# Global Watch Weekly Report

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# THE DIGITAL MATRIX

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## Welcome to the Global Watch Weekly Report

Dear Rema Marketing Member

Intelligent machines will soon surpass the abilities of human beings, say enthusiasts of artificial intelligence. Such predictions are no longer espoused only by science-fiction aficionados. Some serious scientists are saying the same thing.

Why would anyone want to create an artificial entity more intelligent than man? The reasoning of some proponents of artificial intelligence (AI) is that, although mankind represents the pinnacle of intelligence on the planet, we have proven inept at handling many of our problems. Thus we need a new and better solution*. "We could turn to these superior intelligences for advice and authority in all matters of concern—and the humanity-induced troubles of the world could at last be resolved" (Roger Penrose, Shadows of the Mind, 1994, p. 11).*

Such thoughts set off alarm bells in the minds of people who fear such creations could take over society and enslave us or even decide they don't need us. This concept has provided the themes for several Hollywood action films, including the popular 1999 release Matrix and several Terminator movies .

"Super artificial intelligence" is not anticipated until well into the 21st century. AI's current state is still in its childhood. Recent developments include a chess-playing IBM computer named Deep Blue that defeated the reigning (human) world champion in 1997. AI-infused machines can also perform complicated analytical chores such as scheduling maintenance of the space shuttle.

On the horizon lies enhanced speech recognition, which some experts consider a part of AI technology. Many companies already use sophisticated computers to answer their phones. Callers dial into a switchboard and an "auto-attendant" directs their calls. Videocassette recorders (VCRs) and personal computers that respond to spoken commands already exist. Automobile ignition systems that recognize drivers' voices are on the horizon. The front door of your home may someday be equipped with a system that will unlock after a recognizable spoken command.

AI developers hope "heuristic" computers, equipped with vast databases and programmed to analyze and dissect problems, will be in extensive use around 2020. Heuristic computers might provide services normally supplied by a doctor or lawyer. Designing such systems may prove more difficult that many envision. *"Ask a computer about a rusty car and it might blithely diagnose measles" (Michio Kaku, Visions: How Science Will Revolutionize The 21st Century, 1997,p. 62).*

Some scientists believe machines with even-more-humanlike traits will become commonplace. *"It is reasonable to assume that by 2050 we may have robots that can interface intelligently with humans, machines with primitive emotions ... and common sense" (Kaku, p. 90).* Some expect robots will have the capacity to actually love their masters.

In this edition of the Global Watch Weekly we look at this digital matrix and why we need to be conscious of the need to unplug from it and maintain our sense of identity and spirituality.

Enjoy
Rema Marketing Team

## THE ARTIFICIAL FUTURE

Within 20 years, according to top Artificial Intelligence (AI) researchers, nearly half of all jobs currently occupied by humans will be automated by computers or robots. What purpose will these formerly employed individuals fulfil? The elite of society have been discussing this epic moment for decades.


In April of 2000, Bill Joy, co-founder of *Sun Microsystems*, wrote an article for Wired magazine called "*Why the future doesn't need us."* The premise of the article revolves around the potential for humans to become obsolete. Joy's work begins by describing his experience of reading a portion of Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski's manifesto.

Kaczynski targeted an injured computer scientist David Gelernter, one of Bill Joy's friends. To his dismay, Joy had to agree with Kaczynski in his outlook.

