

DELVING INTO STEPHEN HAWKING'S FINAL THEORY

Physicist & aid developed a theory of physics from an observer's perspective

SCIENCE

PARIS: When Thomas Hertog was first summoned to Stephen Hawking's office in the late 1990s, there was an instant connection between the young Belgian researcher and the legendary British theoretical physicist.

observe appears designed," Hawking told Hertog. He explained that "the laws of physics turn out to be just perfect for the universe to be habitable, for life to be possible."

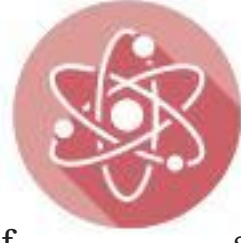
This remarkable string of good luck stretches from the delicate balance that makes it possible for atoms to form molecules necessary for chemistry to the expansion of the universe itself, which allows for vast cosmic structures such as galaxies.

One "trendy" answer to this problem has been the multiverse, an idea that has recently become popular in the movie industry, Hertog said.

New theory is focused on what happened in first moments after Big Bang. Rather than an explosion that followed a pre-existing set of rules, they say laws of physics evolved along with the universe

This theory explains away the seemingly designed nature of the universe by making it just one of countless others. But Hawking realised the "great mire of paradoxes the multiverse was leading us into", arguing there must be a better explanation, Hertog said.

A few years into their collaboration, "it began to sink in" that they were missing something fundamental, Hertog said. The multiverse and even "A Brief History of Time" were "attempts to describe the creation and evolution of our universe from what Stephen would call a 'God's eye perspective'." Hertog said. But because "we are within the universe" and not outside looking in, our theories cannot be decoupled from our perspective, he added. "That was why (Hawking) said that 'A Brief History of Time' is written from a wrong perspective." For the next 15 years, the pair used oddities of quantum theory to develop a new theory.



New theory

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