Global Megatrends Shaping the Future: 2026 - 2035

An Overview of Major Forces Transforming Society, Economy, Technology, the Environment, and Government

Perspective notes written and compiled by Dr. David Gould with contributions from Dr. Rocky Toves, Dan Davenport, Gemini 3

Introduction

Megatrends are powerful, long-term shifts that have a transformative effect on societies, economies, environments, technologies, and governments around the world. Understanding these trends helps individuals, businesses, governments, and other organizations anticipate change to prepare for the future. Below is a list of ten megatrends currently shaping our world.

Thoughts

“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

– Alvin Toffler

“Civilization is in a race between education and catastrophe.”

– H.G. Wells

“The world is indifferent to tradition and past reputations, unforgiving of frailty and ignorant of custom or practice. Success will go to those individuals and countries, which are swift to adapt, slow to complain, and open to change”

– OECD: March 2006

1. Information Technology

“The number of transistors on a chip doubles every two years.”

-Moore’s Law

The rapid advancement of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), robotics, cloud, automation, communications bandwidth, and computing hardware, is revolutionizing industries, workforces, and everyday life. This trend is driving unprecedented efficiency, innovation, and new business models. This trend creates a world where everything—from devices to supply chains—is

interconnected, generating vast amounts of data but with increasing vulnerability to cybercrime and technical failures.

Transformation of governments, organizations, products, services, crime, war, education, entertainment, sports, the economy, and so on to digital wherever possible, leading to a potential loss of security, increasing instability, and continual need to upgrade skills. Digital devices are becoming smaller, lighter, faster, and more interconnected by the billions. Smart phones provide language translation, health monitoring, educational platforms, and act as financial managers, payment processors, travel planners, newspaper and book readers, confidants, counselors, coaches, and teachers as processing speeds begin to exceed the processing speed of the human brain; communication bandwidth becomes essentially unlimited; and applications become artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality enabled.

Electronic payments are replacing cash as smart phones and watches along with tap technology are more convenient and safer than cash transactions and are becoming readily accepted worldwide. Apple Pay (2025) is supported by about 100 countries for example. Many farmers markets and food trucks accept electronic payments.

Digital identities (e.g., passports) can now be added to Apple Wallet and used for domestic flights. Work is underway to create a digital passport accepted worldwide. About 25% of U.S. states support a digital driver license in Apple Wallet. And digital documents such as airline, bus, and train boarding passes are readily accepted worldwide.

Apple and Samsung have announced that their 2025/2026 smartphones will be AI enabled and it is available already on some models. Conversational capabilities will be added and enhanced over the next few months. Large language models or LLMs are currently available on smart phones, tablets, and laptops. Some examples are Gemini, Notebooklm, ChatGPT, Perplexity, Copilot, and others. Hundreds of billions of investment dollars are fueling AI as seen in companies such as Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Meta, Microsoft, Nvidia, Tesla and others.

Robots will become caregivers for old and young alike as well as the disabled, and will be increasingly used in construction, entertainment, crime fighting, hazmat cleanup, hospitality, manufacturing, war, and other fields. Some hotels currently have robots available to deliver towels, shampoo, and such to hotel guest rooms. Drones are now being 3D printed and used in war as seen in the Ukraine / Russia war. An army of none (i.e., few actual people) is closer each day.

Today, smart devices respond to voice command to control HVAC, lighting, TV, music, household appliances, door locks, window coverings, fans, water leak sensors, thermostats, translate languages, and so on make up the smart home. Tomorrow these devices will engage in conversation, offer advice, schedule travel arrangements, serve as personal coaches and psychologists among many other services. Agentic AI refers to autonomous AI systems that can act independently to achieve goals to plan, execute, and adapt without continuous oversight. Agentic AI should begin to appear on smart devices by mid-to-late 2026. Jobs that are high skilled and low routine will be safer for now. Low skilled and high routine jobs will be more vulnerable to automation.

Additive or 3D printing will bring about transformational change from printing component parts to houses to human organs, bones, teeth, artwork, and all sorts of household and commercial items. Currently, 3D printing is available for kids of all ages to create objects of their imagination from artwork, games, toys, and whatever else can be thought up. Makerspace is one organization in the 3D printing space. Additive printing is being integrated into commercial and military industries. Drones and other objects are currently being 3D printed for warfare as an example.

The rapid increase of digital technologies presents both opportunities and threats. Opportunities to create a new digital world are being born. Yet, nations, organizations, and individuals must address cybersecurity threats, privacy concerns, and the ethical use of information as nothing less than national security is at risk.

Upsides include the creation of a new techno-world of advanced technologies to improve our health, safety, education, exploration, housing, communication, and entertainment among others.

Downsides include leaving many people behind, lost, underemployed, unemployed, or with difficulty in adapting to a new world among others.

2. Urbanization

> "First we shape the cities — then they shape us."
> – Jan Gehl, city planner

A significant portion of the global population is moving from rural to urban environments, leading to the expansion of mega cities or those with more than 10 million people. This shift influences infrastructure, housing, transportation, education, sustainability planning and many other factors worldwide.

Major cities are growing at an unprecedented pace, becoming hubs for innovation, economic growth, and talent. However, this growth also creates intense pressures on infrastructure, resources, and social equality, driving the need for "smart city" solutions and sustainable urban development. Sustainable in this sense is more about the capability of the population to adapt to change than stability. Sustainability in the more traditional sense of the term is not possible as cities are not stable but evolve.

Currently the U.S. population is about 80% urban/suburban and 20% rural and over the next 10 to 20 years, there will be continued migration from rural to urban areas. Far more economic, educational, and entertainment opportunities exist in urban areas than in rural areas. This is a worldwide phenomenon, not just in the U.S. The whole world is becoming more urban and not just sprawling but going vertical. Elevators, it turns out, are far less expensive than highways. Density is more efficient than sprawl and far less expensive.

According to the National Intelligence Council about 57% of the world's population will live in urban areas in 2025, up from about 50% in 2020. In 2025, the world added another eight megacities (a city over 10 million in population) to the current list of 19—all except one of these eight is in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Upsides include better access to jobs, healthcare, education, entertainment, and socialization among others.

Downsides include potential increases in sedentary living, crime, economic inequality, and homelessness, and the loss of community life among others.

3. Climate Change and Environment

We are running the most dangerous experiment in history right now, which is to see how much carbon dioxide the atmosphere can handle before there is an environmental catastrophe."

