

What's Next: The Experience Age

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will speculate about the future of technology. We can see new and emerging trends already beginning to develop from our use of the internet. We can probably safely assume that some of these trends will continue to grow. This does not, though, guarantee anything is certain. As much as history can help us to prepare for the future, it cannot fully predict the future. As we learn about technologies of the past and present, we can take what we learn and shape the future of technology. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. The Experience Age
2. Lessons for the Future

"What I've found is that our little devices, those little devices in our pockets, are so psychologically powerful that they don't only change what we do, they change who we are."

Sherry Turkle, Cultural Analyst



BEFORE YOU START

What can history teach us about the future of technology?

1. The Experience Age

Over the past few lessons, we've seen how technologies like written language and the printing press changed the way entire societies functioned and shared ideas. In more recent history, we've seen how advances in communication technology, such as the internet, have become a critical part of our everyday lives.

Let's take a moment to consider how different skills have played a role in this week's lessons from the past.

The main topic in this challenge was **communication**. Remember, communication involves seeking and delivering information, articulating ideas, listening effectively, and connecting to various audiences, settings, and situations. Each new form of technology we read about this week—from written language to the internet—has enabled people to enhance their communication skill. Today, even when we're physically far from others, we can still use our communication and technology skills to stay connected.

From the printing press to instant messaging, innovations in communication have helped people improve their **problem solving skill**. After all, written records help people remember the past to better solve problems in the present and the future—that's one of the main lessons of history. And newer forms of communication

allow people to collaborate and solve problems more quickly, efficiently, and creatively.

We saw a lot of **agility** this week—throughout history, people have had to figure out how to use new forms of communication to reach their goals. After the radio was invented, it was quickly used not only to send messages, but also to entertain people and advertise products. And we saw the same pattern with television and the internet—when a new way to communicate emerges, people use agility to adopt it and get their message across.

2. Lessons for the Future

Based on our understanding of history, it's easy to conclude that this trend will continue, and it's logical to wonder about breakthrough technologies that might be possible through advancements like artificial intelligence.

Some people describe our current moment as a transition from the Information Age, which was defined by using communication technology to share information, to the Experience Age, where technology is used to create entirely new ways of experiencing things in a digital setting. Think about online role-playing games, for example, which let us create entire worlds on our computers, or virtual reality technology that allows us to explore digital settings in a 3D space. Virtual reality is allowing pilots to run true-to-life simulations and doctors to practice surgeries, all within a completely safe trial space. Other people are using virtual reality for therapeutic treatments to help them adapt to prosthetic limbs or overcome phobias.

The possibilities for communication and transmission of information in virtual and augmented realities seem endless at this point. People who are able to adapt to these possibilities have a clear advantage as new technology continues to change the workforce. These people will also be at the forefront of the development of even bigger, better ideas for technological growth in the future.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that the next era in communications technology may be **the experience age**. The revolutions of the past, including the invention of written language and the alphabet, the advent of the printing press and movable type, and the establishment of the internet, hold **lessons for the future** intersection of communication and technology.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: Strategic Education, Inc. 2020. Learn from the Past, Prepare for the Future.