



THE FUTURIST Magazine Releases Top Ten Forecasts For The Next 20 Years

USA Today - October 13, 2008 - Bethesda, Maryland - The World Future Society has released a 10-page report forecasting more than 70 major global developments for the coming year and beyond. The OUTLOOK 2009 report examines the key trends in technology, the environment, the economy, international relations, etc., in order to paint a full, credible portrait of our likely future. Among the most provocative findings:

1. Everything you say and do will be recorded by 2030. By the late 2010s, ubiquitous, unseen nanodevices will provide seamless communication and surveillance among all people everywhere. Humans will have nanoimplants, facilitating interaction in an omnipresent network. Everyone will have a unique Internet Protocol (IP) address. Since nano storage capacity is almost limitless, all conversation and activity will be recorded and recoverable. -Gene Stephens, "Cybercrime in the Year 2025," July-Aug 2008, p. 34

2. Bioviolence will become a greater threat as the technology becomes more accessible. Emerging scientific disciplines (notably genomics, nanotechnology, and other microsciences) could pave the way for a bioattack. Bacteria and viruses could be altered to increase their lethality or to evade antibiotic treatment. Another long-term risk comes from nanopollution fallout from warfare. Nanoparticles could potentially cause new diseases with unusual and difficult-to-treat symptoms, and they will inflict damage far beyond the traditional battlefield, even affecting future generations. -Barry Kellman, "Bioviolence: A Growing Threat," May-June 2008, p. 25 et seq.; Antonietta M. Gatti and Stefano Montanari, "Nanopollution: The Invisible Fog of Future Wars," May-June 2008, p. 32

3. The car's days as king of the road may soon be over. More powerful wireless communication that reduces demand for travel, flying delivery drones to replace trucks, and policies to restrict the number of vehicles owned in each household are among the developments that could thwart the automobile's historic dominance on the environment and culture. If current trends were to continue, the world would have to make way for a total of 3 billion vehicles on the road by 2025. -Thomas J. Frey, "Disrupting the Automobile's Future," Sep-Oct 2008, p. 39 et seq.

4. Careers, and the college majors for preparing for them, are becoming more specialized. An increase in unusual college majors may foretell the growth of unique new career

specialties. Instead of simply majoring in business, more students are beginning to explore niche majors such as sustainable business, strategic intelligence, and entrepreneurship. Other unusual majors that are capturing students' imaginations: neuroscience and nanotechnology, computer and digital forensics, and comic book art. Scoff not: The market for comic books and graphic novels in the United States has grown 12% since 2006. -World Trends & Forecasts, Sep-Oct 2008, p. 8

5. There may not be world law in the foreseeable future, but the world's legal systems will be networked. The Global Legal Information Network (GLIN), a database of local and national laws for more than 50 participating countries, will grow to include more than 100 countries by 2010. The database will lay the groundwork for a more universal understanding of the diversity of laws between nations and will create new opportunities for peace and international partnership. -Joseph N. Pelton, "Toward a Global Rule of Law: A Practical Step Toward World Peace," Nov-Dec 2007, p. 25

6. Professional knowledge will become obsolete almost as quickly as it's acquired. An individual's professional knowledge is becoming outdated at a much faster rate than ever before. Most professions will require continuous instruction and retraining. Rapid changes in the job market and work-related technologies will necessitate job education for almost every worker. At any given moment, a substantial portion of the labor force will be in job retraining programs. -Marvin J. Cetron and Owen Davies, "Trends Shaping Tomorrow's World, Part Two," May-June 2008, p 41

7. The race for biomedical and genetic enhancement will-in the twenty-first century-be what the space race was in the previous century. Humanity is ready to pursue biomedical and genetic enhancement, says UCLA professor Gregory Stock, the money is already being invested, but, he says, "We'll also fret about these things-because we're human, and it's what we do." -Gregory Stock quoted in "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally, Living Personally," Nov-Dec 2007, p. 57

8. Urbanization will hit 60% by 2030. As more of the world's population lives in cities, rapid development to accommodate them will make existing environmental and socioeconomic problems worse. Epidemics will be more common due to crowded dwelling units and poor sanitation. Global warming may accelerate due to higher carbon dioxide output and loss of carbon-absorbing plants. -Marvin J. Cetron and Owen Davies, "Trends Shaping Tomorrow's World, Part One," Mar-Apr 2008, p. 52

9. The Middle East will become more secular while religious influence in China will grow. Popular support for religious government is declining in places like Iraq, according to a University of Michigan study. The researchers report that in 2004 only one-fourth of respondents polled believed that Iraq

would be a better place if religion and politics were separated. By 2007, that proportion was one-third. Separate reports indicate that religion in China will likely increase as an indirect result of economic activity and globalization. -World Trends & Forecasts, Nov-Dec 2007, p. 10

10. Access to electricity will reach 83% of the world by 2030. Electrification has expanded around the world, from 40% connected in 1970 to 73% in 2000, and may reach 83% of the world's people by 2030. Electricity is fundamental to raising living standards and access to the world's products and services. Impoverished areas such as sub-Saharan Africa still have low rates of electrification; for instance, Uganda is just 3.7% electrified. -Andy Hines, "Global Trends in Culture, Infrastructure, and Values," Sep-Oct 2008, p. 20

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