



▶ 'Like using the Force': Neuralink patient demonstrates how he plays chess using brain-chip - video

Computing

Elon Musk's Neuralink shows brain-chip patient playing online chess

Noland Arbaugh, paralyzed after diving accident, received implant in January but experts caution that procedure is in early days

Reuters

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Elon Musk's brain-chip startup Neuralink livestreamed its first patient implanted with a chip playing online chess.

Noland Arbaugh, the 29-year-old patient who was paralyzed below the shoulders after a diving accident, was playing chess on his laptop and moving the cursor using the Neuralink device.

He had received an implant from the company in January and could control a computer mouse using his thoughts, Musk said last month.

"The surgery was super easy," Arbaugh said in the video streamed on Musk's social media platform X, referring to the implant procedure. "I literally was released from the hospital a day later. I have no cognitive impairments."

“I had basically given up playing that game,” Arbaugh said, referring to the game Civilization VI, “you all [Neuralink] gave me the ability to do that again and played for eight hours straight.”

Kip Ludwig, former program director for neural engineering at the US National Institutes of Health, said what Neuralink showed was not a “breakthrough”.

“It is still in the very early days post-implantation, and there is a lot of learning on both the Neuralink side and the subject’s side to maximize the amount of information for control that can be achieved,” he added.

Even so, Ludwig said it was a positive development for the patient that they have been able to interface with a computer in a way they were not able to before the implant. “It’s certainly a good starting point,” he said.

Last month, Reuters reported that US Food and Drug Administration inspectors found problems with recordkeeping and quality controls for animal experiments at Neuralink, less than a month after the startup said it was cleared to test its brain implants in humans.

Neuralink did not respond then to questions about the FDA’s inspection.



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