NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

People Living With Brain Implants Publish Foundational Recommendations for Ethical BCI Research

This document provides background on the research facilitators and BCI Pioneers Coalition members who collaborated on OUR BCI: Recommendations for Ethical Implanted BCI Research. It is intended to help journalists identify the people involved and accurately describe their roles when sharing the recommendations.

The accompanying press release is available here.

The full recommendations and an infographic of the 13 categories are available at https://bcipioneers.org/our-bci-recommendations.

RESEARCH FACILITATORS

- **Jennifer A. Chandler** is a Professor of Law and Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in the Law and Ethics of Brain Technologies at the University of Ottawa, Canada. Her research explores the legal, ethical and human rights implications of advances in neuroscience and neurotechnology, including brain-computer interfaces, neuromodulation therapies, and the use of brain data to infer mental states. She leads an international, multidisciplinary project examining freedom of thought and expression, mental privacy, and equality in relation to communication neuroprostheses. A Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, she received the International Neuroethics Society's Steven E. Hyman Award for Distinguished Service to Neuroethics in 2024.
- **Amanda van Beinum** is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at York University. Her research examines the social, ethical, and political dimensions of medical innovation, with a particular focus on emerging neurotechnologies and new approaches to mental healthcare. Drawing on medical sociology and science and technology studies, she investigates how medical technologies shape individual experiences, transform healthcare systems, and influence ideas about health, disability, autonomy, and what it means to be human. Her work uses critical qualitative and community-engaged approaches to examine questions of equity, power, and access in the development and implementation of new medical technologies.

BCI PIONEER LEADS

- **Ian Burkhart** is a neurotechnology advocate, researcher, and founder and president of the BCI Pioneers Coalition. After a 2010 diving accident caused a C5 spinal cord injury, he became the first person to restore movement to a paralyzed limb using an implanted brain-computer interface linked to functional electrical stimulation. His experience as a long-term BCI trial participant informs his work

advancing participant-centered research, ethics, access, and policy. Burkhart has co-authored research on implantable BCI clinical trials, serves on the FDA Patient Engagement Advisory Committee, is past president of NASCIC, and was named a 2025 MIT Technology Review Innovator Under 35.

- **Scott Imbrie** is a BCI Pioneer, research participant, and advocate for people living with spinal cord injury. After a 1985 car accident caused a cervical spinal cord injury, he gradually regained some movement but retained significant fine-motor limitations. In 2020, Imbrie became the first participant in Chicago—and the fourth in a multisite study—to receive implanted electrodes in motor and somatosensory cortex. At the University of Chicago, he uses neural signals to control virtual and robotic limbs while receiving artificial tactile feedback. Through BCI Pioneers and extensive public speaking, Imbrie brings lived experience directly into neurotechnology research, ethics, and development.
- **Galen Buckwalter** is a research psychologist, entrepreneur, musician, and BCI Pioneer whose career spans neuropsychology, psychometrics, virtual reality, and applied behavioral science. He developed eHarmony's assessment and matching system and later founded psyML. After a spinal cord injury in adolescence, Buckwalter joined a Caltech–USC implanted brain-computer interface study in 2024, receiving six Utah arrays across motor, sensory, and frontal cortices. His work now sits at the intersection of neuroscience, AI, creativity, and neural autonomy. Through BCI Pioneers, he advocates for participant rights, neural-data governance, long-term device support, and participant-centered neurotechnology research and policy development.
- **Robert "Buz" Chmielewski** is a BCI Pioneer, research participant, educator, and spinal cord injury advocate. After a C6 incomplete spinal cord injury at age 17, he became a long-term peer mentor and patient-educator in rehabilitation and health-professions training. In 2019, Johns Hopkins implanted six microelectrode arrays bilaterally in his motor and sensory cortices. Chmielewski subsequently demonstrated simultaneous brain control of two advanced prosthetic arms, including feeding himself, while receiving artificial sensory feedback and later experiencing virtual touch in mixed reality. Through BCI Pioneers, he brings decades of lived experience to neurotechnology research, participant advocacy, accessibility, ethical development, policy, and reform.

MEDIA CONTACT

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Interviews with Pioneer leads and the research team are available on request.