- Elon Musk

"Climate change is the single greatest threat to a sustainable future but, at the same time, addressing the climate challenge presents a golden opportunity to promote prosperity, security and a brighter future for all."

- Ban Ki-Moon, Former Secretary-General of UN

Climate change is one of our most critical challenges. There is an increasing emphasis on renewable energy, circular economies, and sustainable resource management to mitigate the effects of environmental change. Because if world temperature approaches 3 degrees Celsius, much of the world will become uninhabitable. The world is almost at the 1.5 C

limit with the potential of hitting about 2 C by mid-century and 3 C by 2100 if we continue the current business-as-usual trajectory.

The accelerating effects of climate change—including extreme weather and resource scarcity—are making sustainability an urgent global imperative. This drives the demand for a circular economy, green technologies, and corporate net-zero commitments, reshaping policy, infrastructure, and consumer behavior worldwide. Can civilization adapt quickly enough to avoid the worst of climate change? Will civilization adapt quickly or at all? If not, then what?

Climate change today is leading to a rapid extinction of species, loss of fresh water and arable land, warming oceans and land, loss of forest land, ocean acidification, raising sea levels, and human and other species migrations. Bugs and disease are moving north and uphill. Expect dozens of villages, towns, and even large cities to retreat from rising seas over the next 25 years. Snowpack will be reduced resulting in shorter snow seasons and reduced snowpack meaning less fresh water available and shorter winter sports seasons. There is less than 20-25 years to address this problem; if not, some countries, regions, or cities will gradually collapse over time as coastal areas flood and as it becomes too hot to work and play outside—think agriculture, construction, sports, flying, walking, or even driving. Year 2024 was the hottest on record. Major storms in October 2025 destroyed entire villages in Alaska requiring their populations to be airlifted to safety.

Increasing deforestation; pollution (such as plastic, greenhouse gases, and other contaminants); and over harvesting of fisheries and sea foods are visible. Forever chemicals along with microplastics are now found throughout the ecosystem and in the bodies of animals and humans alike, including human female milk. None of this is good for a stable and healthy society.

The World Economic Forum (2025) noted that environmental risks almost completely dominate the 10-year risk landscape. The world will be reshaped in ways we cannot truly anticipate if these risks are not mitigated. The top four most severe global risks over the next decade (to 2035) are all environmental:

- Extreme weather events (#1)
- Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse (#2)
- Critical change to Earth systems (#3)
- Natural resource shortages (#4)

Upsides? Most likely none over the long run. Yet, in the near-to-mid-term there is an economic opportunity to develop social and physical technologies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Downsides include loss of agriculture, biodiversity, coastal cities, desert cities, outdoor activities, and water; human migrations to more suitable climates; and life.

4. Demographic Shifts

"Either a species learns to control its own population, or something like disease, famine, war, will take care of the issue."

- Chuck Palahniuk

“We're at a great transition point in terms of population, demographics, and what it means to be a human being.”

- Grace Lee Boggs

Many developed and emerging economies face aging populations, changing workforce dynamics, and evolving healthcare needs. Meanwhile, other regions, especially in Africa and south-east Asia, experience increasing numbers of young people affecting education housing, transportation, employment and so on.

The U.S. will see a continued decline in the percentage of Caucasians with an increase in percentages of minority groups including Asians, African Americans, and Hispanics. Currently African Americans make up about 13.6% of the U.S. population, Hispanics make up about 19%, Asian Americans make up about 5.6%, and there is a small percentage for other populations. The White population is about 62% The U.S. population is expected to increase from about 340 million people today to around 400 million by 2040-2050, with about 50% living in 8 states and 70% living in 16 states with most of them living in cities. Caucasians will make up less than 50% of the U.S. population within 25 years. Racial forecast for 2050 is about 47.8% White, 25.66% Hispanic, 13.3% Black, 8.2% Asian, and about 4.1% multi-racial.

The world is experiencing complex demographic changes, including aging populations in many high-income economies and expanding youth populations in others. These shifts significantly affect labor markets, healthcare systems, social welfare funding, and consumption patterns.

Population aging (about 10,000 people a day reach age 65 in the U.S. and are expected to do so until the early 2030s). This increase in the percentage of elderly population will require more health care, financial care, adequate housing, and simply care in daily living

activities. Will these resources be available at any price? Note: all of this is subject to change as climate change accelerates.

The U.S. birthrate has been trending down and as of 2025 is about 1.6 children per woman of childbearing age. This is below the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman of childbearing age. UK birthrate is down to about 1.44, South Korea and Italy are slightly less. As countries de-populate, they face new national security problems, workforce scarcity, financial difficulties, among many others. As towns and villages de-populate, infrastructure decay sets in and will need to be shut down for safety. This includes water, sewer, electrical, communications, and transportation systems.

Upsides include reduced stress on the environment, potential reduced intra-state and inter-state conflicts, potential increasing wealth for new generations as well as more educational opportunities among others.

Downsides include having sufficient numbers of people to manage the decline / collapse of the infrastructure inventory and to solve current and upcoming problems among others.

5. Globalization, Deglobalization, and Shifting Economic Power

"Deglobalization will shrink the global whole and shatter what remains into segregated markets. Global aging is collapsing the skilled labor supply. And financial shrinkage will make everything more expensive and more difficult."

> — Peter Zeihan, The End of the World is Just the Beginning: Mapping the Collapse of Globalization

Without education, we are weaker economically. Without economic power, we are weaker in terms of national security. No great military power has ever remained so without great economic power.

- Jon Meacham

Economic power is gradually shifting from established Western economies towards emerging markets, particularly in Asia. Globalization continues to drive interconnectedness, competition, and new trade dynamics. Deglobalization drives away connectedness, competition, and trade and requires new industrialization in house. Both globalization and deglobalization are happening at the same time although in different markets and time. The center of global economic activity is continually shifting, with Asian countries, particularly China and India, playing increasingly influential roles. This megatrend changes trade patterns, supply chains, and international relations, leading to a more multipolar yet uncertain world order.

While there is a lot of political discussion of bringing manufacturing back to the U.S. to create jobs, this is not likely as manufacturing is changing at an accelerating rate and requires less human labor and more robotic controls. Amazon for example expects to replace over 500,000 jobs with robots over the next eight years. Car manufacturing is primarily robotic.

The World Economic Forum (2024) noted that the Fourth Industrial Revolution is "characterized by a range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies and industries, and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human." And the Fifth Industrial Revolution with even more advanced technologies is emerging.

