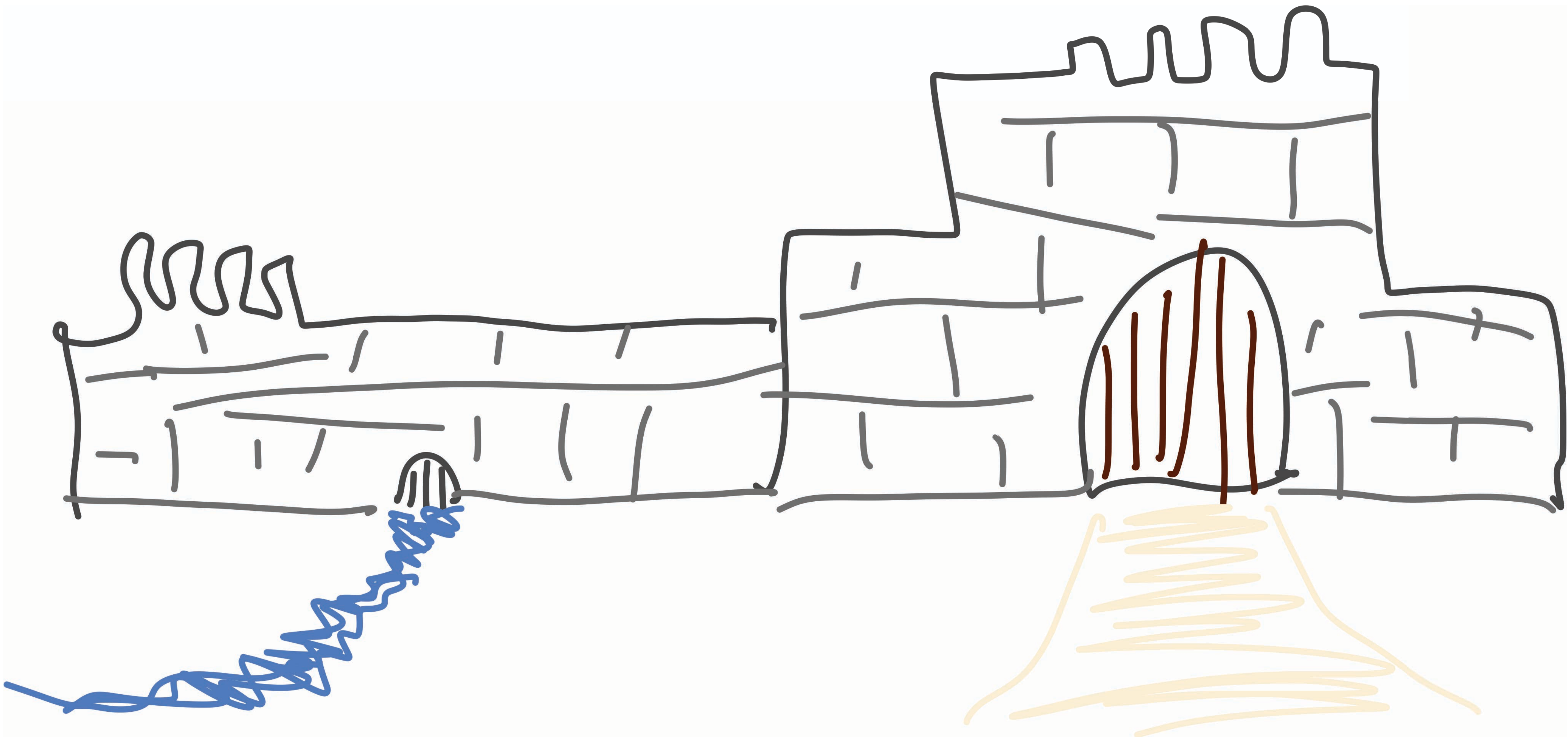


**Marvin** the paranoid android from THHGTTG.

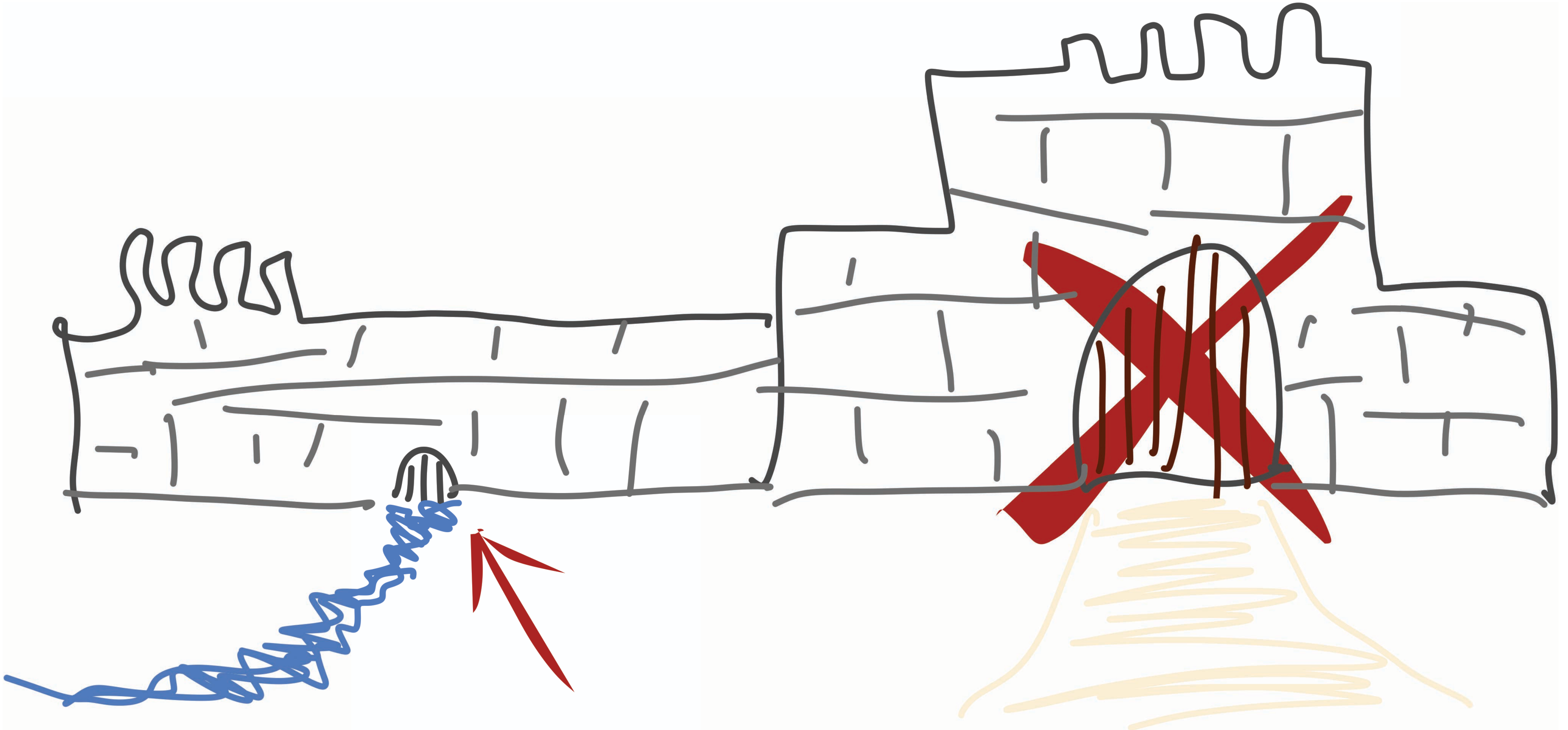
# Whole point of this talk:

**communicate one research design pattern**

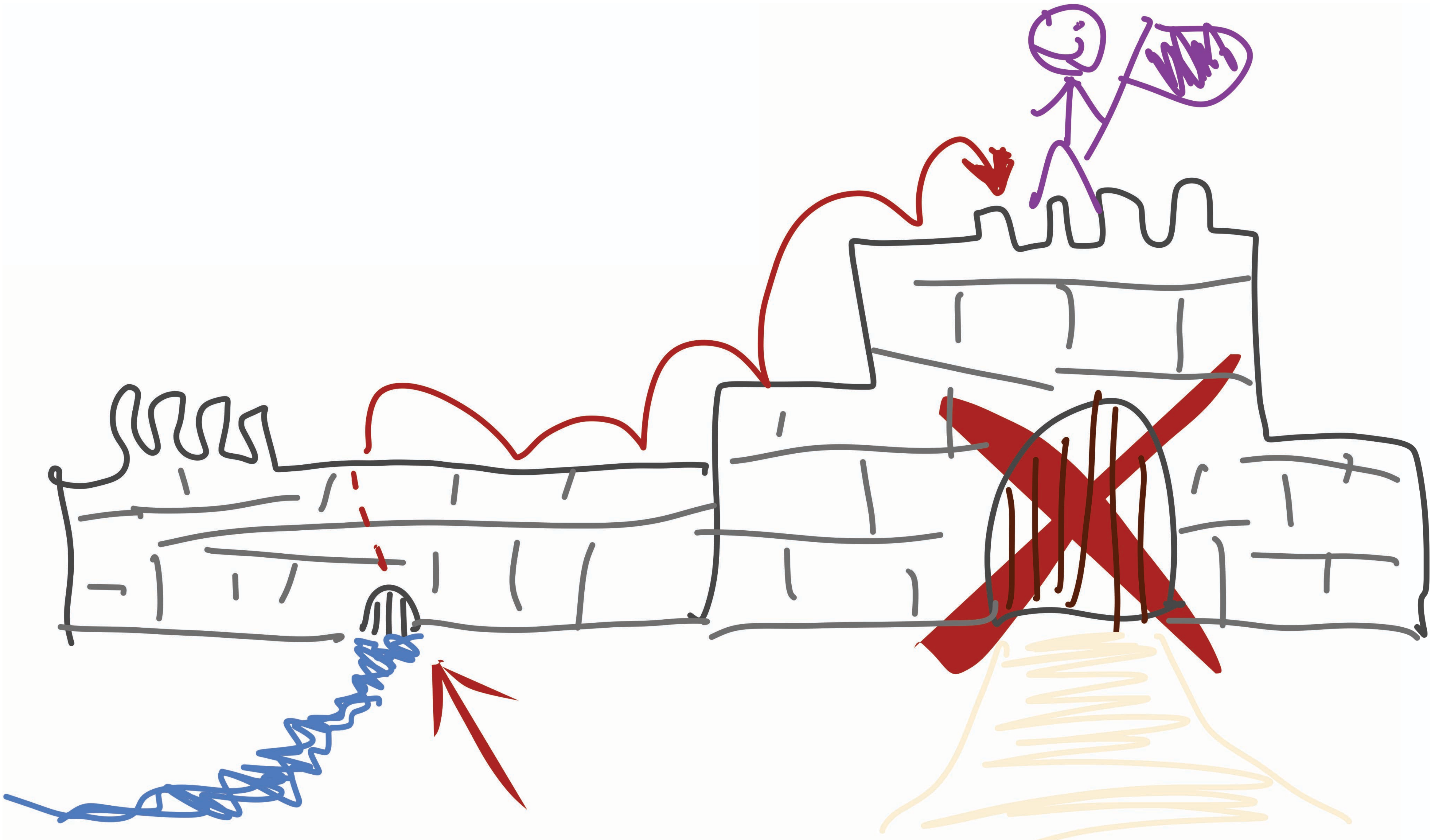
that can help you tackle  
ambitious real-world problems

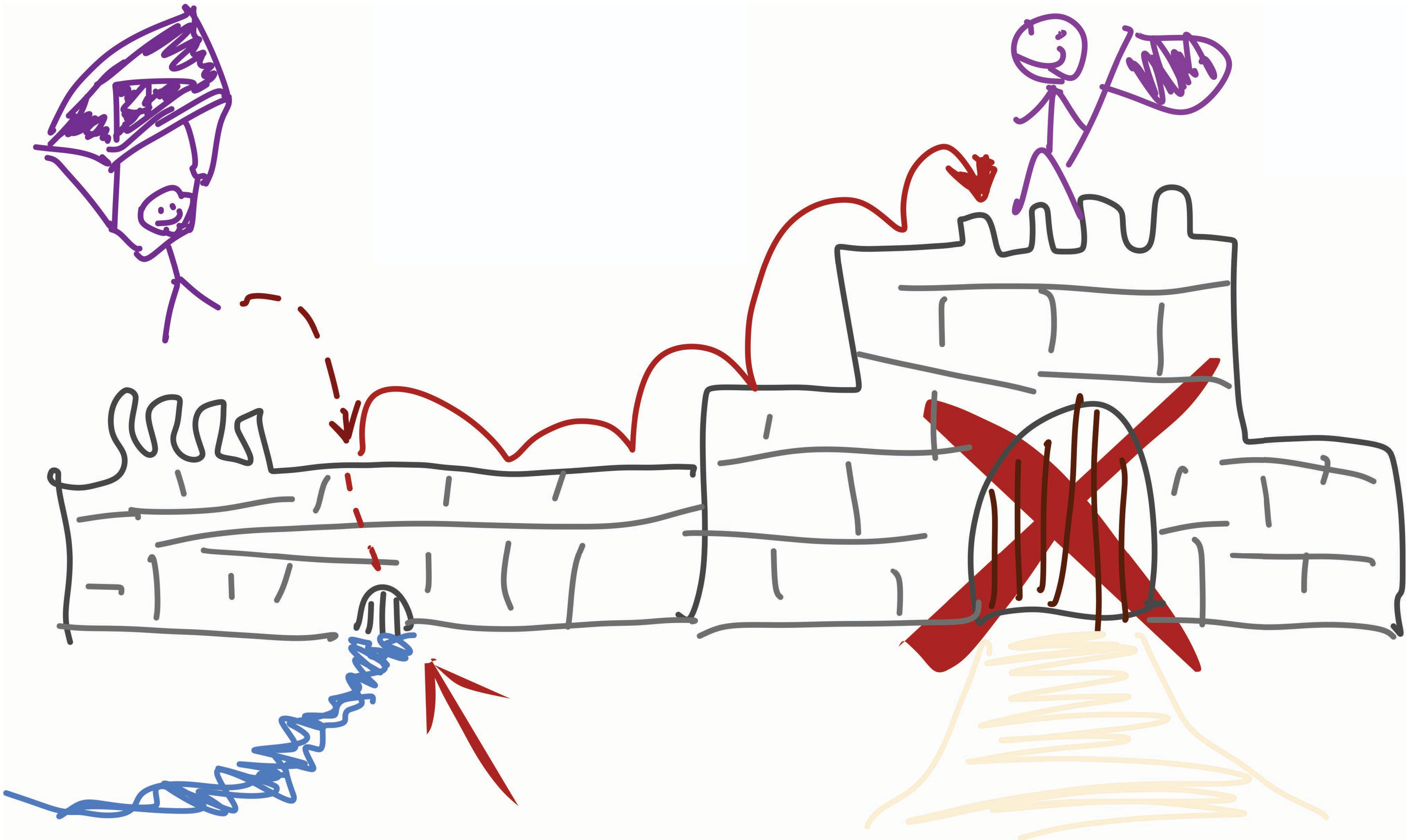


**Never storm a castle through the front gates...**





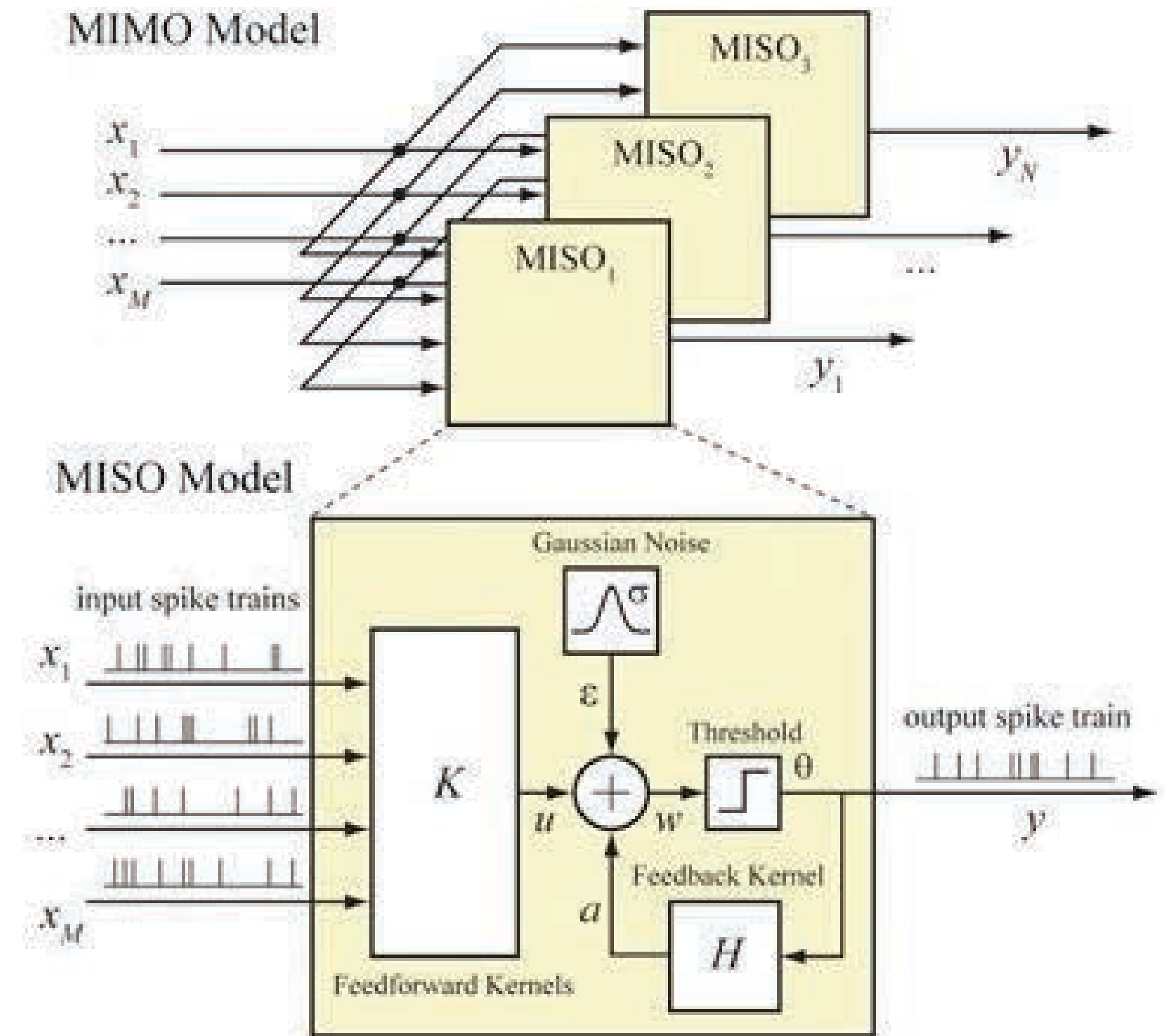
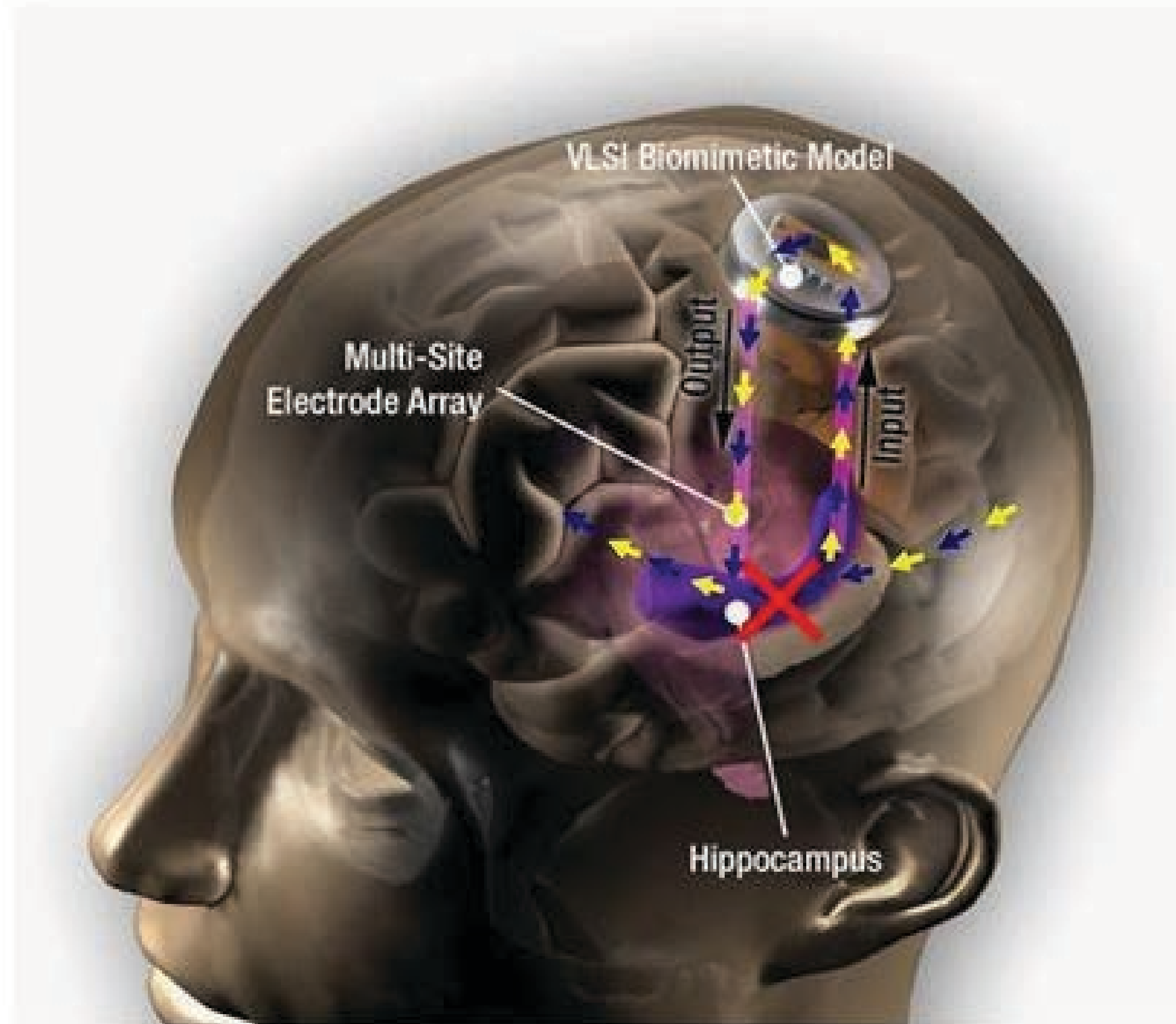




