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Future in Fifty Years

For the whole history of humankind, many people tried to imagine how the world they live in would look like in a few months, years, centuries, and even thousands of years. The evolution process had made people smarter with every new generation, which made the technological revolution possible. Unfortunately, it is rather difficult to forecast all the changes, especially now, when people live in the era of science and technology. Numerous outstanding advances in recent discoveries appear every year or even in a shorter period. For example, ten years ago, cell phones did not have many functions; however, today, they have transformed into multitask tools with numerous options and even cause addiction among young people. The way the future will look like is impossible to forecast, but some details of the near future, for example, in fifty years, can be predicted. Therefore, to cover the most significant changes that may happen in fifty years this issue should be considered more closely.

Advances in Medicine and Healthcare

Medicine has always been one of the most promising fields that bring benefits to the society as well as a significant financial income to the researchers and medical corporations. In fact, the medical field already has investments from the governments of different countries as well as private companies and corporations. Sufficient financing makes possible many breakthroughs in treatment, genetic engineering, cloning, transplantation, etc.

All serious diseases like tuberculosis, cancer, HIV/AIDS will be fully cured by an effective treatment system. However, there is always a possibility of virus or disease mutation, and even though the new disease will be named differently, it will be based on one of those that exist today. In addition, terminal diseases can also be considered as the nature's preventive measures from overpopulation. People will always fight with viruses and infections because the evolution process makes changes in all living organisms, and in future, they will be either mutated from the current ones or have an outer origin (for examples, microbes from the outer space that can be brought to the Earth by people or a meteorite).

Genetic engineering is constantly moving forward in researches and discoveries, and, in fifty years, there might be even more dramatic differences from what people have now. Human cloning will definitely remain being unethical and illegal as moral values will not change significantly in such a short time period. However, cloning will serve to people's benefit and humans' or animals' organs and even parts of a body can be cultured on an individual basis (Benson, 2013). With such a helpful achievement, people who require an organ to be transplanted would not need to wait for the organs from the living human beings, but each organ can be created from the original DNA sample when it is in a healthy condition. The cloning process will take less time than today and possibly may take even few hours. In addition, there is a possibility that in fifty years, missing parts of a body such as arms, legs, etc. will be replaced with real and fully functional ones but not artificial. Such an opportunity will make it possible to reduce the number of physically handicapped individuals, which also have a positive impact on the financial state of countries. In this case, social programs, which are oriented on making the lives of handicapped people easier, will not require so many expenses from the government and taxpayers. On the other hand, such procedures will be rather expensive and people with low financial incomes may not be able to pay for it.

The transplantation problem may also be solved with the help of 3D printers like in the recent case with the skull replacement (Vincent, 2014). In the future, such printers may become so advanced that they will be able to print fully functional organs. This procedure may not have such outstanding results in quality as the cloning, but such “printed” organs might be cheaper and more available to average people.

In addition, advances in medicine will help people starting from their fetal stage. There is a possibility among all others that it will be possible to program the sex of the future baby according to the parents’ wish or society’s needs. Moreover, in case a fetal or an embryo is diagnosed with a genetic disease or predisposition to some illness, it could also be cured before the birth (“Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis,” n.d.). The possibility of giving birth to healthy children only will also improve the genome of humankind in general and have a positive impact on the society, because people with serious illnesses always cause negative emotions in their relatives as well complete strangers.

Environment and Energy

Human’s thoughtless activity has already caused dramatic changes in climate and environment. People started realizing the significance of the problem only few decades ago and have already implemented numerous researches and programs that might prevent the planet from the ecological catastrophe.

One of the most significant environmental problems of today is fossil minerals depletion. The continuous growth of consumers’ demands requires more and more natural resources, which exhaust fossil deposits all over the planet. In fact, people had already started to research and propose new ways for satisfying people with everything needed without causing damage to the environment, for example, alternative sources of energy. Today, nearly every person knows that mineral oil usage for producing energy exceeds the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and causes drastic pollution that results in climate changes.

In addition, mineral oil continuously grows in price, because this source of energy is not renewable and will be entirely depleted in the following few decades.