The growth industries of our next 10-year future are not going to be in last year industries but in the new and emerging industries in nanotech, biotech, infotech, fintech, medtech, AgeTech, AI, renewable energy, and so on as cities, regions, and countries are transformed into smart cities, smart regions, and smart countries.

As of 2025, the GDP rankings are first, the U.S., followed by China, Germany, and Japan. California, if a separate country, would rank above Japan and just below Germany. The U.S. west coast of California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii would rank third and above Germany. The west coast is by itself, the third largest economy in the world, and is continuing to grow in terms of its economics, technologies, education, entertainment, and influence. The west coast and other Blue states generate about 70% of the U.S. GDP and will likely be generating a higher percentage over the next 10 years as the new industries are highly educational dependent.

Upsides include more domestic production leading to potentially more jobs, skills development, and innovation among others.

Downsides include potential loss of connectedness and experience or innovation among some set of the population.

6. Energy Transition

"To truly transform our economy, protect our security, and save our planet… we need to ultimately make clean, renewable energy the profitable kind of energy."

— Barack Obama

"I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait till oil and coal run out before we tackle that."

– Thomas Edison

This is the global shift from reliance on fossil fuels toward a decarbonized, decentralized, and digital energy system powered by renewable energy (solar, wind, and hydrogen) and advanced energy storage solutions such as batteries. It's a massive undertaking that affects geopolitics, investments, commercial stability as well as the acceptance of a widely diverse population.

Energy consumption in 2021 was about 97 quadrillion BTUs with about 12% renewables, 8% nuclear, and 80% fossil fuels according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Assuming about 150,000 BTUs are required to heat an average home in the U.S., this translates to about six and a half billion homes. However, most of the energy goes to commercial and transportation uses rather than residential homes. Energy needs are expected to double over the next 10 years and at the same time, there is a critical need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions if we are to meet the 1.5 C degree warming goal.

Renewable energy sources are expected to increase as a percentage of energy requirements while fossil fuels peak according to McKinstry (2022). The U.S. electrical grid will need significant upgrades to support increased energy demands as well as for relatively discontinuous renewables as the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow all the time. Solar power is already the lowest cost power in many areas of the world and costs continue to drop. Utah (2025) approved balcony solar for homeowners to capture, store, use, and feedback into the grid without state approval. Consider Moore's law for solar, wherein power performance increases while costs decrease every few years. The combination of solar and wind with battery backup will continue to provide increasing and significant amounts of electrical energy.

As a result of falling prices, over 90% of all electricity-generating capacity added worldwide in 2024 came from clean energy sources, according to data from the International Renewable Energy Agency. At the end of 2024, renewable energy accounted for 46% of global installed electric power capacity, with a record 585 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity added that year — about three times the total generating capacity in Texas. Solar power and wind power have become cheaper than coal and natural gas for utility-scale electricity generation.

Given the worldwide demand for electricity, the length of time it takes to bring nuclear power online, and the environmental problems associated with fossil fuels, the growth in the mid-term or 5-10 years will be solar and wind with battery storage.

There are more than 500,000 square miles of great plains in the U.S. with an average wind speed of 10 to 20 mph and wind blows during the day, at night, in winter, and in

summer. There are over 7,000 multi-megawatt wind turbines in operation. Human training, equipment, mass production and public acceptance are all available. Wind energy will last for thousands of years and requires no import of resources. No mining and no long-term storage of waste like nuclear. No carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) is needed. Farming and livestock production can continue in windmill farm areas.

One of the criticisms of wind energy is the transmission from the source to where it is needed. However, HVDC lines can transmit electricity over 1,000 miles (1,600 km) or more with lower losses. HVDC is especially useful for connecting remote renewable energy sources (like offshore wind farms or desert solar plants) to urban centers. Wide geographically separated wind farms avoid the "Single Point of Failure" problem that large nuclear or coal plants have.

Storing electrical energy for later use is a legitimate concern but solid-state battery technology is advancing rapidly. Meanwhile existing plants can be used as backup until storage technology perfected.

Irrespective of greenhouse gas elimination, wind energy must be economically competitive with carbon generated electricity. A barrel of crude oil is around $80. The United States consumes about 6.9–7.0 billion barrels of oil per year as of 2024. That is about $560 billion/year. About $484 billion is used for transportation and electricity.

It would take 182,648 windmills to replace all transportation and electrical needs at the current rate of consumption.

Square miles occupied	36,535
Windmill construction	$730 billion
Payoff of initial investment	5 years
Fossil fuel costs	$484 billion / year
Windmill replacements	$9.1 billion / year
Windmill maintenance	$8.2 billion / year
Saving using windmills	$467 billion / year with no dependence on foreign sources

Solar power with battery backup has reached utility scale levels. The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) reported in 2024, “the U.S. added a record-breaking nearly 50 gigawatts (GW) of solar capacity, a 21% increase from 2023, with solar making up 66% of all new U.S. electricity generation, driven by massive utility-scale projects, while

residential installations fell due to higher interest rates." Globally, experts estimated about 593 GW of solar would be installed in 2024, with strong growth in China and emerging markets. Solar forecasts for 2025-2029 are robust and around 40-45 GW annually but could go higher as solar panel costs decrease and demand increases.

A 1 GW solar farm is sufficient to power about 200,000 to 750,000 homes depending on location, hours of sunlight, hours of household usage, and so forth. Thus a 40 GW solar farm could power between 8 million and 30 million homes. This translates to 32 million and 120 million new homes by 2029. Given that there are about 125 million homes in the U.S. as of mid-2025, they could potentially all be heated / cooled by solar. Given advances in wind, solar, and battery backup, the potential for all homes and a significant of amount of transportation to be electrified seems plausible.

Battery technology for storage and grid stability is improving rapidly with global capacity expected to soar, especially in utility-scale and residential sectors, though policy shifts (like US FEOC rules) add uncertainty, pushing deployments higher but potentially slowing projected rates for grid projects. Record installations are expected in 2026 and beyond, with prices continuing to decline towards $60/kWh by 2030, making it crucial for grid stability and energy transition.

Upsides include reduced dependency on foreign and domestic oil and gas sources, reduced need for nuclear, reduced environmental damages, reduced CO2 emissions, better air quality, better overall health, reduced time to provide utility scale energy, and one of the best approaches to help mitigate and adapt to climate change among others.

