

In 2011 an abstract of the concept of the web portal as a collaborative scientific online project was included into the [program](#) of the prestigious international conference Towards a Science of Consciousness which was held in Stockholm (Sweden) in May. We thank the organizing committee of the conference for their assistance and understanding.



Online networking as a way to catalyze and coordinate a transdisciplinary community of scientists studying altered states of consciousness

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Abstract: The world today becomes increasingly complex; the same processes are reflected in science. In the 20th century there has been a trend of specialization, but the 21st century brings the need of transdisciplinary collaboration and action. The emerging science of consciousness is essentially a transdisciplinary field. Our argument is that in today's informational society it is important to co-create and develop online platforms that support international academic transdisciplinarity. The case is made on the example of a non-profit, non-governmental international academic web project altstates.net devoted to studying altered states of consciousness (ASC). The platform is designed to support the growth of practical transdisciplinary links and cooperation among specialists of psychology, neuroscience, medicine, anthropology, cultural sciences, and other fields who explore the phenomenon of ASC and its cultural and psychophysiological correlates. This helps to further establish the notion of ASC as a legitimate topic of research in the mainstream academia worldwide.

Comment: Science is usually associated in our minds to the scientific process of making hypothesis, doing experiments, and interpreting their results. Most often the metaperspective on science, the meta-awareness of its basic pragmatical manifestation in sociocultural dimensions

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of life is lacking. Every scientific paradigm has its roots, its history; and it is possible to influence the history of a scientific paradigm through systemic means. The creation of an online platform that would support catalyzing of a transdisciplinary community of scientists who are established in their fields and, nevertheless, want to pursue academic research of the phenomenon of altered states of consciousness (which is still marginalized in the mainstream academia of many countries around the world due to often—if we are to use C. T. Tart’s term—a *state-specific*

nature

of the subject matter) is explored through the perspective of an attempt for consciously influencing public opinion, de-marginalizing and legitimizing the topic of inquiry in the collective consciousness of academicians and non-academicians, and catalyzing the growth of interest in studying the field. The States of Consciousness (

<http://altstates.net/>

) International Academic Web Portal, supported by Russian Foundation for Basic Research and organized in partnership with specialists of the Human Brain Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences is such an initiative which is aimed at reviving the framework of altered states of consciousness as a legitimate topic of in-depth transdisciplinary scientific study. The initial idea of the project has had its origins in the scholarly activities and struggles of several Russian scientists who found out that “consciousness” and especially “altered states of consciousness” are still taboo topics in the mainstream Russian academia. They organized an academic team who brought forth the project under in collaboration with Dr. Dimitry Spivak (senior research fellow at N. P. Bechtereva Human Brain Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences) who acts as a scientific consulting of the project.