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Brain-computer implant has passed 1000-day milestone

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Health

Technology

Helen Thomson, biomedical news editor

A paralysed woman was still able to accurately control a computer cursor with her thoughts 1000 days after having a tiny electronic device implanted in her brain, say the researchers who devised the system. The achievement demonstrates the longevity of brain-machine implants.

The woman, for whom the researchers use the pseudonym S3, had a brainstem stroke in the mid-1990s that caused tetraplegia - paralysis of all four limbs and the vocal cords.

In 2005, researchers from Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, the Providence VA Medical Center and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston implanted a tiny silicon electrode array the size of a small aspirin into S3's brain to help her communicate better with the outside world.

