

A Brief History of the Future



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Predicting the future is a notoriously precarious, profitable and even dangerous business. This book takes a look at the most interesting, important and influential futurists over the years; from Delphi's virgin visionaries, to pop futurists, science fiction writers, trend gurus and evolutionary experts. It provides a chronological history of the future, looking at the predictions that have shaped our world - Leonardo's flying machines; Darwin's evolutionary theory; Mendeleev's periodic table; Marx's political futurism; Orwell's Big Brother; von Neumann's game theory that nearly led to World War Three; Buckminster Fuller and Corbusier's visions of social change through architecture. Prediction has become an integral part of business - Shell used scenario planning against oil shocks in the seventies, Nokia has a 'foresight' department, even the government of Lichtenstein has a shiny new futures department. But how do these people think, where do they get their ideas and what influence do they really have over our minds, businesses and politics? As well as the history of this influential, mysterious discipline, this book also gives an insider's view of the workings of future prediction today. Ultimately, we must ask whether we can 'make' the future, or does the future make us?

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