

Alex Stout
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Tech 1010 – R. Winter

2060: A NEW ERA IN TECHNOLOGY

By the time the new year arrives on January 1st, 2060, much will have happened in the past fifty years including the election of our first robotic president...just kidding. But something analogous may not be such a far stretch. Perhaps we'll have our first president with a bionic arm. Either way, wars will still be waged, disasters will still take place, disease, crime, and famine will continue throughout certain places in the world. Mankind will face many trials. But mankind will live on. We will use the elements provided to us here on Earth to build the tools necessary for our survival, as we have always done...so long as a meteor doesn't completely annihilate the entire planet.

This is a look into the future. Some of my projections may be accurate, some may never happen, some may happen sooner or later than estimated, but one thing is for certain, the future will come. And with it will come new ideas and innovations.

GLOBAL ECONOMY:

Will there be a balance of powers throughout the world? Or will the United States of America still be the superpower of our planet? Every other superpower has fallen after so many decades or centuries.¹ Will our strive for peace be answered?

My answer to these questions collectively is...not likely. The United States will no longer be THE superpower of the world. However, they will feel just the same. Countries, such as Russia, China, Japan, The United Kingdom, France, and Germany

¹ <[http://althistory.wikia.com/wiki/Timeline_\(Superpowers\)](http://althistory.wikia.com/wiki/Timeline_(Superpowers))>

will have become mere equals to the United States. They will agree that peace between the powers is ideal and will consent to a balanced global economy.

However, it is unfortunate to note that most of Africa will continue as it is today. Throughout history, Africa has had very few shining moments. Genocide, famine, and disease have blighted the vulnerable continent century after century and will still prevail in the not-so-distant future.² The rest of the world will occasionally lend a helping hand, but no one is devoted enough to really help the struggling peoples of the African continent.

Large cities will still suffer homelessness and crime as the global population reaches 11.3 billion people due to the regular exponential trends of the birth and death rate persist.

GOVERNMENT:

The government slows crime with a new law that the majority of criminals get a device planted into the back of their neck. Criminals can then be tracked at all times. Crime in the city is significantly lower per capita due to the decrease in cost of security. Nearly all street corners have security cameras. However, suburbia still sees murders, rapes, and theft.

By 2050, the government begins providing an individualized e-mail to all citizens. Citizens are provided with information about the on-goings of their government rather than receiving information from the partisan-biased news channels. Also, if citizens are currently going through any legal matters (i.e. auto citations, divorce, etc.), they receive their information through this e-mail, as well.

² Paul Halsall - <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/africa/africasbook.html>>

The government enforces healthier habits placing regulations on school lunch cafeterias and removing vending machines entirely. They also “provide tax breaks [for those] spending less money on processed, fatty, and fast foods...and [a break for those who] visit their doctor often for checkups.”³

LIVING:

As noted before, the global population has reached 11.3 billion people with 1.1 billion just in the United States. In 2010, there is estimated to be a new baby “born every .23 seconds” on Earth. That’s “4.2 babies per second.”⁴ By 2060, it’s not entirely unlikely that there could be 10 new babies every second. That would mean there are approximately 315 million newborns every year. In 2010, the global death rate is estimated to be just over “75 million per year.”⁴ You take into account how many people there are on the planet when calculating the death rate. By 2060, it could easily be down to 70 or even 65 million deaths per year. That would mean with the additional 315 million new people every year reduced by the 65 million that die every year, we would have a total natural increase of 250 million people per year. It would then take just 4 years to jump up a billion people.

So in 2060, the country has become considerably crowded, but continues to be manageable. But with more people come more buildings, roads, and especially new homes. And with more buildings, roads, and homes comes a further decreased amount of land dedicated to farming, forestry, and wildlife preservation because of the need for more room for suburbia.

³ Senator Dan DeBicella - <<http://ctsenaterepublicans.blogspot.com/2008/02/changing-debate-on-healthcare.html>>

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau - <<http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/ipc/pcwe>>

Farming continues to reinvent itself. Fruits and vegetables can be grown even faster and can be grown year round due to advanced sciences in “nitrogen’s effect on protein synthesis” in plants.⁵

Processed foods become healthier due to new techniques in food processing along with injection of vitamins and minerals to processed foods. No matter what food humans are eating, they are very likely to be able to get their daily intake of vitamins and minerals just through their regular meals. Most foods that we would consider fatty foods today, are now made with a healthy alternative known as ‘pseudofood.’ You could be eating a brownie, but the usual butter and fatty oils that make up today’s common ingredients would be an imitation of the real thing loaded with healthy nutrients (not unlike the idea of food in Gordon Young’s book *Colors*).⁶

HOME LIFE:

The home life will still have the same level of home-sweet-home satisfaction it always has, but of course it will be...different. Smart homes in 2010 are often used for convenience and comfort, but they’re also used to impress. The smart home of 2060 will surely make life more convenient and comfortable, and it certainly wouldn’t fail to impress us today. But in 2060, most homes will be smart homes.

