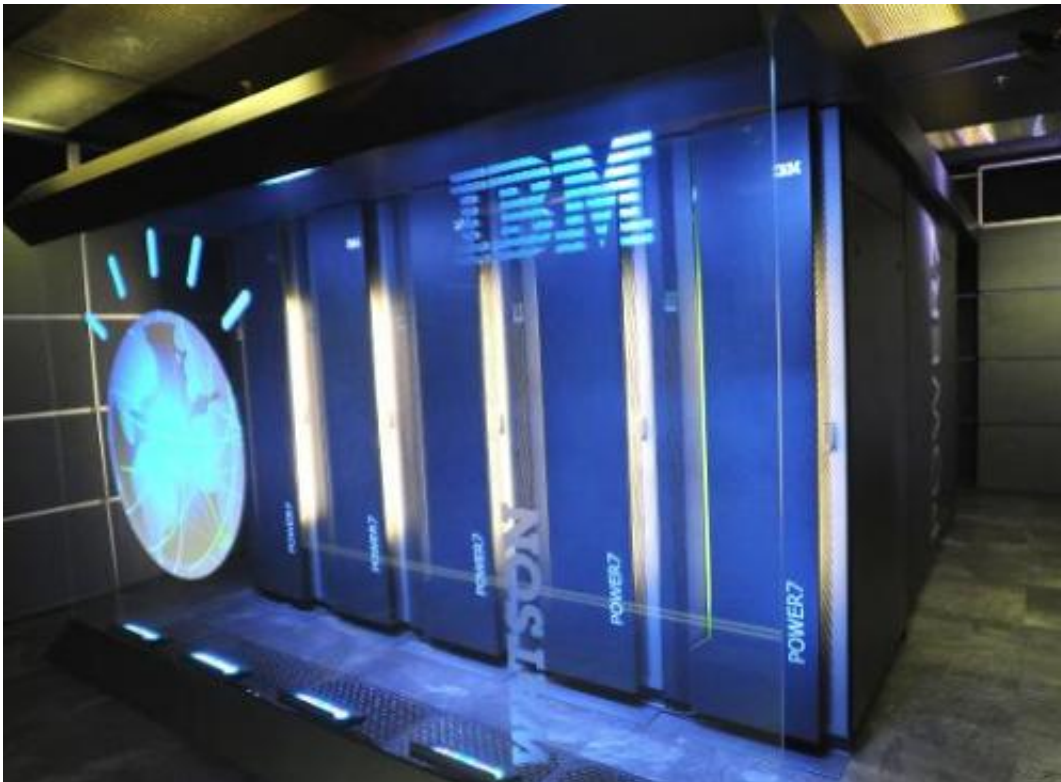# IBM sees five tech-powered changes in next five years

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The IBM-powered Watson computer that triumphed on US gameshow Jeopardy

Technology stalwart IBM on Tuesday predicted classrooms getting to know students and doctors using DNA to customize care are among five big changes on the horizon.

IBM said that its annual forecast of five ways technology will change

lives in the coming five years was "driven by a new era of [cognitive systems](#) where machines will learn, reason and engage with us in a more natural and personalized way."

And while software evolves to "think" in ways similar to the human brain, computing power and troves of data kept handy in the Internet "cloud" will enable machines to power innovations in classrooms, local shops, doctors' offices, city streets and elsewhere, according to the firm behind the Watson computer that triumphed on US television game show Jeopardy.

"Over time these computers will get smarter and more customized through interactions with data, devices and people, helping us take on what may have been seen as unsolvable problems by using all the information that surrounds us and bringing the right insight or suggestion to our fingertips right when it's most needed," IBM contended.

Predictions for the coming five years included "classrooms of the future" equipped with systems that track and analyze each student's progress to tailor curriculum and help teachers target learning techniques.

"Basically, the classroom learns you," IBM vice president of innovation Bernie Meyerson told AFP. "It is surprisingly straight-forward to do."

In another prediction, IBM sees retail shops large or small blending online and real-world storefronts with 'Watson-like' technologies and augmented reality.

Also, doctors will tailor treatments using patient DNA, according to Meyerson.

"Knowing your genetic make-up lets you sort through a huge variety of

treatment options and determine the best course to follow," he said.

"They don't have to carpet bomb your body to treat cancer," Meyerson continued. "There is the ability to tailor the attack to improve the efficacy against cancer cells while leaving healthy cells untouched."

Smart machines tapping into the Internet cloud will also be able to serve as "digital guardians" protecting people from hackers by recognizing unusual online behavior, such as shopping binges at dubious websites, and spying scam email messages or booby-trapped links.

"The digital guardian will know you are not someone who goes to a poker site and tops off your account," Meyerson said. "Not only does it shut down the behavior, but it tracks it back to who is doing it and passes the information on to authorities."

The final prediction was that cities will weave social networks, smartphones, sensors, and machine learning to better manage services and build relationships with citizens.

"The city will help you live in it," Meyerson said. "There is a new generation of leaders coming in who are extremely tech savvy and making good use of it."

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