## Test your Tacit Knowledge

- Shut your eyes
- Try to touch the Tipp of your nose with your index finger
- At the same time, concentrate hard on what you are doing and on where your arm is all the time
- Do it slowly.

**Did you succeed in finding your nose?**
Yes / No

**Which hand did you use?**
Left / right

Now tell/describe your neighbor exactly how you held your index finger, every movement your arm was doing and all different angles, all the way up to your nose.

**Was it easy to describe in words how you did the exercise?**
Very easy / No difficult / I don't know

## Information

Nose Finder

Out of 702 nose finders – 94% found the nose.

You managed to tip the nose even though you could not see. This is because you have tacit knowledge of where the tip of your nose is and how you must move your arm to touch it.

In this exercise you were focusing on your tacit knowledge. Normally we do not concentrate so deliberately on the physical motions we make. If we did, we would never get anything done because our conscious minds are hopelessly inefficient information processor compared with our unconscious minds.

**Conscious mind** is capable of processing between 16 and 40 bits of information per second. **Unconscious mind** can handle more than 11 million bits per second.

This means we are of no more than a millionth of all the information that our brain process!

## Describing the exercise

Normally, it is easier to do this exercise than to explain what we did.

54% of the 702 nose finders thought it was difficult.
41% thought it was easy
5% didn't know

It is even more difficult to write it down and describe it exactly. We are very good in doing things tacitly, so good that we can express only a fraction of it in words.

A much better way is to show how to do it. Information is a very poor vehicle for transferring knowledge.

## Use of right or left hand

76% of the 702 nose finder used the right hand.

Why did you use the hand you were using? You never gave it a thought, It was purely automatic. Am I right?

Over the years we build up innumerable patterns in our brains that serve as unconscious rules of procedure to cope with every conceivable situation. These rules save us a great deal of energy, enabling us to act quickly and effectively without having to think about what we are doing the whole time. These rules of procedure are also an essential part of acquiring and improving skills.

But the rules of procedure are also a limitation. Since they are always there, they affect new knowledge like a filter or a pair of spectacles. In this way all new knowledge is always colored by our previous knowledge.

If you used your right hand in the exercise, you missed the experience of trying it with your left hand. No great loss in this case perhaps, but consider how you act in more complex situations at home or at work.

How much happens automatically? How much of your ability to create new knowledge do you unconsciously switch off?

So congratulations if you used the other hand and the reason wasn't trivial (such as holding the mouse or the pen in your best hand). The ability to break our unconscious limitations is an indication of creativity!