

A futurist predicts the new technologies that'll change your life

by **Emily Dufton**

Driverless cars, personalised diets, credit card extinction and self-service hotels: A futurist tells us what we can expect the world to look like in a decade's time.

The world as we know it is changing, with Artificial Intelligence (AI) already making its way into many of our personal lives, in the form of smart speakers at home and AI assistants on our smartphones.

Futurist Michael McQueen and author of [How to Prepare Now for What's Next](#) says as disruption continues to upend industries, change employment opportunities and alter the way the world communicates, we need to future-proof our lives to stay relevant and thrive.

Here's what you can expect to change in the world of travel, home, shopping, health and food in the next five to ten years.

Travel

Driverless cars

According to Michael, autonomous vehicles will move into the mainstream by 2027. Initially, there'll be perimeters of three to four kilometres set up around CBD areas and within that perimeter, only autonomous vehicles will operate, while outside the perimeter people can drive cars as normal.



In the five to ten years following, the perimeter will start to move further out, until the suburbs become driverless. Once cars are completely automated, they'll communicate with each other electronically and 'platoon', travelling a centimetre from one another on roads at 100km per hour.

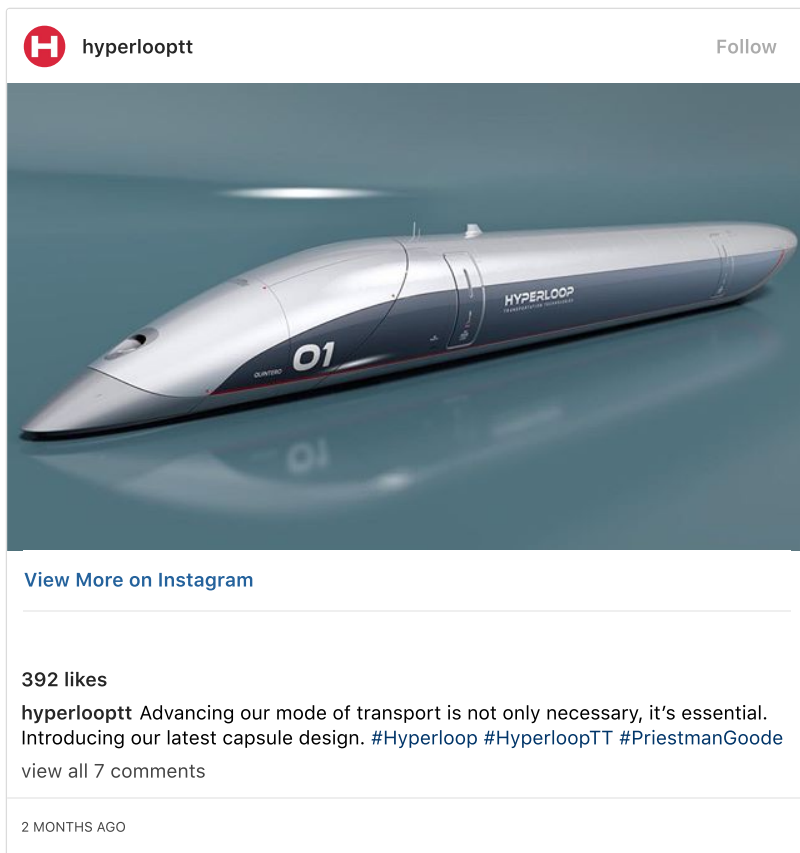


"This unlocks huge potential on our roads," Michael says. "Traffic will decrease and people will be able to move further and further away from their workplaces, for those still commuting to work."

Once driverless cars become mainstream, the requirement to buy vehicles also comes into question. Barclays predicts vehicle sales will fall 40% between now and 2040, and Michael suggests owning a car in three decades will be like owning a horse today: You might own one for a hobby or passion, but not as your primary mode of transport.

Transport

The biggest trend will be the development of supersonic travel and Elon Musk's proposed hyperloop - a transportation system allowing people to travel in pods at over 1,200km per hour - will likely be replicated in other markets, with Michael noting Virgin Galactic is the one to watch.



International travel will also change, and one day soon it may take three hours to travel between London and Sydney. This will allow people to visit places they've never before dreamed of, creating a huge market for tourism in Australia and other far-flung locations, Michael says.



These much shorter travel times will also make the experience of jetlag very different.

Hotels

Once we arrive at our destinations, we'll find the experience of navigating new places a lot easier and more enjoyable in the future, with hotels already implementing technology into the design of their new spaces to create a more seamless service for guests.

Aloft Hotels offer guests a robotic butler - Botlr - who delivers towels and toiletries to guests' doors; self-service check-in and keyless entry to their rooms via smartphones or Apple Watches; voice-activated lights, air conditioning, music and tips on local attractions; and even Emoji Room Service.