Downsides include additional land mass required, rebuilding the electrical grid, additional research into battery technologies, retrofitting homes, and transitioning from fossil fuel vehicles to electric among others.

7. Health Care, Health Tech, and the Biotechnology Revolution

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

– World Health Organization (WHO)

"The chances that an individual can live a long and healthy life appear to be increasingly tied to their state of residence and the policy choices made by governors and state legislators, which include healthcare access, environmental protection, labor standards including minimum wage, and civil rights protections."

- Jennifer Karas Montez, a demographer at Syracuse University

Advances in health technology and biotechnology are transforming disease prevention, diagnostics, and treatment. Telemedicine, genomics, and wearable health devices are becoming mainstream. Some earbuds provide entry level hearing aid functionality while smart rings, smart watches, and smart phones can monitor activities such as walking, running, and bicycling, and provide information on heart rates and calories. Smart phones can store medical records, which can be important when traveling or if in an accident.

Advances in biotechnology, genomics, and digital health are transforming healthcare from a reactive system to a proactive one focused on personalized medicine, longevity, and overall well-being. This includes a growing market for anti-obesity drugs, digital therapeutics, and precision nutrition.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming various sectors, including healthcare, by streamlining tedious tasks and improving efficiency. In radiology, a field that involves the interpretation of medical images, AI technologies are set to transform traditional practices.

Radiology can be described as process of numerous routine tasks that can be time-consuming and prone to human error. One significant area where AI can alleviate the burden is in image analysis. Radiologists often spend significant time reviewing and interpreting X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs. However, AI algorithms, particularly deep learning models, have demonstrated proficiency in detecting anomalies such as tumors or fractures with speed and accuracy that can rival human experts (Yala et al., 2019). These algorithms can automatically flag images for further review while, allowing radiologists to focus on complex cases that require human judgment, thus enhancing productivity.

Additionally, AI can assist in tasks such as patient data management and workflow optimization. It can automate scheduling, improve communication between departments, and streamline the reporting process. This not only reduces administrative burdens on radiologists but also can minimize delays in patient care (Chuang et al., 2020).

Artificial intelligence can extend beyond radiology, such as other medical fields that involve routine data analysis, For example, medical coding and billing. These fields are at high risk of automation. Moreover, AI can efficiently process large volumes of medical records, ensuring accurate billing and coding with minimal human oversight (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

The integration of AI in healthcare processes will lead to the evolution of roles rather than outright replacement. As AI takes over more routine tasks, healthcare workers will need to adapt by acquiring new competencies, focusing on areas where human expertise is irreplaceable, such as empathy and ethical decision-making (Topol, 2019).

AI is will significantly change the landscape of radiology. It will take over tedious tasks that currently consume valuable time and resources. While certain medical careers may face the risk of replacement, the overall impact of AI is likely to lead to a transformation in job roles, emphasizing the need for continuous education and adaptation in the workforce. Radiology is just one example of other emerging changes in medicine.

Yet, all is not well in health care, even with the AI potential. World health is being dismantled by the Trump administration beginning in early 2025. The U.S. CDC is now promoting an anti-vaccine and anti-science ideology, which is leading to the return of some old problems and the creation of new problems. There is now a resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, mumps, and pertussis (whooping cough). Herd immunity requires high vaccination rates to protect those vulnerable populations such as babies, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems who cannot be vaccinated for whatever reason. Death rates spiked during the Covid 19 pandemic in part because of anti-vaccine misinformation. Estimates were about an additional 200,000+ deaths due to those unvaccinated.

Upsides include great health care for the well off to the wealthy, private clinics, and state-of-the-art drugs and medical procedures among other benefits.

Downsides include increasing stress on medical hospitals and clinics, state budgets, increasing insurance costs, loss of public trust, millions of additional deaths especially young children, increased poverty and instability, among others.

8. Political Polarization and Societal Fragmentation

“America may be more diverse than ever coast to coast, but the places where we live are becoming increasingly crowded with people who live, think, and vote like we do.”

- Bill Bishop

“Project 2025: We are in the process of the second American Revolution, which will remain bloodless if the left allows it to be.”

- Kevin Roberts, Heritage Foundation

Many countries, including the U.S., are experiencing increased political polarization and social fragmentation, affecting governance, policy-making, and civic engagement. The U.S. is gradually separating into red and blue states and areas within states. Most U.S. cities are blue, even in red states.

As of 2024, **nine** states are majority minority: Hawaii, California, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Maryland, Georgia, Florida, and New Jersey. An additional **nine** states have less

than 60% non-Hispanic White population: Alaska, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Illinois, New York, Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina. Finally, an additional **seven** states have less than 70% non-Hispanic White population: Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Washington. Washington DC is under 50%. Given that minority births have exceeded White births since 2011, the forecast that within 15 or so years, the non-Hispanic White population becoming minority seems correct. Even if only 24 or about half of the states were to become majority minority, this could exacerbate many of the existing social and political issues.

Increased global uncertainty is driven by rising geopolitical tensions, protectionism, and social instability stemming from persistent inequality and the spread of misinformation/disinformation. This fracturing world creates operational risks for global businesses and pressure for governments to localize supply chains and increase regulatory oversight.

Goldstone (1991) argued that today's global instability—rising inequality, elite overproduction, populist anger, and democratic decay—signals the breakdown of the post–World War II liberal order. Structural-demographic theory is about government debt, elite overproduction, excess competition, and popular grievances about declining living standards and loss of opportunity. Combine these four factors to see a collapse of faith in the existing government and institutions.

Soft secession is non-cooperation by a U.S. city or state with the U.S. federal government without formally declaring independence, which is currently illegal under U.S. law. The concept includes political non-compliance on issues such as abortion access, immigration enforcement, vaccination policy, cannabis legalization, and gun ownership. Recent Supreme Court decisions emphasizing federalism and states' rights have provided the legal arguments that both red and blue states can use to justify political and financial non-cooperation.

Based on current political and legal trends in late 2025, soft secession is significantly increasing in the United States. What was once a niche legal theory has become a mainstream governance strategy for both red and blue states. This rise is driven by historic levels of political polarization and a growing belief that the federal government is either unable to solve national problems or is actively hostile to local values.

By 2040, about 70% of the U.S. population (16 states) will elect 32 U.S. Senators, while about 30% of the U.S. population (34 states) will elect 68 U.S. Senators. By 2040, about 50% of the U.S. population (about 8 states) will elect 16 U.S. Senators while the other 50%

of the U.S. population (about 42 states) will elect 84 U.S. Senators. How long can minority rule last?

