

The dramatic acceleration of change

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Things are changing faster these days and are predicated to change much (a 1000 times) more rapidly than in the past. By its nature this change will lead to the collapse of most current systems because they don't change fast at all, being subject to vested interests in the status quo. We have already seen this with the collapse of famous companies and governments and whole industries changed by new technology and methods. This article from [FuturEdition](#) tells more. And gives some background to some of the economic and political changes that I have written about.

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Michael

The Nature of Big Change

We are living in unprecedented times . . . but, of course, everyone has said that at any given period in the past. Nevertheless, technically it's true. Every year is a fresh, new one that might seem familiar, but essentially, is not. Unless all change could be eliminated, we're necessarily producing new realities every moment that have never existed before.

Parallels with historical times, at best, therefore, reflect only a very rough congruity with an earlier time that certainly did not have the technology, communications, ideas and values of the present. So, sure, these are unprecedented times.

But in important ways, this time it is *really* unprecedented. There is always change, but **the rate of change that we are experiencing these days has never been seen before . . . and it is accelerating exponentially**. That means that if present trends continue, every week or month or year going forward will produce *significantly* more change than in the previous one. Humans have never experienced this rate of change before.

Let me give you an example. Futurist Ray Kurzweil, in his important book, *The Singularity is Near*, cataloged the rate of technological change in many different dimensions. His bottom-line assessment was that **our present century will see 1000 times the technological change as the last century** – during which the automobile, airplane, Internet and nuclear wars emerged. Transportation rates went from that limited by the gallop of a horse to chemically propelled space craft that traverse more than 15,000 miles in an hour. And, of course, we visited the moon.

Now, think about what 1000 times that change would be. What kind of a world might show up in 100 years if we lived through a thousand times the change of the 20th century? Well, you can't reasonably do it. No one can. The implications are so great that you are immediately driven into science fiction land where all of the current "experts" just dismiss you with a wave of a hand.

Try it. With two compounded orders of magnitude change over the period of a century, you could literally find yourself in a place where humans didn't eat food or drink water (which would eliminate agriculture). They might be able to read minds telepathically and be able to visually read the energetic fields of anyone they looked at – immediately knowing about the past experiences, present feelings, and honesty of statements. Just that, of course, would eliminate all politicians and advertising!

But maybe, as some sources seriously suggest, you could manifest physical things at will – just by focusing your mind. Think of what that would do to the notion of economics as we know it. In this handful of future human characteristics you'd also be able to transport yourself wherever you wanted by thinking yourself there. In that world, no one would know what airplanes were.

You might think that what I've just described is farfetched, and if so, then you just made my point. Even though there are credible analysts and observers who seriously propose that the above changes will happen in far less than a century, change of this sort is more than we can reasonably understand and

visualize. Just to parse it down to **the next decade – 70-80 times the change of the last century – boggles the mind!**

Well, it's my business to think about these things and even I have a hard time visualizing how this all might turn out, just because it is so severe and disruptive, but I can tell you a bit about what a revolution of this magnitude means.

First of all, it means that we are in a transition to a new world – a new paradigm. All of this change has direction and it is leading us to a new world that operates in very different ways.

Secondly, in this kind of shift, things change *fundamentally*. We're not talking about adjustments around the edge. The only way to support and sustain this rate of change is if there are extraordinary breakthroughs across almost every sector of human activity.

Already, for example, there are serious efforts afoot to make it possible to control many processes with only your thoughts and the ability to make physical things invisible has made great strides. In a very short time it will be possible to capture, store and search on everything you say in any public (or even private) environment and extract it at will. As this book suggests, unlimited energy and the control of gravity are all in the works.

Thirdly, the tempo accelerates -- things change more quickly. The rate of change is increasing so bigger things are coming faster. And as they converge, these extraordinary events and driving forces interact and cause chain reactions, generating unanticipated consequences. There's a pretty good chance that the inventors of Facebook and Twitter didn't think they were going to be part of bringing down governments . . . and it's certainly clear that most governments didn't anticipate that this new technology might threaten their ability to govern.

Fourthly, much of the change will therefore be strange and unfamiliar. When very rapid, profound, interconnected forces are all in play at the same time, the unanticipated consequences are likely to move quite quickly into threatening the historical and conventional understanding of how things work. Our situation is exacerbated by the fact that significant cosmic changes are influencing the behavior of the sun and therefore major systems (like the climate) on our planet. These are contextual reorganizations that are so large and unprecedented that the underlying systems – agriculture, economic, government, etc. – will not be able to respond effectively.

