

BLACK HISTORY MONTH ~~EMERGING FUTURE~~

Cybervisions For A Greater Black Community

By PAUL McDONALD

At 6 years old, my father started teaching me how to read using notes and symbols that my grandfather created in 1888. It was about creating a town and organization that would liberate the Black community that was just out of slavery. Grandfather was a progressive, 20th century thinker for his time that created the ideas behind Black Wall Street, Rosewood (in Florida) and other places.

Both my father and grandfather were self-proclaimed Futurists. Like them, I began looking at how to create a parallel world where there was no Supreme Court decision that we were 'separate but equal.' I grew up to also become an Urban Futurist growing institutions and corporations through cybervisions that support an emerging culture for Black communities. It is a "virtual", parallel world with a leveled playing field in which Blacks are judged by their collective productivity.

In a parallel world, as black people, we are the new pioneers designing futures that are simpler and more in line with our concerns. Great leaders of great movements have demonstrated that compelling visions have the power to draw people toward a

preferred future.

The Black community will soon be awakened to the potential usage of computer and telecommunication power which will be coupled with marketing imagery. Today, the appeal of arcade games, beepers, cellular phones and VCRs have met with widespread acceptance in the Black marketplace.

Urban Futurists create models and marketing that tailor high-tech telecommunication applications for the special needs of the Black community. Once the flow of information within the Black community is managed properly, the competence of the organization increases and the relation within the community improves. Knowledge and information are not the same thing. Information has no value until it becomes integrated knowledge and therefore useful.

The Black community is stuck on many problems. In the end, we as the Black community are defeated because we rely upon the competition and thinking reproductively - that is on the basis of similar problems encountered in the past.

Reproductive thinking leads us to the usual ideas about building a better community and not

original ones. When confronted with problems, the Black community fixate on something in our past. Because of the soundness of the steps based on past experiences, we become arrogantly certain of correctness of our conclusions. Interpreting past problems through the prism of past experiences will, by definition, lead the Black Community thinkers astray.

In contrast, Urban Futurists think productively, not reproductively. We ask ourselves:

How many different ways can we look at our better future?

How can we rethink the way we see it?

How many different ways can we see our collective better future?

By creating models of our better future, we come up with many different responses, some of which are unconventional and possibly unique. Albert Einstein was once asked what the difference was between him and the average person. He said that if you asked the average person to find a needle in a haystack, the person would stop when he or she found a needle. Einstein, on the other hand, would look through the entire haystack looking for all possible needles.

In order to solve the problems of the Black community, we must develop a community think tank. We must not settle for one perspective and conceptualize our community problems by abandoning our usual approach that has stemmed from past experiences. The think tank does not merely solve existing problems. We identify ways of creating the community's "collective better future."

The Black community of the future will revolutionize science by making our thoughts graphically visual through new technologies. We must showcase our visual mind as we think more in visual forms. This better future is characterized by our immense productivity because from our massive quantity of work comes quality.

Our collective creative genius is to know how to use Futurist thinking strategies and teach others to use them. We must act as masters of different thinking styles and strategies rather than what to think. So, clearly, our genius strategies can be learned and applied. Recognizing and applying our collective common think strategies helps make us more creative in our work and community.

Trends

By GRAHAM T.T. MOLITOR

Infotech

Optimal transmission of digital signals will grow from 80 gigabits per second in 1997 to beyond 100 gigabits per second by 2011. (A gigabit - one billionth of a second - is to a second what a second is to 31.7 years.) Scientists are already working on transmitting data in terabits (one-trillionth of a second); at this speed, the contents of the Library of Congress, estimated at 25 terabits, could be transmitted in just over five minutes.

Consumer Electronics

Electronic notebooks will supplant paper tablets by 2027; electronic publishing may surpass paper-based publishing by 2005. One key driver in this trend is real estate; It's too expensive to devote some 20% of office space to storing paper.

Voice recognition, voice synthesizing, and voice-activated computer systems will usher in a cascade of communication growth. Accompanied by palm-sized instan-

taneous translation programs, these voice-entry computers will be a boon to international tourism.

Medical Breakthroughs

Diagnostics will advance rapidly in the next 50 years. Traditional methods of diagnosing symptoms in the laboratory once took many weeks, often requiring hundreds of labor-intensive and costly experiments. In the future, doctors will use credit-card-sized diagnostic plates consisting of up to a million or more microcell probes - arrays of miniature test tubes - to detect disposition or to verify diseases, deformities, and dysfunctions. Results will be read and analyzed by computers in just minutes.

Health, Lifestyles, and Values

Euthanasia may become common, as the right to choose extends from abortion rights (rights over birth) to death rights. New definitions of "death" will be heatedly debated. Soaring medical costs will influence views

on death: Terminal illness and dying currently account for 10% of health-care outlays; for Medicare, it's 27% of program outlays.

Eugenics will gain acceptance as humans take control over their own evolution. Animal and plant genetic manipulation opens the way to human biological engineering. Conception will be less a matter of chance and more a result of genetic screening and manipulation to maximize desirable traits and minimize undesirable ones.

Aging

The trend toward early retirement will be reversed, rising to an average of 67 years in 2022 and 70 in 2025, as Americans live healthier and longer lives.

More age-centered political controversies will arise, especially over government spending. Programs for the elderly could increase, from one-third of all federal spending to more than one-half by 2010, pitting economic needs of YIPPIES (young impoverished workers) against WHOPIES (well-heeled

older persons).

Multiculturalism

Immigration will continue to increase the overall U.S. population. Immigration will steadily increase racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. By 2100, persons of European descent will comprise less than 50% of the U.S. population. Hispanics now outnumber African-Americans in 21 U.S. states and will become the largest ethnic minority by 2020, comprising 15.7% of total population compared with 13.9% for blacks.

Business and the Economy

Electronic Commerce is taking over more and more of retail and wholesale commerce. Virtual corporations use communications technologies for instantaneous ordering and fulfillment, eliminating the need for costly production facilities, warehouses, and storefronts.

Retail stores and wholesalers may largely disappear as the convenience and time savings of electronic shopping and home delivery alter con-

sumer behaviors, starting with time-pressed dual-wage-earner households and the elderly.

Personal Finance

Education costs at private schools are more likely to double again by 2014. Rising college costs will force growing numbers of parents to choose between saving for their retirements and paying for their children's education.

Energy Supply and Demand

Nuclear power will meet most electric power needs following breakthroughs in high-temperature plasma fusion, which will become commercially viable by 2020 and offer the world a virtually limitless and cheap source of energy. Clean and safe fusion will become a panacea for global warming.

Transportation

The world's fleet of cars will grow. There are currently some 625 million motor vehicles in use around the world, and the population of motor vehicles will grow to 1 billion by 2025.

Superfast rail systems approaching speeds of 200 mph will collapse distances for exurban

areas. Global perspectives will shrink as suburban space travel becomes commercially available to the public by 2021.

Social Security

Birth rates and death rates are falling in the United States, creating greater numbers of elderly. Social Security trust funds will face insolvency between 2029 and 2036. Social Security, left unchanged, will pile up an overwhelming \$8-trillion deficit by 2070; decades of continuing reform will offer incremental relief.

Crime

U.S. crime rates will continue to decline slowly as the population of crime-prone young people shrinks as a proportion of the overall population.

Leisure

Workweeks averaged 70 hours during early industrial times (mid-1890s), then plummeted to 38.1 hours during 1980, rebounding to 39.2 hours in 1996. The average workweek will likely fall to 30-35 hours by 2030, making more leisure hours available. By 2010, leisure time will account for over 50% of lifetime activities.

