

Gordon Bell

<http://www.businessinsider.com/interview-with-gordon-bell-on-lifelogging-2016-4>

Gordon Bell has one of Silicon Valley's most incredible resumes. Bell is probably best known for promoting the practice of "lifelogging," or literally wearing a computer around your neck that keeps track of everything you do, hear, and say for later retrieval. He literally wrote the book on the subject, titled "Total Recall."

"What's on your computer, the lifelog, is really your personal memory," says Bell.

MyLifeBits

From 1998 through 2007, Bell was the leader and prime subject of a Microsoft Research experiment called "MyLifeBits," lifelogging every aspect of his life, including stuff like heart rate and temperature. It was an important forerunner to the more modern notions of the "quantified self" and fitness trackers like Fitbit.

In 2007, right at the tail end of the experiment, the introduction of the iPhone upended the whole lifelogging craze. People no longer needed to record everything about their lives; now we capture the highlights on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook as they happen.

"Whether you like it or not, all of that content of your life will be stored somewhere, most likely your phone," Bell says.

More importantly, the smartphone era has led to an explosive need for storage that the MyLifeBits project simply couldn't navigate. In 2007 or so, at the conclusion of the project they were working on the assumption that 1 terabyte, or a thousand gigabytes of data, was enough for a human lifetime.

"We guessed that this would be enough to store everything you've ever seen or heard," Bell says. "Geeze, our model of what the world would be really had changed."

Bell himself quit actively lifelogging, and a few hardcore adherents still do it these days.

Bell says that all of this ubiquitous technology is making it more important, not less, to keep better track of our data. After all, if our devices are storing our life's highlights, then it's an important augment to what he calls "biomemory," whether we like it or not.