Because of that, human systems will have a hard time adapting to the change. Research has shown that civil and social systems (legal, education, government, families, et. al.) reconfigure themselves thousands of times slower than the rate of technological change that we are experiencing.

Therefore, it is inevitable that the old systems will collapse. They will not have the capability to change fast enough, and in some cases (like the global financial system), have structurally run out of the ability to sustain the status quo.

So, lastly, a new paradigm will emerge from all of this upheaval that only seems chaotic because we're in the middle of it. Something new will arise to fill the vacuum left by the implosion of the legacy systems. If history gives us any indicator of what the new world will be, it is certain that it will be *radically* different from the world in which we all now find familiar.

In physical terms, there is no more fundamental and basic influence on the way we live and behave than the availability and form of energy that we use. Every aspect of our lives, food, clothing, shelter and transportation . . . and therefore every derivative activity (work, government, recreation, etc.) changes when the affordable source of energy changes. The modern world has been directly enabled by the discovery, development and availability of petroleum, for example. When that era ends, many other ways of doing things will also necessarily end.

Thomas Kuhn famously stated that new paradigms in science emerge only when the leadership of the old generation dies, leaving space for the emergence of the new ideas. What he was saying is that the incumbent system fights new ideas – regardless of whether it is science, education or spirituality. In all cases, the current generation has vested interests (reputations, income streams, influence) in the present way things operate. These individuals and organizations have devoted a great deal of time and wealth to building and shaping the present paradigm and would lose a great deal if their ideas, processes, investments and infrastructure were suddenly deemed obsolete. Like white corpuscles rushing to attack invading germs that are advancing through a break in the integrity of the skin, those with reputations and resources immediately respond to threatening new ideas that could potentially upset what they have worked so hard to put in place.

But Kuhn was describing the dynamics of evolutionary change – change from within. What we're experiencing is revolutionary change that is driven as much by uncontrollable externalities as from internal system dynamics. If rapid climate change sweeps away the assumptions of the past, everyone will have to rethink how things are done. If we begin running out of oil, everyone will be in the business of finding new energy sources. And similarly, if the financial system collapses of its own weight, space will quickly be made for new ideas . . . and these are just conventional scenarios. If alien life comes by to introduce itself or solar cosmic rays turn on strings of dormant human DNA, suddenly providing us with radical new capabilities – well, all bets are off and new ideas will really prevail!

That's what I think is happening. We are full into the most significant global revolution in the history of our species. We are about to watch our world turn sideways as the result of the collision of both conventional and unconventional forces and one big story in that shift will be energy. That's why this book is important.

In many cases, the new ideas that rise to fill the void produced by large-scale change had their origins long before the environment finally presented the opening that allowed their proliferation. (Interesting new ideas about alternative financial systems and economies, for example, are now anticipating the collapse of the present financial system). More than likely the system fought those insurgent concepts when they first showed up, finding them threatening. Nevertheless, over the years some small groups continued to develop and refine the ideas, trying to ready them for a market opening. The coming months and years are going to present that opportunity.

As mentioned earlier, the nature of this revolution is that there will be widespread, fundamental breakthroughs. They are already happening in every area of science, technology and society. Ultimately, for the system to operate with some stability, the big changes will migrate throughout the organism so that there is an internal consistency within the interface, communication and operation of the subsystems of the larger network. Finding that equilibrium is the process that we will be experiencing during the near future. As breakthroughs happen in certain spaces, they will force other areas to operate differently. If they are unable to efficiently adapt, those threatened institutions or ideas or processes will fail . . . and new ideas, institutions and processes will show up that fulfill the required function (e.g. economy, government), but in a way that is necessarily compatible with the big, forcing change that precipitated the whole thing.

The change that is headed this way is so profound that I think we all need as much information as possible about the coming months and years. We've recommended so many different books and DVDs in the past that I thought were particularly helpful in painting a picture of the big change that appears on our horizon – and concrete suggestions about how to prepare for the coming shift – that we've put them all together in a new [Transition Store](#) where you can browse all of the titles. We'll mention other books and videos as we hear of them here in FUTUREdition and we'll also put them in the new store. You can visit it by [clicking here](#) or on the banner.