



Words: Stephen Allan,
MediaCom Worldwide Chairman & CEO

INTRO

Soon – sooner than you may think – robots will be smarter than we are.

Make the most of the next 30 years. That's how long you've got to enjoy feeling vaguely superior to machines.

According to Ray Kurzweil, Google's director of engineering and one of the world's leading experts in artificial intelligence, we have until 2045 to celebrate our intellectual advantages over computers. That's when we'll hit "singularity," a point at which machine intelligence will be infinitely more powerful than all human intelligence combined. Kurzweil says that intelligence will then radiate outward from the planet until it saturates the universe. In other words, AI will do more good than harm.

Some aren't so sure.

What we do know is that the AI sector is becoming increasingly powerful, and investment is soaring. Signposts along the road to singularity include automated intelligence (we use software programs to automate human processes), augmented intelligence (we augment the physical world with a digital layer), advertising intelligence (smart channels, optimized systems) and ambient intelligence (electronic environments that are sensitive and responsive to the presence of people or that inform without intrusion).

While we gaze into a potentially astonishing future, this issue of BLINK will tackle these early stages of the AI revolution, how it's already impacting our lives, and how marketing will be affected along the way.

Programmatic buying, for example, promises a world where you can deliver 60,000 customized versions of your advertising message to your potential customers (p. 16), but we need to be aware that very similar algorithms are powering ad-blocking software; if we're becoming programmatic, so are consumers.

You might be quite pleased with your latest wearable, because it tells you how many steps you've walked today. Chris Dancy, meanwhile, known as "the most connected man on earth" uses several hundred sensors to quantify his entire existence. "Rather him than me," you might be thinking, but his extraordinary experiments with "data-assisted living" offers up clear insights into how we will all be engaging with technology in the near future (p. 44).

Jonathan Oliver, Global Head of Innovation at AOL, believes that we need to ensure that the tech is designed to fit into our lives, rather than the other way round (p. 28); while Neil Jacobstein, Artificial Intelligence & Robotics Co-Chair at the Singularity University offers expert insight into how we as humans need to prepare for the future by becoming more literate (p. 24).

I hope you enjoy this read and find the potential of AI as fascinating as I have.

Regards,

Stephen Allan

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I am very excited about AI-powered medical diagnostics that will be able to diagnose symptoms more quickly with a broader range of knowledge so people can be treated faster and more accurately.



NORMAN WAGNER
Head of MediaCom Beyond
Advertising, MediaCom
Germany

The big one I am looking forward to, is Autonomous Vehicles. That will be a big game changer in the industry and I can't wait to love traveling by car again...

The other AI tech that definitely needs to be developed is a more intelligent assistant that can arrange appointments for me – taking travel time and other meetings into account. It must do much more than finding empty slots in my calendar. That is a real AI task.



CHRIS DANCY
Most Connected Human
on Earth

I'm looking forward to more voice agents like the Amazon echo. We need to focus on making AI disappear into our homes and lives.



MATTHEW DAY
Strategy Director
MediaCom UK

As a gamer, I'm looking forward to how AI is going to improve in-play environments. Currently even the most advanced bots on the virtual battlefield are no match for humans in a fair fight. Soon not only will they be able to compete, but more interesting still, they will cooperate with human players, which will make for whole new play dynamics.



OLIVER GERTZ
EMEA Managing Director,
Interaction and Programmatic
Lead, MediaCom

I am looking forward to the self-driving car; to switch off on the country road and to not be consumed with traffic jams anymore.



JONATHAN OLIVER
Global Head of Innovation, AOL

What excites me most about the AI future is the smartness of the algos in the VR space. This area is about to explode with crazy creativity across both immersive, augmented and mixed reality...none of which is truly possible without the initial stages of an AI economy.



PINAKI DUTT
Global Head of Applied Connected
Intelligence, MediaCom

I look forward to synchronized man/machine usage (from driving to traffic management); to wearables 2.0 that will hopefully be like the Dr Bones medical bay in Star Trek; and to energy consumption optimization from electricity and beyond.



MATTHEW MEE
Global Chief Strategy Officer,
MediaCom

I am first in line for a mass-market self-driven car.

