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Thinking at species level

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The solutions to human population growth and the challenges of sustainability and climate change may well lie in the most important event in human evolution in the past two million years.

I refer, of course, to the linking of human minds, values, information and opinion at lightspeed and in real time around the planet, via the internet and social media.

This is a development without precedent, not only in our own history but also among all the species which have inhabited or currently inhabit the Earth.

Almost unawares, it is giving birth to an entirely different kind of humanity.

In the second trimester of a baby's gestation a marvellous thing happens. The neurons, axons and glia in the embryonic brain begin to connect – and cognition is born.

An inanimate mass of cells becomes a sentient being, capable of thought, imagination, memory, logic, feelings and dreams.

Today individual humans are connecting, at the speed of light, around a planet – just like the cells in the foetal brain.

We are in the process of forming, if you like, a universal, Earth-sized mind. What Teilhard de Chardin called the noosphere is becoming incarnate (de Chardin 1955, p. 191ff).