

# CATALYST

## Series returns Tuesday 15 August, 8.30pm, on ABC & ABC iview

We're living through a golden age of scientific discovery – and **Catalyst** returns to take you to the heart of the biggest science stories from Australia and around the world.

The series is made up of hour long programmes; each one looking at the latest science on single subjects from human health and medical breakthroughs to astronomy and technology.

We want to capture the wonder and excitement at the heart of these stories and meet the scientists and researchers working at the cutting edge of these fields.

Many of the films are hosted by presenters chosen for their expertise and ability to communicate the discoveries in their fields.

We dive into the hunt for alien life beyond our solar system; investigate whether seaweed can help save the world; witness some of the extraordinary techniques used in operations to heal the human heart and undertake a world-first experiment to understand how changing what's in your gut can radically alter your life.

We're also working with international co-producers to bring some of the best filmmaking from around the world.

It's a series that will surprise, delight and inform in equal measure.





## Episode One: Meet the Avatars

Hosted by Dr Jordan Nguyen

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Virtual Reality is a multibillion dollar industry poised to transform your life in the same way the internet did 20 years ago. But it's about a lot more than watching films and playing games. These humble headsets could replace a visit to the doctor, cure phobias, open a new world of emotion and experience and even bring the dead back to life. Biomedical engineer, Dr Jordan Nguyen, takes us to the global frontlines of this fascinating and often bizarre virtual world. He examines what it is and how it could transform the way we relate, learn, work and travel. He meets some of the most life-like avatars that scientists are creating to live in a virtual world and helps an Australian family create their own avatar – with surprising results.

### Biography:

Dr Jordan Nguyen is a biomechanical engineer on a mission to improve lives through technology. After a diving accident in his 20s, Dr Nguyen became particularly interested in disability. He studied at the University of Technology, Sydney, where he developed a mind-controlled smart wheelchair. In 2016, Jordan presented the multi award winning ABC documentary, 'Becoming Superhuman', where he adapted technology so a 13-year-old boy could use brain waves to control electronics in his house and drive a vehicle - despite his cerebral palsy.

### Upcoming episodes:

Future episodes of *Catalyst* include world-renowned scientist and explorer **Professor Tim Flannery** asking the question – can seaweed save the world? Meanwhile, astrophysicist **Graham Phillips** wants to know if we really are alone in the universe. Dr Phillips' mission is to uncover the latest science in the search for alien life. Starting in Australia, Dr Phillips hears from the world's top scientists including **Professor Brian Cox**. In another episode, **Dr Nikki Stamp**, takes us into the amazing world of our hearts to reveal how they function, how we should look after them and the latest medical advances to live a long and healthy life.

## **Production:**

Meet The Avatars Director: David Symonds  
Catalyst Executive Producer: Aidan Lavery  
ABC Head of Factual: Steve Bibb.

## **Publicity Contact:**

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