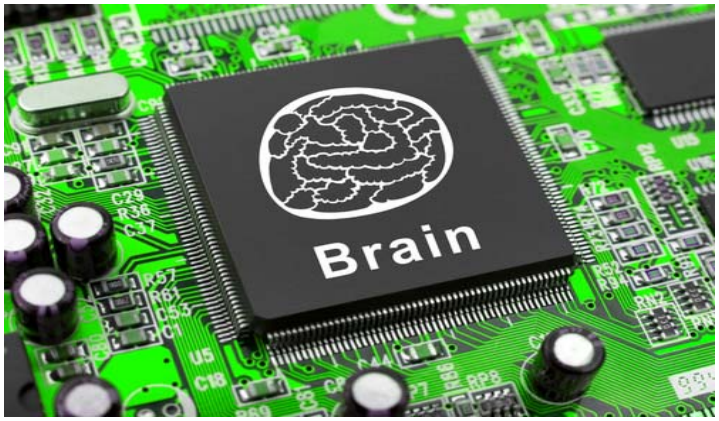
Kaczynski's manifesto describes a dystopic future in which a ruthless elite eradicate useless humans in the wake of the technological revolution. In an alternate scenario the elite are "good shepherds" that make sure *"…everyone's physical needs are satisfied, that all children are raised under psychologically hygienic conditions, that everyone has a wholesome hobby to keep him busy… These engineered human beings may be happy in such a society, but they will most certainly not be free. They will have been reduced to the status of domestic animals,"* writes Kaczynski.

## THE AGE OF DISCONNECTION

In the interim between the robotic takeover and our potential extinction, our lives as human beings will be greatly impacted. The industrial revolution triggered similar apprehension with the threat of mechanical automation. This new revolution is altering the very genetic code of humanity, re-wiring our brains, and creating new forms of life unknown to history. Technology has enabled our world to be digitally connected 24/7. Tele-medicine will allow doctors to remotely monitor patients health at home using a system of sensors, including your toilet. But what of the human element? We are in an age of seeming connection, but are we actually entering an age of disconnection?

Recent news headlines seem to suggest this may be the case.

Our social interactions are changing dramatically due to the prevalence of technology. Our brains are being literally rewired. Human instincts are being twisted. Our drive to connect with others still exists, but it is directed into artificial settings. Technology is augmenting – and may eventually replace – parts of our humanity that have helped us to survive and thrive for ages. Will we be fully domesticated by our technology? One thing is certain: The idea of being human is about to change dramatically in the digital hybrid age we are entering.




## SOCIAL MEDIA: NOT SO SOCIAL?

Social media is a great way to stay connected with your friends online. But how do our digital lives impact our real ones? Researchers at the University of Benedictine at Mesa, Arizona found that Facebook users exhibited signs of anxiety in face to face meetings with people they "met" online. The Daily Mail reported recently,

"The current tendency for people to use Facebook to 'lurk' or 'creep' on other people's profiles raised the question of

what such activities do to change later face-to-face interactions, particularly among the socially anxious,"

explained the researchers.

To test this theory, researchers from the university of Benedictine at Mesa, led by Shannon Rauch, fitted 26 female students with electrodes that measure galvanic skin response (GSR). These electrodes are used to measure changes in physiological arousal. Individuals who "lurked" on the person they later physically met recorded a higher amount of anxiety.

How else are we being impacted by "social" media? We usually associate 16th birthdays with driver's licenses and sneaking off for a drive. For newer generations, this is no longer the case. In the United States, the number of teens with driver's licenses is dropping dramatically. In 1983, 69% of 17 year olds had a license. In 2010, only 46% of 17 year olds had one [Editor's Note: A similar statistic in Australia's largest state NSW: in 1991, 79% of young people aged 20-24 held a license; by 2008 the figure had dropped to 51%].

A 19 year old told the Washington Post that, *"If I couldn't get a ride to see my friend who lives a town over… I could talk on IM or Skype."*

New York public radio reported on the dropping number of teen drivers. Young listeners responded to the question of why they are not driving, or driving less. Poor economic conditions were cited. Some said they are simply "going green" in response to global warming. One said,

"I drive less because I have become a couch potato. The Internet takes me anywhere I want to go. And services like Netflix provide entertainment at the touch of a button. It's also a lot more affordable."

