

# Furd Log

Intellectual Property: Technology, Culture, Policy

**August 12, 2008**

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**[OT: Magic, Perception and Reality](#)** [7:39 am]

[Scientists and Magicians Describe How Tricks Exploit Glitches in Perception](#)

[In a paper published last week](#) in the journal Nature Reviews Neuroscience, a team of brain scientists and prominent magicians described how magic tricks, both simple and spectacular, take advantage of glitches in how the brain constructs a model of the outside world from moment to moment, or what we think of as objective reality.

For the magicians, including The Great Tomsoni (John Thompson), Mac King, James Randi, and Teller of Penn and Teller, the collaboration provided scientific validation, as well as a few new ideas.

For the scientists, Susana Martinez-Conde and Stephen Macknik of the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, it raised hope that magic could accelerate research into perception. “Here’s this art form going back perhaps to ancient Egypt, and basically the neuroscience community had been unaware” of its direct application to the study of perception, Dr. Martinez-Conde said.

[Attention and awareness in stage magic: turning tricks into research](#); Macknick, King, Randi, Robbins, Teller, Thompson and Martinez-Conde; *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience*; 30 July 2008; doi:10.1038/nrn2473

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