



BRAVE NEW WORK: THE OFFICE OF TOMORROW

Imagine a technology wonderland filled with cool toys like **3-D printers, hologram tables, and office windows that turn into media screens.** The best part? It's your office, circa 2022.

Open the foldout to read more.



SAMPLE



Illustration by MARCOS CHIN



WALK INTO A CORPORATE office a few years from now, and you'll be struck by how much it physically resembles the office of today. [No delivery guys on hovercraft, no teleportation devices.] People will still sit at desks and meet in conference rooms and get food from the cafeteria. There will be some new gizmos: more tablet computers, for example, and desktop "printers" capable of spot-manufacturing small three-dimensional objects.

But most of the big changes to the way we work will be invisible to the eye. Smartphones will be as powerful as mainframes, allowing workers to do heavy computing work, like product design, on the go. [Phones will also be loaded with all kinds of office basics, like your health-insurance card and a digital wallet stuffed with virtual bucks from your medical savings account.] Tiny sensors will monitor your movements and, based on the departments you visit, recommend potential co-workers to meet and work with.

Of course, all this assumes you're even going to the office 10 years from now. Most futurists predict the demise of a central office, replaced by telecommuters and contractors working from satellite locations. We're skeptical: If anything, the fast-paced global nature of business is going to call for more collaboration and face-to-face teamwork. And if we're wrong, we can all work remotely using our amped-up smartphones.

Illustration by LUKE SHUMAN

SPECIAL THANKS: RICHARD KADZIS, CORENET GLOBAL, SOPHIE VANDEBRDEK, XEROX; CINDY PICKERING, INTELLORI, DR. PETER BOCKO, CORNING; APPLIED MATERIALS, JDS UNIPHASE; PRIMESENSE; CATHERINE HAVASI, MIT MEDIA LAB; LUMINOSO

SMART GLASS

Offices will be outfitted with special window glass that can morph from solar panel to multimedia screen to frosted privacy shade.

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ROLLABLE

Ultraslim, of film will cumbersome blueprints flip through document changes o



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WHEN BIG BROTHER IS YOUR BOSS

→ The office of the future will be a digital, data-driven place. For many workers the productivity gained by having a computer program tell you exactly whom you should team up with on your next project far outweighs the big-brother nature of how the software arrived at its conclusion [tracking your whereabouts, monitoring your work]. More “work product” will be recorded and stored; teleconferences will be

instantly transcribed and the text saved, for example.

Privacy experts say companies will have to give employees full control over their privacy: Workers will need to grant permission to be recorded in a videoconference, for example, and they should be able to maintain their online computer through customized settings. For many, this world sounds ominous, but for the generations that embrace Facebook, Foursquare, and Spotify, the future will be business as usual.

E GLASS

Large sheets replace the paper. Designers can make hundreds of models and make them in the fly.

OFFICE MATCHMAKER

What happens when Quora meets Foursquare? Software will be able to track employee whereabouts and marry that data with information about current projects to produce a list of potential collaborators.





INSTA-MANUFACTURING

Affordable desktop-size 3-D printers will let workers churn out small prototypes, hastening the product-development cycle.

TALKING WITH YOUR HANDS

The same technology that powers game consoles like Microsoft's Kinect will let workers navigate computer screens with the flick of the wrist.

SUBTITLED CALLS

Real-time translations will also be transcribed and scroll across a computer screen so that teleconferencers can hear *and* see the words on the other end of the line.

CAFETERIA CULTURE

Apps on phones and desktops will let employees peruse the menu, order, and pay for lunch. All they'll need to do is pick up their meal.

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"HELLO, HOW IS THE WEATHER IN UKRAIN?"
"HELLO, THE WEATHER IS LOVELY AND USUAL AT THIS TIME OF YEAR."

NOT LOST IN TRANSLATION

Teleconferencing suites will be outfitted with computer programs that can translate languages instantaneously, expediting chats among colleagues who don't speak each other's native tongue.

A NEW KIND OF TEAMBUILDING



For the past 100 years business

leaders have been trained to manage teams that are similar intellectually but widely disparate psychologically—a group of engineers, say, whose members might be disciplined, introverted, anxious, cooperative, or any of a million combinations. That structure

worked fine when business models lasted decades. In tomorrow's world the leader's job will be reversed. As companies revamp business models continually, the only teams that can do the job fast enough will have members who are highly diverse intellectually; the engineers, marketers, and designers will meet in the same room. And because the

challenges the world throws at them will change rapidly and unpredictably, team members will have to share certain psychological traits, especially flexibility, adaptability, and resilience. Effective leadership will demand a new set of skills built around choosing team members, tuning the culture, and integrating radically different types of expertise.

—Geoff Colvin

HOLOGRAM TABLE

Using a combination of proprietary software and special lenses and lights, next-gen "tables" will be able to render 3-D holograms of real-world objects. No special glasses required.