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Cryonics, the science of freezing a human brain or whole body and thawing it in the future to bring it back to life, seems like a good way to get a second opinion. After all, future medical research is likely to find a cure for cancer, heart disease, and possibly even old age. But "rising from the dead" could create some complex legal and financial problems.

"We don't like to use the word *dead*," says Ralph Merkle, a scientist at the famed [Xerox Palo Alto Research Center](#) and a director of the nonprofit cryonics organization [Alcor](#), the largest in the United States: 400 living and 30 frozen members (brains or whole bodies). "We prefer *suspension*. But let's just say that we're still awaiting the results of the clinical trials."

Alcor's lawyers are working on a way for its clients to access their money in the future, should the need arise. The problem, it seems, is threefold: suspension is illegal until the subject is dead (otherwise, even with permission, it's murder); suspended subjects have no legal status; and most states have laws against "perpetuities": legally, nothing -- especially trusts -- can last forever.

Unlikely? Perhaps, but it's now possible to freeze and thaw simple cell structures, including embryos, sperm, skin, and bones, with little damage. "What we don't know is if freezing causes information leakage," says Mr. Merkle. "If the brain's information is erased, then the subject is quite definitely dead."

By the time scientists know for sure, lawyers may have found a way for the newly living to settle their storage fees.

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The living room is a jungle of plastic and wires – I say enough already.

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Satoru Itawa's keynote touched on both systems, but it seems like the Wii got the short end of the stick.

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