Image credit: Aloft Hotels

Michael says we'll see this style of autonomous hotel experience increasing.

Home

Design

The designs of our homes will change significantly in the future, which Michael says will be driven by the autonomous vehicle trend.

There'll be no need for garages or carports at home and multi-storey car parks will be converted into apartments.

New car parks are increasingly being designed so they'll easily convert into apartments or commercial spaces, as soon as car parking is no longer a necessity.

Appliances

Our dishwashers, fridges, washing machines and TVs are all going to get smarter and make domestic duties easier to manage.

LG has launched its range of smart appliances, which get smarter the more you use them, by remembering usage habits and data to better anticipate your needs.

Appliances include a fridge which allows you to remotely adjust temperature settings, dishwashers which can self-diagnose issues and find solutions via the app, washing machines you can start and monitor remotely and robot vacuums with an inbuilt camera to monitor movement.

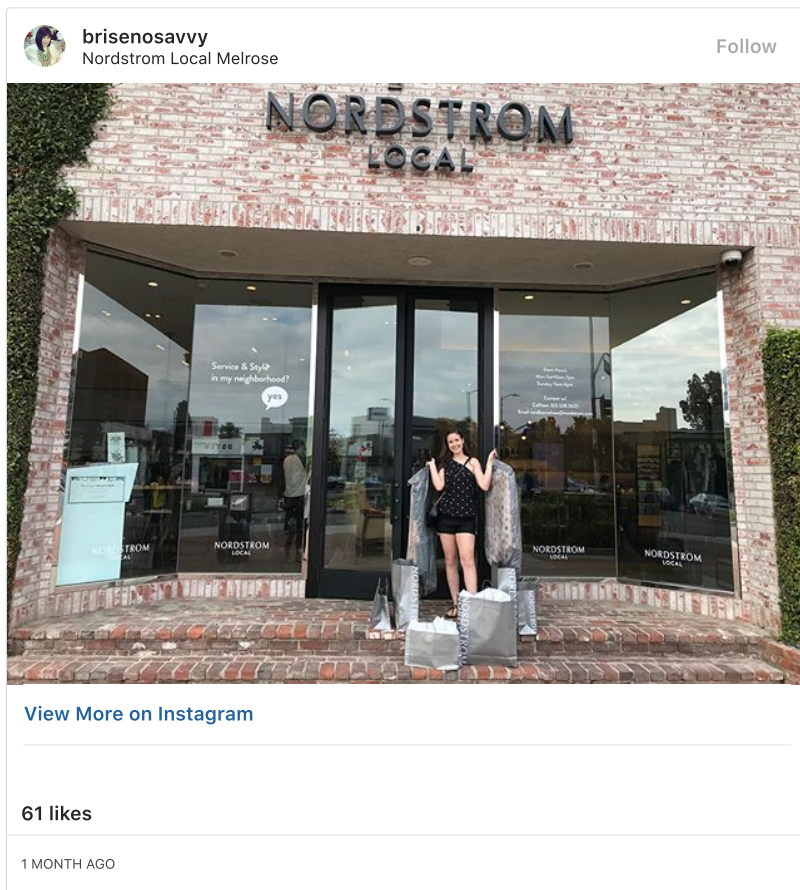
Appliances such as these are being built on open platforms, so they'll continue to work with smart technologies and devices in the future.

Shopping

The high-street

The purpose of retail stores will change in coming years, with shops moving towards becoming experience centres, rather than just housing inventory.

The stores themselves won't contain any stock, and Michael says you'll order the item and it'll be delivered to you within 20 minutes of leaving the store. Nordstrom Local in the US is already operating such a retail experience.



"Every sense is involved in the experience, but the clothes are ordered and delivered from a warehouse," Michael explains. "That's a much better use of space and people's time."

The recently-launched **Amazon Prime Wardrobe** allows online shoppers to try before they buy and order a number of items of clothing to try on at home and return any items they don't want before their account is charged. This incentivises people to buy online and recognises one of the main apprehensions about online shopping is the inability to try on items before committing to the purchase.

Regarding the future of the high street, Michael doesn't believe the model we're currently used to will be sustainable or profitable.

"The rule of thumb for any business nowadays is to go big, boutique or broke," he says. "If you can't compete with the big guys, you need to go boutique - don't try to beat Amazon at their own game."

Michael believes a couple of the iconic Australian brands will stick around if they can remain distinct and continue to evolve alongside technology.

Payments

When it comes to paying for our shopping, we'll be using credit cards a whole lot less and lining up for the checkout will become a thing of the past.