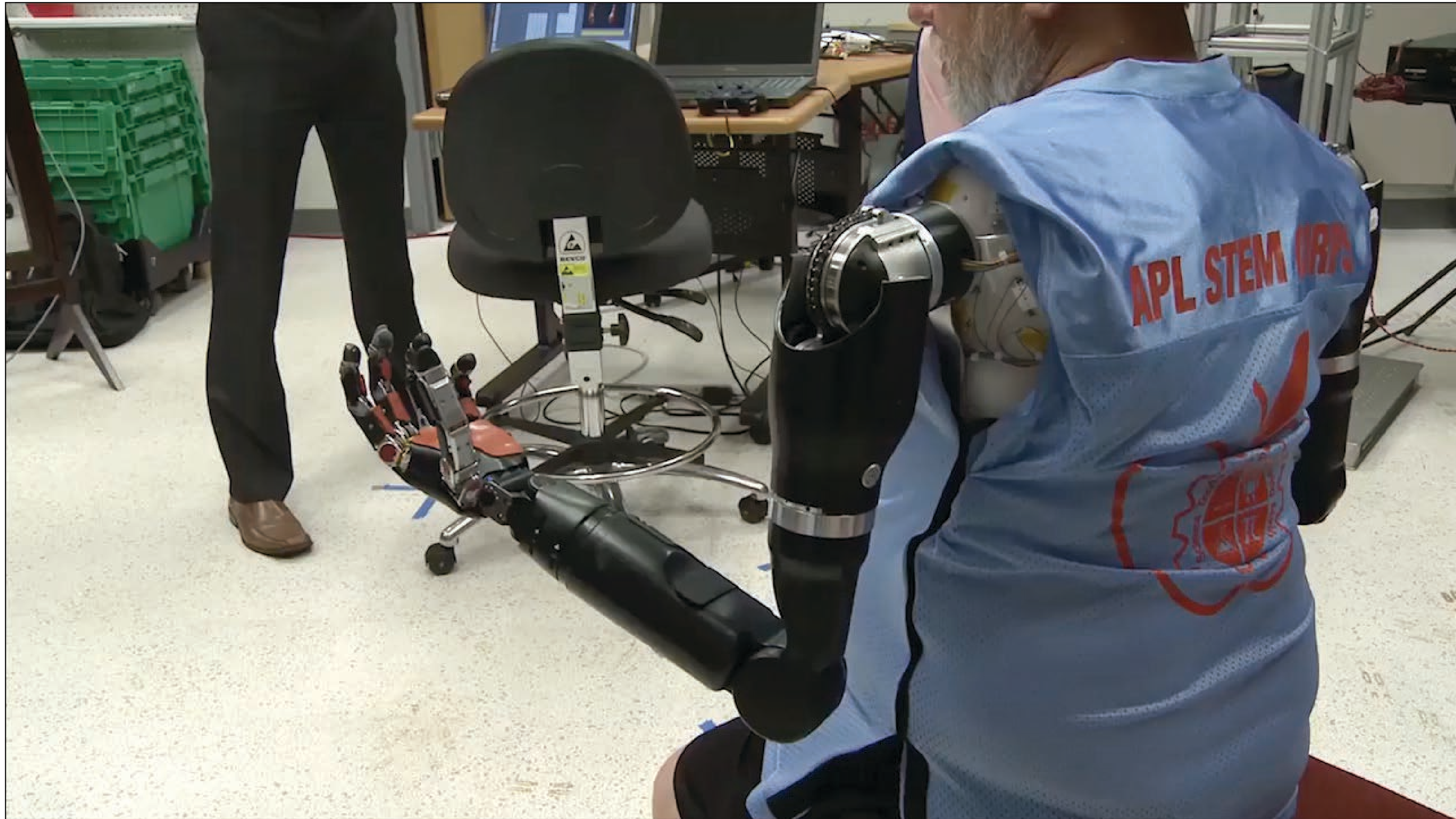
IA



**Direct brain-computer interfaces:** study participant Jan Scheuermann feeding herself with a robotic limb (University of Pittsburgh); <http://www.upmc.com/media/media-kit/bci/Pages/default.aspx>



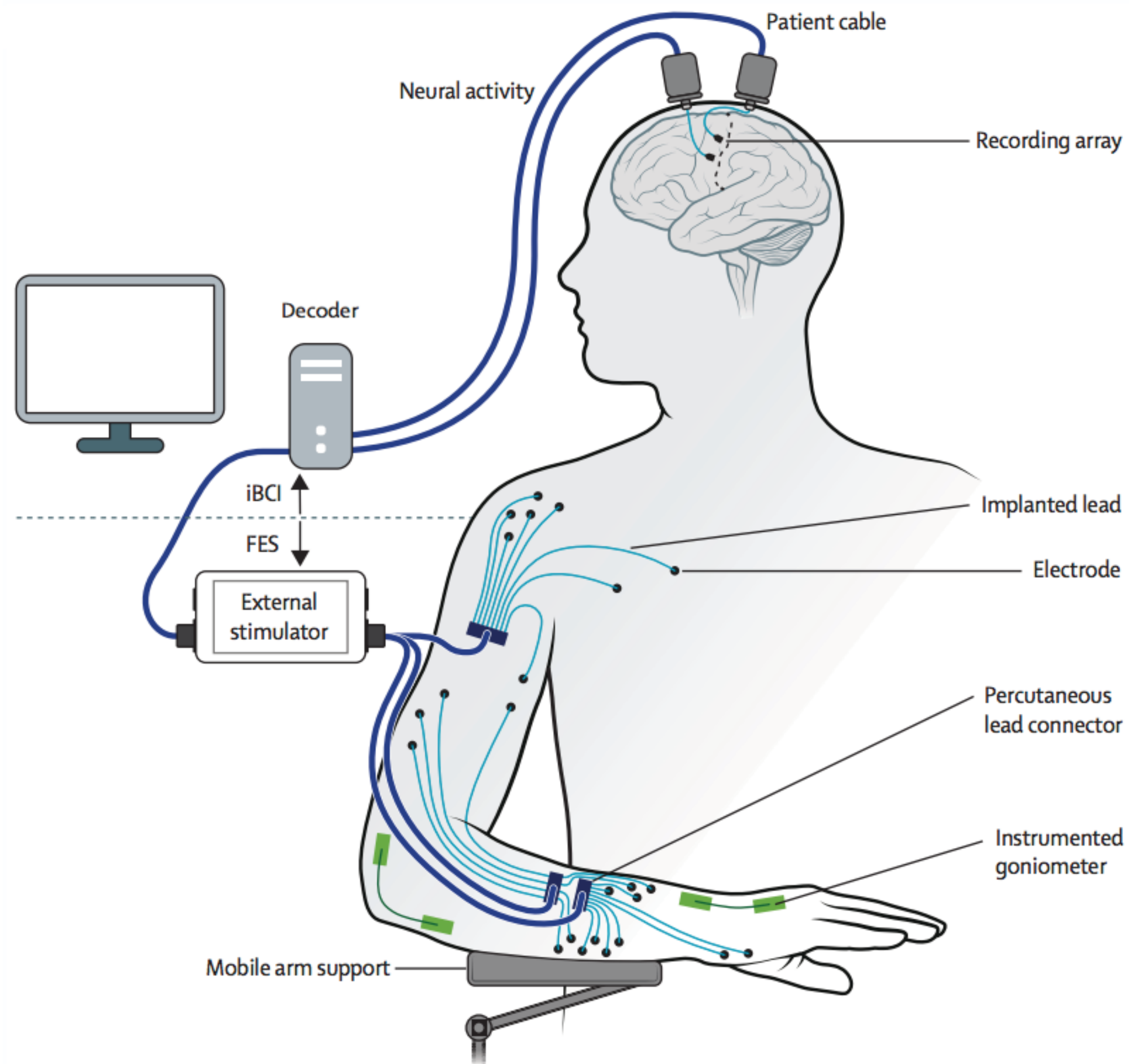
**Direct brain-computer interfaces:** *memory prostheses* from the Center for Neural Engineering, Viterbi School of Engineering. <https://cne.usc.edu/neural-prosthesis-for-hippocampal-memory-function/> and [IEEE Trans Neural Syst Rehabil Eng.](#) 2018, 26(2):272-280.



**Brain-body-machine interfaces:** “Amputee Makes History with APL’s Modular Prosthetic Limb” (JHU Applied Physics Laboratory); <https://youtu.be/9NOncx2jU0Q>



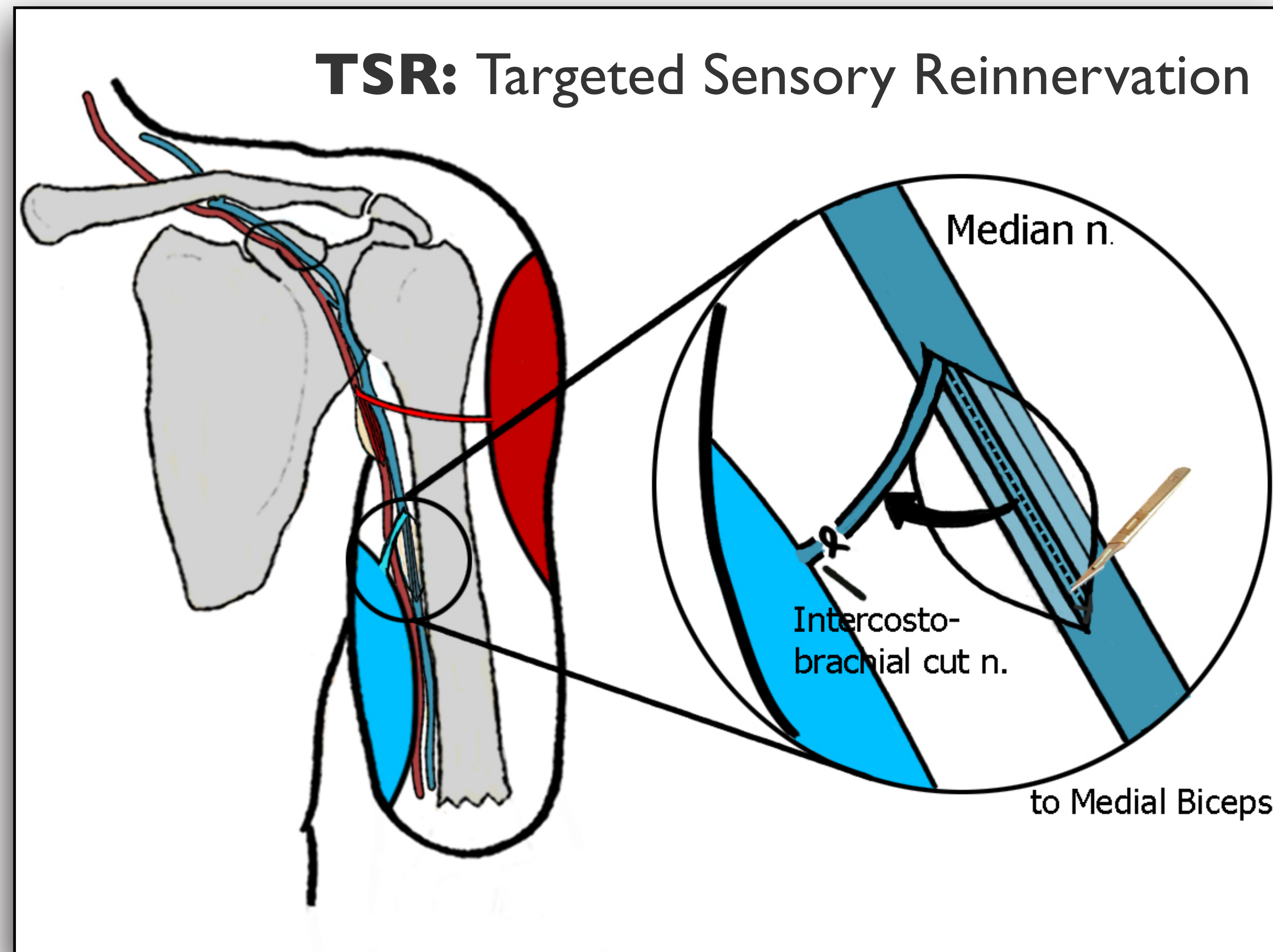
**Brain-body-machine interfaces:** “APL’s Modular Prosthetic Limb Reaches New Levels of Operability” (JHU Applied Physics Laboratory); <https://youtu.be/-0srXvOQlu0>



**Brain-body-machine interfaces:** “Restoration of reaching and grasping movements through brain-controlled muscle stimulation in a person with tetraplegia: a proof-of-concept demonstration” Ajiboye, A Bolu et al., *The Lancet*, Volume 389 , Issue 10081, 1821-1830, 2017.



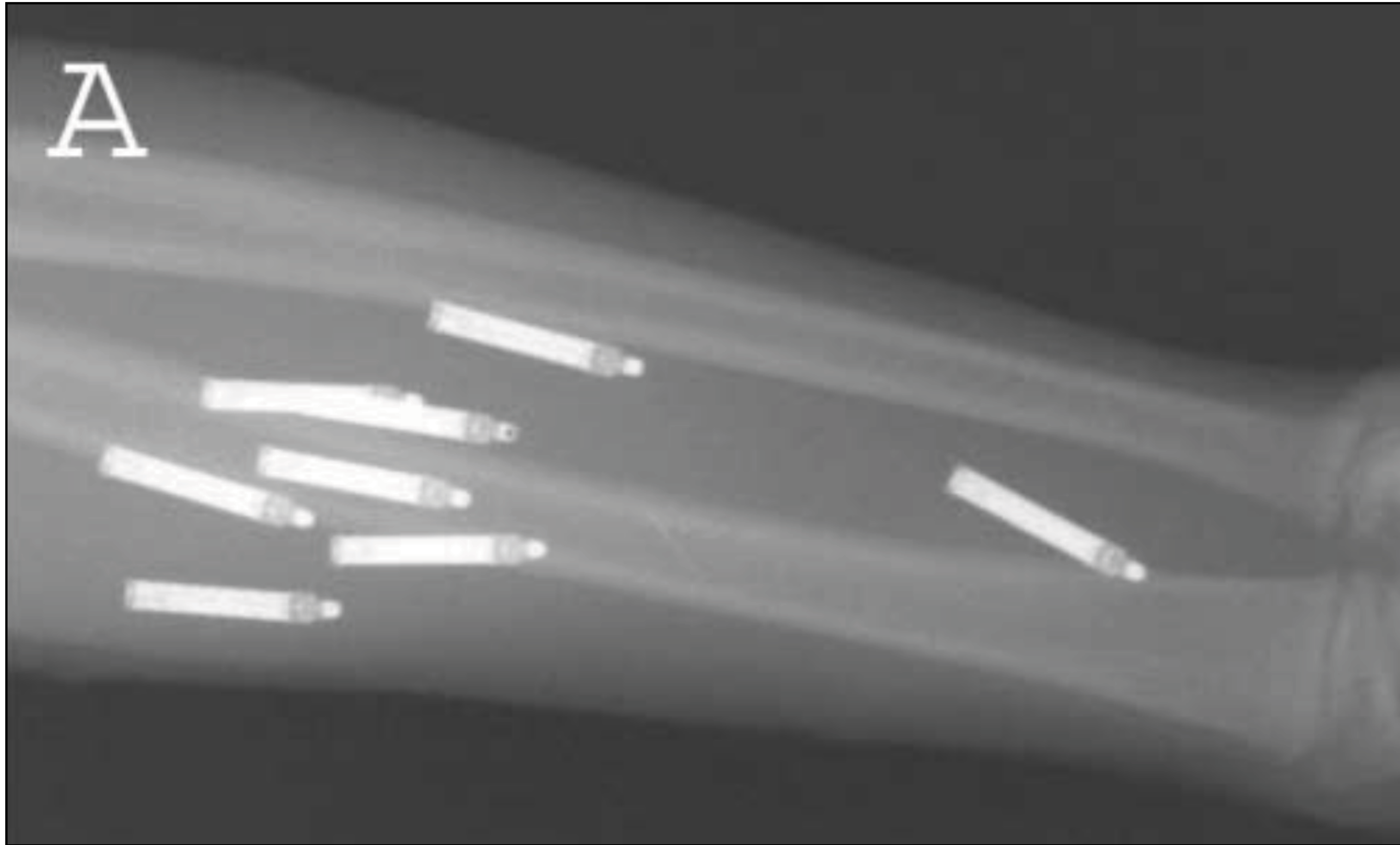
# Re-wiring the Nerves



Hebert JS, Olson JL, Morhart MJ, Dawson MR, Marasco PD, Kuiken TA, Chan KM, "Novel Targeted Sensory Reinnervation Technique To Restore Functional Hand Sensation After Transhumeral Amputation," *IEEE Transactions on Neural Systems and Rehabilitation Engineering*, Vol 22, No 4, pages 765-773, 2014.



