

Here are some of my predictions for 2021, and a little beyond.

I should note that I study futurism, for lack of a better term, and follow people such as Ray Kurzweil, Michio Kaku, Andrew McAfee & Erik Brynjolfsson. I loved the late Isaac Asimov, all the predictions he made. But most of all, I'd say I follow the way John Naismith, who wrote Megatrends, and his methods of Content Analysis.

In the past I gave a presentation at Lee Hecht Harrison on using this method to predict the future of work, and hope to give it again when the pandemic wanes.

You'll also be able to search predictions from others, but most of those tend to be business or political related. The big difference between all these heavy hitters and myself though, is that they all come from high academia, while I've been a member of the working class, sometimes the working poor, my entire life. So my perspective is a little different than theirs.

So, here are my predictions:

1. Let's get the elephant out of the room, Covid19.
 - a. We will be slow to implement vaccines, slow to herd immunity. Slower than people want, but we'll also see record numbers of people getting vaccinated. People are hoping by summer we'll be closer to normal, I doubt that. I think we'll still be wearing masks, likely through the end of the year in most places, and when people don't, infections will still spread badly. Though we'll start to round the curve around Labor Day in this regard.
 - b. There are a lot of predictions about how we're possibly headed to an economic boom when the pandemic ends, a new "Roaring 20's!" I have areas I am both optimistic, and pessimistic about in this regard. The key area of optimism is in that the supply-demand chain has been stretched incredibly thin across manufacturing and distribution, and by result, service as well. Many companies and businesses are operating at a bare minimum, and have for some time. When the economy starts to move, just a little, that will create real positive numbers for some time across the board.
 - c. If you believe Moody's, hardly liberal propaganda, the Biden presidency will create 7 million more jobs than Trump would have, and household incomes will rise more than \$5,000 over the next four years ([link](#)). Numbers I believe in, as I believe supply-side economics are a failed economic strategy for the current economic system we have. More on this in a future post perhaps.
 - d. Participatory engagement, experiential entertainment, will see real positive outcomes when the pandemic starts to wane. I wrote about this on LinkedIn months ago ([article here](#)), about how people were slowly tiring of being sucked into the black hole of their mobile life

and ripe for living in the real world. The pandemic has pushed this, so expect to see record numbers of people actively doing this as the pandemic recedes. We're already seeing this in bicycling and hiking, for example, but look to see it in areas that get people out of their houses, and doing something with other people. This could be anything from amusement parks, to pottery classes, to anything with children at any event, escape rooms, and so on. If the pandemic has rounded the curve by late summer, state and county fairs (which happen then in most states) could see record numbers. The same goes with haunted houses.

- e. Look for luxury type vacations to boom as well. Lawrence Summers, former VP of the World Bank and US Treasury Secretary recently stated he was against government issuing \$2,000 checks, even \$600 checks, as people were sitting on money they were having a hard time spending ([link](#)). That may be true for the upper 10% or so in Larry's economic bubble (I'll address details on this in a moment), I'll also give him some slack as his recent writings have stressed even more relief for the working poor during the pandemic, but the credence in his theory translates to a real windfall for people who weren't hurt much by the pandemic, and made good money; them splurging on a lot of things. Picture lavish cruises and resort getaways, new luxury cars, lagoon pools, first class flights, etc. doing quite well.

2. Areas of pessimism.

- a. We haven't been able to control the pandemic, and that won't change with record numbers of people dying, likely topping 500,000 by summer. That's the population of the city of Atlanta.
- b. Ancillary ailments from those who contracted Covid, but didn't die, will continue for months, at a horrifying cost, and go largely underreported.
- c. Despite growth listed above, there are staggering numbers that cannot be denied, meaning millions, millions of people are going to be trying to crawl out of an enormous economic hole.
 - i. We now have over 25 million people who go hungry at least part of the day.
 - ii. That number more than doubles when you take food insecurity into consideration (without help, such as family, friends, food stamps, food banks, these people would join the 25 million). ([link](#))
 - iii. Before the pandemic truly hit, we had nearly 75 million people on Medicaid. Not *Medicare*, for the elderly. Medicaid, for the poor, or those who cannot afford any health care, even on the exchanges. This conjures up images of people in nursing homes, or lazy people. But the fact is, over 60% of people on Medicaid are working, and over 80% are in a household where at least one adult works. 75 million (likely low) is nearly one in four Americans. ([link](#))

- iv. Utility customers owe over \$40 billion in debt. [\(link\)](#)
 - v. 25% of all Americans have no retirement savings, and the average is only about \$60,000, which may last people less than five years into retirement. Close to 70% of all Americans are not prepared for retirement. [\(link\)](#) I hope to write an article on this in the near future, from a working-class point of view, that differs from what the industry will tell you.
 - vi. We're already seeing record numbers of suicides, and depression, which is wildly unreported, with little safety net for mental health, and mental health issues still widely viewed as a stigma. The reciprocal costs of this are enormous, and will not abate when people are faced with the numbers above.
 - vii. There is zero indication at all that any implementation of economic tax or rule changes by the Biden administration will do anything to slow the massive divide of economic inequality in the country. The super rich will get richer, and the bottom 80% or so will have to get by with less, with the bottom 40% or so taking the brunt of this, for years to come. [\(report\)](#)
 - viii. There is growing indication future jobs coming out of the pandemic will be gig jobs, temp jobs, part time jobs, far more than "career" jobs, with excellent benefits.
 - ix. Automation, AI, robotics and other technology will continue to eat away at jobs at a more rapid pace than new jobs can replace them. Ask any CEO in America, even ones that truly care about their staff, and the honest answer is they are looking to make advancements in AI and automation. I hope to write an article on this in the near future as well.
- d. While a robust economy, likely from 2022-202X will help put a dent in this for many people, there is no indication that it will stem the long-term tidal wave of inequality well into the 2030's likely. [\(link\)](#).
3. Look for more direct cash payments from the government (despite what Summers says), as the year goes on. These cash payments will continue to be hugely popular, and pave the way to more robust discussions of a UBI (a system I support, and will write on another day.)
 4. Net Zero will grow [\(what is Net Zero?\)](#), If you weren't sure what that means, it's a concept around companies curbing carbon emissions to nothing. This will in turn create more green jobs, and this will, despite concerns about regulations and restrictions costing jobs, actually grow better than people expect.
 5. Rank Choice Voting will grow. Look this term up, and tell me if you like it. The idea works like this, instead of voting for one candidate in a primary election, you rank the people you like, in order. The top candidates face a run off later. Systems like this already exist in some places, Maine, Alaska, parts of Oregon, California, Massachusetts, soon New York City, elsewhere. [\(link\)](#)

- a. Along these lines, expect open primaries to grow as well. That is, you get to a voting booth, and can vote for any candidate for any party.
6. Smart stuff, and wearables will continue to grow at a very rapid rate. Smart water bottles already exist, smart glasses are appearing, super smart watches that measure all sorts of health factors already exist. Expect these to grow, and expect this technology, especially around health, to expand into everyday items around you. This could be other electronics, but also in cars, televisions, jewelry, clothing even.
7. Medical advancements will continue at an astounding rate, with technology assisting medical expertise with incredible success. It's going to take a few years, but we will reach a point where data for an illness will be fed into a computer, and the computer will spit out very refined potential solutions for remedies and cures, greatly assisting medical staff.

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