

Talking tingles with ASMRtists

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ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) is taking the internet by storm. YouTubers producing ASMR visitors are enjoying massive success in terms of both subscriptions and views. This summer, GentleWhispering became the first channel to hit one million subscribers. W Magazine meanwhile, began a series where they invited celebrities to try and make their own ideas.

So, what exactly is ASMR?

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But what exactly are tingles and how are they created?

Benjamin Nicholls, who wrote the book *ASMR: The Sleep Revolution*, looking at ASMR psychology, is an ASMRtist (The word used by the community to describe people who make such videos) producing videos from his ASMR Gamer channel, with 61,000 subscribers describes tingles as: “The poster boys of the ASMR experience and the more peculiar physiological aspect of the phenomenon.”

He goes on to describe what happens when you feel a tingle: “You feel a soothing chill through your scalp and neck, which almost sounds oxymoronic which again lends itself to why ASMR is difficult to describe. Even after the tingling dissipates you are left in a more relaxing state, almost a trance, with a heightened concentration coupled with less stress.”

Lilium, a Danish ASMRtist with over 200,000 subscribers on her channel, TheOneLilium ASMR, describing the phenomenon as: “The feeling of becoming lighter and heavier simultaneously. It's a feeling of zoning out and in at the same time. It's blissful and the most relaxing feeling to have tingles.”

She goes on to describe this as a “unique feeling”, that causes her to get, “butterflies in my stomach that slowly and calmly flies all the way through my chest and expands to my legs and arms and eventually my head”, which eventually makes her fall asleep.



Lilium, a Danish ASMRtist

Whilst, Ira, the Russian ASMRtist behind ASMR COSMONAUT with 8,300 subscribers, compares them to “pleasant waves”, before explaining: “I feel something like entrancement: my body freezes in one position, so as not to ‘frighten off’ the approaching feelings. At the same time, I'm completely focused on the perception of my feelings and the trigger that causes them. This is the difficulty in obtaining the first ASMR experience: you need to be able to let yourself relax, even when the head is packed with a lot of thoughts.”

Triggers do not appear to be exclusive to ASMR, with all three noting that they experienced triggers before they were introduced to ASMR.



“I have experienced tingles throughout my life but never knew what it was or that anyone else experienced it”, Nicholls explains, before noting that on car journeys hum of the engine and the rocking of the car would cause a “fuzzy feeling” in his head, or when teachers would read out in a soft tone.

Lilium begins: “My very first tingles happened when I was a small child and when I would have friends over to play.” She then explains that whenever one of these friends spoke quietly or whispered, she felt “intense shivers and tingles” and “almost paralyzed”.

Whilst she did not understand at the time what caused these responses, she eventually realised it was close-up, soft sounds in her ear.

She then found other things to cause triggers: “As time went on I experienced that it could also be triggered by sounds of plastic, tapping, sounds of soap bubbles, the crinkling of sheets and so much more.”

Ira, [REDACTED], was introduced to triggers from a friend, saying that at the age of 13, she was sent two [REDACTED] pieces of what turned out to be binaural microphone advertising and that these pieces “Barbershop” and “3D Sounds” caused her to look for similar pieces of audio. [REDACTED]



Ira, the Russian ASMRtist behind ASMR Cosmonaut

All three must produce triggers to cause tingles in their videos, so what do they feel is best?

All of them note that triggers are very personal and there is no one size fits all answer.

Lilium tells me: “If I have to generalise people seem to be most fond of videos with kissing sounds, a very gentle atmosphere, personal attention and close up whispering or speaking.”

Her collection of videos is varied including videos of her reading out creepypastas, vaping and eating as well as intimate and fantasy based roleplays.

So, how do creators decide what triggers to use?

“I get an intense urge to incorporate certain triggers that I’m fond of personally. I also include my audiences wishes and they give me tons of inspiration as well,” says Lilium.

Ira is much the same, and notes the positive effects that triggers have on people: “In the helping people cope with insomnia, stress, and depression - this is the reason for w



made this channel. And if I can help at least one person by shooting a video, then it's wonderful!"

So, what about the science behind tingles?

Nicholls explains that scientific investigations are still in their infancy, but possible explanations include the "combination of hormones that illicit quite powerful physical responses", while "others believe that it is tied to Misophonia which is a physical repulsion to certain sounds such as chewing food, or even synaesthesia which is where words are perceived as colours, music as flavours and vice versa."

Interestingly, Liliun notes that the more exposed she has become since making ASMR videos has resulted in her developing "a little immunity to it", though Nicholls highlights research showing "that if you take a break from ASMR for a while, the tingling does return".

Nicholls then goes on to cite a University of Swansea research paper that found markers indicating relaxation and pain suppression.

The world may not yet be clear on what causes these triggers, but they are most certainly real and differ from person to person and like Nicholls points out with more publicity and study, the closer an answer is.

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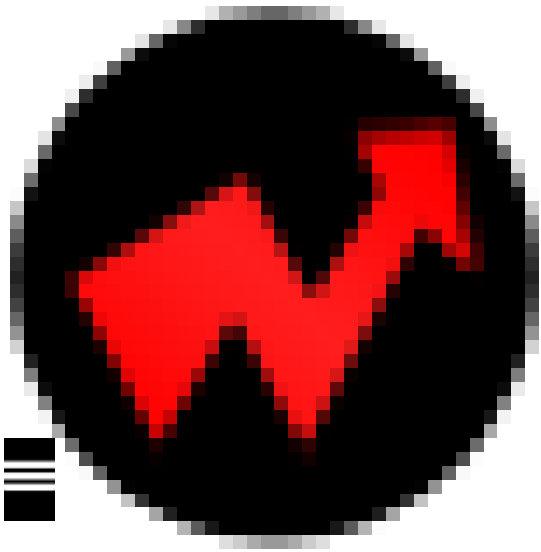
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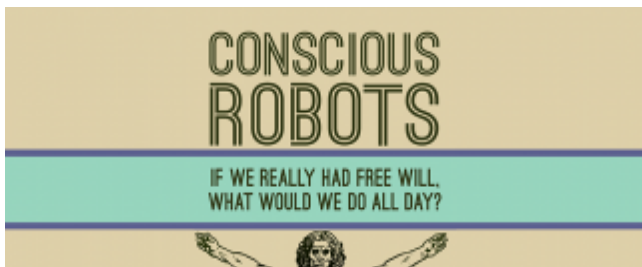
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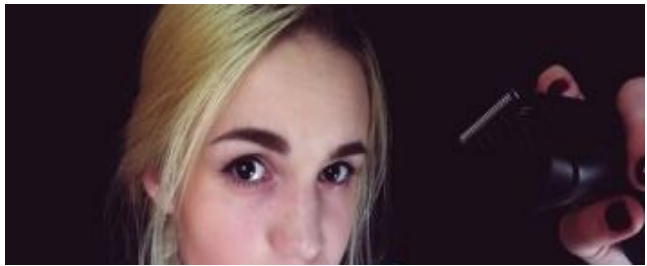
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