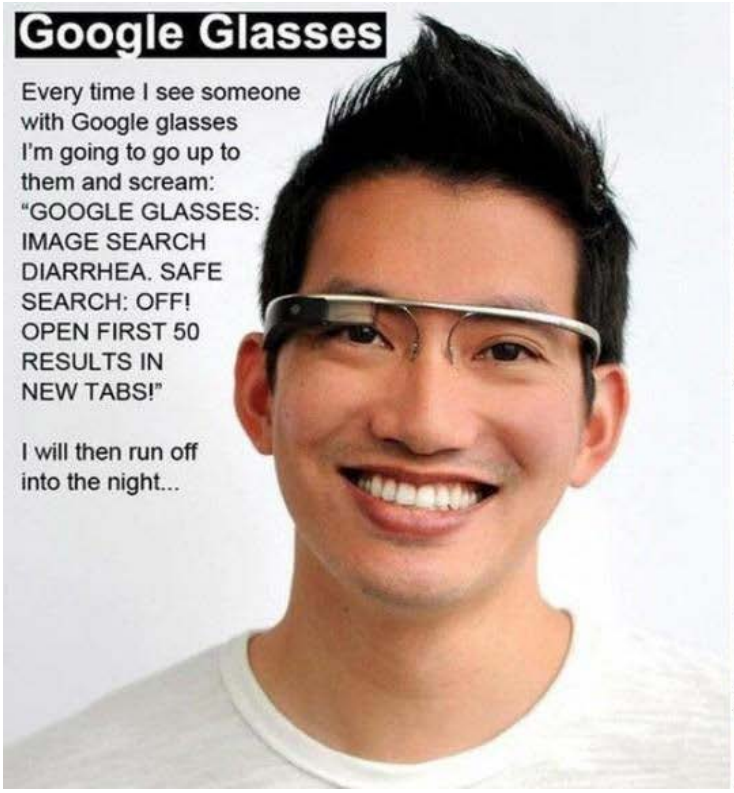
Krystine Batcho, a professor of psychology at Lemoyne College, told CBS news a few years ago that social media is causing a "distancing phenomenon" among users. *"The greater the social media use over time, the life satisfaction decreases,"* Batcho said.

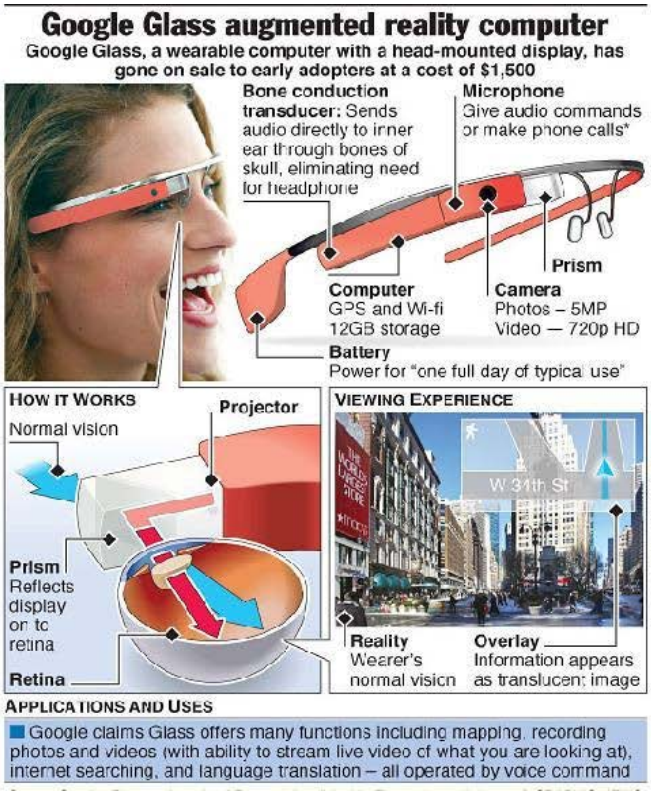
Batcho also pointed out that young people are not developing the language of face-to-face communication. Outside of the impact on their personal lives, Facebook users are in fact helping to create artificial intelligence systems when they share their information online. These self-learning systems are expanding more every day as more information is posted.

