

# IBM Reveals Five Innovations That Will Change Our Lives in the Next Five Years

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- Energy saving solar technology will be built into asphalt, paint and windows
- You will have a crystal ball for your health
- You will talk to the Web . . . and the Web will talk back
- You will have your own digital shopping assistants
- Forgetting will become a distant memory

The Next Five in Five 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 can make these innovations possible.

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

**Energy saving solar technology will be built into asphalt, paint and windows**

Ever wonder how much energy could be created by having solar technology embedded in our sidewalks, driveways, siding, paint, rooftops, and windows? In the next five years, solar energy will be an affordable option for you and your neighbors. Until now, the materials and the process of producing solar cells to convert into solar energy have been too costly for widespread adoption. But now this is changing with the creation of “thin-film” solar cells, a new type of cost-efficient solar cell that can be 100 times thinner than silicon-wafer cells and produced at a lower cost. These new thin-film solar cells can be “printed” and arranged on a flexible backing, suitable for not only the tops, but also the sides of buildings, tinted windows, cell phones, notebook computers, cars, and even clothing.

## **You will have a crystal ball for your health**

What if you could foresee your health destiny and use that knowledge to modify your lifestyle? Even though we are told that things like French fries, potato chips, cheese and wine aren't good for us, what if you could find out specifically that you are someone who could consume more of those vices without having negative impact on your health? In the next five years, your doctor will be able to provide you with a genetic map that tells you what health risks you are likely to face in your lifetime and the specific things you can do to prevent them, based on your specific DNA – all for less than \$200. Ever since scientists discovered how to map the entire human genome, it has opened new doors in helping to unlock the secrets our genes hold to predicting health traits and conditions we may be predisposed to. Doctors can use this information to recommend lifestyle changes and treatments. Pharmaceutical companies will also be able to engineer new, more effective medications that are targeted for each of us as individual patients. Genetic mapping will radically transform healthcare over the next five years and allow you to take better care of yourself.

## **You will talk to the Web . . . and the Web will talk back**

“Going” to the web will change dramatically in the next five years. In the future, you will be able to surf the Internet, hands-free, by using your voice – therefore eliminating the need for visuals or keypads. New technology will change how people create, build and interact with information and e-commerce websites – using speech instead of text. We know this can happen because the technology is available, but we also know it can happen because it must. In places like India, where the spoken word is more prominent than the written word in education, government and culture, “talking” to the Web is leapfrogging all other interfaces, and the mobile phone is outpacing the PC. In the future, through the use of “VoiceSites,” people without access to a personal computer and Internet, or who are unable to read or write, will be able to take advantage of all the benefits and conveniences the Web has to offer. And by the web becoming more accessible by using voice, it will become easier to use for everyone. Imagine being within a phone call’s reach from the ability to post, scan and respond to e-mails and instant messages – without typing. You will be able to sort through the Web verbally to find what you are looking for and have the information read back to you – as if you are having a conversation with the Web.

## **You will have your own digital shopping assistants**

Ever find yourself in a fitting room with all the wrong sizes and no salesperson in sight? And what about affirmation from friends that the outfit you’ve chosen truly does look good on you? In the next five years, shoppers will increasingly rely on themselves - and the opinions of each other - to make purchasing decisions rather than wait for help from in-store sales associates. A combination of new technology and the next wave of mobile devices will give the in-store shopping experience a

significant boost. Fitting rooms soon will be outfitted with digital shopping assistants - touch screen and voice activated kiosks that will allow you to choose clothing items and accessories to complement, or replace, what you already selected. Once you make your selections, a sales associate is notified and will gather the items and bring them directly to you. You'll also be able to snap photos of yourself in different combinations and email or SMS them to your friends and family for the thumbs up...or the thumbs down. Shoppers can access product ratings and reviews from fellow consumers and will even be able to download money-saving coupons and instantly apply them to their purchases.

## **Forgetting will become a distant memory**

Information overload keeping you up at night? Forget about it. In the next five years, it will become much easier to remember what to buy at the grocery store, which errands need to be run, who you spoke with at a conference, where and when you agreed to meet a friend, or what product you saw advertised at the airport. That's because such details of everyday life will be recorded, stored, analyzed, and provided at the appropriate time and place by both portable and stationary smart appliances. To help make this possible, microphones and video cameras will record conversations and activities. The information collected will be automatically stored and analyzed on a personal computer. People can then be prompted to "remember" what discussions they had, for example, with their daughter or doctor by telephone. Based on such conversations, smart phones equipped with global-positioning technology might also remind them to pick up groceries or prescriptions if they pass a particular store at a particular time. It's not hard to imagine that TVs, remote controls, or even coffee table tops, can one day be the familiar mediums through which we tap into our digitally-stored information.

Provided by IBM

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