Hebert et al. 2014, IEEE-TNSRE



**Brain-body-machine interfaces:** Baker et al., “Continuous Detection and Decoding of Dexterous Finger Flexions With Implantable MyoElectric Sensors,” IEEE TNSRE 18(4):424-32, 2010.



**Brain-body-machine interfaces:** “Brain-Machine Interface @ EPFL- Wheelchair”  
(École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne); <https://youtu.be/0-1sdtnuqcE>



Commercially Deployed  
Pattern Recognition for Prostheses



**Muse**



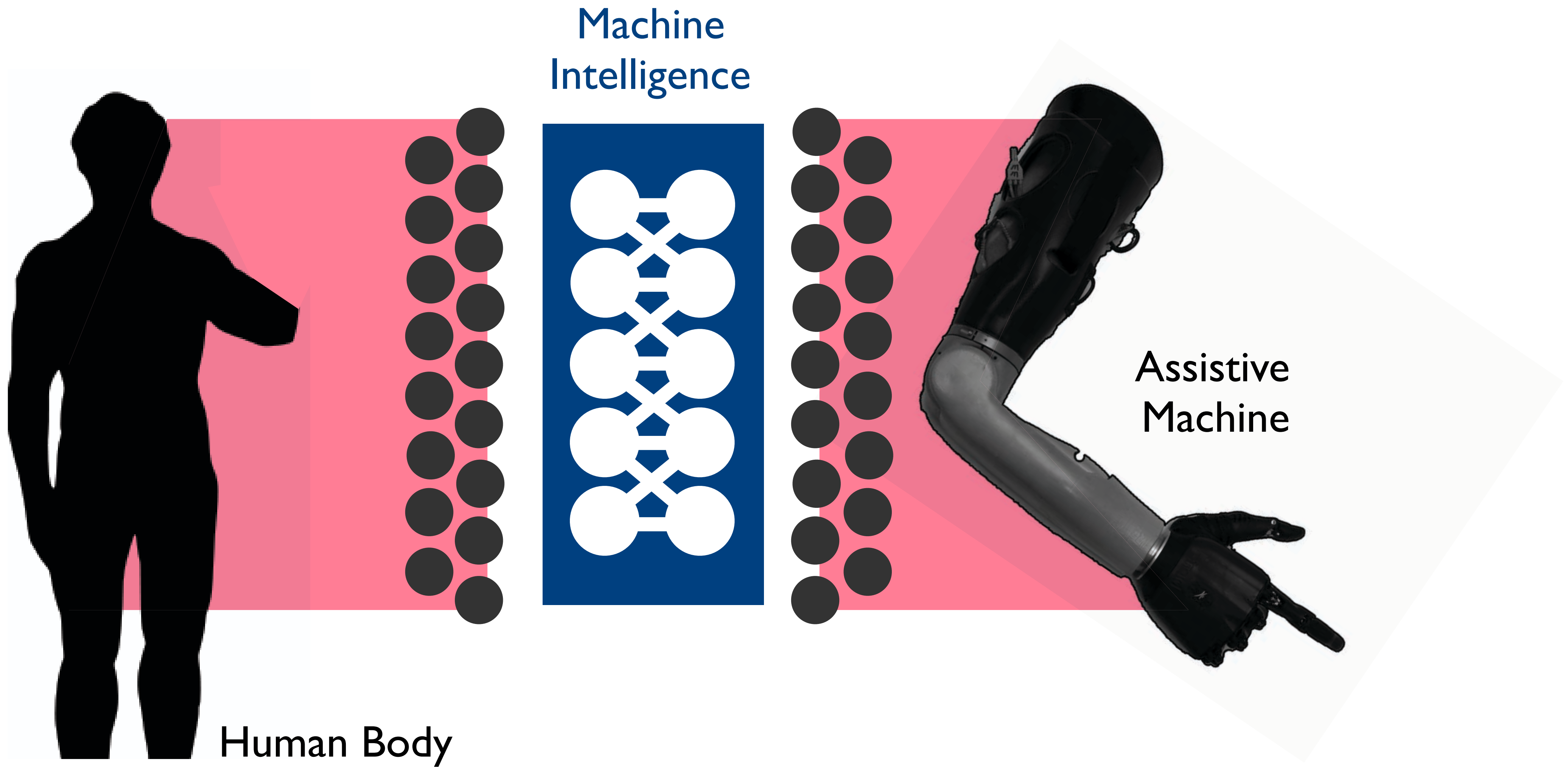
**Myo** (Thalmic Labs)

**Consumer-Available BCI and BMI**



These examples  
**all involve machine intelligence**  
or machine learning





Would you do **trial-and-error** control learning on all those I/O channels?

# Whole point of this talk:

highlight **prediction learning**

# Whole point of this talk:

highlight **prediction learning**  
as a foundation  
for more advanced control solutions

# PREDICTIONS

**Momentary.**  
**(e.g., classification decision)**

S. Micera, J. Carpaneto, and S. Raspopovic,  
“Control of hand prostheses using peripheral  
information,” *IEEE Rev. Biomed. Eng.*, 2010.

# PREDICTIONS

**Momentary.**  
**(e.g., classification decision)**

**Temporally extended.**  
**(e.g., expected return)**

S. Micera, J. Carpaneto, and S. Raspopovic,  
“Control of hand prostheses using peripheral  
information,” *IEEE Rev. Biomed. Eng.*, 2010.

Sutton et al., “Horde: A Scalable Real-time Architecture for  
Learning Knowledge from Unsupervised Sensorimotor  
Interaction,” *Proc. of 10th International Conference on  
Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems (AAMAS)*, 2011.

# PREDICTIONS

**Momentary.**  
**(e.g., classification decision)**

**Temporally extended.**  
**(e.g., expected return)**

Can be acquired or updated in batches or in real time.

S. Micera, J. Carpaneto, and S. Raspopovic,  
“Control of hand prostheses using peripheral  
information,” *IEEE Rev. Biomed. Eng.*, 2010.

Sutton et al., “Horde: A Scalable Real-time Architecture for  
Learning Knowledge from Unsupervised Sensorimotor  
Interaction,” *Proc. of 10th International Conference on  
Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems (AAMAS)*, 2011.

# PREDICTION PRECEDES CONTROL

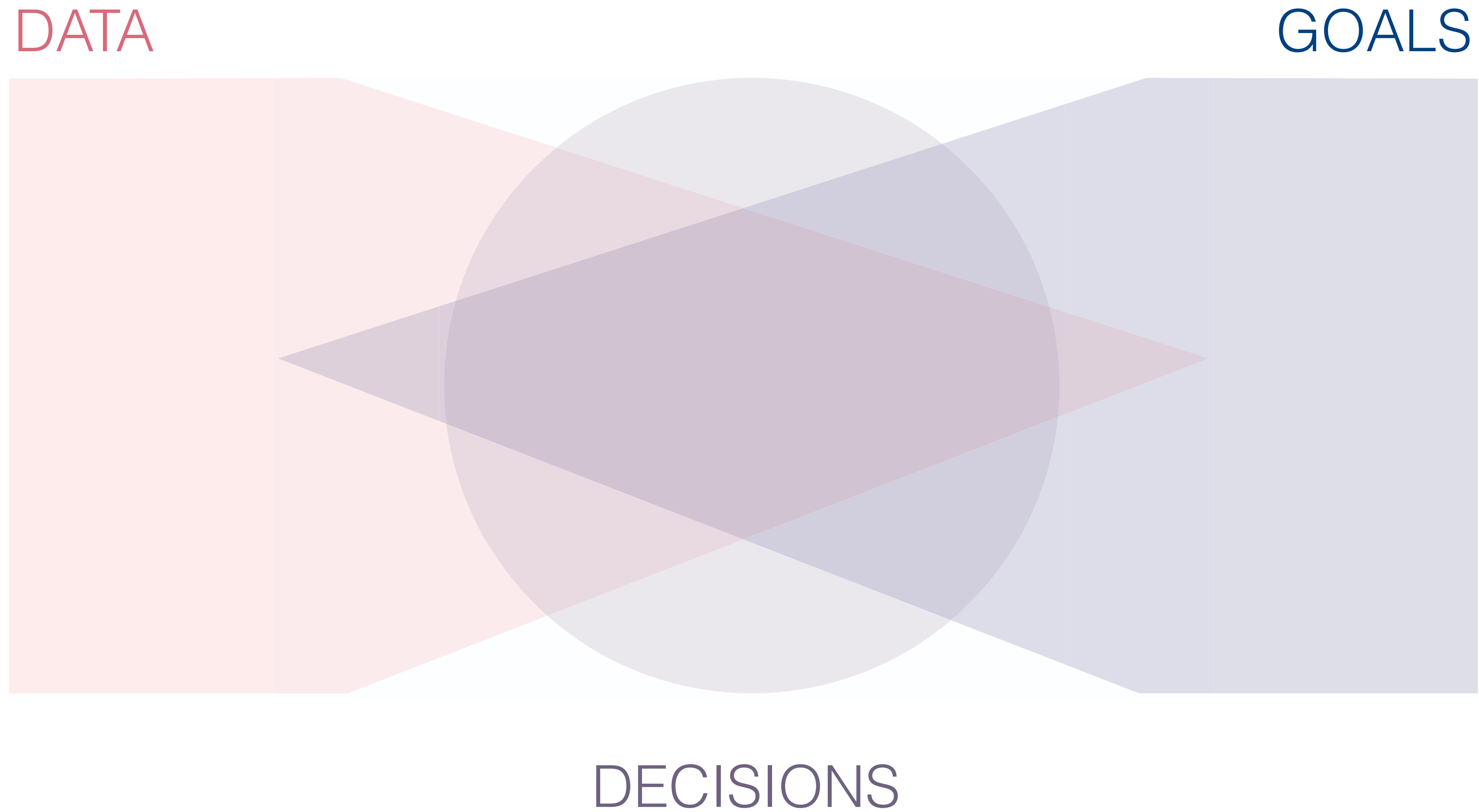


Wolpert et al., *Trends Cog Sci* 5(11), 2001: “Perspectives and problems in motor learning”

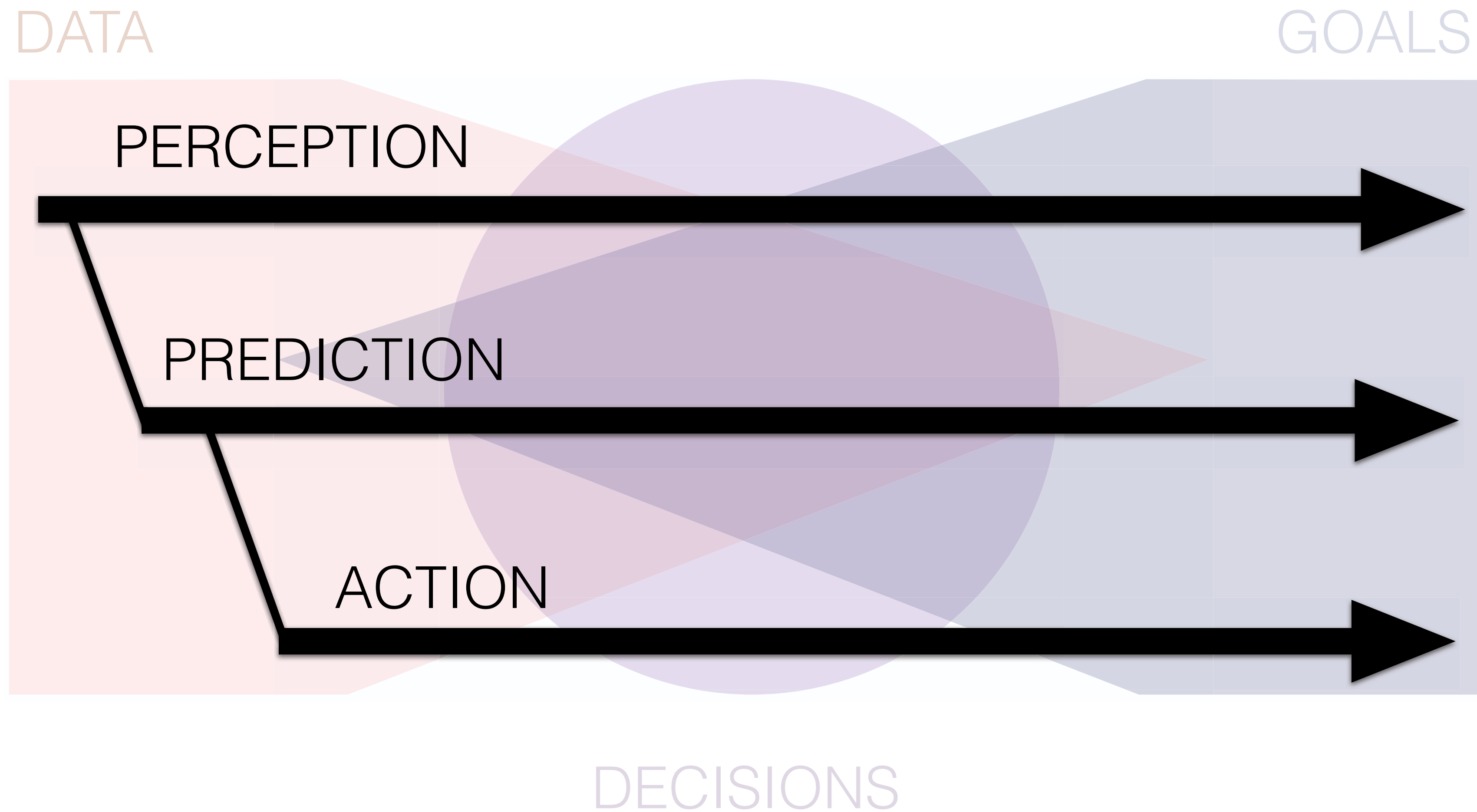
Flanagan et al., *Current Biology* 13(2), 2003: “Prediction precedes control in motor learning”

Desmurget et al., *Science* 324(5928), 2009: “Movement intention after parietal cortex stimulation in humans”