The CEO of Digital Sky Technologies, a Russian venture capital company, invested heavily in Facebook in 2010, saying that it would be *"…one of the early platforms for artificial intelligence sometime in the next 10 years."*


Your life and vitality are literally being used up to create a real life matrix. As James Bamford reported for NOVA in 2009, the US National Security Agency (NSA) has been developing – and are likely now actively using – what whistle-blowers have called "HAL." It is an artificial intelligence that taps into phone calls, cell phone geolocation, emails, and you guessed it, Facebook.


A former researcher for the project says *"Think of 2001: A Space Odyssey and the most memorable character, HAL 9000. We are building HAL."*




**THE "DIGITAL NOW"**

The self as we once knew it has ceased to exist. An abstract digital universe is now a part of our identity.

– Abha Dawesar

As the world around us crumbles, will we be trapped in a state of complacency so long as we are still "connected"? The perception of contentment and the feeling that "everything is O.K." is more and more tied to the ability to log on to the web, browse our Facebook feeds, and keep up to date on a never ending stream of data.

Digital technology and social media have altered our identities and our perception of the world. Indian novelist Abha Dawesar discussed this issue in a 2013 TED Talk. The digital now *"...isn't the now of a shooting pain in your foot or the second you bite into a pastry or the three hours you lose yourself in a great book. This now bears very little physical or psychological reference to our own state,"* said Dawesar.

The Internet has expanded our awareness of global issues, and allowed millions of like-minded people to communicate. This is undoubtedly a positive consequence of technology. This same technology can also be profoundly disconnecting.

The digital world has created another layer on top of our existing reality. It has mapped our streets, profiled our tastes, and wired everyday objects into the Internet cloud.

Google Glass and augmented reality technology allow individuals to interface with this digital reality layered on top of the physical world. Eventually an artificial lens will allow us to view this augmented reality right before our eyes.

Are we fully present when we are absorbed in our smart phones? Many of us have seen people walking obliviously while texting on their phones. How many moments of potential connection with other people are we missing? More and more people are investing more time in creating and managing online identities while real-world ones are neglected.

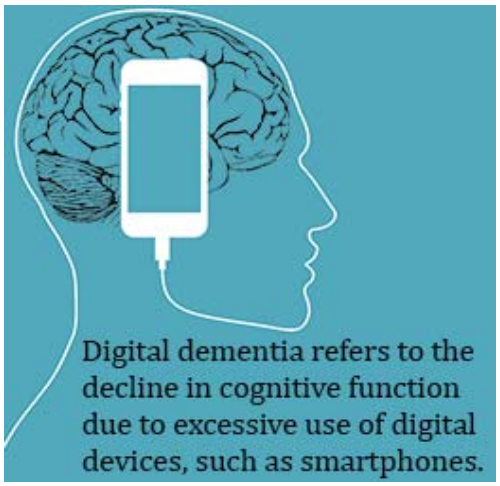
There are numerous companies that offer "online identity management" services. For those who want to remain anonymous, other services offer to erase you from the web.

In this age of disconnection, the "digital now" is disconnected from our present lives. It is a distraction, but an especially enticing one. It calls us back even when part of us resists. As we are finding out, the devices that deliver digital content may be altering our brains.

## DIGITAL DEMENTIA: OUTSOURCING HUMAN MEMORY

Our smart devices capture the moment for us. Researchers are finding that due to the dependence on electronic gadgets, we are no longer remembering things themselves. Instead, we remember where to find them. We use Google to find the answer. Our phone has the information we need.

Human memory is in fact being outsourced. Will our brains adapt to this new technology in a way that we no longer need to remember people, places like we used to?




This phenomenon has become a recognized issue by scientists in South Korea, who have named it "digital dementia." South Koreans are heavy technology users who are quick to pick up new gadgets. This makes the population a "canary in the coalmine" for detecting hazards to humanity posed by technology.

In 2011 scientists from Columbia University, Harvard, and Wisconsin University conducted a study on how human memory is impacted by Internet use. Two groups were given information to type into a computer. One was told that the information would be saved into the computer. The other group believed the information would be erased. As the New York Times reports,

"The subjects were significantly more likely to remember information if they thought they would not be able to find it later. 'Participants did not make the effort to remember when they thought they could later look up the trivia statement they had read', the authors write."

