

## Explaining déjà vu: Is this eerily familiar ‘glitch in the matrix’ a form of conflict resolution?

Some think déjà vu is a sign that you’re recalling an experience from a past life. Spooky!

Carrie-Anne Moss, as Trinity in The Matrix trilogy, tells us (and Keanu Reeves as Neo) that déjà vu is a “[glitch in the Matrix](#)”—the simulated reality that keeps humanity unaware that intelligent machines have actually taken over the world.

[One] theory is that déjà vu is associated with [false memories](#)—memories that feel real but aren’t. This form of déjà vu would be similar to the feeling when you can’t differentiate between something that really happened versus a dream. However, researchers have begun to push back on this idea.

One study used functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) to scan the brains of 21 participants as they experienced a kind of lab-induced déjà vu. Interestingly, the areas of the brain involved in [memory](#), like the hippocampus, were not triggered.

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Instead, the researchers found the active areas of the brain were those involved in decision making. They interpret this result to mean that déjà vu could instead be a result of our brains conducting some form of [conflict resolution](#). In other words, our brain checks through our memories like a rolodex looking for any conflict between what we think we’ve experienced versus what actually happened to us.

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