I’ll take you on a tour through one of 2060’s smart homes. You walk up to the house from the street. Don’t worry, the lawn and garden are still in the front yard. As you approach the front door you notice very comfortable, colored lighting on the front porch emitting from the floor level of the walls. When you ring the doorbell, the

⁵ Lukas K. Buehler - <<http://www.whatislife.com/reader2/Metabolism/pathway/nitrogen.html>>

⁶ Gordon Young - *Colors*; p. 33.

doorbell asks you for your name. When the occupant of the home is told your name by the speaker or intercom system of their home, they decide to either walk to the door to formally answer it themselves or tell the house to unlock and open the door for you to enter.

As you enter the house, in the front room, you notice comfortable furniture around a blank coffee table (which turns out to be an electronic media device), and picture frames on the walls above the furniture. And you see the far wall is naked of furniture, picture frames, and wall decorations. Instead, the entire wall is animated with a single, large moving portrait of the family taking up the entire space of the wall. You walk down the blue-lighted hallway by the stairway toward the kitchen.

The kitchen is quite similar to today's except for a few additions. On the wall, conveniently placed between the fridge and the pantry is a touchscreen device that provides recipes, notes, appliance function controls, and an inventory of the foods and items available, providing a count and location. And next to your microwave oven is your 'instafreezer' in which you can place any food item and freeze (or cool) it in a matter of seconds or minutes.

On to the family room, the entertainment center is completely hidden. The television has been completely replaced by a new technology. The image is projected onto the wall by a projector within the floorboard of the wall. It projects the image at an extreme angle up onto the wall. Most accent walls have one of these projectors to display wall decorations, designs, large family portraits, etc. This same device is your movie player and stereo sound unit. Movies are all downloaded eliminating DVDs or anything of the sort. Which brings us to the internet.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The internet is something with a high amount of technological potential. But the biggest fear today is the internet taking away our last hope of privacy. With everything becoming electronic, Luddites have feared automation and intelligent electronics taking over the world.⁷ Well, now these smart, electronic gadgets are all getting connected via a network. We can only imagine the advanced communication between our smart gadgets. The question that remains is not if, but when will these communications devices become a hinderance on humanity? Hopefully we can just throw in some more government regulations to control who hears or sees anything through our tech gadgets. But who knows, the government just might want to use it to their advantage.

Will the cell phone advance as far as an implanted speaker into the ear and microphone into one of our teeth? Not likely, but cell phones very well may become just a voice-commanded bluetooth headset with Google Voice® technology. I see Google Voice® technology today as a glimpse into the future.⁸ Ask your cell phone a question, and your cell phone will be able to answer it for you using its own basic functions or performing a search using Google's further advanced search technologies. In 2060, Google has divided their searches into strict facts, questionable facts, opinions, and other categories and subcategories.

ENERGY:

Well, you think of all of these new technologies being used within the modern house of 2060 and the new gadgets and you have to think to yourself, "That's going to

⁷ Kirkpatrick Sale - <<http://www.mindfully.org/Reform/Luddite-History.htm>>

⁸ Wyatt Walter - <<http://whatan00b.com/google-voice-and-the-future-of-telephony>>

be one hell of an electricity bill.” Worry no more my friends. Nuclear technology will prosper. Miniature nuclear reactors will be installed under our neighborhood streets, beneath our skyscrapers and airports.⁹ Dangerous? Not at all. The devices are fail proof and can not turn out in a violent explosion (like those we discussed in class). Production for miniature nuclear power stations “will begin in 2013 by U.S. company Hyperion.”⁸

TRANSPORTATION:

The advancements in micro/mobile nuclear technology brings to us very powerful transport vehicles with practically unlimited amounts of power. Cars will require tune-ups every 3 months, but will never require another ounce of gasoline. I’m sorry, but I’m a passionate disbeliever in flying cars. Especially within the next hundred years. I just don’t think drivers have the capacity for 3-dimensional driving. So, NO FLYING CARS!

