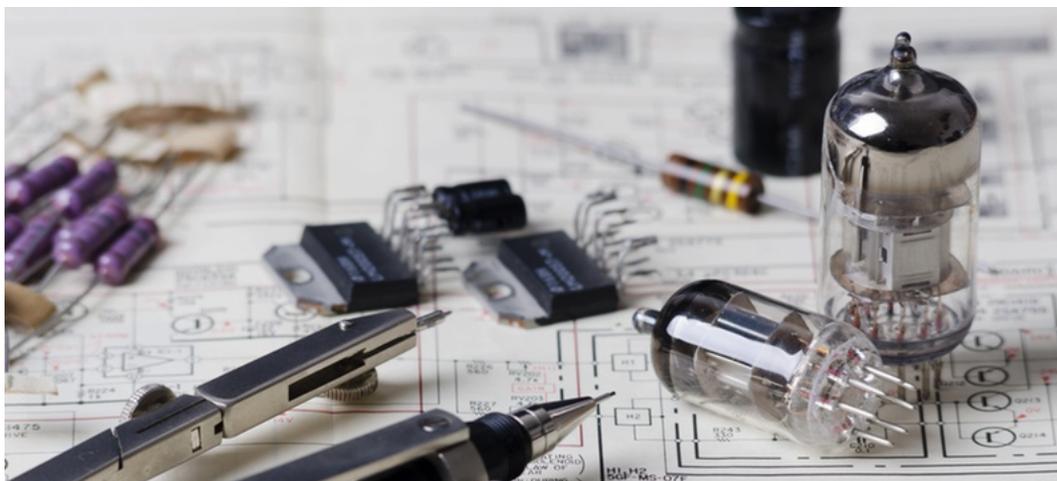




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The 10 Top inventions of the 20th and 21st centuries

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The initial part of the 21st century has been the stage of major technological inventions that have changed significantly humankind daily lives. Things happen at an incredible speed. The world has become a global "village", where everything is a "click" away.

This article main goal is to highlight the top ten inventions that irreversibly changed the way humanity lives.

Obviously there are a plethora of inventions that one could mention here; however I want to restrict this article to those that had the greatest impact.

In order to understand the changes occurred in the first part of the 21st century, it is important also to highlight the top ten inventions of the 20th century (again it could be much more than ten), because there can be no doubt that the twentieth century is one of the most remarkable, in human history, for its previously unparalleled rate of technological advances and scientific discoveries. A rate that continues to this day, one might add.

It is important to provide a timeline for both centuries, to help us situate in time; thus, it is considered as the 20th century, the period between 1 January 1901 and 31 December 2000 and the 21st century comprises the period that started on January 1st, 2001 and it will end on December 31st, 2100.

I will start with the top ten of the 20th century and then the top ten of the current century.

1. Radio

Not many people can appreciate the impact the advent of radio had on 20th century. Besides the obvious novelty of allowing people to be heard from hundreds or even thousands miles away without the use of a wire, it was the center of family life through the end of the Second World War into the doldrums of the fifties, when it was steadily replaced by television. Currently, its use is restricted to cars as a mean to prevent drivers from falling asleep behind the wheel.

2. Internet

Computer rendered the typewriter obsolete and made hand-typing a thing of the past; however internet was what made the computers to become the “monster” that it is today. Everything can happen with internet: one can buy/sell; get to know what is happening across the other side of the world, start a revolution, change mindsets, spread lies; have a social life. There are endless possibilities.

3. Television

Somebody called it “Society’s babysitter” and I completely agree. For most of us, television it is the only company one has, and despite the sadness of this argument, this is more common than one might think!! I guess it would very hard for a lot of people to live without the magic tube. Unfortunately!!

4. Antibiotics

Up until Alexander Fleming discovery of penicillin, everything could be fatal for human race, bug wise. Since then, and after the discovery of a whole range of antibiotics, death due to bacterial infection became extremely rare, which increased hugely humankind life span.

5. The Submarine

Although submergible vessels had been used in the past, it was not until the 20th century that the modern submarine came into scene.

6. Rocketry

While the rocket was first invented and used by the Chinese over three thousand years ago—and used occasionally by the Greeks and Romans since—it wasn’t until the twentieth century that it came into its own and became more than just a dazzling amusement or a largely harmless but still effective “terror weapon” for ancient armies. In the twentieth century, rockets became bigger and more powerful. Most importantly, they became controllable, which suddenly made them useful both as weapons of war and, even more vitally, as our means of accessing outer space. Without the rocket, it is safe to say we would not only have never gone to the moon or visited every planet in our solar system. Rockets also place satellites into orbit around our planet, so without them we also wouldn’t be able to use GPS, predict the weather, make international calls or, for the most part, even use our cell phones much of the time.

