

Reading 3

Skills:

- Details
- Vocabulary in context
- Make inferences

Getting started: Could machines/robots totally replace human beings in the future?

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE DIGITAL WORLD?



Independent internet and **digital media** analysts think there will be a number of important **trends** in this new decade. These include cheaper smartphones, declining sales of tablets, the increasing use of **IoT technologies**, **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Virtual Reality (VR)**, and continuous growth in the digital economy. **They** also expect a rise in cyber-attacks, which will lead to better security protocols, especially to help protect their connected cars or smart homes. Improved connection speeds, especially for Europe, and better mobile and home internet services are also part of the future.

It is predicted that there will be fusions between networks, technology, television, media, transportation and industry. **For instance**, companies like Google and Apple could start working more in the **automotive** industry, major tech companies would move into television and streaming services.

With sustained growth in online services, the industry experts expect a gradual shift away from owning to using. For example, people sharing cars via an app, or streaming music and video-on-demand films, rather than buying products or downloading. The move towards more on-demand, subscription services is possible because of the increasing use of **ad-blocking software** which, in turn, could make the abundance of free internet services (like YouTube) a thing of the past.

Bitcoins and online payments will impact the future of financial institutions. Some banks could even close some of their branches as more people now use the internet for online banking. Further development in internet services will help cut intermediaries in other industries, too. Other considerations include **Big Data** and how EU legislation is dealing with data privacy and protection, as well as how, in the future, more access to personal data might affect people's insurance premiums or requests for loans.

These analyses also predict modest growth in the western world, but a bright future for Chinese, Indian and African industries. In telecommunications, Asia and the Pacific will become the world's largest market during the next decade, while growth in the main European markets will be weak, and possibly even negative.

Glossary:

- **Digital Media:** Digital Media is a blend of technology and content, like video games, social media or mobile applications.
- **Trends:** Tendencies
- **IoT technologies:** IoT (Internet of Things) describes the network of physical objects— “things”—that contain sensors, software, and other technologies for the purpose of connecting and exchanging data with other devices and systems over the internet.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Computer science related to smart machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence.
- **Virtual Reality (VR):** Environment full of scenes or objects that look real.

- **Automotive:** Related to motor vehicles.
- **Ad-blocking software:** They are simple software programs that prevent ads from being shown on websites.
- **Big data:** extremely large data sets that may be analyzed computationally to reveal patterns, trends, and associations, especially relating to human behavior and interactions.

**Adapted from <https://www.cbronline.com/what-is/what-is-the-future-of-the-digital-world-4926789/>*

1. What is a problem described in paragraph 1?
 - a. The rise of virtual reality
 - b. Computer security
 - c. Low internet speed
 - d. Expensive mobile phones
2. The word **they** in paragraph 1 refers to
 - a. attacks
 - b. analysts
 - c. trends
 - d. sales
3. The phrase **for instance** in paragraph 2 can be replaced by
 - a. for example
 - b. on the contrary
 - c. in addition
 - d. because of
4. Which could be a consequence of the use of bitcoins and online payments?
 - a. People will lose a lot of money.
 - b. Some bank employees could be fired.
 - c. Some financial institutions could operate in Asia.
 - d. Bitcoins will replace the Euro in some European countries.
5. Which country is more likely to have a successful digital economy in the next decade?
 - a. The United States
 - b. Argentina
 - c. France
 - d. Japan

What do you think?

In your opinion, how much will **AI** evolve?