

In the middle of a revolution - 2017 is going to be memorable

By [Graeme Codrington](#)

9 Jan 2017

As 2016 is left behind us in history's review mirror, we should take a moment to mark its passing. History will remember it for five key reasons that are going to remain with us for a long time.



Graeme Codrington

This is why:

1. In March, Google's AlphaGo supercomputer beat the World Champion at the game, Go. This is the most complex game humans play, and we didn't expect a machine to be able to master it. More importantly, AlphaGo showed a subtlety of play that indicated it was well on the way to true artificial intelligence (as opposed to simple grunt processing power).
2. In April, Germany produced so much energy from wind and solar sources that they paid people to use it before it overwhelmed the grid. In the first six months of 2016, the UK generated more power from solar than from coal. The price of solar panels halved in 2016.
We're approaching a tipping point in energy.
3. A variety of tech companies launched virtual and augmented reality helmets, and VR/AR became mainstream. A short-lived fad, Pokemon Go, propelled global consciousness of AR into the limelight. The game might have faded, but VR/AR will not.
4. In September, the first properly driverless taxis took to the streets of Singapore. Uber-owned driverless trucking company, Otto, delivered 50,000 Budweiser beers in the US in an autonomous truck, and Pittsburgh began to map its streets in anticipation of a full driverless Uber experience in 2017.
5. Brexit and Trump. Disenfranchised voters in two of the world's most important democracies chose the anti-establishment political options, triggering a few years of uncertainty, fear and unprecedented change.

Twelve months ago, if I had written a BizTrends forecast for the year ahead that included those five items, I might have been thought crazy. And yet here we are, and it's all happened.

Will 2017 be as significant in human history?

Our strategic insights team at TomorrowToday believes it will be. The above five trends will continue to gain traction and become more mainstream.



Image by 123RF

We expect a few additional key trends to gain traction in the next 12 to 24 months, including:

1. Medical breakthroughs – most likely the announcement of a cure for a major disease; increased accessibility of genetic sequencing for individuals.
2. Human carrying drones – A step beyond driverless cars, we'll be able to fly from place to place (just for fun in 2017, they won't be legal anytime soon).
3. Blockchain – increased use of the distributed ledger system for much more than just Bitcoin and cryptocurrencies.
4. Quantum computing – a breakthrough in computing power that refreshes our faith in the long-term viability of Moore's Law. This will fuel even further advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning. Chatbots will be the rage.
5. Nanotechnology materials move mainstream – the best of these, graphene, will dramatically reduce in price as a new manufacturing process is discovered. Construction and manufacturing will be changed forever.

The key question we all have to ask is not whether these things will happen in 2017 or not (because they all will surely happen at some stage soon), but whether your business is ready for the way the world is changing because of them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Graeme Codrington, futurist and international director of strategy firm Tomorrow Today Global, is a researcher, author, presenter and board advisor. Contact him at graeme@tomorrowtodayglobal.com

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>