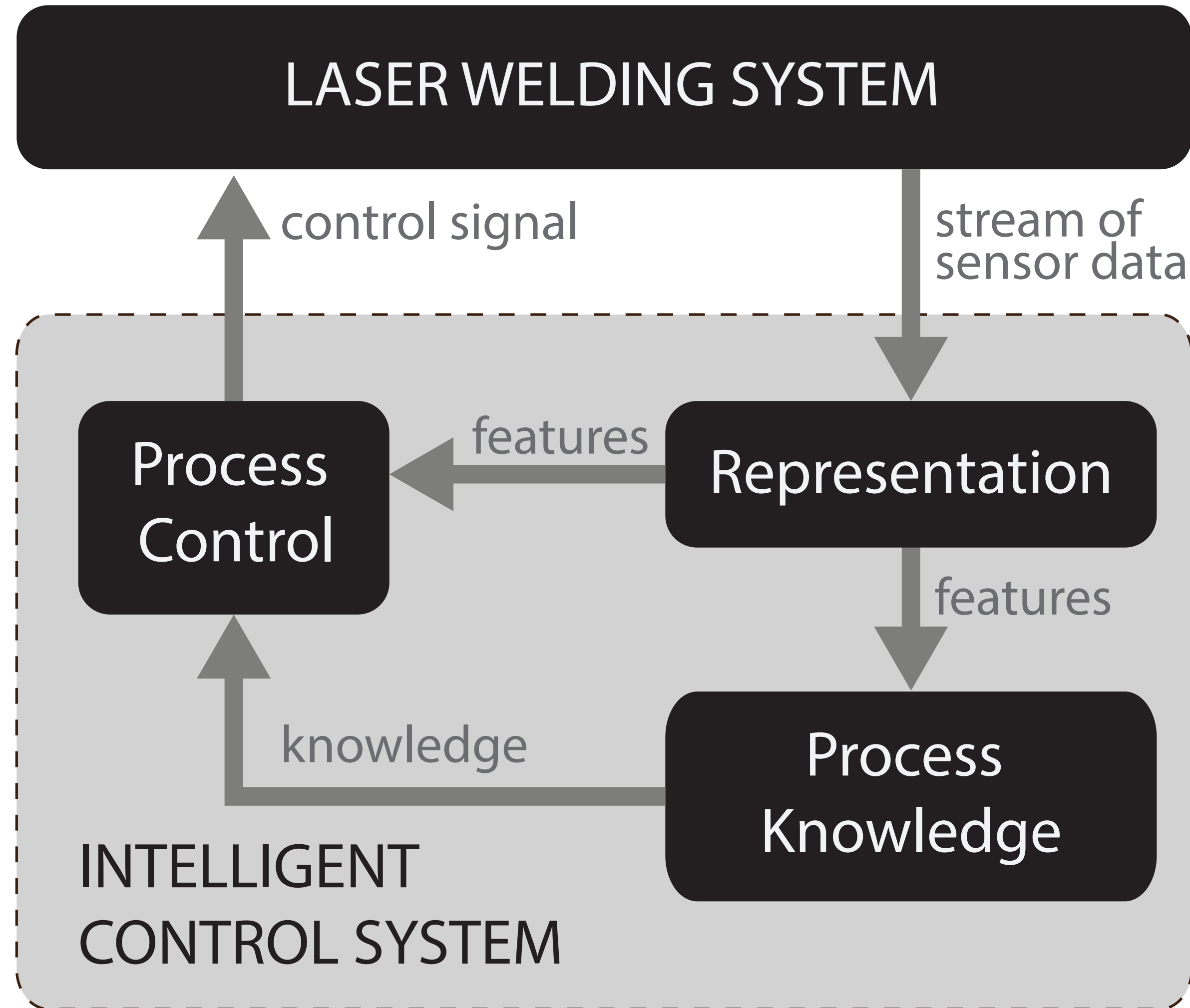




# Hallmarks of Intelligence: Artificial, Machine (and Human)



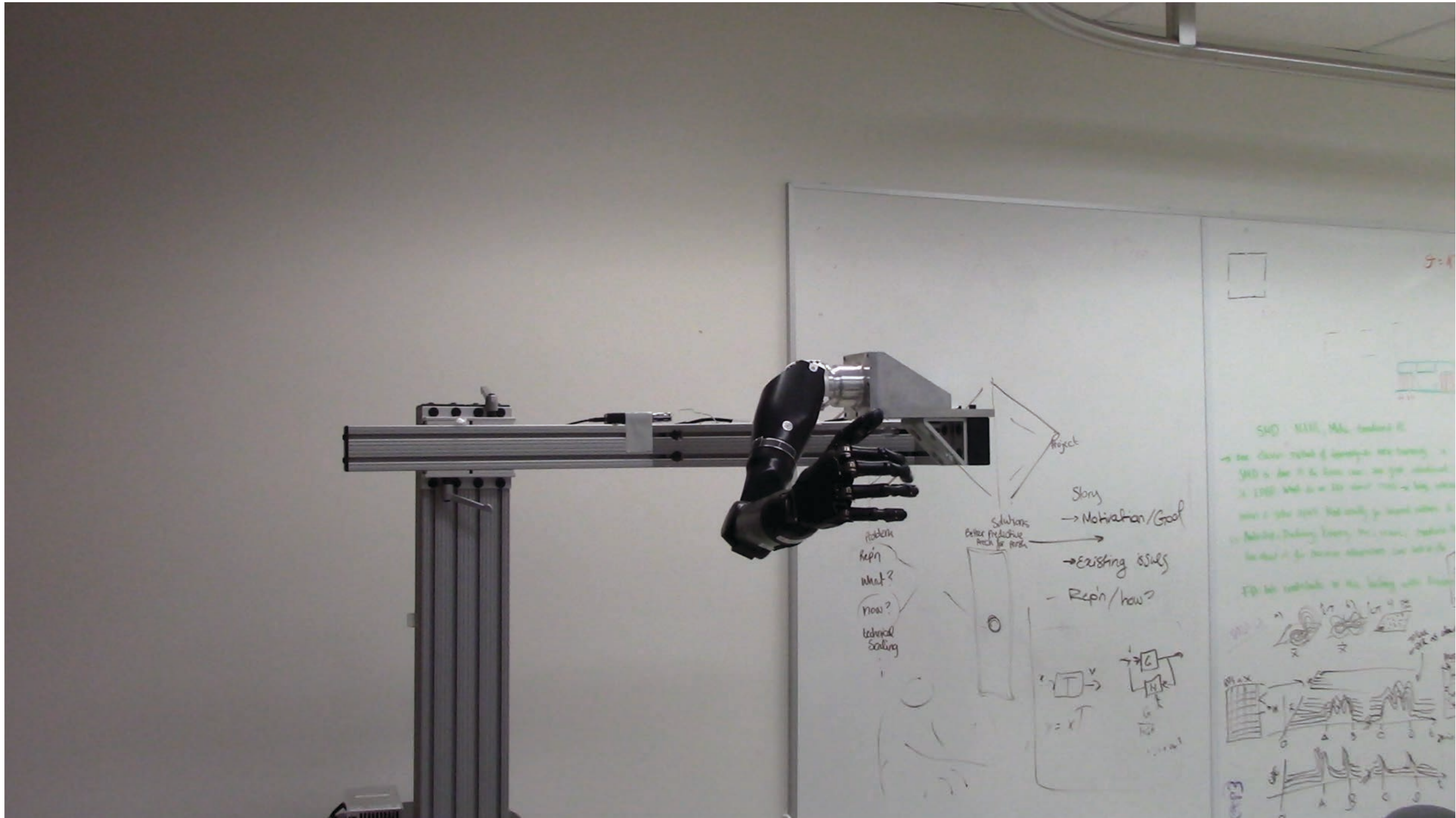
**Hallmarks of Intelligence:**  
Artificial, Machine (and Human)



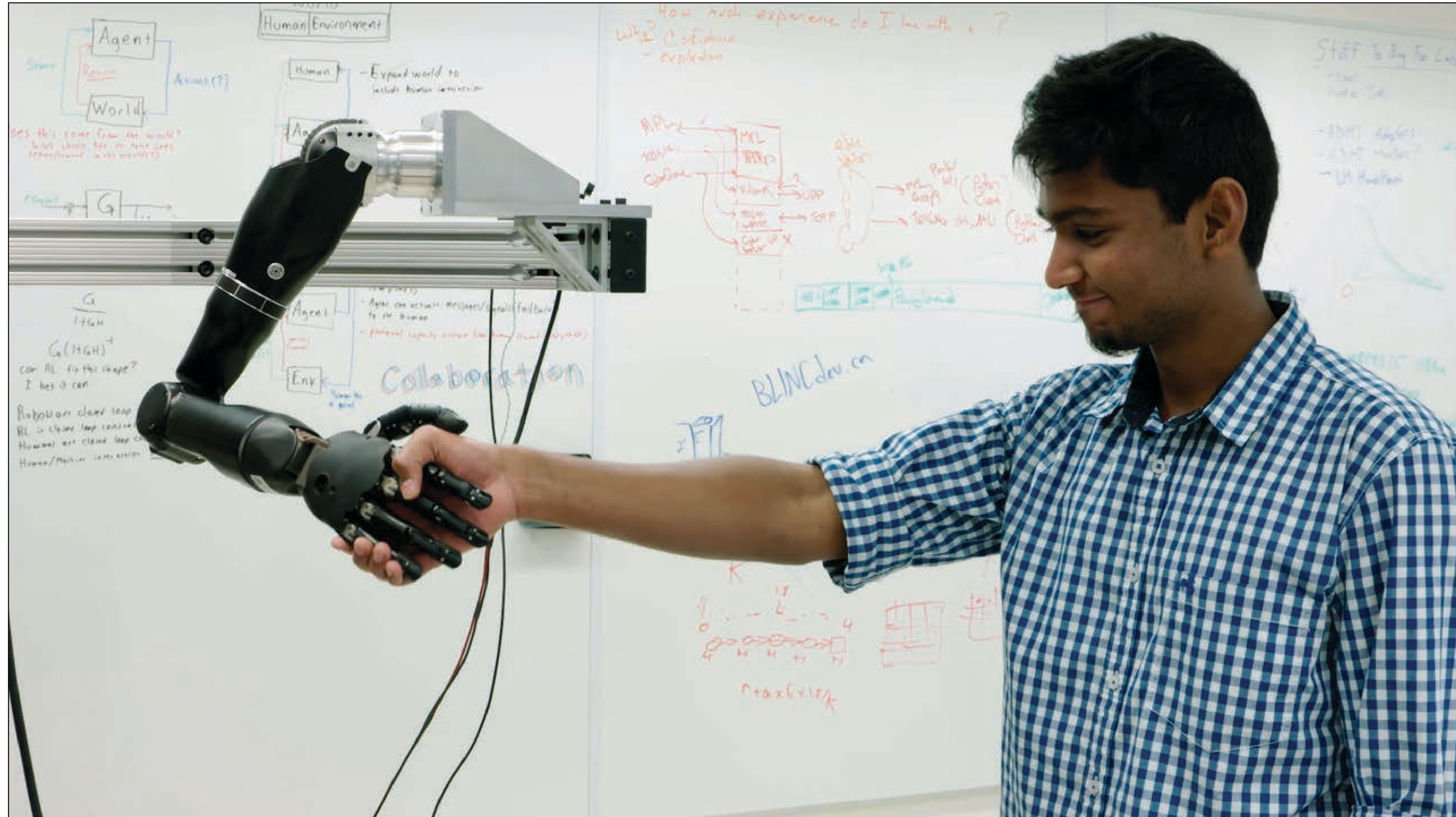
J. Gunther, P. M. Pilarski, G. Helfrich, H. Shen, K. Diepold, "Intelligent Laser Welding through Representation, Prediction, and Control Learning: An Architecture with Deep Neural Networks and Reinforcement Learning," *Mechatronics*, vol. 34, pp. 1–11, March 2016.

# CASE STUDY

human embodiment  
of a robot body part  
is really tricky...



University of Alberta: <http://blinlab.ca>, <https://www.smartnetworkcentre.ca/>



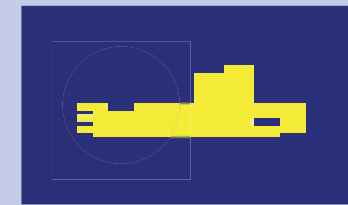
**Pilarski Lab**  
August 2016



University of Alberta: <http://blinlab.ca>

# Planning and Meta-learning

Control



2009

Prediction

Representation

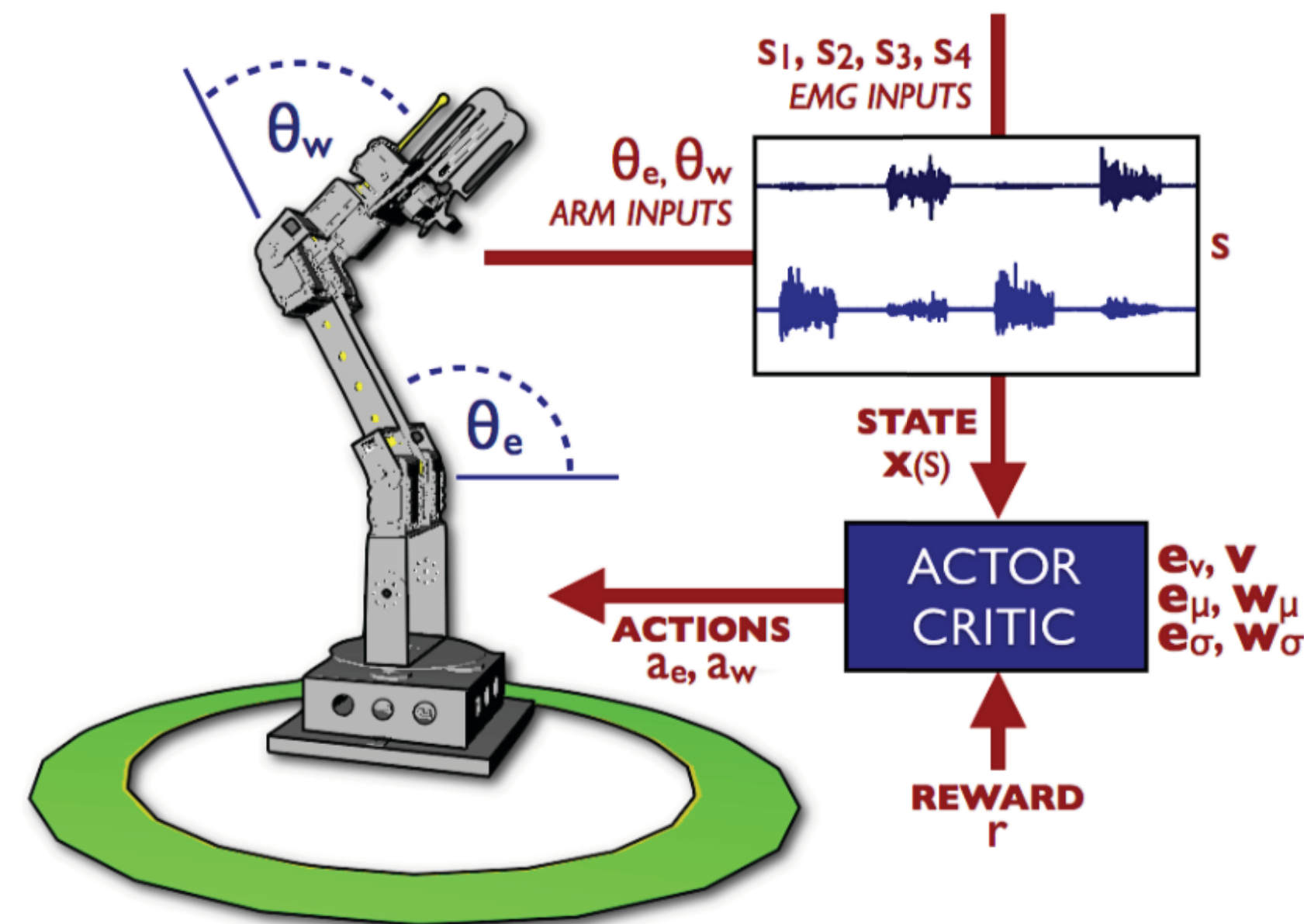




# Online Human Training of a Myoelectric Prosthesis Controller via Actor-Critic Reinforcement Learning

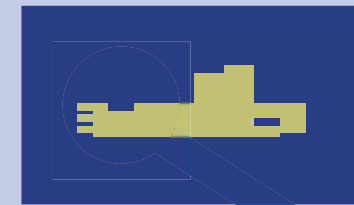
Patrick M. Pilarski, Michael R. Dawson, Thomas Degris, Farbod Fahimi, Jason P. Carey, and Richard S. Sutton

*Abstract*—As a contribution toward the goal of adaptable, intelligent artificial limbs, this work introduces a continuous actor-critic reinforcement learning method for optimizing the control of multi-function myoelectric devices. Using a simulated upper-arm robotic prosthesis, we demonstrate how it is possible to derive successful limb controllers from myoelectric data using only a sparse human-delivered training signal, without requiring detailed knowledge about the task domain. This reinforcement-based machine learning framework is well suited for use by both patients and clinical staff, and may be easily adapted to different application domains and the needs of individual amputees. To our knowledge, this is the first myoelectric control approach that facilitates the online learning of new amputee-specific motions based only on a one-dimensional (scalar) feedback signal provided by the user of the prosthesis.



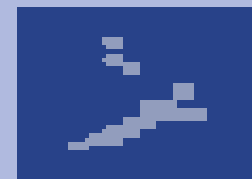
Planning and Meta-learning

Control

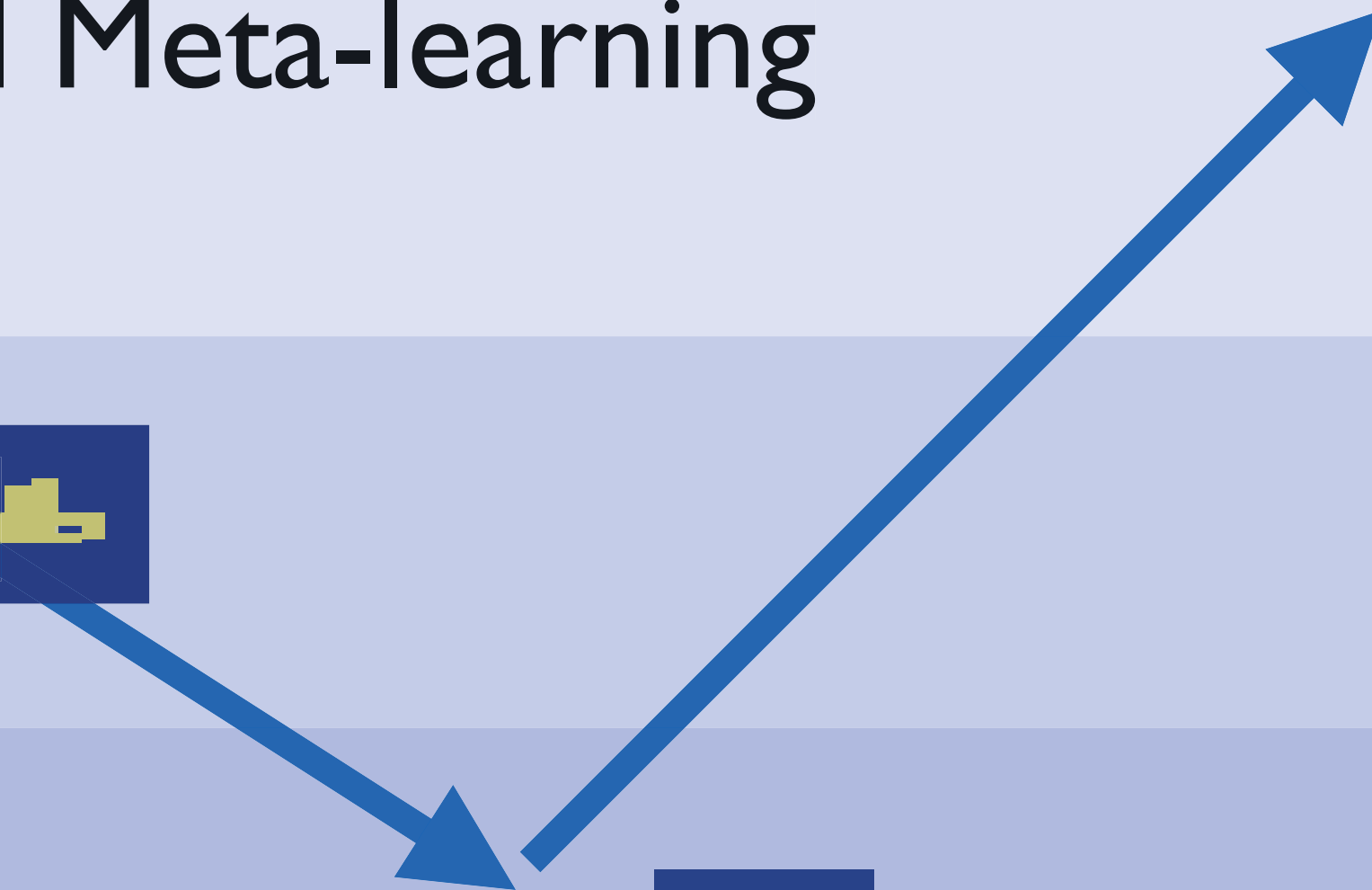
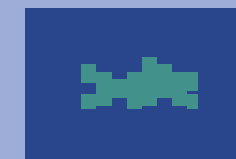
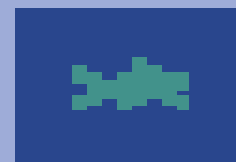


Prediction

2010

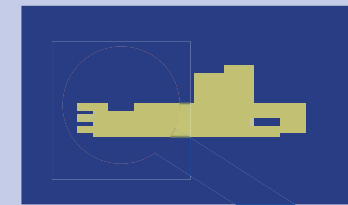


Representation

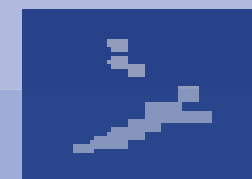
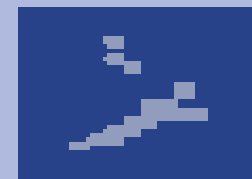