7. Automobile

Once the automobiles came into scene in the 20th century it changed completely people’s mobility. The main responsible for the spreading of this mean of transportation was Henri Ford’s assembly line production style, which made cars affordable to almost every purse.

8. Airplane

This revolutionary mean of transportation made travelling much quicker and safer, as well as revolutionized warfare, sped-up package deliveries and made fire-combating more effective.

9. Personal Computer

It’s difficult to imagine our world today without computers. Of course, they have been around since World War Two, but they were clunky, massively expensive things that had all the calculating power of a brick. When Steve Wozniak and Stephen Jobs introduced the Apple in 1976, however, it changed everything and the rest is, as they say, history. Today, of course, they are everywhere and we have become so dependent upon them that many people almost feel naked without one. For some, they even provide the very means of maintaining a livelihood: we use them to keep track of our finances, write books, design logos and sell real estate. Plus, they are rapidly replacing the stereo and television in their ability to entertain us with music, movies, and games.”

10. Nuclear Power

Nuclear power was to the twentieth century what steam power had been to the nineteenth: a game changer. Suddenly humanity had a power source that didn’t pollute, was efficient and practically unlimited, and so had the potential to change the planet overnight. Unfortunately, it was a two-edged sword in that this same energy source could be used to create the most destructive weapons in history, threatening human survival with its very presence. Additionally, while nuclear power plants didn’t spew pollutants into the air, in the hands of the truly incompetent they had the capacity to render whole regions radioactive and, as such, uninhabitable for generations (as was demonstrated at Chernobyl in 1986).

However, it is hard to deny the overall positive impact nuclear power has had. The fear of mutually assured destruction probably prevented the world from experiencing a third world war and, when operated safely, nuclear power plants truly are a superb and cost-efficient energy source that has the capacity to power entire cities.

1. Hydrogen Powered Cars

It is hard to imagine that cars as we know them will be out of use anytime soon; however they will soon be overcome by electrical cars & hybrids. If so, it will completely change the statistics of planet Earth pollution. Advantage: use hydrogen in the combustion chamber and leave only water vapor. Disadvantage: Might be very costly for day-to-day use.

2. Robotics

It is a branch of technology that deals with the design, construction, operation and application of robots. It is something that the modern scientist community has been working for quite a while now. It is a fact that robots are becoming more and more capable of performing certain tasks that were previously only carried out by humans. This can have a huge impact in the very fabric of modern societies, at all levels!

3. Automation

Predictions say that by the end of the 21st century, your house, car, refrigerator and anything else you can think of, will be smarter than you and will be capable of carrying out nearly any task you might have in mind. This invention is walking hand in hand with the previous one. Let's hope humans will be capable to have the last word, all throughout this huge technological advances.

4. Anti-Gravity

If one speak about the facts of classical physics, this invention sounds like a lot of rubbish, because it is a fact that magnetic monopoles (magnets that have only one pole) cannot exist; however it is very likely that this will be doable in another seventy year or so. Then we will say goodbye to wheels and everybody will be riding in a cushion of magnetic fields.

5. Cloning of Humans

Scientists have made possible the impossible feat of copying humans. After a few experiments and alterations with genes, scientists have found out the way by which one can grow new organs and even a complete new human. Life spans of two hundred or three hundred years might be within reach.

6. Nanotechnology

Undoubtedly this is the most fascinating advent in the field of technology. It deals with the extremely small microscopic particles which are so fine that they can be injected into the system and repairs can be done to the human organs. We are not there yet but the prospects for it are great.

7. Artificial Intelligence

It is one thing to make a robot do a daily chore around the house, it is a quite another to get it to think about what is the best way to carry out that task. Artificial intelligence will enable machines to be able to learn, plan, decide, compare among other things.

8. Free Energy

The holy grail of science has been the acquisition of energy that comes from non-polluting sources (i.e. oil, natural gas, coal, etc.). By the end of the century it is very likely that the dream will become a reality. However, it will come from several sources and in very different ways. Geo-thermal, wind, biomass, clean coal, nuclear and solar energy will be a part of the change, but other more exotic technologies may also emerge – technologies such as fusion and zero-point energy generators, either of which would provide an inexhaustible source of non-polluting, non-radioactive energy.

9. Hypersonic Transportation

The way we travel by aircraft has completely changed in the current century. This is mainly to do with the outstanding developments that have occurred in the area of hypersonic transportation. We have at our disposal planes and trains that almost equal the speed of light. With proper development of the technology it is not far away when we will seriously be able to travel all the countries of the world in just 80 days, like Willy Fogg!

10. Genetic Engineering

This is without a question, the next step in human development. Tailor-made human beings and animals will be a possibility in a near future.

When one takes a look at the list and compares where it started with where it finished, one starts wondering where it is going to end!!

There is no stopping progress!!

Is it all on behalf of humankind welfare?

Well, let's say that there were some inventions that I much rather they were left undiscovered!

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