

In Just 20 Years...

By the end of the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution [redacted] the world forever, and technology has continued to make many improvements since then. The first two decades of both the 20th and the 21st centuries brought life-changing progress in technology. From 1900 to 1920, there were enormous changes, especially in communications and transportation. Of course, [redacted] innovations in these areas when the 20th century began. For example, the first passenger train powered by a locomotive [redacted] in 1825 in England, but the huge expansion of the railroads in the US and Europe came in the 20th century. The first commercial telephone company opened in 1878, but at the beginning of the 20th century, the telephone [redacted] widely available to the public. Most surprisingly, there were electric taxis in London by 1897, but automobiles became available to ordinary people with the invention of the assembly line in the 20th century. The first two decades of the 20th century also brought the first movie theater in 1905, the first commercial flight in 1914, and the first radio station in 1920.

In the first two decades of the 21st century, progress in information technology was particularly important. This "Digital Revolution" included two of the most important developments in communications since the telephone — smartphones and the creation of social media platforms. The first social media network was Friendster in 2002, and the first modern smartphone was the iPhone in 2007. Entertainment technology also changed enormously from the close of the 20th century to the first decades of the 21st century. Some of the major 21st-century inventions so far have been wireless headsets in 2002, YouTube and internet radio in 2005, e-readers in 2007, and virtual reality headsets in 2016. It is hard to imagine where digital technology will take us by the end of the 21st century!



VOCABULARY

A Scan the article in READING A and write a word with a similar meaning for each of these words.

- 1 close (n): _____ [para. 1]
- 2 progress (n): _____ [para. 1]
- 3 huge (adj): _____ [para. 1]

- 4 especially (adv): _____ [para. 2]
- 5 invention (n): _____ [para. 2]
- 6 important (adj): _____ [para. 2]