

Mapping the brain

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as one of the world's major illnesses, the commercial value of his findings could prove enormous.

While it will take at least another three to five years to further test and develop his

technique, Liddle has already considered its commercial implications.

Like most university researchers, he is aware of the often delicate balance that exists between the public who pays for his research and the private interests who stand to potentially profit as a result.

Liddle wants to ensure that any diagnosis is available for widespread use.

"If [the technique] works as a diagnostic test, I personally wouldn't want to patent it," he said. "I'd want it just to be used world-wide, and I think anything that was an obstacle to that would be a disappointment to me."

But as Liddle points out, there's a major difference between

diagnoses and treatments.

While new diagnostic techniques can be shared relatively freely, new treatments like drugs are generally kept in the hands of pharmaceutical industry.

"You could imagine a world in which the pharmaceutical industry is a state-run or a university-run business, but that's not the world we live in," said Liddle. "I don't see any prospect of changing that, and indeed I'm not even sure we would want to change it."

Over the past 12 years, research conducted at UBC has resulted in the creation of 77 different spin-off companies.

In 1998 alone, those companies generated over \$1 million in royalties for UBC.



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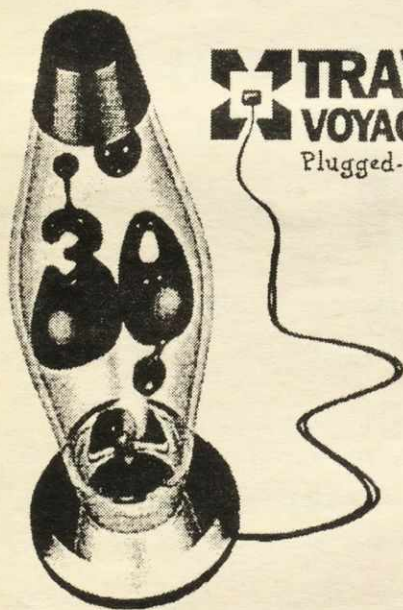
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