

The Singularity

Nobody asked but ...

I have very recently been reading *The Information: History, Theory, Flood* by James Gleick. After having absorbed twice the section on the Turing Machine, the coin has finally dropped after more than a quarter century. I will not attempt to explain the Turing Machine to you, referring instead to a starting point as in the Wikipedia entry linked above. My current understanding of the TM is that computers only work in closed systems, ie ones without uncomputable numbers. But the TM itself proves that there are no systems without uncomputable numbers. So, here's how it works in the real world. Humans are able to forget irrelevant information, more or less well, but we do very well in handling novelty and synthesizing response. In other words, we can encounter an open system and fence off the part that does not compute. Computers, however, cannot do this. Computers can only close systems where their instruction set, provided by imperfect humans, tells them what to exclude. If they do not have the instruction, they halt. Tell me where this does not compute.

Kilgore Forelle