Upsides include potential opportunities to reduce fragmentation, stress the need for unity, listen to all parties, address socio-economic-political problems, and make decisions for country, not just the party.

Downsides include continued polarization, fragmentation, minority rule, soft secession, and possibly hard secession or civil war among others.

9. Transportation

"Public transportation is like a magnifying glass that shows you civilization up close."
– Chris Gethard

Rail has been an emerging and proven means of moving people on the ground in several different formats: light rail for intra-city, heavy rail for inter-city, and now the beginning of high-speed rail in the U.S. U.S. cities have been installing light-rail for years with more to come as it is far less expensive than adding more freeways, for which there is less and less available land or even space. High-speed rail has proven very successful in Europe and Asia with new routes coming online each year.

Electric vehicles are the future of personal transportation, regardless of the current political climate in the U.S. China has a robust EV industry and selling EVs worldwide with between 800,000 and 1 million sold outside China in 2024. About 89% of all vehicles bought in 2024 in Norway were EVs. About 40% of new sales in China were EVs while about 10% of new sales in the U.S. were EVs in 2025. About 20% of all new car sales in 2024 were EVs worldwide. EVs are being adopted everywhere.

Autonomous electronic vehicles are an emerging technology and are gradually but increasingly being deployed, especially in the ride hailing services. By mid-century they should become mainstream. Vehicle ownership in suburban and rural areas will be essential for the foreseeable future, yet ownership in urban areas is likely to decline given the availability of ride hailing services, bus, and increasingly light-rail services.

Upsides include more public, reliable, and faster transportation, reduced numbers of fossil fuel vehicles, cleaner air, and reduced spending on highways, among others.

Downsides include fewer private and personal transportation and the follow-on effects to the automobile manufacturing industry.

10. The Future of Work and Education

“Education, in its truest sense, is not about "a saleable skill set." It's about freedom, from inherited prejudice and argument by authority.”

- J.M. Epstein.

"Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.”

- H.G. Wells

Consumers increasingly prioritize experiences over products, influencing hospitality, entertainment, travel, and retail sectors. Personalization and immersive technologies are key drivers of this trend. Travel is a growth industry.

Automation, remote work, and lifelong learning are redefining traditional career paths and education systems. Lifelong learning, skills development and adaptability are becoming essential for future success. AI is becoming a helpful research assistant and with more education becoming available online, the combination makes it easy and inexpensive to pursue lifelong education and applications.

The nature of employment is fundamentally changing due to the decline of manufacturing and the increase in white collar work in information technology, biotechnology, finance, healthcare, law, non-profits, and various other fields. Emerging technologies such as AI, AR, and VR will change work even more. This trend requires workers, managers, and entrepreneurs to continuously upskill in areas like adaptation, AI literacy, communication skills, entrepreneurship, problem solving, resilience, and teamwork, while businesses must adapt to attract and manage a globally distributed, diverse, and fluid workforce.

Upsides include less physically demanding work, potentially shorter hours, and potentially more interesting and challenging work.

Downsides include a need for lifelong learning, frequent upskilling, and frequent changes in employment.

Conclusion

“It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.”

- Machiavelli

“People will rarely acknowledge that an accustomed way of life is unsustainable except in the face of prolonged devastating failure.”

- Joseph Tainter

“There can be no question that today’s *turbulent times* are not a transition to a new era, a new environment for organizations and their managers. To the contrary, these *turbulent times* are the new era, they are the long-term future.”

- Huber & Glick (1993)

These ten megatrends, among many others, are reshaping the U.S. and the world in profound ways. Staying informed and proactive about these trends can help organizations and individuals navigate our volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world to exploit emerging opportunities, deflect threats, improve strengths, and reduce weaknesses.

The world economy is being driven by accelerating climate change, rapid advances in technology, changing human demographics, human migrations, geopolitics, and political struggles. Future shock, in the words of Alvin Toffler is here, and overwhelming us with change. While many scenarios are possible, fewer are plausible.

Scenario planning is an approach to think about the future and an approach used by several corporations, non-profits, and governments. The basic two step approach is described as follows.

1. Identify key drivers and uncertainties**:** Brainstorm and identify the major internal and external forces (political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental) that could influence the focal issue.
2. Develop scenarios: Select the two most critical and uncertain drivers to form the axes of a 2x2 matrix, creating four distinct scenarios or "stories" of what the future might look like. Each scenario should be a coherent and plausible narrative.

The following two sets of scenarios were developed or generated by Gemini 3 and reviewed and edited for clarity and plausibility.

The first prompt: “develop a scenario with the key driver being climate change and the key uncertainty being democracy.”

The following scenario is an interplay between an inevitable force (Climate Change) and a variable social response (Democracy). This scenario focuses on a specific future called **"The Green Leviathan."** It explores a world where the pressures of climate change become so acute that they force a resolution of the "Democracy Uncertainty" toward authoritarianism, trading liberty for survival.

Scenario Architecture

- **The Key Driver (The "Certainty"): Accelerating Climate Destabilization.** By 2040, the world has breached the +2.0°C threshold. Extreme weather is no longer an "event" but a persistent state. Food systems are volatile, and coastal migration is constant.
- **The Key Uncertainty: The Resilience of Democratic Institutions.** Can consensus-based, slow-moving democratic systems handle rapid, existential crises? Or will populations demand "strongman" efficiency to guarantee basic survival?

The Scenario: "The Green Leviathan" (2050)

In this future, the "Emergency" never ended. Democracy did not die with a bang, but was voluntarily surrendered in exchange for food security, flood defenses, and stability.

1. The Turning Point: "The Black Summer of 2034"

The catalyst was a simultaneous multi-breadbasket failure. A heat dome over the U.S. Midwest, combined with flooding in Southeast Asia and drought in Ukraine, caused global grain stocks to collapse. Democratic governments, paralyzed by parliamentary debates, lobbyist stalling, and polarized voters, failed to ration resources quickly. Food riots erupted in London, Paris, and New York.

In the chaos, the **"Planetary Security Act"** was drafted by a coalition of technocrats and military leaders. It promised one thing: *"Survival through Order."* It passed with thunderous applause from terrified populations.

2. Governance: The Algorithm of State

Traditional parliaments and congresses have been dissolved or reduced to ceremonial advisory boards. Executive power is held by **Regional Directorates**—technocratic councils composed of climate scientists, logistics AI, and military generals.

