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Although we don't quite have a time machine or a crystal ball to see into the future, some of the world's most esteemed futurists are helping us get a glimpse of what our lives may look like one day.

Scientists, sociologists and authors, these top four futurists have gained huge followings around the world for their predictions of how science and technology will impact society in the future.

Kevin Kelly

Kevin Kelly is the founding executive editor of *Wired* magazine and is the author of a number of books.

Kelly's 1994 publication, *Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems, and the Economic World*, discusses a future where machines and systems are "so complex and autonomous as to be indistinguishable from living things".

His latest book *What Technology Wants* takes this idea to another level. According to his website Kelly suggests that "technology as a whole is not just a jumble of wires and metal but a living, evolving organism that has its own unconscious needs and tendencies." The book looks out "through the eyes of this global technological system to discover 'what it wants' ". The book claims that by listening to what technology wants will prepare future generations for the "inevitable technologies" to come.

David Brin

Science fiction author and scientist, David Brin has received the Nebula, Locus, Campbell and Hugo Awards. He's also a respected futurist.

in 1998, he won the Freedom of Speech Award for the American Library Association for his non-fiction book *The Transparence Society: Will Technology Force Us To Choose Between Privacy and Freedom?* According to his website, the book "concerns threats to privacy and openness in the information age". In a world where police monitor public places in New York 24 hours a day with CCTV cameras and credit companies can sell people's financial details to anyone willing to pay, Brim warns that surveillance technology will be used by too few people in the future. He argues that the tables should be turned and the public should have access to information like who is buying financial profiles from credit companies.

Dr. Michio Kaku

Dr Kaku is a professor of theoretical physics at the City University of New York and author of *The Future of the Mind and Physics of the Future: How Science Will Shape Human Destiny and Our Daily Lives By the Year 2100.*

In *Physics of the Future,* he predicts that glasses and contact lenses will be connected to the internet and cars will become driverless with the power of the GPS system. He also predicts that nano bots will search and destroy cancer cells and we will be able to prolong our lives by reprogramming our genes with a specially programmed virus.

In *Future of the Mind,* he explores the frontiers of neuroscience. He predicts that one day we will be able to upload the human brain into a computer.

Dr Ray Kurzweil

As well as being the principal inventor of technologies such as the first CCD flatbed scanner and the first print-to-speech reading machine for the blind, Dr Kurzweil has also authored seven books, received 20 honorary doctorates, awarded honours from three presidents and is the director of artificial intelligence development at Google. He's also one of the world's most renowned futurists.

Over the past 25 years, a number of his predictions have come true. In 1990, he predicted that a computer would defeat a human at chess by 1998 (IBM's Big Blue competed against Garry Kasparov in 1997). In 1999, he predicted people could talk and give commands to the their computers by 2009 (natural language interfaces like Apple's Siri and Google Now have since changed the way we can interact with computers).

He predicts that by the 2020s, most diseases will go away as nanobots become smarter than current medical technology; normal human eating can be replaced by nanosystems; the Turing test (a test of a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behaviour equivalent to, or indistinguishable from, that of a human) begins to be passable; and self-driving cars begin to take over the roads, and people won't be allowed to drive on highways.

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