

Alumnus' unusual research got an engineering start

By Jamie Hutchinson

From age five, ECE alumnus Dean Radin (MSEE '75) seemed headed for a career as a concert violinist. But he also excelled at science and math, read voraciously in many subjects, and enjoyed taking apart gadgets and putting them together again.

What's a prodigious polymath to do?

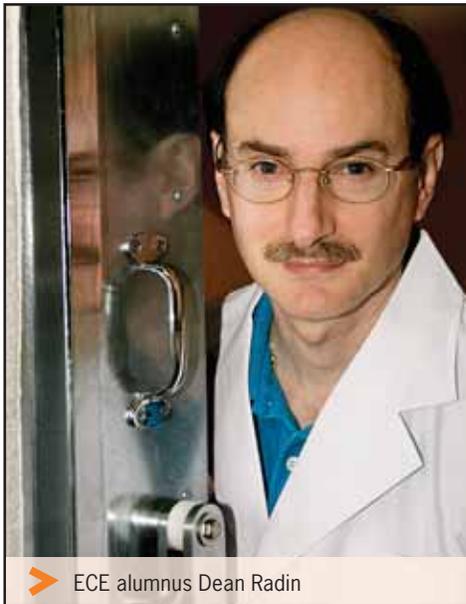
Radin consulted with family and friends, who gave him the advice he now gives to others: "I always tell people now that if you're interested in a huge range of topics...first learn how to do engineering so you can know how to do something." He majored in electrical engineering at the University of Massachusetts, then picked Illinois for grad school.

In many ways, Radin's resume since leaving ECE looks like those of the department's other most successful and interesting alumni. He earned a PhD and went on to hold positions in prestigious labs and think tanks; he worked in a Silicon Valley startup for one of the giants of the tech industry; and his research and publications have made him a big name in his field.

But the similarities end there, and the differences originate in another of Radin's boyhood interests. "When I was a kid and I learned that it was possible to apply some science towards verifying whether psychic phenomena were true or not, I couldn't think of anything more interesting to do."

Today Radin is a senior scientist at the Institute of Noetic Sciences in Petaluma, California. Arguing from the results of his own well-known

research on psychic phenomena (or "psi"), as well as his command of psi research worldwide, Radin fiercely defends the evidence for human potentials like psychokinesis, clairvoyance, telepathy, and precognition.



➤ ECE alumnus Dean Radin

Radin's books, *The Conscious Universe* (1997, HarperCollins) and *Entangled Minds* (2006, Simon & Schuster), are available as mass-market paperbacks. He's been interviewed by Oprah and Larry King, profiled by the *New York Times*, and featured in the award-winning documentary *What the BLEEP Do We Know!?* He draws huge crowds for talks at venues ranging from Cambridge University's Cavendish Laboratory to Google. And he's all over the Internet.

After earning his PhD in educational psychology at Illinois, Radin worked at Bell Labs in Columbus, Ohio, where he

used discretionary research time to study psi. His next job was with the famed think tank, SRI International, which performed classified psi research for the Pentagon. At SRI, Radin conducted experiments, reviewed translations of Russian and Chinese psi literature, and interviewed defecting scientists from those countries.

In the late 1990s Radin worked at Microsoft cofounder Paul Allen's Interval Research Corp., and he has long been interested in the possibility of psi-based technologies. He points to several new patents or patents pending for devices that exploit the effects of mental intention on circuitry.

"Somebody somewhere thinks there's money to be made," said Radin. "The closest analogy to things we have today are brain-activated technologies, and this would be the next step, which would be pure mind-controlled technologies."

Radin shares the engineering community's optimism about nano and biotechnology, if for slightly different reasons. "The effects that we see in mind-matter interactions tend to be very small and very statistical," he said. "That suggests that the smaller the system, or the easier it is for the system to be 'pushed,' the better the results might be."

Radin and other psi researchers often use the Internet for networked experiments, an area Radin has explored since his student days at Illinois, when he posted a precognition test on the PLATO network. "Nothing very spectacular to report about it," he said. "But it was fun." ●