# Planning and Meta-learning

Control

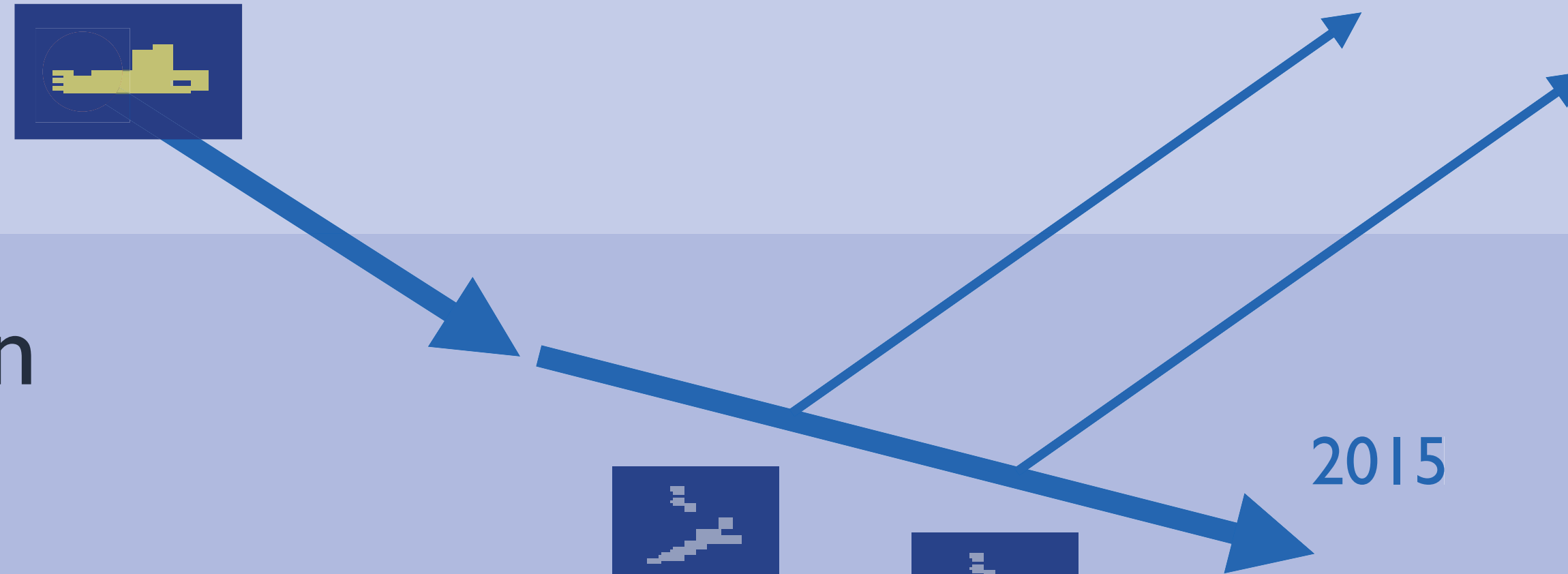
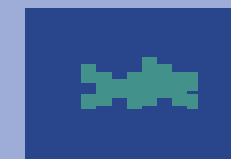
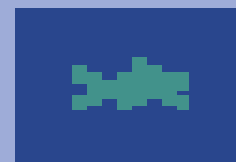


Prediction



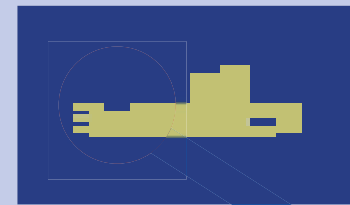
2015

Representation

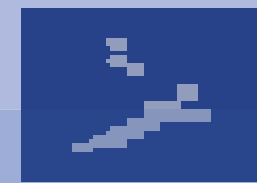
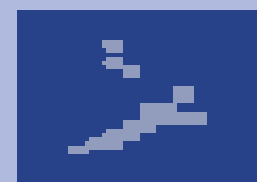


Planning and Meta-learning

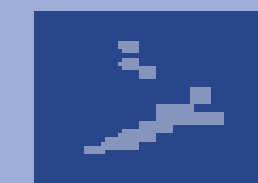
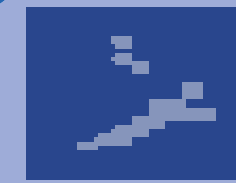
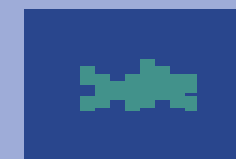
Control



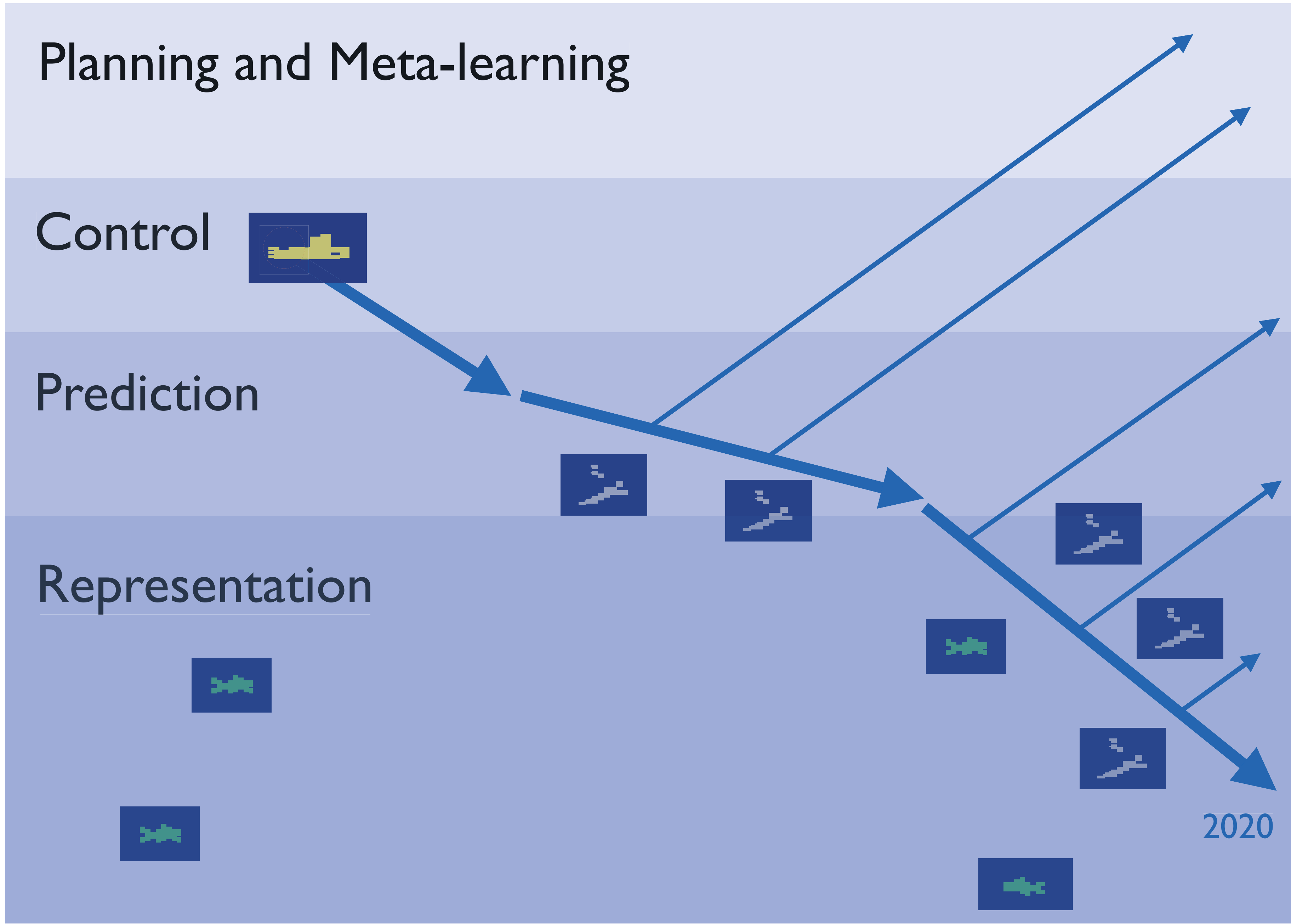
Prediction



Representation

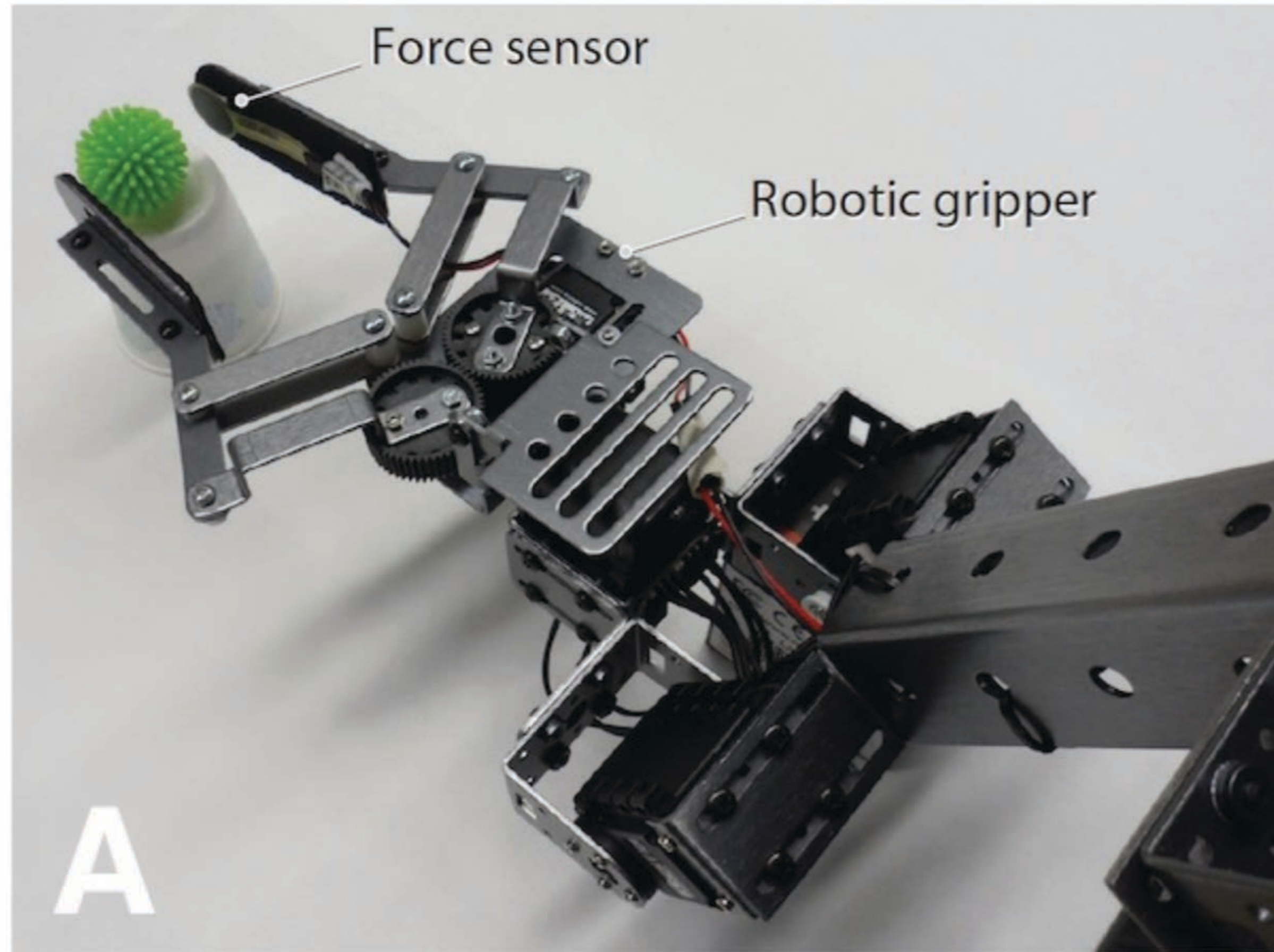


2020

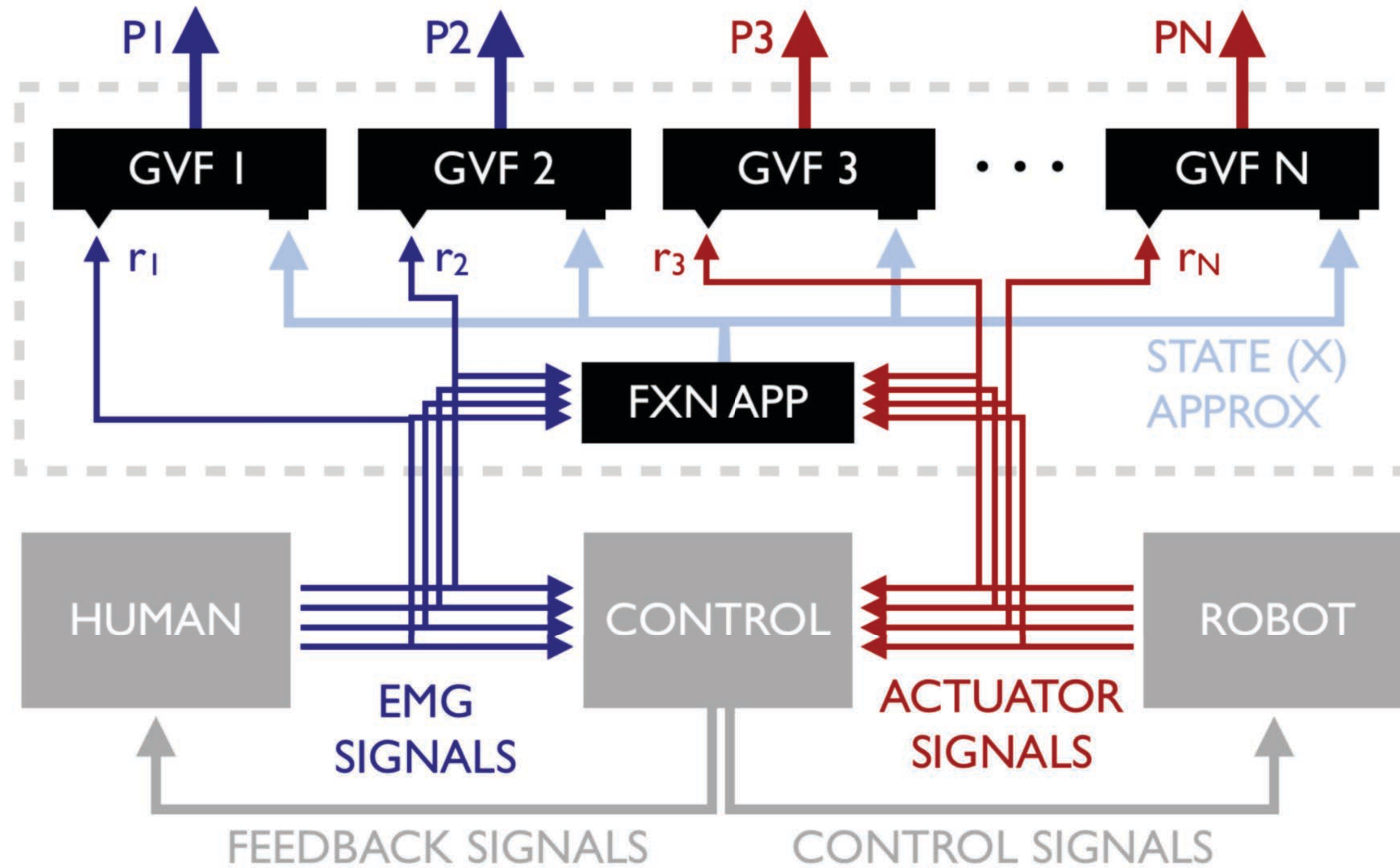


# EXAMPLE 0

**making predictions**  
(Nexting in real time)



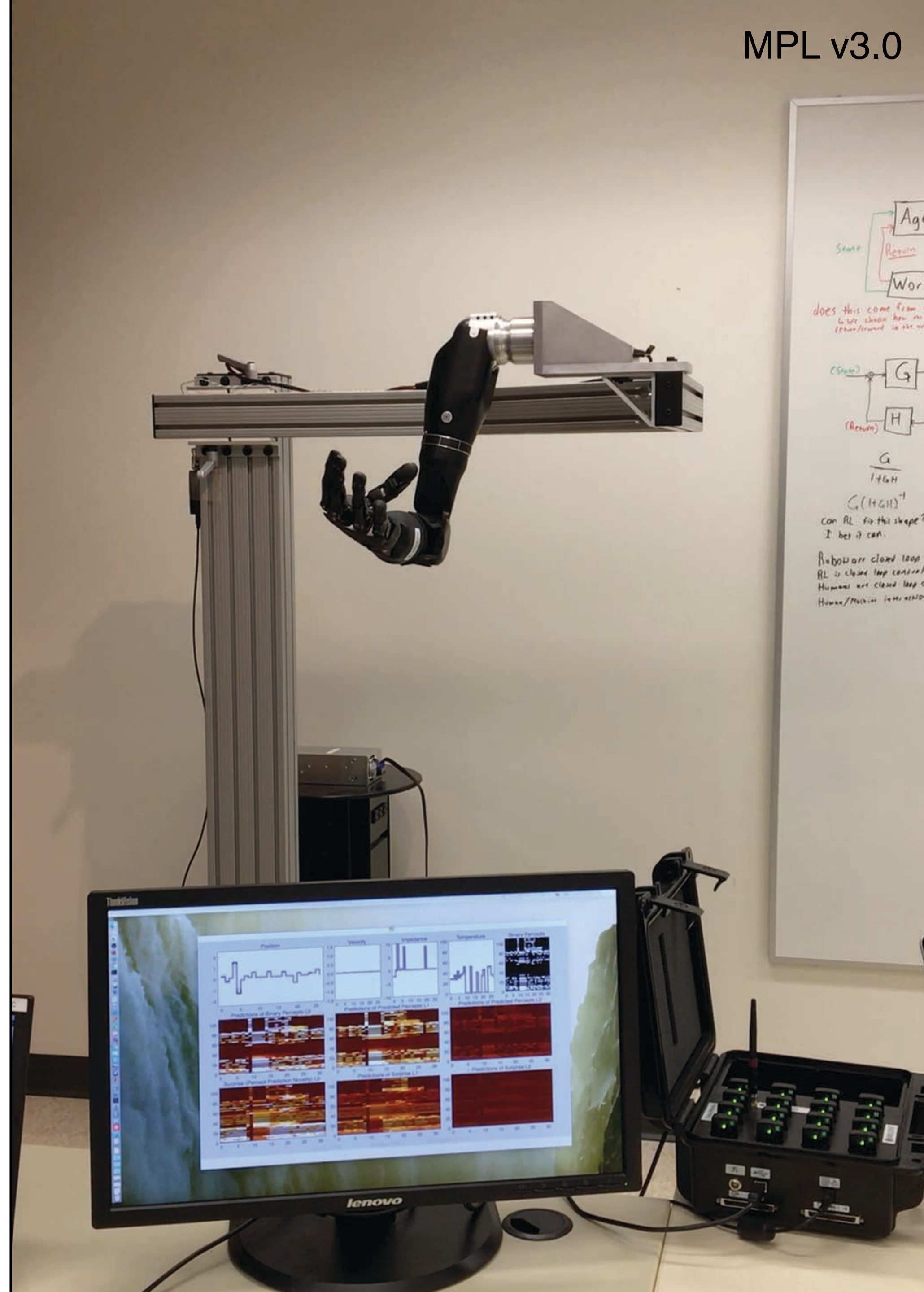
P.M. Pilarski, M.R. Dawson, T. Degris, J.P. Carey, K.M. Chan, J.S. Hebert, and R.S. Sutton, "Adaptive Artificial Limbs: A Real-time Approach to Prediction and Anticipation," *IEEE Robotics & Automation Magazine*, Vol. 20(1): 53–64, March 2013.