- **Voting is replaced by "Feedback Loops":** You don't vote for leaders; you input your daily satisfaction metrics into the state app. If the algorithm detects unrest, the Directorate adjusts rations or deployment strategies.
- **The Social Contract:** The State guarantees caloric intake, shelter, and energy. In return, the Citizen grants the State total control over their consumption, movement, and employment.

3. Daily Life: The Carbon Ledger

Freedom is no longer defined by speech, but by your **Carbon Allowance (CA).**

- **Algorithmic Rationing:** Every citizen has a digital wallet linked to their biometric ID. Buying a steak, booking a flight, or even charging a vehicle deducts from your non-renewable Carbon Allowance. When you hit zero, you are cut off from high-emission goods until the next cycle.
- **Restricted Movement:** Travel is viewed as a "resource leak." Taking a vacation requires applying for a permit, proving the trip has "social utility."
- **Eco-Surveillance:** "Green Marshals" (local enforcers) use drones and smart-meter data to ensure no household exceeds its energy quota. Hoarding resources is a capital offense.

4. The Economy: Fortress Economics

Free market capitalism was deemed "ecologically inefficient." It has been replaced by a **Command-and-Control Circular Economy**.

- **Planned Production:** The Directorate decides how many cars, phones, and shirts are produced annually based on available resources. Marketing and advertising are banned to prevent "induced demand."
- **The Job Guarantee:** Unemployment is 0%. Everyone is conscripted into the "Restoration Corps"—planting mangroves, building sea walls, or retrofitting insulation. It is hard labor, but it pays in extra caloric credits.

5. The Outcome: A Cold Stability

By 2050, the atmosphere is stabilizing. Carbon emissions have plummeted 80% because the Directorate simply turned off the factories that didn't matter. The sea walls in Miami and Mumbai are holding. No one is starving.

However, the human cost is silence. Dissent is treated as "climate treason"—sabotage against the survival of the species. The press is a mouthpiece for "Optimism & Order." We saved the planet, but we lost the free society that lived on it.

Strategic Implications (The "So What?")

This scenario highlights three critical risks for organizations and leaders today:

- **The Efficiency Trap:** If democracies remain too slow to act on climate, the public appeal of authoritarian efficiency will grow.
- **Technocracy vs. Humanism:** As we rely more on data to manage resources, we risk removing the "human element" (empathy, choice) from governance.
- **The Inequality of Survival:** In a "Green Leviathan," those close to the Directorate live in comfort, while the masses live in austere barracks.

What is the alternative?

The *other* side of the uncertainty axis is **"Civic Resilience."** In that scenario, the climate crisis forces democracy to evolve into hyper-local, participatory networks (citizens' assemblies) that solve problems faster than centralized governments ever could.

Here is the detailed "Civic Resilience" scenario. This future stands in stark contrast to the **"Green Leviathan."** Instead of centralized efficiency and coercion, it relies on decentralized adaptability and radical participation.

Scenario: "The Mosaic of Commons" (2050)

In this future, the nation-state proved too rigid to handle the granular chaos of climate change. When central governments faltered, local communities didn't wait for rescue—they organized. Democracy didn't die; it evolved into something hyper-local, messy, and deeply resilient.

1. The Turning Point: "The Great Fragmentation" (2032)

While the "Green Leviathan" scenario was born from a desire for order, this scenario was born from abandonment. In 2032, a series of cascading infrastructure failures (grid collapses in Texas and India, seawall breaches in Northern Europe) revealed that central governments were bankrupt and overwhelmed.

The federal response was, "You are on your own for now." Neighborhoods, towns, and bioregions realized that no cavalry was coming. They formed **"Resilience Councils"** out of necessity, pooling generators, water filters, and food. These temporary emergency measures became the permanent new foundation of society.

2. Governance: The Assembly of Peers

The era of the career politician is over. Governance is now **"Sortition-based"** (random selection), similar to jury duty.

- **Citizens' Assemblies:** Every town and city block is governed by a rotating council of randomly selected residents who serve 2-year terms. They hear testimony from experts and vote on local issues (e.g., "Do we raise the sea wall or retreat inland?").
- **Liquid Democracy:** For regional issues, citizens use secure blockchain platforms to delegate their vote to trusted peers or experts on specific topics (e.g., "I trust my local farmer to vote on water rights for me").
- **The Federal Role:** The national government still exists but is hollowed out. It acts mostly as a "standards bureau"—setting baseline environmental targets and mediating disputes between autonomous bioregions.

3. Daily Life: The 15-Minute Mesh

Life is intensely local. The global supply chain has been replaced by the **"Mesh"**—a network of local circular economies.

- **Radical Sharing:** Private ownership of "heavy assets" (cars, washing machines, lawnmowers) is rare. Instead, every block has a **"Library of Things"** where you check out what you need. This drastically reduces the carbon footprint of manufacturing.
- **Civic Duty:** The "work week" is 20 hours of paid employment and 10 hours of **"Civic Service"**—maintaining the community garden, repairing local solar grids, or caring for the elderly.
- **Data Sovereignty:** Unlike the surveillance state of the Green Leviathan, data here is owned by the community "Data Trust." You choose exactly what information you share, usually in exchange for specific services (e.g., sharing your energy usage data to help balance the neighborhood microgrid).

4. The Economy: The Regenerative Commons

GDP is considered a relic of the "Extraction Age." The new metric is **"Bioregional Health."**

- **Local Currencies:** Communities trade using time-banks or local digital tokens backed by real assets (energy, grain, water). This insulates local economies from global financial crashes.
- **Maker Culture:** "Planned obsolescence" is illegal. If you buy a phone, it must be modular and repairable. Local "Fab Labs" with 3D printers produce spare parts on demand, eliminating the need for shipping parts across oceans.
- **Food Security:** Every available surface—rooftops, medians, old parking lots—is dedicated to permaculture. Food is grown where it is eaten.

5. The Outcome: "Messy Resilience"

By 2050, the world is not "fixed" in the neat, sterile way of the Green Leviathan. It is chaotic, colorful, and diverse.

- **The Pros:** Inequality is low, mental health is high (due to strong community bonds), and the system is antifragile—if one town fails, it doesn't drag the whole nation down.
- **The Cons:** It is *slow*. Building a high-speed rail line takes decades of negotiation with hundreds of local councils. Standard of living varies wildly—a well-managed town is a paradise; a poorly managed one is a slum.

