

LOOKING INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Some Predictions for the New Millennium

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It is predicted that computers will alter almost every activity of our lives in the first ten years of this millennium. There is strong evidence to suggest that this prediction will soon become a reality. This report will summarize the changes we will experience in the areas of artificial intelligence and the Internet.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence is generally described as a computer's ability to assume an intelligence similar to that of the human brain—thus, its ability to reason and make decisions based on a preassigned set of facts or data.¹ But many experts predict that the computer's power will not stop there. They predict that the computer will soon become much smarter than humans by a process in which “intelligent” computers create even more intelligent computers. What we learn from these computers will have a far greater impact than the combined discoveries of the microscope, telescope, and X-ray machines.

It is also predicted that the power of computers will double every 18 months through the year 2010.² With these enhancements, robots will displace humans from farms and factories; we will travel in cars, planes, and trains that are operated solely by computers; and traveling on the interstate highways will be as safe as watching television at home.

COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET

The Internet will continue to expand and proliferate around the world. The speed at which information is transmitted on today's Internet will be considered a “snail's pace” on tomorrow's telemetric system. Most computers will transmit information at gigabit speeds and higher.³ Computer security will be “foolproof,” and most business

¹ Peter F. Boyd, “Artificial Intelligence,” *Journal of Computer Trends*, January 2004, pp. 23-24, 36.

² Toshida Doi, “Is Computer Intelligence Better Than the Human Brain?” *Power PC Magazine*, April 2003, pp. 14-17.

³ Melanie T. Reynolds, “Tomorrow's Brainpower,” March 17, 2004, <http://www.businessweek.com/2004/brainpower.htm>. (August 19, 2005).

transactions will be conducted on the Net. Fewer people will travel to foreign countries to vacation since “virtual vacations” will be commonplace.

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