P.M. Pilarski, M.R. Dawson, T. Degris, J.P. Carey, K.M. Chan, J.S. Hebert, and R.S. Sutton, "Adaptive Artificial Limbs: A Real-time Approach to Prediction and Anticipation," *IEEE Robotics & Automation Magazine*, Vol. 20(1): 53–64, March 2013.

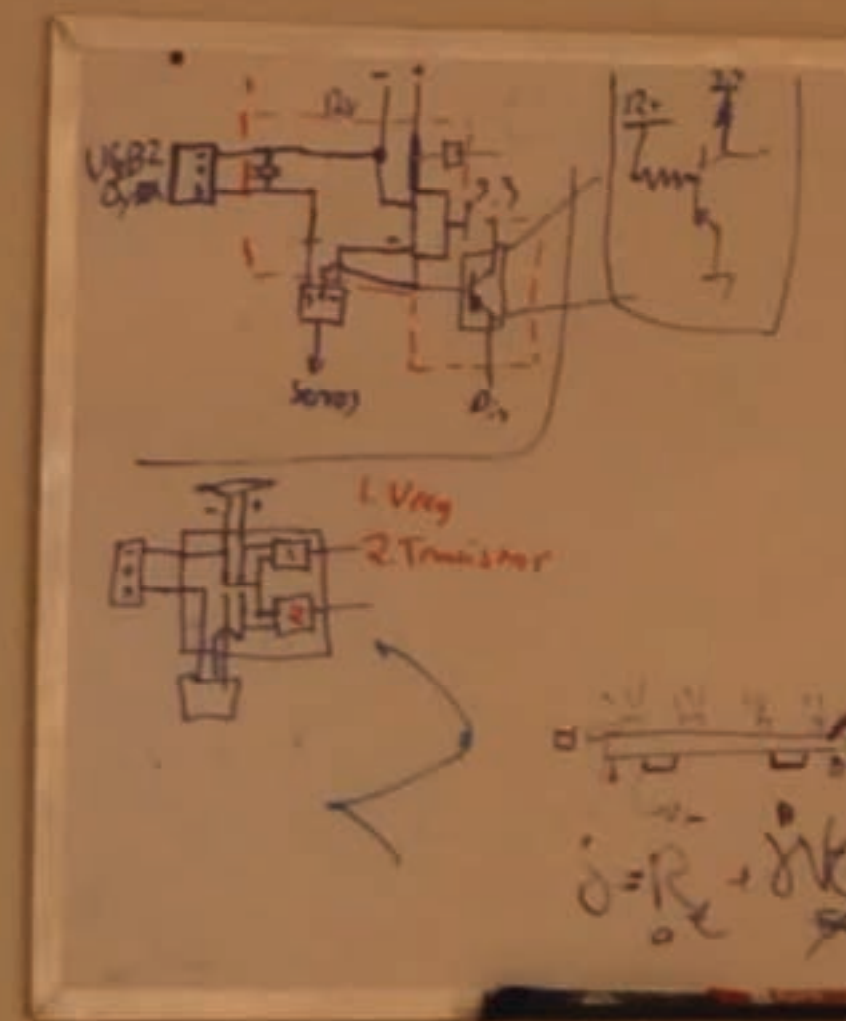
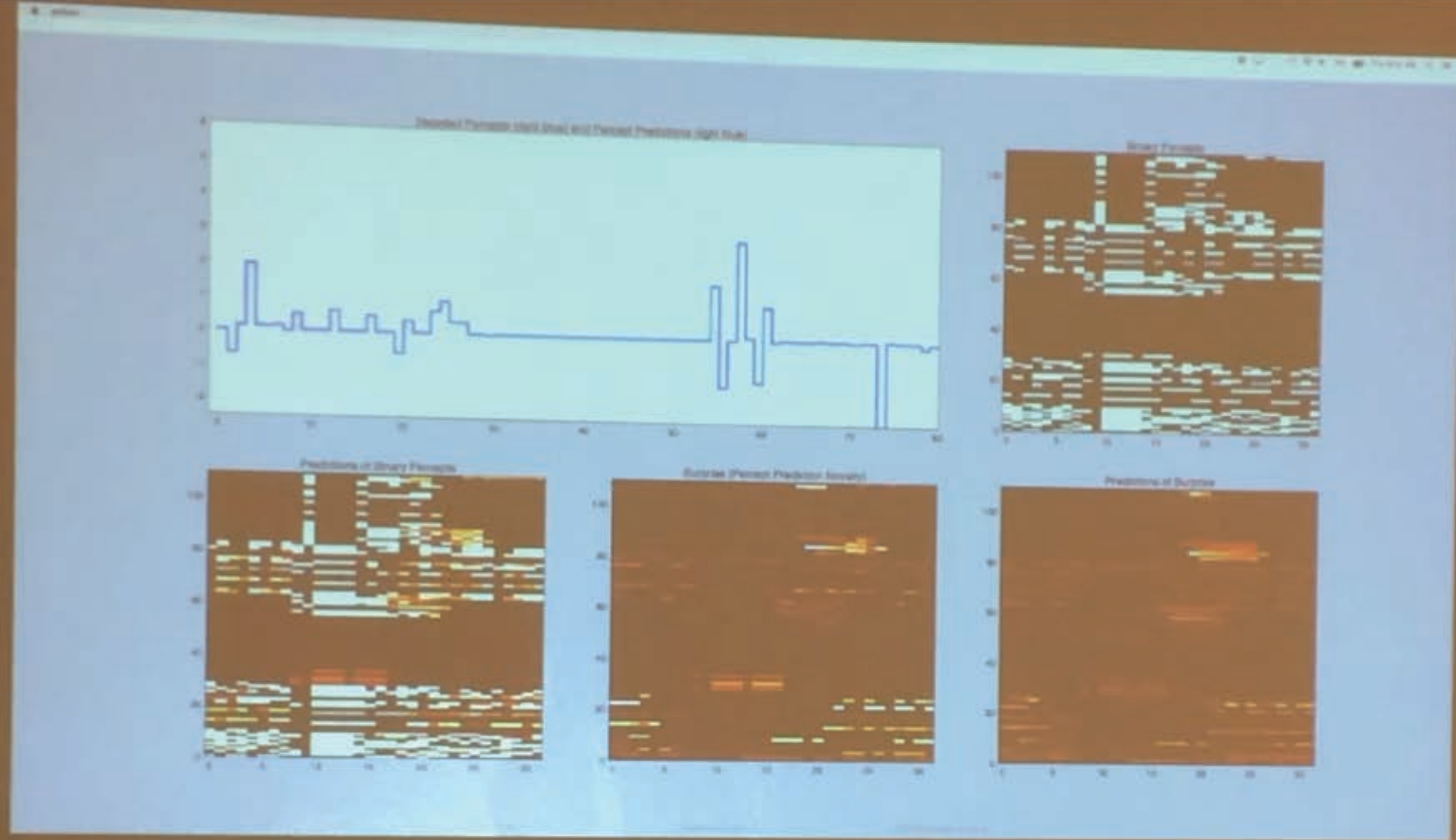
MPL v3.0

P. M. Pilarski, C. Sherstan, "Steps Toward Knowledgeable Neuroprostheses," *Proceedings of the 6th IEEE RAS/EMBS International Conference on Biomedical Robotics and Biomechatronics (BioRob2016)*, June 26-29, 2016, Singapore, pp. 220.



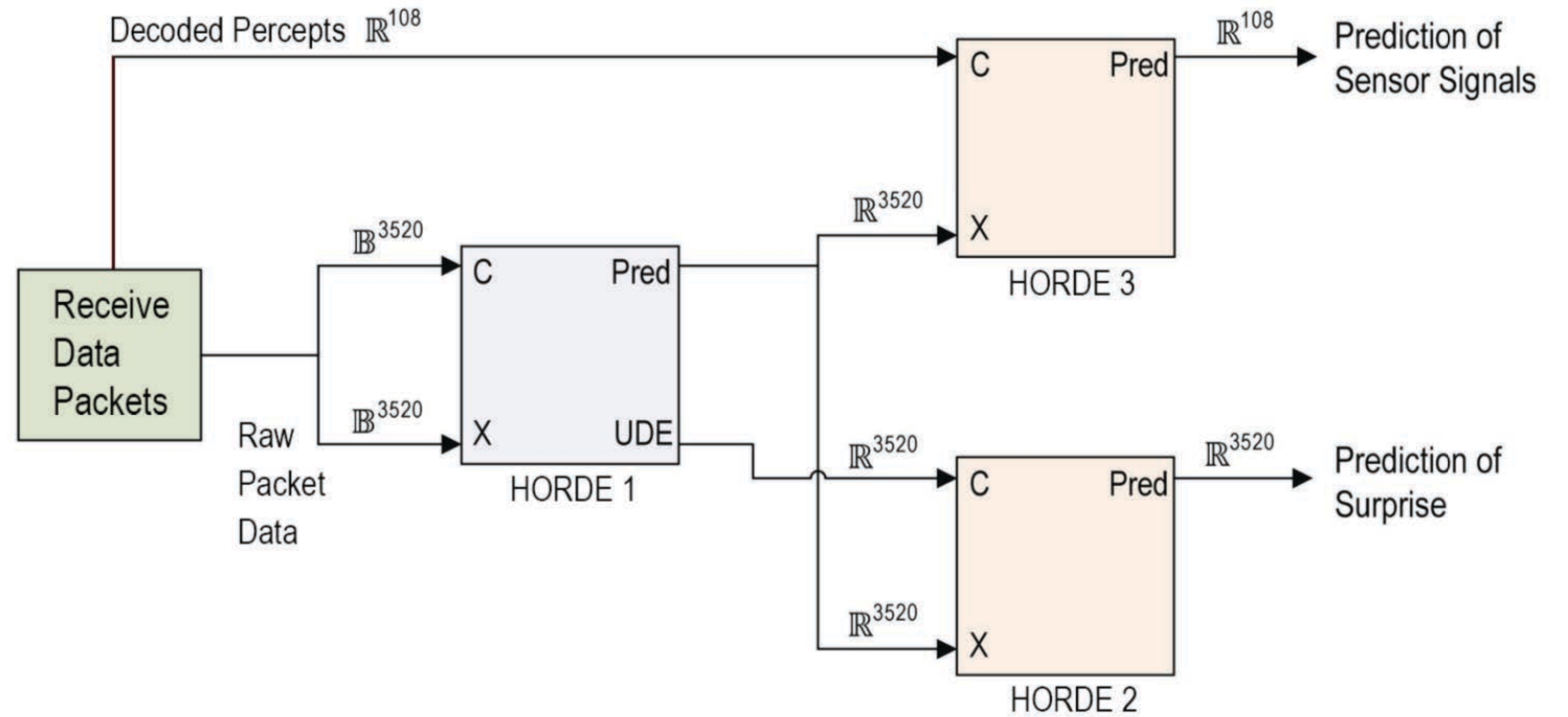
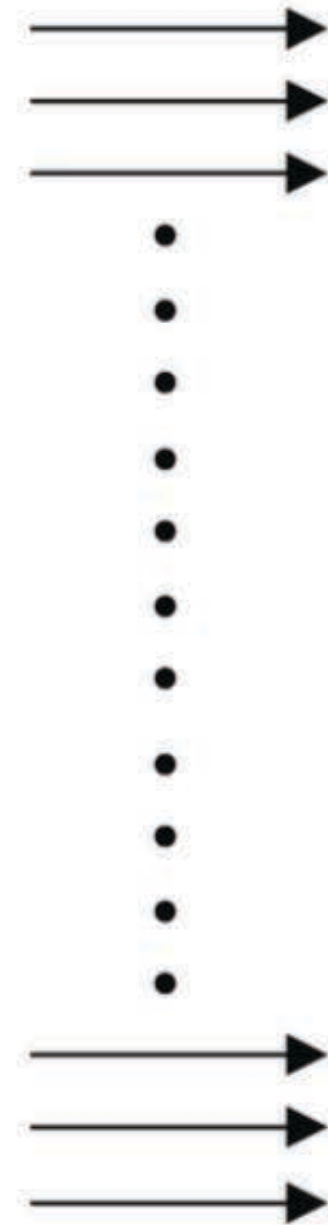
**~18k predictions  
about bits  
learned and made  
in real time**



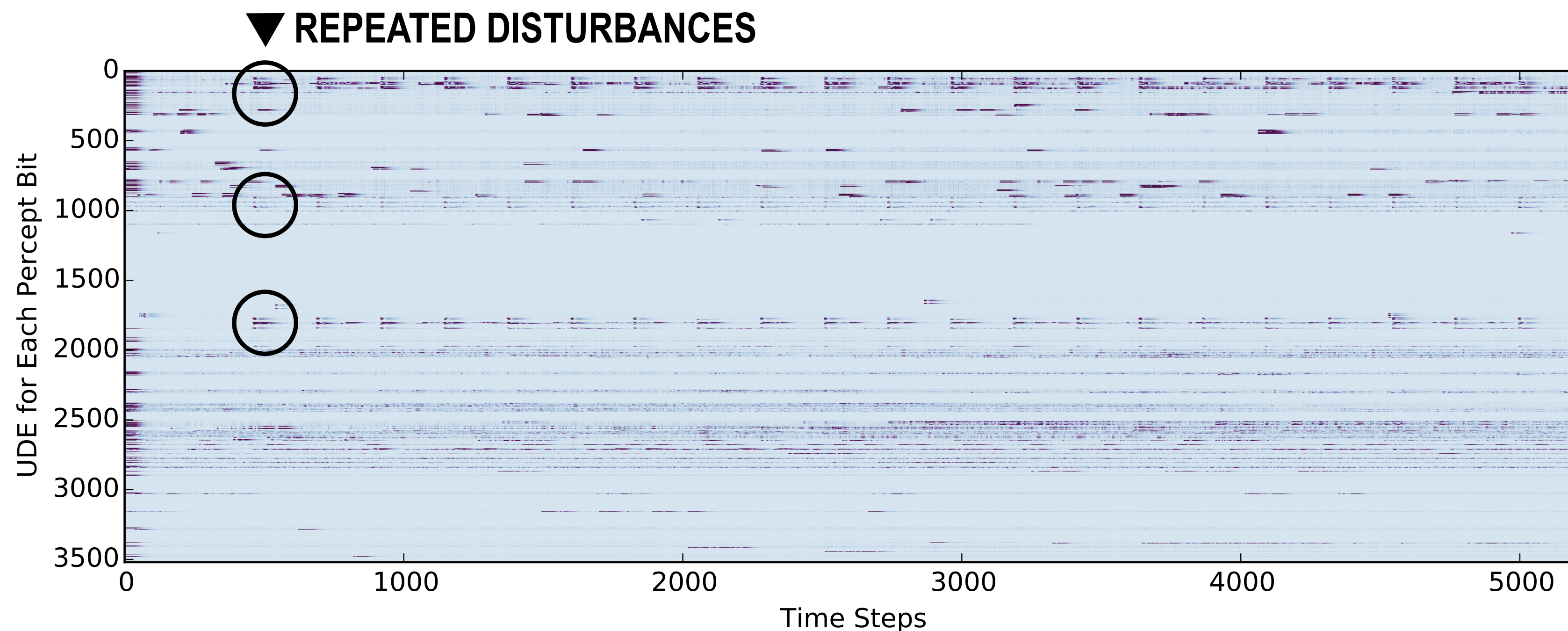
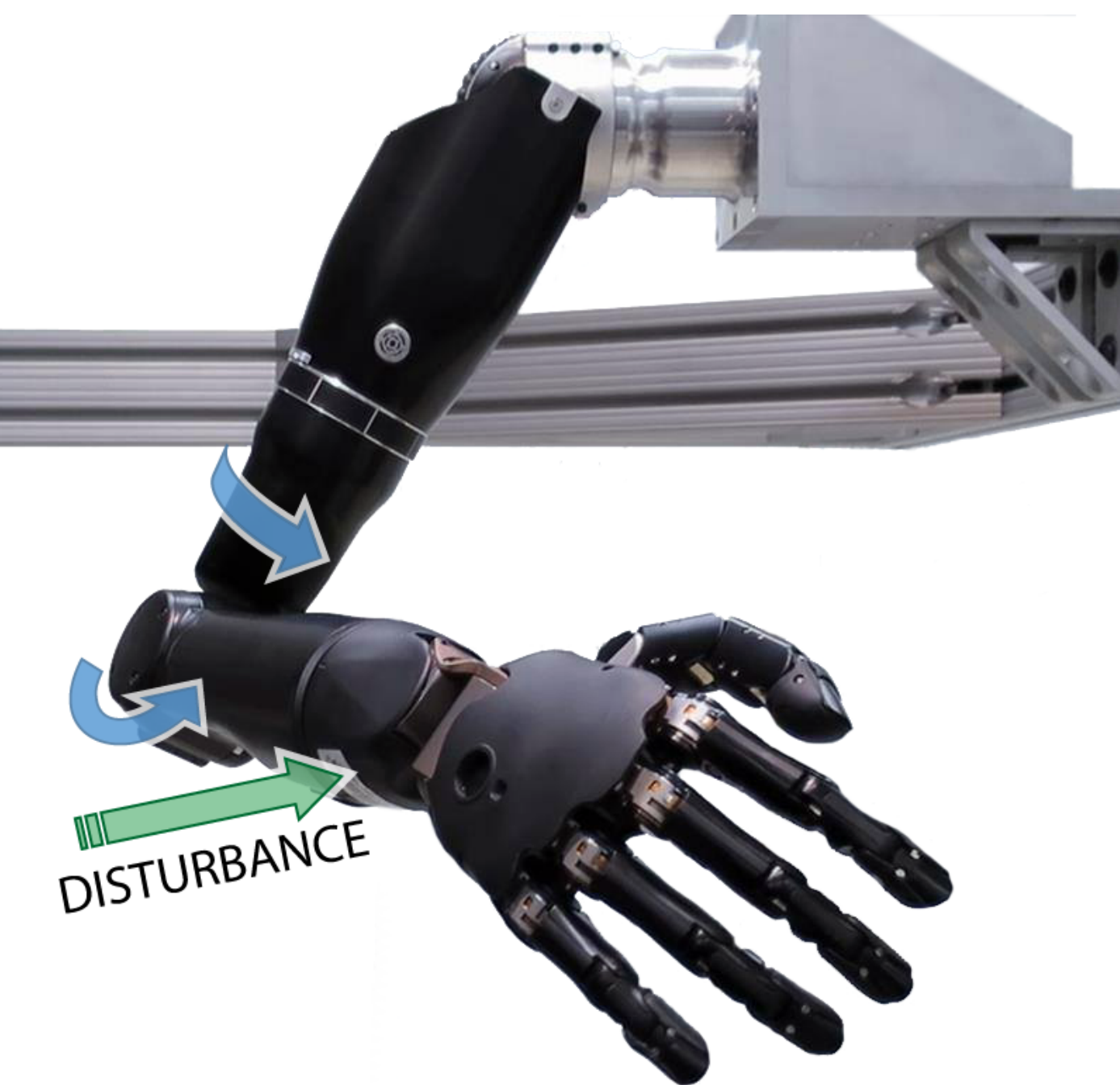




Modular Prosthetic Limb



J. Gunther, A. Kearney, M. R. Dawson, C. Sherstan, P. M. Pilarski, "Predictions, Surprise, and Predictions of Surprise in General Value Function Architectures," *Proc. AAAI 2018 Fall Symposium on Reasoning and Learning in Real-World Systems for Long-Term Autonomy*, Arlington, USA, October 18-20, 2018, pp. 22–29.



