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Cyborg urges better understanding of technology

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Granada (Spain), Feb 26 (IANS/EFE) The artist whose prosthetic audio-visual implant makes him the world's first cyborg said here Monday that society needs to see technology "as a human creation, not as something extraterrestrial".

"It's very logical to use technology to enrich ourselves. Cybernetics can help everyone perceive what we cannot perceive," Neil Harbisson said in a speech at the University of Granada.

The 30-year-old artist, composer and activist was born with achromatopsia, a condition that limits colour perception to black and white.

Harbisson, a native of Northern Ireland who spent most of his youth in Spain, learned in 2003 of a possible cybernetic solution. He and a succession of cyberneticists developed the eyeborg, a head-mounted camera that translates colors into sound waves.

In 2009, a student at Spain's Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya found a way to put the eyeborg into a chip that can be implanted in the user's head.

The chip allows the user to perceive infrared and ultraviolet light that is beyond the range of human vision.

Harbisson says that with the implantation of the chip, he became a cyborg by virtue of "the union between the software and my brain".

He founded the Cyborg Foundation three years ago, aiming to help others follow the same path.

"In this decade we will stop using technology as a tool and we will use it as part of the body," Harbisson said in Granada.

The 21st century will witness the emergence of human beings whose bodies incorporate mechanical, electronic and cybernetic elements, he said.

—IANS/EFE

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