

The race for inner space

This year saw the 40th anniversary of landing on the moon, a momentous event that captured the world's attention, and which prompted many young minds of the day to enter engineering.

The moon landing was the culmination of a space programme in which engineers and scientists were given the daunting task of placing objects into what everyone considered to be a very hostile, unforgiving and relatively unknown environment ... space. The tools and methods that they were schooled in had to be radically adapted, while existing technologies had to be modified or replaced by innovative new ideas. Everything had to be made smaller, more energy-efficient, more reliable and, most crucially, able to communicate vital information back to the base station.

Today, many of the same engineers who were inspired by the space race to enter the profession face many, if not more, of the same challenges their predecessors faced during the space race. But this new frontier is not outer space. It is inner space ... the inner space of the human body. And the objects that need to be placed in this no less hostile, unforgiving and unknown environment are implantable devices.

Implantable devices are subject to the same rigid requirements and conditions of those that were launched into space, but the mission is vastly different. Today's devices, although state of the art in the current design paradigm, are still considered bulky, difficult for the patient, and at times unreliable. The next generation of devices will be tiny in comparison, and will not only treat a patient's existing conditions, but also detect and possibly prevent new ones from developing.

The race to outer space pitted nation against nation, but we all won in the end, gaining a wide range of the technologies - from microwave ovens to cell phones - we now view as everyday. The race to inner space is just as competitive, with engineers at medical companies large and small devoting time, resources and money to developing tomorrow's implantable, each vying to find an inner space cure for Parkinson's, obesity, depression, etc. To borrow from Neil Armstrong, the new frontier of inner space could very well be "a small step for man, but a giant leap for mankind."

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by the way...

When we put Interface together, the last thing we ever want is for it to become just another piece of 'corporate litter'! However, in the past, this has led to comments of "nice magazine, but what exactly do you do?"

Well, in short, we help people achieve great things with technology.

Yes, we offer technology consulting, as the company name in part suggests. But the majority of our work involves developing absolutely brilliant products for clients across a whole range of markets. And with half a century of experience behind us, we have the knack of being able to do it in double quick time.

Naturally, we employ some of the sharpest minds in the industry, and you can only imagine how pioneering these people are when you put them in one room with a problem to solve.

To find out more, why not have a look at our website? Or simply get in touch.

...the Editor