J. Gunther, A. Kearney, N. M. Ady, M. R. Dawson, P. M. Pilarski, "Meta-learning for Predictive Knowledge Architectures: A Case Study Using TIDBD on a Sensor-rich Robotic Arm," *Proc. of the 18th International Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems (AAMAS 2019)*, Montreal, Canada, May 13–17, 2019, pp. 1967–1969.

J. Gunther, A. Kearney, M. R. Dawson, C. Sherstan, P. M. Pilarski, "Predictions, Surprise, and Predictions of Surprise in General Value Function Architectures," *Proc. AAAI 2018 Fall Symposium on Reasoning and Learning in Real-World Systems for Long-Term Autonomy*, Arlington, USA, October 18-20, 2018, pp. 22–29.

# Whole point of this talk:

say the phrase “Pavlovian control”

enough times that you  
remember it next week

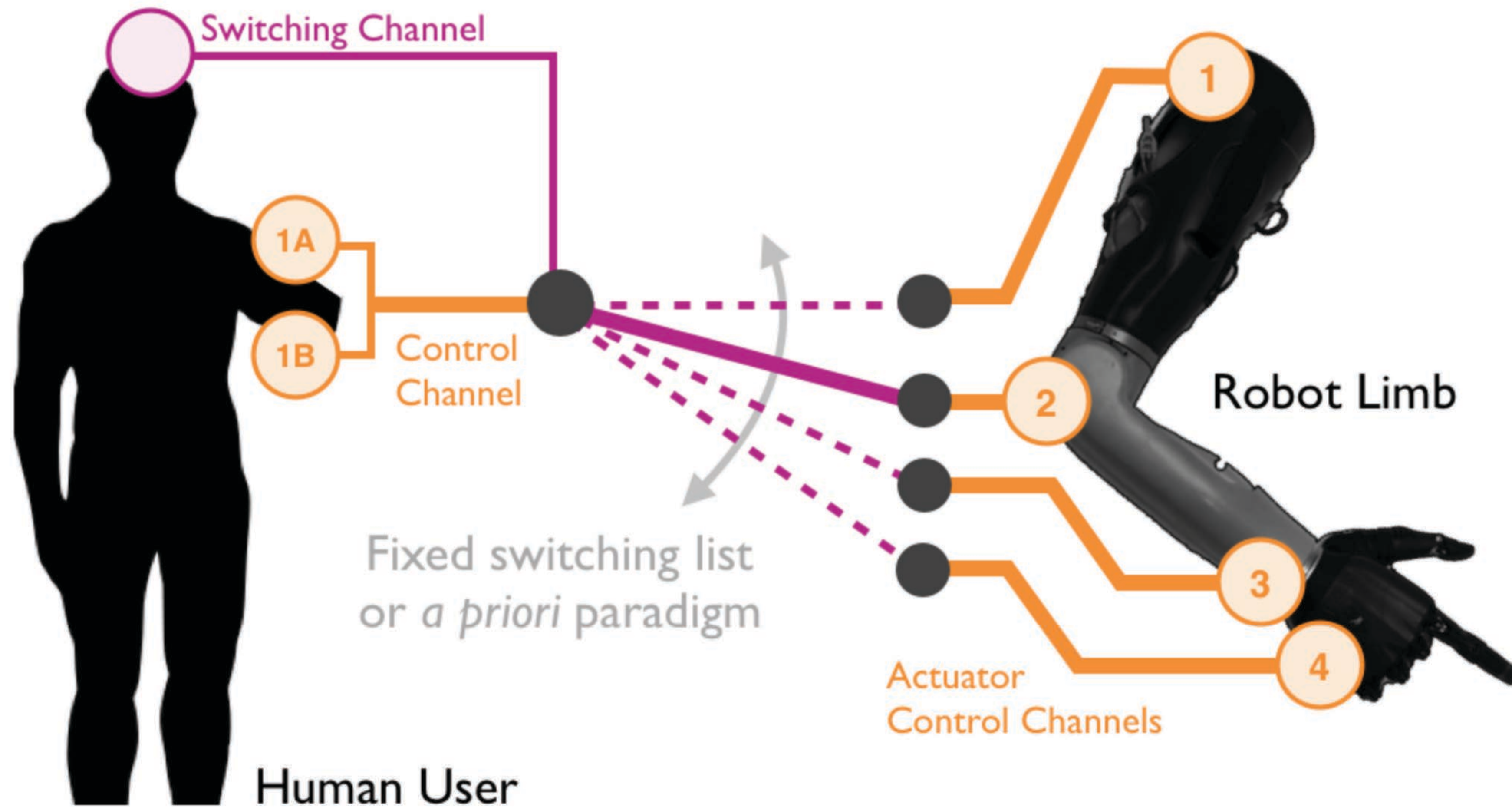
Pavlovian control involves a  
**fixed mapping between learned  
predictions** and control actions

J. Modayil and R. S. Sutton, "Prediction Driven Behavior: Learning Predictions that Drive Fixed Responses," *AAAI Workshop on AI and Robotics*, 2014.

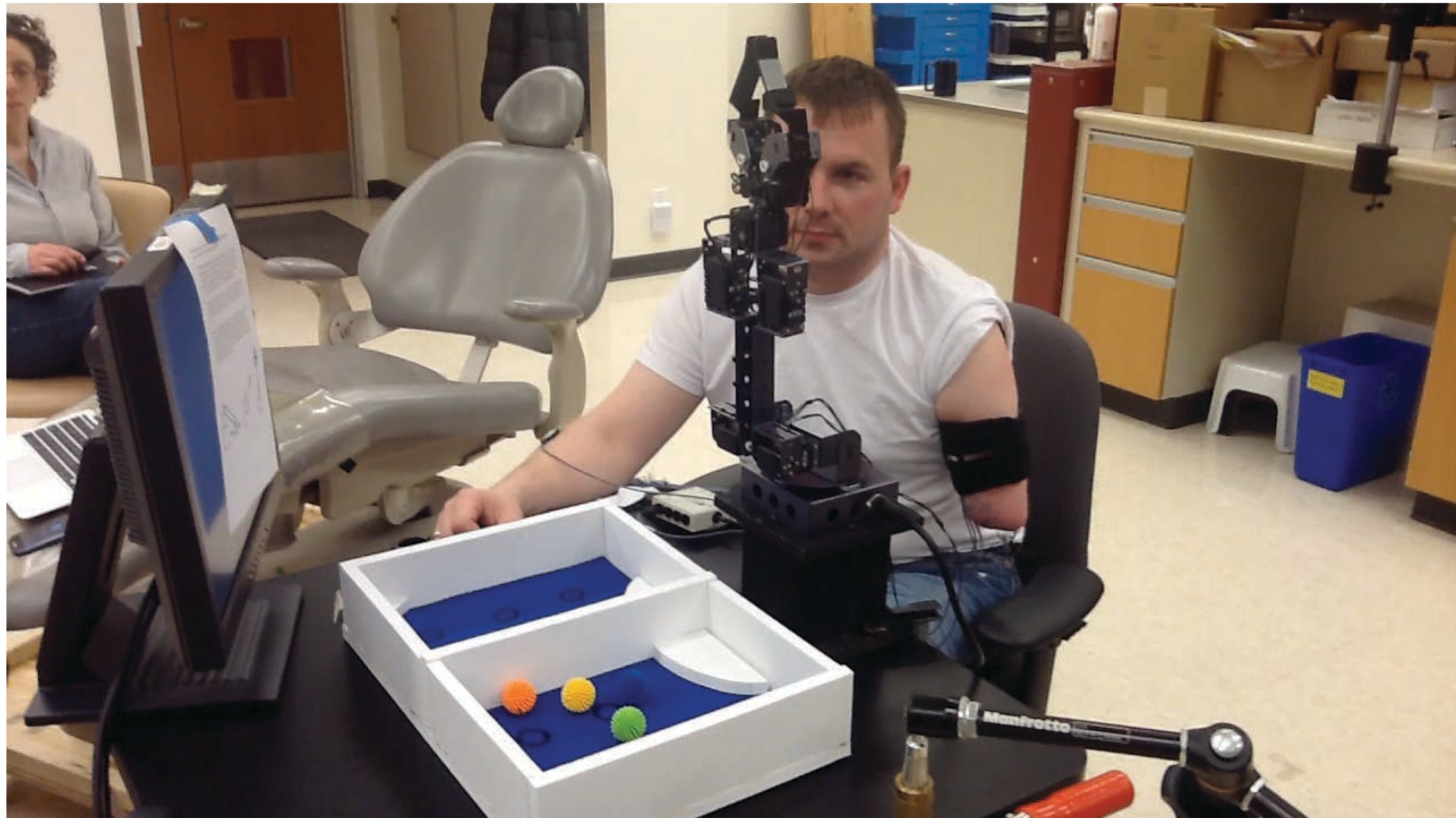
# EXAMPLE 1

## adaptive switching

(predictions change an interface)



A. L. Edwards, "Adaptive and Autonomous Switching: Shared Control of Powered Prosthetic Arms Using Reinforcement Learning," MScRS Thesis, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta, 2016.



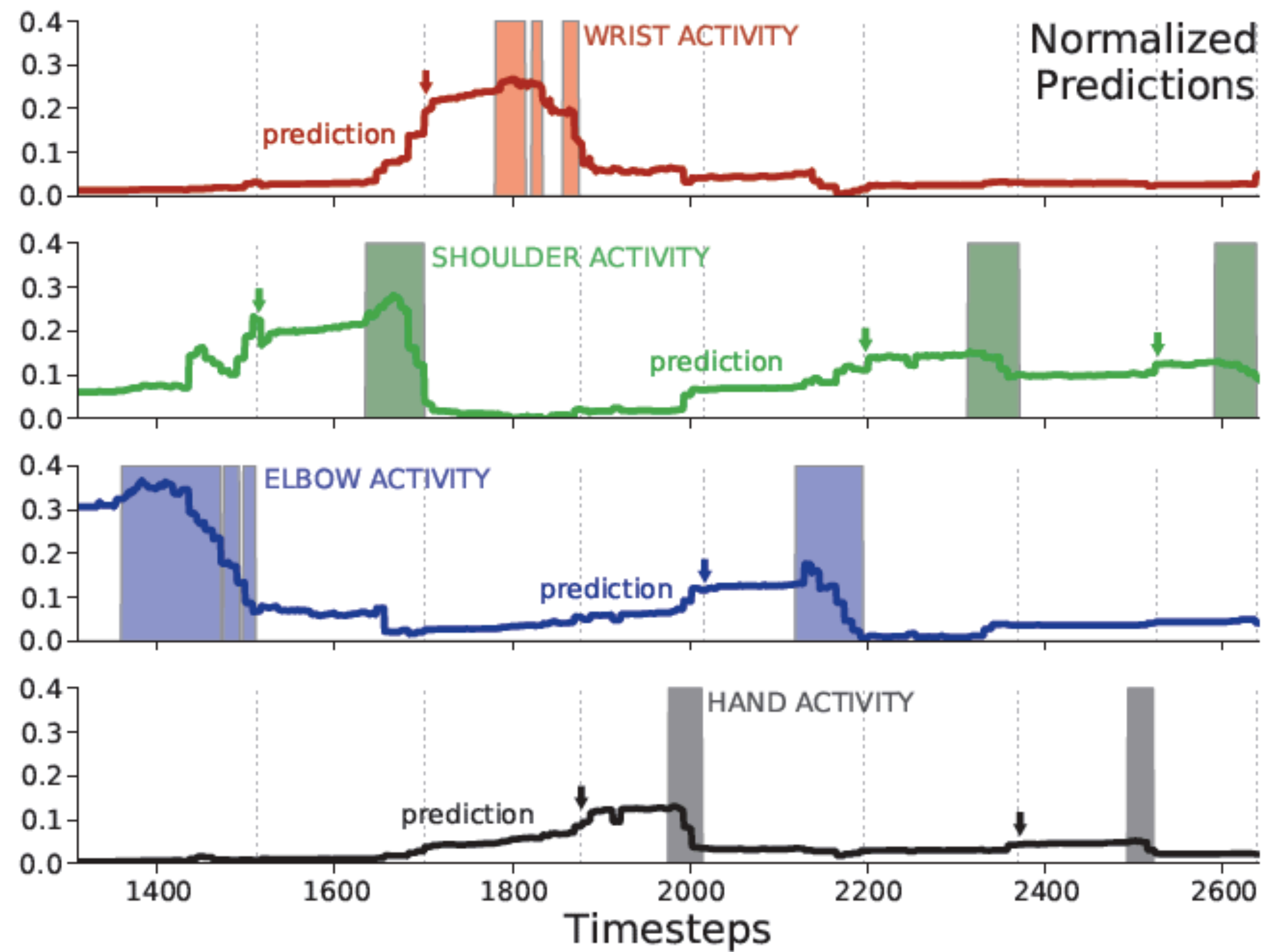
## Adaptive Switching

Edwards et al., *MEC*, 2014

Edwards et al., *Prosthetics Orthotics Int.*, 2015



# Predicting the Future





## **Autonomous Switching**

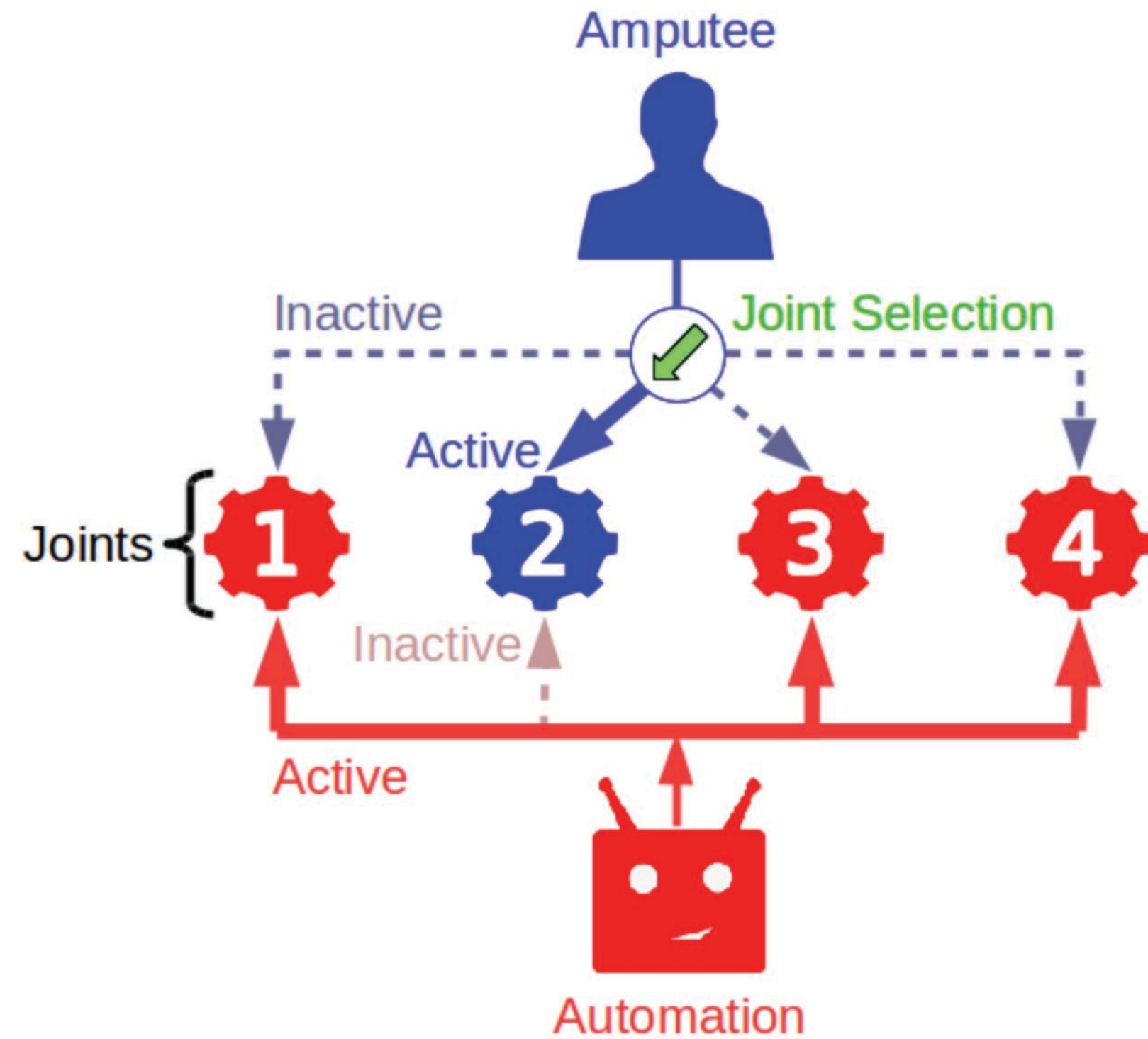
Edwards et al., *BioRob*, 2016

(learning and unlearning automatic control actions)

# EXAMPLE 2

**motor synergies**

(predictions as actions)



C. Sherstan, J. Modayil, P.M. Pilarski, "A Collaborative Approach to the Simultaneous Multi-joint Control of a Prosthetic Arm," *Proc. of the 14th IEEE/RAS-EMBS International Conference on Rehabilitation Robotics (ICORR)*, August 11–14, Singapore, 2015, pp. 13–18.