Comparison: The Two Futures

Feature	**Scenario A: The Green Leviathan**	**Scenario B: The Mosaic of Commons**
Primary Value	**Order & Efficiency**	**Participation & Adaptability**
Power Structure	Centralized Technocracy (Top-Down)	Decentralized Federation (Bottom-Up)
Citizen Role	Passive consumer / Data point	Active participant / Co-creator
Economy	State-Capitalism / Planned Economy	Circular / Mutual-Aid / Cooperatives
Risk	Totalitarianism; lack of innovation	Gridlock; inequality between regions
"The Vibe"	*Singapore meets The Hunger Games*	*Switzerland meets Burning Man*

Strategic Implication

For an organization or government, the "Civic Resilience" scenario requires a completely different operating model. You cannot just lobby a central minister; you must

obtain **"Social License to Operate"** from hundreds of distinct communities. Trust becomes the most valuable currency.

The second prompt: “develop a scenario with the key driver being authoritarian government and the key uncertainty being soft secession.”

This is a change from an environmental constraint to a **political constraint**.

To build this, we first need to define the uncertainty. **"Soft Secession"** does not mean civil war or declaring independence (that is "Hard Secession"). Soft Secession is **"Quiet Quitting" on a societal scale.** It involves creating parallel institutions, using black markets, engaging in tax evasion, withdrawing into private enclaves, and performing "compliance theater" while actually ignoring the state.

Here is the scenario framework based on the interaction between a **Dominant Authoritarian State** and the **Degree of Soft Secession**.

The Scenario Matrix

- **The Driver (The Certainty): The Iron Ceiling.** The government is authoritarian, surveillance-heavy, and undemocratic. This is non-negotiable.
- **The Uncertainty: The Depth of Soft Secession.**
    - *Low Soft Secession:* The population accepts, integrates, and relies on the State.
    - *High Soft Secession:* The population withdraws, hides, and hollows out the State from within.

Scenario A: The Seamless State (Low Soft Secession)

The Authoritarian Dream: Total Integration.

In this future, "Soft Secession" failed because the cost of opting out became too high. The State successfully merged convenience with control. The population isn't rebelling, not even quietly, because the State App is the only way to live.

1. The Dynamic: The "Super-App" Society

The government consolidated all functions—banking, ID, messaging, health, and transport—into a single platform. To "secede" is to effectively cease to exist.

- **Opting Out is Starving:** You can’t buy groceries, unlock your apartment, or board a train without the State ID. There is no cash, so there is no black market.
- **The Psychology:** People have traded privacy for friction-free living. They view the Authoritarian State not as an oppressor, but as a strict parent who "gets things done."
- **Gamified Citizenship:** Loyalty is rewarded with "Priority Access." High social credit scores grant access to faster internet, better travel permits, and luxury goods.

2. The Economy: The Glass House

Every transaction is visible. Tax compliance is 100% because taxes are deducted automatically at the point of sale.

- **Corporate Fusion:** Big Tech and the State have merged. CEOs are appointed by the Party.
- **The "Transparency" Trap:** Dissent is impossible because private spaces no longer exist. Even whispering in your own home is risky due to smart-device penetration.

3. The Outcome: Stagnant Stability

The society is incredibly stable and crime is non-existent. However, it is culturally sterile. Innovation has stalled because no one dares to think "outside the algorithm." The State is a well-oiled machine that is slowly rusting because it deleted the mechanism for self-correction.

Scenario B: The Shadow Archipelago (High Soft Secession)

The Authoritarian Nightmare: The Hollow Shell.

In this future, the State *looks* powerful on maps and in military parades, but it controls nothing but the concrete it stands on. The people have mentally and economically seceded, creating a vast, invisible network of parallel societies.

1. The Dynamic: "Double Life" (Ketman)

Every citizen practices *Ketman* (the Persian concept of paying lip service to authority while secretly dissenting).

- **The "Official" Layer:** People show up to mandatory rallies, chant the slogans, and sign the forms.

- **The "Real" Layer:** The moment they go home, they switch to encrypted mesh networks that the State cannot crack. They use VPNs to access the global internet. They teach their children "real history" in secret living-room schools.

2. The Economy: The Gray Bazaar

The official GDP is collapsing, but people are eating well. Why?

- **Crypto & Barter:** The State currency is worthless. The real economy runs on untraceable cryptocurrencies or direct barter of skills (e.g., a doctor treats a plumber in exchange for pipe repair, off the books).
- **The "Brain Drain" in Place:** The smartest engineers and scientists officially work for State Ministries, but they do the bare minimum (quiet quitting). Their real energy goes into the "Shadow Economy" or working remotely for foreign entities via dark web connections.

3. Governance: The Blind Giant

The Authoritarian State becomes increasingly violent but increasingly ineffective.

- **Data Poisoning:** Citizens feed the surveillance algorithms junk data. They swap phones, wear adversarial clothing to confuse facial recognition, and hack their own utility meters. The State has "data," but it is all noise.
- **Corruption as a Feature:** The police and bureaucrats know the system is a lie. They accept bribes to look the other way. The laws are strict, but everything is negotiable.

4. The Outcome: Volatile Decay

The State is a zombie—dead but still walking. It creates a dangerous environment where infrastructure crumbles because funds are stolen, and public trust is below zero. Eventually, the "hollow shell" cracks, not from a revolution, but because the government simply runs out of resources to pay the enforcers.

Comparison: The Two Authoritarianisms

Feature	**Scenario A: The Seamless State**	**Scenario B: The Shadow Archipelago**
Driver	**Total Compliance**	**Total Avoidance**
State Power	Absolute and Effective	Absolute in theory, Null in practice
Economy	Centralized, Digital, Taxed	Black Market, Barter, Untaxed

Feature	**Scenario A: The Seamless State**	**Scenario B: The Shadow Archipelago**
Social Trust	High (in the System)	High (in the Tribe/Network)
Information	Propaganda is believed	Propaganda is ignored
Vulnerability	A single software bug causes collapse	Chronic instability and corruption
Daily Life	"I have nothing to hide."	"I tell them nothing."

Strategic Implication: The "Legitimacy Gap"

This matrix reveals a paradox for authoritarian regimes:

- If they clamp down too hard without offering prosperity, they push people into **The Shadow Archipelago**, stripping the state of tax revenue and talent.
- If they want **The Seamless State**, they must offer enough "bread and circuses" (prosperity/convenience) that people *voluntarily* stop seceding.

