

IBM Reveals Five Innovations that Will Change Our Lives Over the Next Five Years

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Unveiled today, the second annual "IBM Next Five in Five" is a list of innovations that have the potential to change the way people work, live and play over the next five years.

The list is based on market and societal trends expected to transform our lives, as well as emerging technologies from IBM's Labs around the world that could make these innovations possible.

In the next five years, our lives will change through technology innovations in the following ways:

It will be easy for you to be green and save money doing it: A range of "smart energy" technologies will make it easier for you to manage your personal "carbon footprint". As data begins to run through our electrical wires, dishwashers, air conditioners, house lights, and more will be connected directly to a "smart" electric grid, making it possible to turn them on and off using your cell phone or any Web browser. In addition to alerting you about leaving appliances on when they could be off to conserve energy, technology will also provide you with up-to-date reports of electrical usage, so you can monitor how much you are spending and how much energy you are putting out, just like you can track your cell phone minute usage today. Intelligent energy grids will also enable utilities to provide you with the option to use green energy sources, like solar and wind, to fuel your home, and innovations in solar and wind technology will bring cost-efficient options to a utility near you.

The way you drive will be completely different: In the next five years, a coming wave of connectivity between cars and the road is going to change the way you drive, help keep you safe, and even keep you out of traffic jams. Technology is poised to keep traffic moving, cut pollution, curb accidents, and make it easier for you to get from point A to B, without the stress. The cities you live in will find a cure for congestion using intelligent traffic systems that can make real-time adjustments to traffic lights and divert traffic to alternate routes with ease. Your car will have driver-assist technologies that will make it possible for automobiles to communicate with each other and with sensors along the road -- allowing them to behave as if they have 'reflexes' so they can take preventive actions under dangerous conditions. Your car will automatically tell you where traffic is jammed up and find you an alternative route to take.

You are what you eat, so you will know what you eat: We've all heard the saying 'you are what you eat', but with foods being sourced across international borders, the need to 'know exactly what you eat' has never been so important. In the next five years, new technology systems will enable you to know the exact source and make-up of the products you buy and consume. Advancements in computer software and wireless radio sensor technologies will give you access to much more detailed information about the food you are buying and eating. You will know everything from the climate and soil the food was grown in, to the pesticides and pollution it was exposed to, to the energy consumed to create the product, to the temperature and air quality of the shipping containers it traveled through on the way to your dinner table. Advanced sensor and tracing systems will tell you what you eat, before you eat it.

Your cell phone will be your wallet, your ticket broker, your concierge, your bank, your shopping buddy, and more: In the next five years, your mobile phone will be a trusted guide to shopping, banking, touring a new city, and more. New technology will allow you to

snap a picture of someone wearing an outfit you want and will automatically search the web to find the designer and the nearest shops that carry that outfit. You can then see what that outfit would look like on your personal avatar – a 3-D representation of you – right on your phone, and ask your friends, in different locations, to check it out online and give their opinion. Your phone will also guide you through visiting a city. When you turn on your phone in a city you are visiting, it automatically provides you with local entertainment options, activities, and dining options that match your preferences, and then make reservations and purchases tickets for you – like a personal concierge.

Doctors will get enhanced “super-senses” to better diagnose and treat you: In the next five years, your doctor will be able to see, hear and understand your medical records in entirely new ways. In effect, doctor’s will gain superpowers – technologies will allow them to gain x-ray like vision to view medical images; super sensitive hearing to find tiniest audio clue in your heart beat; and ways to organize information in the same way they treat a patient. An avatar – a 3D representation of your body – will allow doctors to visualize your medical records in an entirely new way, so they can click with the computer mouse on a particular part of the avatar, to trigger a search of your medical records and retrieve information relevant to that part of your body, instead of leafing through pages of notes. The computer will automatically compare those visual and audio clues to thousands or hundreds of thousands of other patient records, and be able to be much more precise in diagnosing and also treating you, based on people with similar issues and makeup.

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