

## Being forgetful can actually help your brain make better decisions

Most of us think “perfect” memory means never forgetting, but maybe forgetting actually helps us navigate a world that is random and ever-changing.

The argument is that memory isn’t supposed to act like a video recorder, but instead like a list of useful rules that help us make better decisions, says Blake Richards, a University of Toronto professor who studies the theoretical links between artificial intelligence and neuroscience. So it makes sense that our brains would make us forget outdated, irrelevant information that might confuse us, or information that leads us astray.

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[T]he brain actually spends energy making us forget, by generating new neurons that “overwrite” the old ones, or by weakening the connections between neurons. But why does it do so if our brains aren’t running out of space?

Firstly, forgetting old information can make us more efficient...Forgetting old information can also keep us from generalizing too much from one piece of information. Here, there are many parallels with artificial intelligence and how these systems learn, according to Richards.

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Ultimately, says Richards, we often assume that memory is a good thing, but “at the end of the day, our brains only do things if it was good for our survival from an evolutionary perspective.”

*[Read the full study [here](#) (behind paywall)]*

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Are you forgetful? That's just your brain erasing useless memories](#)**