



The Technological World of 2034:

Prediction or Reality

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Hello friend, hold on a minute I forgot to switch on my voice translator, this will be so cool to compare your world with mine. I have never been to your country, except virtually of course, and since you have never been to my country either, I think the fact our teachers matched us up as distance pals or what my grandparents called the "old fashioned pen pals" is going to be really cool. Have you ever heard of pen pals? I hadn't, so when my grandmother used that word I was very interested. I had heard of pens, as we do use those from time to time, but I am sure in your country, much like in mine, we use imbedded keyboards or voice recognition to communicate, not pens! My grandmother talks about the Dragon Naturally Speak 9 program that was evolving when she was in college 22 years ago as a way to use voice commands with computers (BenajBall, 2007). Look how far we have come with voice activation and translation programs in such a short time! Well, my grandmother said a pen pal was a person much like us, who didn't live near each other, but shared their experiences of their daily life by writing it down and mailing it to each other. I then had to ask her about this mailing process she referred to. When she described that, I was like wow, you would send your writing off and have to wait to for it to get there and wait for someone to send one back you? Now, doesn't that sound strange when we can sit and talk to each other face-to- face and yet you are all the way across the ocean from me? Can you even imagine waiting for 3-4 or more days to receive my transmission! I am so glad that we don't have to wait. Like my grandmother said, things have changed a lot since she was in school as a child and even when she was on college. One of her favorite pioneers in technology education is Milton Chen. My grandmother said, when she was doing research in college she read a book called, *Education Nation: Six Leading Edges of Innovation in our Schools*, written by Chen (2010). Chen said in his book, "changing our thinking can be the most

difficult thing we human beings can do especially when our opinions are firmly rooted in personal experience" (p. 11). My grandmother said that educational reform or transformation, as some have called it, has taken a long time and been an uphill battle.

I still think there is room for more educational reforms. I know there are still some kids outside the urban settings stuck in some of the old traditional ways of learning. I don't think they are going to be ready for the future like I am. Grandma talks of a time when students went to different buildings called schools for their learning. I am so glad I get to stay here at my own home and I do my own learning through the modulars created just for me. When we moved into the city, we were able to move out of government controlled schools, though there still are some of those around in the rural areas of our country. How about your country? Back in her day of schooling my grandmother tells me about a time when students would attend school from September to June and then take time off from school in June, July and August. She said that was a tradition well before her time and was started for farming children to be able to attend school, then be able to help during the harvest time with the crops. I can't imagine not being able to learn all year long and whenever I want and at my own pace. Grandmother says learning has changed in other ways too over the years. Back when she went to college she talks about children doing such things as worksheets, standardized tests, and other activities that really had no meaning to what they were learning. Grandmother points to Phil Schlechty (2011) as one who helped change the definition of what takes place when we are in our learning modulars. Schlechty helped define student work, "as an activity with a clear end in view". Schlechty called for not school reform but school transformation. Schlechty took what Chen had said, about having to shake the old way of doing things from the past and helped design new ways for students to learn. I feel sorry for those kids who are still stuck in the old schooling system. I

can't image not knowing why I would be doing something, even using technology without knowing what the end purpose was. What a waste of time. The skills I am learning in creating and collaboration, critical thinking, synthesizing and assessing information I find while browsing just adds to the technical savvy that I need to be successful in this very global world. I feel that I am a new generation student. Richard Saul Wurman (2010) was another person my grandmother talks a lot about, I guess he use to say, "I sell my ignorance and I have an unlimited repertoire". My grandmother said Wurman was another leader in getting people to look at the world differently though information architecture. Richard was also pressing to get schools to teach students where their passion lies. Whoa, I can't even imagine being in a learning modular that I had no interest in. Wouldn't you just die? The way my modular's are designed, I have all the conditions I need for growth as a student. Grandmother even tells me when she was in her Master's of Information Technology program she downloaded her first text book for her e-reader. Can you imagine what that must have been like for her? What a thrill to be on the cutting edge of new technology that we now take for granted. My dad got all my books downloaded in a matter of a few seconds for all my modulars and my little brother who is four has a whole library on his tablet. My brother also has game-based learning experiences on his tablet too. He will begin his modular lessons soon too. No more waiting until you turn an age set by the government to start school. Grandmother said she was just learning about tablets in college too. I guess they had more PC's when she was in college, though some were still carrying around large laptops. My pocket tablet is perfect. I love the fact I can read and work on such a small tool and carry it with me and have everything I need all the time. The speeds of connection with the new atom powered tablets are great (Kurzweil, 2006). You have got to love yours, too, right? I can't imagine what it was like when computers were run on anything less that atoms. It must

have been really slow. My grandma tells me about my great-grandma who used something called a dial-up connection to get on the Internet. I don't even want to know about that ancient history!

History does teach us, though about our ancestors who seemed to thrive on new technology and creating it and craving it is what got our world going in a downhill spiral with e-waste. It is so great, though, that they designed and figured out this new technology of nana-bots. we are now more of an eco-friendly world. The creation of the nana-bots have really helped clean up the environment as well as helped with powering our world (Kurzweil, 2006). If we had not developed this new technology we might have been like the dinosaurs. Extinct!