Freight trucks will have more power enabling them to manage canyons smoothly and will be able to go from San Francisco to New York without ever needing to stop...that is if the driver can hold his bladder and stay awake the whole trip.

Airline tickets become more affordable, but never reach chump-change standards. Jet airliners are able to fly at high speeds, one way with no stops. A flight from New York to London is reduced from eight hours to three.¹⁰ Trains and monorails

⁹ Nick Rosen - <<http://www.off-grid.net/2008/10/31/micro-nuclear-plants-for-local-power/>>

¹⁰ Alexandros Michalopoulos - <http://www.spacefuture.com/archive/the_future_of_commercial_airlines.shtml>

are everywhere allowing people to park and ride avoiding the preposterous traffic that is a result of the high population.¹¹

EDUCATION:

The release of Apple's iPad inspired my thought of the classroom in 2060.¹² I imagine ThinkDesks (called LearnDesks for students and TeachDesks for teachers) that have full computer and communication functionality. It's all touch screen with incredible graphics. The students use these ThinkDesks to write their 'papers' with a stencil. It looks very much like a real piece of paper being written on by pen or pencil. When it's time to take a test, the student's ThinkDesk loses all network and communication functionality, but maybe the teacher enables a calculator for the math test. The teacher passes the 'paper' out with the swipe of a finger and the paper slides down onto the students' desks. The students type or write their name and answers directly on the document. And when they're done with the test they swipe the 'paper' forward and the 'papers' collect in a 'stack' or 'folder' on the teacher's desk. After the test, the teacher wants to show a video, he launches the video and swipes it out to the students for their viewing pleasure. Talk about going green, eh?

MILITARY:

Lasers have always been thought to be used as a weapon.¹³ I believe that by 2060, we will have accomplished creating laser guns. Laser guns will be incredibly accurate. Lasers will also be very efficient and cheap compared to live ammunition.

¹¹ Terry Long - <<http://electrictrains.suite101.com/article.cfm/monorails>>

¹² Andrew Dodson - <http://www.mlive.com/news/bay-city/index.ssf/2010/02/can_apples_ipad_revolutionize.html>

¹³ MistaPrimeMinista - <<http://hight3ch.com/top-10-future-weapons/>>

The military wouldn't be dumb enough to completely cut out live ammunition because the wider the variety of weapons, the harder it is to be defended against.

Gone are the days you see soldiers excused from military service due to the loss of a limb or other injuries.¹⁴ Bionic body parts will be so functional that no one will be able to distinguish between 'handicapped' people and not 'handicapped' people. And if we can achieve such perfect bionic parts, what's to keep us from building entirely robotic soldiers?¹⁵ I know you're thinking of the classic action flick *Terminator* and, yes, it sounds scary if you think about a machine carrying weapons, driving tanks, and what not, but what if the robot doesn't 'think' for itself. Rather, it's just a drone like our unmanned aircrafts. It's controlled by a soldier with a computer or remote-control device. The weak spot here is the vulnerability to loss of connection between the puppet and its master. All the enemy has to do is emit an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) and poof, no more soldiers.

So, much like the lasers, I could see the military implementing these robotic soldiers only as tools for the humans out on the battlefield to use at their will. Rather than send your living, breathing soldier out into the open field to save another wounded soldier just to get shot by the sniper lurking up in the crow's nest, send your lean, mean, remote-controlled, fighting machine out to save him instead. I'm talking a biped robot, not one of those slow hover bots we see today. A couple sniper bullets won't take down this reinforced steel bot. Although, it will likely need some minor

¹⁴ Kevin Bosnar - <http://www.tacticalwarfightergear.com/tacticalgear/catalog/soldier_exoskeleton.php>

¹⁵ <<http://www.irobotics.com/movies-mainmenu-301.html?task=videodirectlink&id=447>>

repairs. These 'warbots' would significantly reduce the amount of human war casualties. And hey, that's at least two more military jobs thanks to one new machine.

Conclusion:

I will be 71 years old come 2060. I can only hope I will have an impact on some of the technologies I foresee. The home entertainment, home comfort, and education categories are my main areas of interest. I feel like my ideas may be somewhat innovative and hope that someday I may be able to put my ideas into effect before they are inevitably 'stolen.'

People always say either 'the future is bright,' or 'we're headed for another period of 'The Dark Ages,' but I see it as, more or less, the same old same. Yes, the population will be much higher, there will be more robotic machines, there will be incredible gadgets, but the way of living really isn't going to change *that* much.

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