Taking into account this issue, people started looking for renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar power, biofuel, etc. In fifty years, people will use energy only from the renewable sources as it will be environmentally friendly and costly efficient. Since every source of energy has negative or weak sides, they will work better if combined. Therefore, the idea of using artificial trees with “nanoleaves” is too innovative now, but may become one of the most efficient methods of preserving nature in fifty years. The structure of such leaves will have photothermovoltaic cells, which will transform the entire spectrum of sunlight into energy and electricity. In addition, with the blowing of the wind, the leaves will move causing flap frequency and piezo electric generators placed into branches will generate and store electricity (Goodman, n.d.). Moreover, such trees would also absorb carbon dioxide and convert it into oxygen like the real trees do. Such innovations will be possible to implement into real life with the help of more advanced materials that would be more resistant to such negative factors as excessive heat and wind, moisture, corrosion, etc. that do not exist now.

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Saving the planet will be one of the primary issues in fifty years, and to prevent the planet from the ecological catastrophe, nearly all goods and products will be made of recycled materials. Such approach to producing and consuming will also reduce the amount

of landfills significantly, and the free space would be used for creating useful grounds or buildings.

Changes in Transport

Advances in technology will also bring improvements in the quality of transport. Today, the concept of magnetic cushions is already used in such type of vehicles as trains, and this idea is quite promising. In fact, if all vehicles will not touch the ground, especially the heavy ones, the traffic-bearing surface will not need to be replaced or repaired for a longer time. Moreover, the vehicles people use today are already considered slow and obviously will not be a good option in the future.

Some countries (for example, Japan) already use the magnetic levitation system with the help of powerful electromagnets that make trains float over a special guide way. The entire idea is based on the magnets' principles and does not require wheels to move the vehicle (Bonsor, n.d.). Since such system requires a special traffic-bearing surface, the process of replacing the current roads is highly expensive; therefore, magnetic levitation vehicles cannot be widely used now. On the other hand, if to replace it gradually, in fifty years, absolutely all transport will function only with the help the abovementioned magnetic cushions. Moreover, such vehicles will not require any kind of energy that might pollute the environment.

IT Technology Advances

One of the most commonly used IT innovations are windows-widgets. One or few windows in houses will become multitask tools. In addition to their ordinary function, they will show various information needed such as temperature and weather forecast, latest news, list of events, business calendar, etc. like recent widgets can show all this ("Tutorial: What's a widget?" n.d.). Such innovation will be useful to all people in spite of their status and

financial condition, because there will be absolutely no need to reach the phone or computer to get the information needed.

Moreover, the lives of people will be also simplified by using special glasses, which would also show all the information needed. For example, if a person looks at the street or a building, he/she may see the information like names, parameters, historic facts and everything that refers to the object within sight. Such glasses will have a microprocessor, camera, Wi-Fi, etc. In fact, such glasses will have nearly everything a computer has (Voo, 2013). Today, this idea exists not only in theory, but is already brought to life and called Google Glass (“How It Feels through Google Glass”).

First Colonies on Mars

Today, people try to find or create favorable conditions to live outside the planet in case it will be destroyed by a meteorite or people’s activity. There is a possibility that in fifty years, there will be one or even more first colonies on Mars (Mars-One, n.d.). The colonies will be in special domes with artificially created people-friendly environment and closed biological system. With the help of planted trees and plants, people will always have the required amount of oxygen and healthy food. Also, in fifty years there will already be first people born on the Mars planet that will be more assimilated to the living conditions than people from the Earth. Unfortunately, it is rather difficult to forecast if such mission on Mars will be successful, but in fifty years, people will have colonies there at least for scientists and their researches.

Conclusion

Taking into account all facts and presumptions mentioned above, it should be highlighted that in fifty years, there will be no really dramatic changes comparing to what people have now. It is very likely that there will not be significant improvements in financial and social aspects. In fact, there will always be upper, middle, and lower social classes.

Things that will change mostly relate to medicine, genetic engineering, space, and IT technologies. In fact, the majority of current investments are already sent to these most promising fields. The world in fifty years will be different not only because of technical changes, but mostly due to the changed worldview of the future citizens. They will be smarter and more conscious regarding their attitude to the environment and each other. Therefore, in fifty years, many things will be different from what people have now, but not entirely. Today, people can vividly observe the first stages and concepts of many unusual items and ideas that will be ordinary in fifty years.

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