Well, I guess I should tell you a little bit about my family. My dad works at the Dr. William Hanson laboratory. Dr. Hanson was a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a leader in the new way of treating critical care patients. My dad uses the latest technology to monitors critical care patients from all over the Greater Central Philadelphia hospitals. He tracks a patients's progress without even going to his/her bedside. He has a good bedside manner, but he does his best work in treating patients following in the footsteps of Dr. Hanson and using technology to treat the critically ill (Freitas, 2012). My mom works for the company that supplies the modulars for student learning. She is called a learning architect. She loves creating the perfect learning environment for students to excel at their training for their future jobs. She really likes developing and testing modulars for kids to take to see what skills and interests that they might be good at. I guess a little of Richard Saul Wurman rubbed off on my mom growing up too. Richard was often heard saying, " Learning comes from being interested in something. Learning comes from embracing what you are interested in and nurturing that interest". I know when I took my first modular test to see where my skills and interest might match up for future

employment I was surprised at the results. It wasn't until I was much older that we began to see the alignment of my personal skills and my interest for my future career. Now, my learning has a purpose and a direction for me! I guess that is the great thing about learning, though you are never too old to find something you are interested in and learn about it...oh my gosh, now I am sounding like Richard Saul Wurman. I wish he were alive today. Back when grandma was in college he was seventy-seven. If he would be alive today he would see the fruits of the predictions he made for our world in his last project 19-20-21. Wurman predicted that by 2050 two-thirds of the earth's populations would live in a supercities, and here we are! (Wurman, 2010). We moved to Philadelphia about 2 years ago, so we are part of Wurman numbers, part of what he called the network of cities and countries. I expect it won't be long before the building we live in will be full of new families moving into the city just like our family did, I know a couple of blocks over they are set to begin building two more high-rise all-in-one buildings complete with everything from restaurants, grocery stores and fitness centers right in that one building, everything a family needs. My parents use the exercise center in our building, My mom goes there with her virtual friends three mornings a week. She says her virtual girlfriends keep her accountable. My dad on the other hand uses his personal robot to keep him accountable for his diet and exercise (Breazeal, 2011).

I guess with us being distance pals we are really a part of this network of countries; this new global community that is still growing and learning to communicate and work together that Wurman predicted. For us to be able to communicate with the simple ease of technology and not have communication limited to speaking the same language is really great and adds to our global unity.

I don't know about you but who would have ever been able to survive without the ease of

communication we share across the globe? I can't even imagine life without my virtual personal assistant either. My applications on my Siri 6.0 are so much of a part of my life! Articulated Naturality Web is something my grandmother was just learning about in her college class too. I can't even imagine life without the use of this tool. It has helped our family when we were looking for this apartment to live in as we could see inside the buildings before even asking to look inside and that helped us narrow down our search for the perfect place for our family to live rather quickly.

Well, there are a couple more people in my family you need to know about. My uncle works for one of the big cooperations that created the platform for Second Life. He is a graphic artist and designer. The funny thing is his wife works as a psychologist to help people who get overly consumed with Second Life and have lost touch with reality. Now isn't that funny! My older brother just got a job working with a cloud computing corporation. He helps in designing seamless applications for technologies used in the homes. Though cloud computing, as I understand from my grandmother, was just talking off in 2012, the interfacing of all forms of technology in the home to operate on one system is still a work in progress to reach perfection, but hey, if anybody can do it my older brother can. Well you pretty much have met the whole family I guess. Funny, I bet you think my grandmother lives with us since I talked about her so much don't you? Well, she doesn't. She and grandpa were able to retire and they live in New Zealand now. I talk with my grandmother all the time through our robot communicators. My brother even uses it to play games with grandpa (Breazeal, 2011). I am thankful that my grandmother is still alive to tell me about the olden days. When she was in college she was bothered by high blood pressure and had issues with her cholesterol but thanks to the advancement in medicine my grandmother was give a nanomedicine which was first developed

by Robert A. Freitas Jr for curing type 1 diabetes. Dr. Freitas and his team made quick advancements after the nanomedicine for diabetics. My grandmother got in on the ground-breaking nanomedicine for high blood pressure and cholesterol control. How thankful I am you and I don't have to even worry about those medical conditions thanks to gene therapy (Kurzweil, 2006). With her new nanomdicine, though we don't have to worry about her having a stroke or a heart attack. My parents don't even worry about them living in the outback as my grandparents have one of the driverless cars that were just in the beginning stages of development when my grandmother was in her Master's program. That new technology has come a long way too.

Well, I had better stop talking. My grandma says I spend way too much time on the Internet and she bought me this new device called a Geopalz Pedomoter that tracks my exercise. She learned about it back in graduate school from a classmate, Elizabeth Alligood. Now, there is a piece of new technology that has hung around a few years much to my misfortune! Grandma will be checking up on me online to see if I have been getting enough exercise. I promise next time we talk, I'll do more listening and less talking. I want to know more about your part of global. So until tomorrow, See ya later, alligator. That's a old saying my great- great-grandma taught my dad, from the old, old days. It means “bye” to my new distance "pen pal". I guess a few things from the old days are worth keeping around in 2034!

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