Wearable technology like Google Glass will record our lives in every detail. Sleep patterns, eating habits, social connections and more will be recorded. Will our entire lives be outsourced?


Will all our friend be floating in the Internet cloud. What happens when the grid goes down and the technology we have become dependent on to manage our lives is no longer there? Will we still know who we are? Our internal lives are intimately connected with vivid memories. Increasingly, our online identities are taking precedence over our real-world ones.

According to Ray Kurzweil, Google's top technology engineer, this problem could eventually be "solved" by connecting our brains to the Internet cloud. This could be accomplished using devices *"…the size of blood cells… we'll be able to send them inside our brain through the capillaries, and basically connect up our brain to the cloud,"* Kurzweil says.

## UNPLUG FROM THE MATRIX

Just as power vacuums develop when super-powers collapse, there is a power vacuum that forms when you leave the helm of your mind,

body and spirit. You will be filled by other people's agendas and fall victim to circumstance. In this state you will function as an unknowing, unconscious biological android living out someone else's scripts. Therefore there is a need to wake up and unplug from the matrix and take back your consciousness.

In an age of rising tyranny we need to be alert, discerning and clear eyed. The technological grid that is infiltrating our lives has the potential to cut us off from ourselves and the wider world, while at the same time giving the illusion of connection. Paradoxically, technology is assisting in the process of becoming aware of this situation.

The Washington Post published a startling article in 2008 titled "*Washington's Future, a History*." The article looked into the future of America, with a focus on Washington D.C. Multiple experts in the fields of economics, technology and politics contributed to the piece. It described a high tech society in which "small scale" terror attacks and angry rioters plague the streets while implantable ID chips allow government workers to pass through checkpoints.

As the outside world crumbles, "Google LifeServices" replace big box stores and malls long abandoned. They provide people with pre-packaged experiences of outdoor activities and life experiences.

The Post article speculates that ultimately there will be a revolution against these trends. They foresee a "paper nostalgia movement" that encourages people to write letters and neighbourhood newsletters after the postal service is disbanded. The fictional characters in the piece reflect on the old days *of "...simple pleasures of lingering over meals or discovering some new path through the woods."* The individuals engaging in this revolution of true connection are seen as "political or religious extremists" because of their desire to unplug.

In 2010 the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense released a document titled *"Global Strategic Trends – Out to 2040".* By 2045 – and likely before then – many futurists and scientists are projecting that technology will have advanced exponentially, bringing the much anticipated 'singularity' closer to reality. The Ministry of Defense hints at some of these possible developments, including the emergence of an "Internet of things," radical life extension technology, and surveillance of personnel via wireless mood-sensing devices. Ultimately, due to pervasive technology in the environment, it may become difficult to "turn the outside world off." The document states: *"…Even amongst those who make an explicit lifestyle choice to remain detached [from the technology grid], choosing to be disconnected may be considered suspicious behaviour."*

We need a revolution of true connection before we get to the point of no return.

**THE BIBLICAL VERDICT**

Why would anyone want to create an artificial entity more intelligent than man? The reasoning of some proponents of artificial intelligence (AI) is that, although mankind represents the pinnacle of intelligence on the planet, we have proven inept at handling many of our problems. Thus we need a new and better solution.

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In developing a source of artificial intelligence that can supply answers to our insoluble problems, this new knowledge tends to produce even more problems in approximate proportion to the amount of new information he discovers.

Man cannot find lasting solutions to his problems because they are, at their core, spiritual in nature (Isaiah 59). Unless and until humanity as a whole is ready to recognize the true source of its problems, and seeks God's solutions, we will continue to face the dilemmas and difficulties that have plagued mankind for thousands of years.

The Bible shows us human problems will not be resolved until Jesus Christ returns.

"Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed" (1 Peter:2:6)