Alipay in China has already begun using facial recognition technology to allow customers to make payments. The application can scan and identify a user's face in a second or two, so there'll soon be no need to even reach for our wallets.

In Seattle, customers can walk into the checkout-free **Amazon Go store** and experience the "world's most advanced shopping technology".

Shoppers will first check-in via an app on their phones before entering the store to do all their shopping. Once they've left, technology detects everything they've put into their shopping baskets and charges their card or Amazon account, so there's no queueing required.

Image: Amazon Go store in Seattle

Food

Data means we can now be more tailored than we have ever been before, with Michael predicting there'll be more emphasis on eating personalised food in the future, customised to individual requirements.

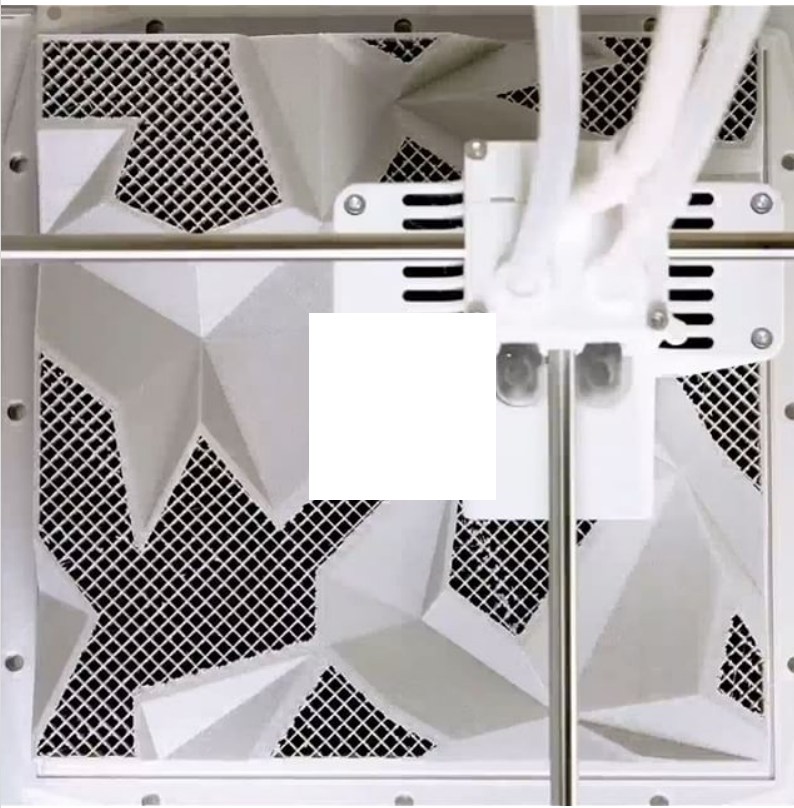
"A new technology can analyse your stool to determine the composition of your diet," Michael says. "It then gives you intelligent meal suggestions, designed to compensate for any nutritional deficiencies in your diet."

As a result, Michael says one-size-fits-all diets, like Lite n' Easy, will increasingly phase out.

"Another trend to watch is **3D-printed food**," Michael tells us. "3D printing will go from being a bit of a flimsy, random technology to something that everyone wants to own."



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There'll also be an increased focus on ethical sourcing and consumers will come to expect fairtrade products. As AI continues to grow and dominate different areas of the economy, we may find an increasing demand for artisan products hand-crafted by people.

"Similar to 'Made in Australia' labels - we'll start to see 'Made by Humans' stickers on products, to distinguish them from those created by robots," Michael says.

Professional and amateur chefs shouldn't worry as Michael doesn't predict cooking will go anywhere anytime soon: "There's been a renaissance of interest in cooking. As the world becomes more technology-driven, we may find people want to create food at home more often and cooking will become a mainstay in years to come."

Health and fitness

An obsession with monitoring our health through data has already begun, with wearable tech growing in popularity.

"Technology is now also being woven into fabrics, which is much more accurate than a device on your wrist," Michael says. "It'll measure your breath and the sweat coming off your body, which will give you information about your water consumption."

Measurements on their own though, won't be enough. Just as we've seen F45 grow in popularity in recent years, people will want fitness programmes which fit into their busy lifestyles. There'll be more demand for short, sharp, team-led workouts and Michael thinks this space will only continue to grow.

24-hour fitness has become the new norm and is now a basic expectation from consumers, with Michael predicting traditional gyms like Fitness First will become less relevant.



With so much change on the horizon, it can sometimes be a challenge to embrace this new world of technology.



"AI is already changing the way we live and making our lives easier, and it'll continue to do so," Michael says. "But we need to always be mindful that we remain the masters of our technology."

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