One last but plausible scenario in this paper over the next 10 years for the U.S., based on human demographics, migrations, climate change, technological developments, social / political fragmentation, and economics, is that the U.S. will continue to separate into red and blue regions continuing the current and recent past trajectory and possibly forming multiple separate and autonomous regions. The west coast (Cascadia—Vancouver BC to Seattle to Portland), Silicon Valley, Los Angeles to San Diego to Tiajuana, MX), northeast coast (Philadelphia to New York City to Boston), Denver (Front Range), the Arizona Sun Corridor (Phoenix to Tucson), Toronto – Waterloo Corridor, and Chicago to Minneapolis areas will continue to increase in population, wealth, education, innovation, economic gains, technologically advance, and remain politically progressive. Most of the remainder of the country will lose population, be less wealthy, less educated, less innovative, have limited economic gains, and be more conservative.

The U.S. is increasingly politically and religiously divided or in simple terms, the U.S. is culturally divided. As cultures clash and compromise becomes difficult to impossible, it is worth considering the pattern of the escalation systems archetype. If compromise is impossible and it's difficult to compromise one's religion / identity, then what could hold the country together? Tolerance is behavior that allows for differences to co-exist and if tolerance is not possible, then it becomes more likely that separation becomes formal and the U.S. could split into two or more countries. Splitting up has precedent as several countries have separated into two or more independent countries.

As states increasingly choose their own paths on fundamental issues, we may be witnessing the emergence of something unprecedented: **a United States that's united in name only**, held together by a federal structure that states systematically choose to ignore. The infrastructure for resistance is already built. The legal precedents are established. The only question remaining is how far states are willing to go in walking away from a federal system that no longer serves their values or their people. If the U.S separates, in the words of Juan Enriquez, the United States becomes the Untied States.

Or in the words in the Declaration of Independence.

"When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness."

Challenge Questions

- Will our future be more urban, mobile, educated, secular, tolerant, healthy, and wealthy? Uncertain?

- Will our future become less mobile, less educated, more religious, less tolerant, less heathy, and more unequal? Uncertain?

- Will our future become both more urban, mobile, educated, secular, tolerant, healthy, and wealthy and less mobile, less educated, more religious, less tolerant, less heathy, and more unequal? Quite likely as it is today given the increasing gap in economic and social inequality with likely more economic and social inequality coming as advances in technology drive an accelerated world.

- How will the U.S. and the world counter the World Economic Forum (2025) identified critical risks such as misinformation / disinformation and climate change? Or will we? Uncertain?

- Will the U.S. stagnate and fragment into multiple semi-autonomous regions?
    - Eleven economic regions containing two or more metropolitan areas already exist. The Cascadia Innovation Corridor, for example includes Vancouver, CA and south to Seattle and Portland. Other innovation hubs include the Front Range (Denver), The Arizona Sun Corridor, and others.
    - Regional alliances are forming: the West Coast Health Alliance, the Northeast Public Health Cooperative, the Governors Public Health Alliance, and the Climate Alliance signed by 22 states.

- Will the U.S. remain a democracy? Uncertain?

- Will the U.S. remain one country? Uncertain?

- Will the U.S. see a continuation of soft secession—a devolution of federal power to the states? To cities? Uncertain? Likely? Possibly?

- Could blue cities in red states declare independence? Possible? Likely?

- Is the U.S. Constitution obsolete? Does it need revision? Definitely? Probably?

- Will climate change force a new world order? Definitely? Quite possibly? Certainly?

- Will the UN Sustainable Development Goals be realized? Possible? Likely?

Sources

Bishop, B. (2008). *The big sort*. Mariner Books.

Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu

Bureau of Labor Statistics, https://www.bls.gov

Brynjolfsson, E., & McAfee, A. (2014). *The second machine age: Work, progress, and prosperity in a time of brilliant technologies*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Cascadia Innovation Corridor. (2025). https://connectcascadia.com

Chuang, M. L., et al. (2020). Artificial intelligence in radiology: A review of the current landscape and future directions. *Journal of the American College of Radiology*, 17(7), 845-853.

Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org

Enriquez, J. (2005). *The Untied States of America: Polarization, fracturing, and our future*. Crown.

Gemini 2.5 (Google). https://www.google.com

Goldstone, J. A. (1991). *Revolution and rebellion in the early modern world*. University of California.

Huber, G. P., & Glick, W. H. (Eds.). (1993). *Organizational change and redesign: Ideas and insights for improving performance*. Oxford University.

HUD, https://www.hud.gov

International Renewable Energy Agency.

IPCC, https://www.ipcc.ch

Korotayev, A, & Turchin, P. (2016). Phases of global demographic transition and gun diffusion: A spatial-demographic analysis. *Cliodynamics 7*(1).

McKibben, B. (2025). *Here comes the sun*.

Microsoft. https://www.microsoft.com

Mike Baker Law. (2025). https://mikebakerlaw.com/blog/2025/08/22/soft-secession-vs-soft-fascism-how-states-quietly-resist-federal-overreach/#:~:text=As%20states%20increasingly%20choose%20their,for%20resistance%20is%20already%20built.

MIT. https://www.mit.edu

National Intelligence Agency (2025). *Global trends report: A transformed world*.

Peter G. Peterson Foundation. (2023). http://www.pgpf.org

Pew Research Center, https://www.pewresearch.org

Scharre, P. (2019). *The Army of none: Autonomous weapons and the future of war*.

Solar Energy Industries Association (2025). https://seia.org

Toffler, A. (1971). *Future shock.* Bantam Books.

Toffler Associates. (2025). https://tofflerassociates.com

Topol, E. J. (2019). *Deep medicine: How artificial intelligence can make healthcare human again.* Basic Books.

Turchin, P. (2003). *Historical dynamics: Why states rise and fall*. Princeton University.

Turchin, P. (2016). *Ages of discord: A structural-demographic analysis of American history*. Beresta Books.

Turchin, P. & Nefedov, S.A. (2009). *Secular cycles*. Princeton University.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. (2025). https://sdgs.un.org/goals

U.S. Federal Reserve. https://www.federalreserve.gov

Washington State Department of Health. https://doh.wa.gov

West Coast Health Alliance

Wikipedia (2025). https://www.wikipedia.org

World Economic Forum. (2025). https://www.weforum.org

Yala, A., et al. (2019). A deep learning algorithm to measure breast density on mammography. *Radiology*, 290(1), 198-208.