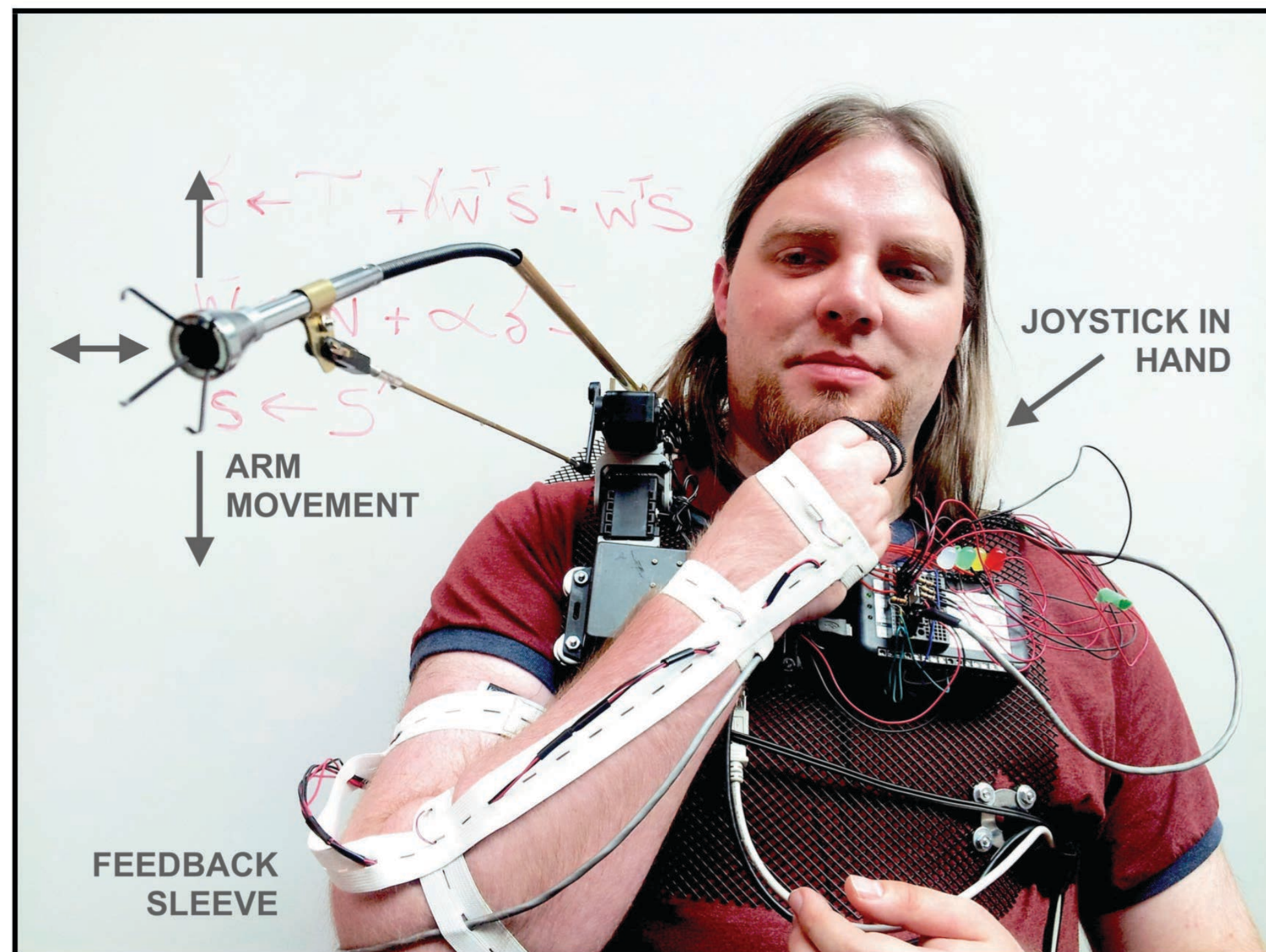
P.M. Pilarski, T.B. Dick, and R.S. Sutton, "Real-time Prediction Learning for the Simultaneous Actuation of Multiple Prosthetic Joints," *Proc. of the 2013 IEEE International Conference on Rehabilitation Robotics (ICORR)*, Seattle, USA, June 24–26, 2013. 8 pages.



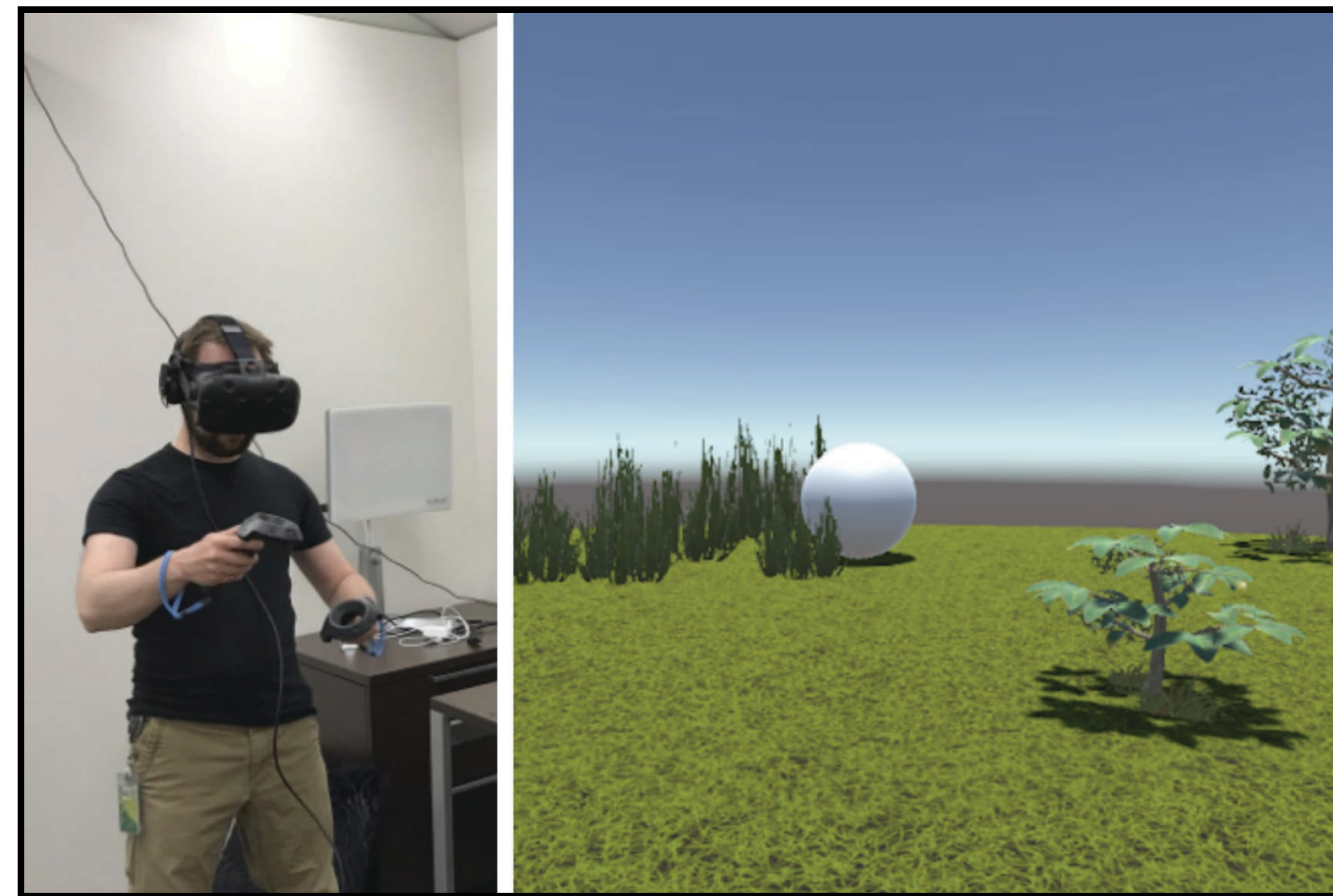
# EXAMPLE 3

## communication

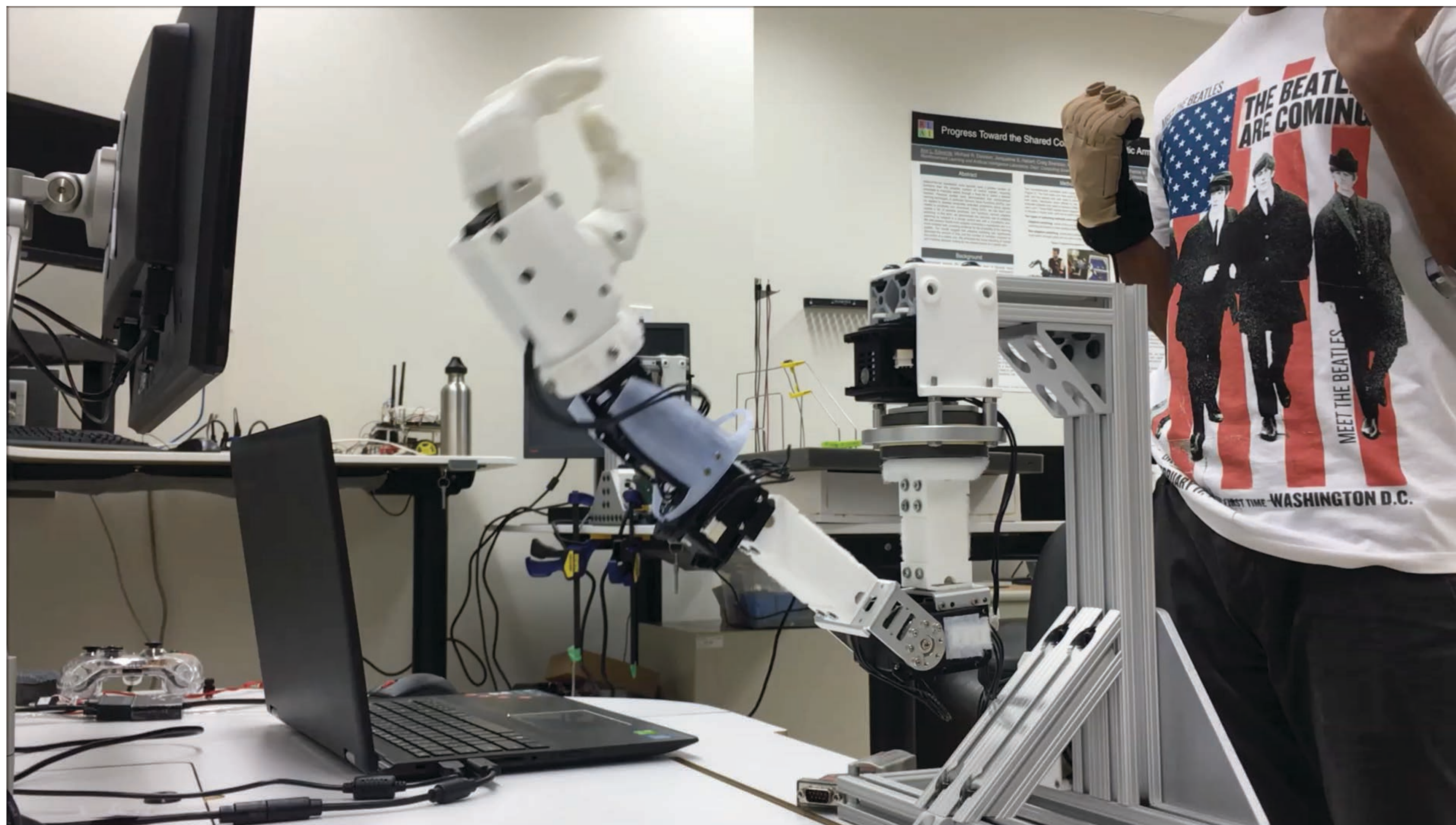
(predictions as feedback)



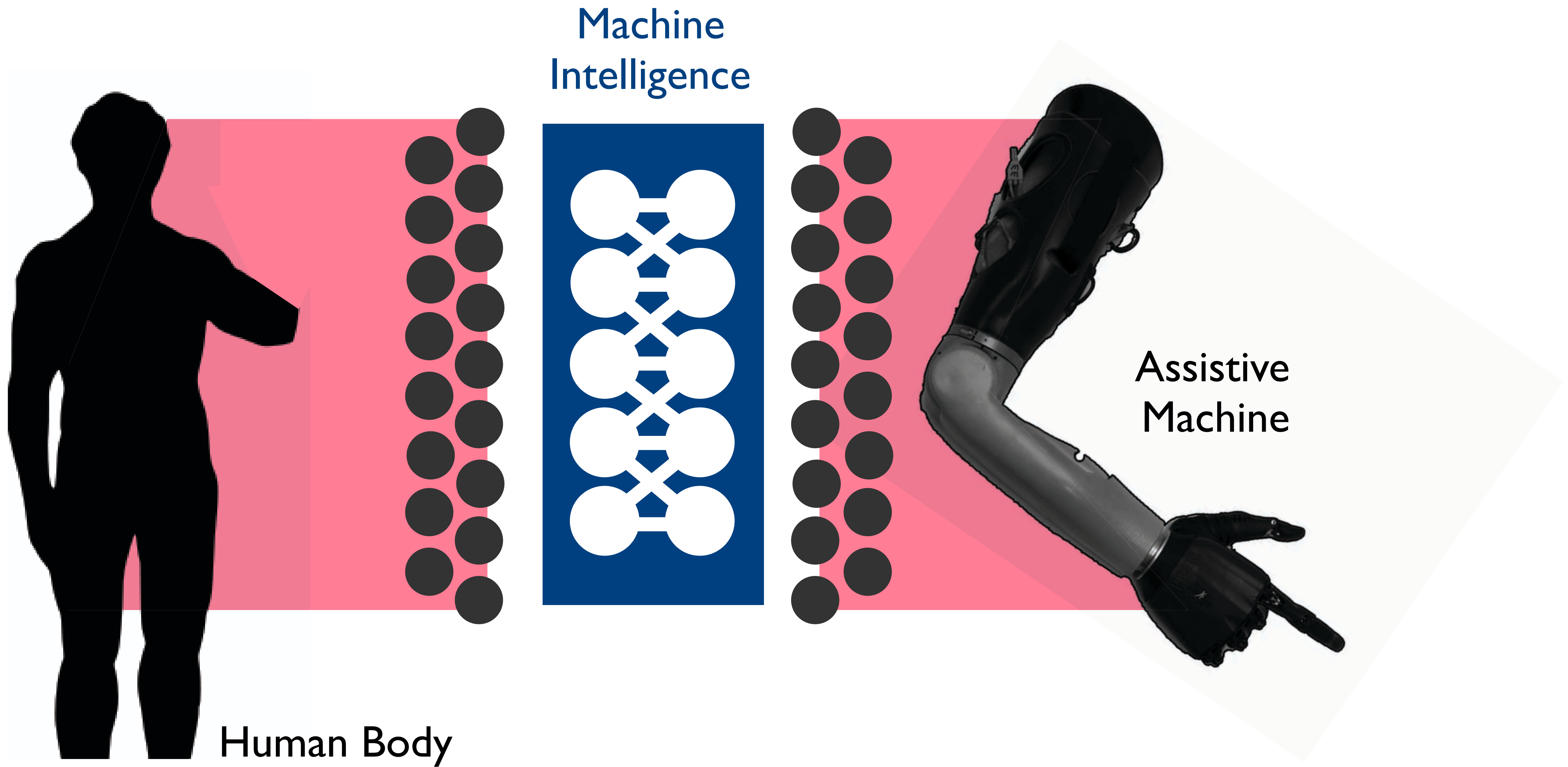
A. S. R. Parker, A. L. Edwards, P. M. Pilarski, "Exploring the Impact of Machine-Learned Predictions on Feedback from an Artificial Limb," *2019 IEEE-RAS-EMBS International Conference on Rehabilitation Robotics (ICORR)*, 24-28 June, 2019, Toronto, 8 pages.



P. M. Pilarski, A. Butcher, M. Johanson, M. M. Botvinick, A. Bolt, A. S. R. Parker, "Learned human-agent decision-making, communication and joint action in a virtual reality environment," *RLDM 2019 / arXiv:1905.02691 [cs.AI]*, 5 pages, 2019.



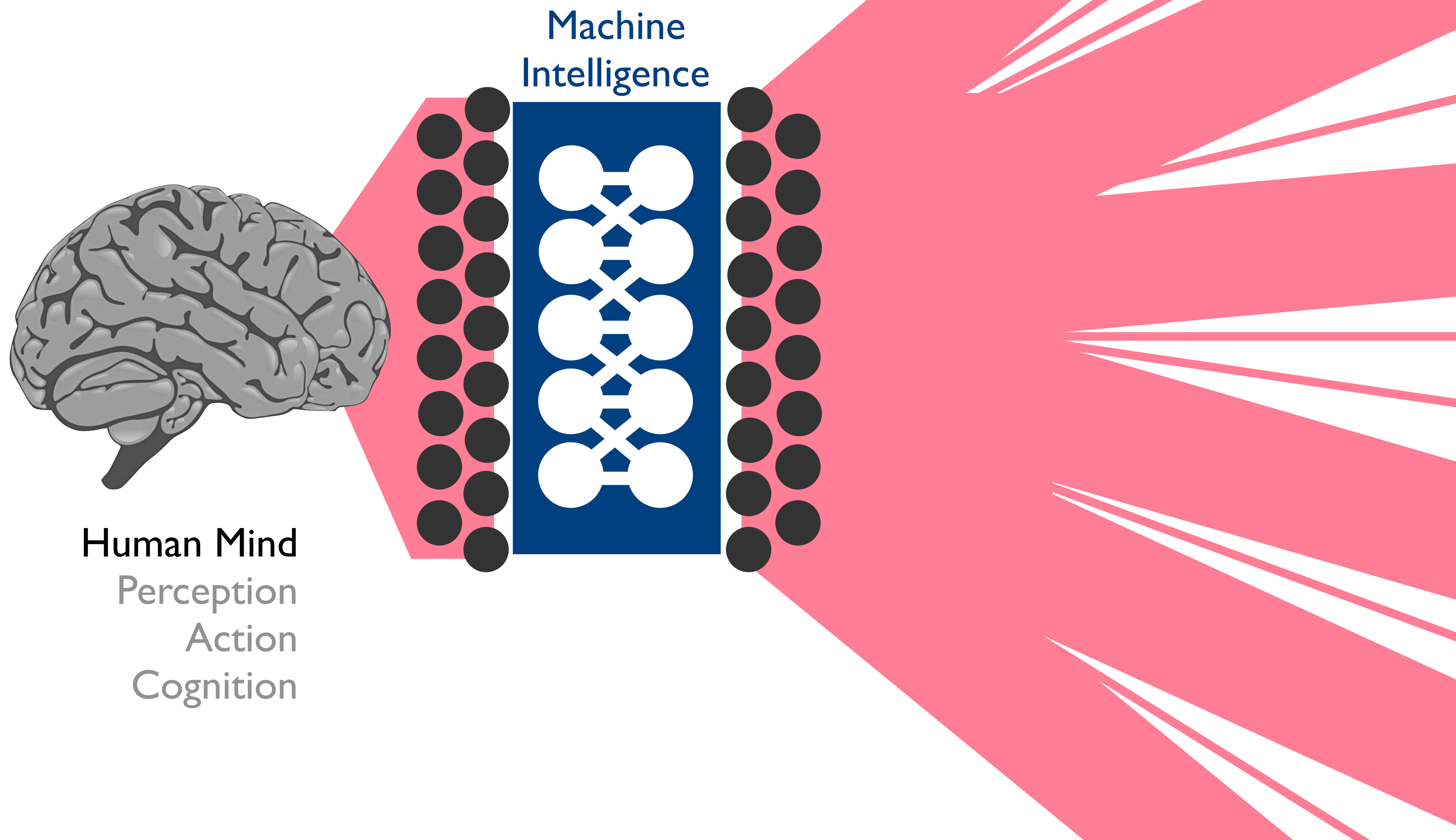
G. Vasan, "Teaching a Powered Prosthetic Arm with an Intact Arm Using Reinforcement Learning," MSc Thesis, Dept. Computing Science, University of Alberta, 2017.







**Exoskeletons:** UC Berkeley spin-off suitX exoskeleton technology;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3roYI3CB2Y>



Machine  
Intelligence

Human Mind  
Perception  
Action  
Cognition





**#ConstructivistAGI**

**Whole point of this talk:**

**was to keep you awake**  
with cool videos long enough  
to hear Rich's talk

**Whole point of this talk:**

**or think about Intelligence Amplification**  
as the grand challenge  
for DL and RL

# Whole point of this talk:

or maybe just that “prediction then control”  
research pattern we talked about earlier.  
either way, all good.

**Start with prediction.**



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