

00:03

It's 2041. The world is even stranger than fiction. Full of astonishing technologies and scientific advances. But there's still one thing that is very familiar. COVID is still with us. We've just figured out how to live with it. You haven't been outside of your apartment for three years. The pandemic of 2021 traumatized you. You still have the nightmares about losing your grandparents and despite advances, fear of infection has kept you inside and isolated. You've just found out that the lover you met in an immersive online game has flown halfway around the world to meet you. But now he's quarantined in the hospital, stricken with a new, extremely virulent variant of the virus. It looks like he might die even before you met him. You decide you've got to venture out, into the dangerous world beyond your four walls.

01:25

Luckily, there are robots to help you. Your housekeeping robot takes you to a special elevator reserved for robots only, allowing you to completely avoid people. It's crammed with all manners of bots. DeliveryBot, CleaningBot, SeniorCareBot, DogWalkingBot, even the walls and ceiling are covered with DisinfectionBots that resemble insects.

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You cautiously step out on the street for the first time, eyeing the passers-by with suspicion. You rely on your Safety Circle app on your mobile device to keep you safe. It alerts you with a vibration or buzz if potential virus carriers step too close. The biosensor membranes on your inner wrist display real time physiological data, including the expiration of various vaccines -- and yours are three years out of date! Without this electric identification film, you definitely can't get to the hospital, or anywhere, as it's needed to access transportation. Meanwhile, your device streams real-time medical status of your dying lover, making it hard not to panic. You race against the clock. When you make it in time? Can you even get there?

03:10

You can. Thanks to AI-automated processes, it was possible to synthesize a quick-fix drug for your lover. And technologies such as AlphaFold will accelerate the speed of vaccine development from years to weeks.

03:28

So, what else could happen in 2041? Anti-fake detectors are part of the standard configuration for cybersecurity. The abuse of technology such as deepfakes to spread rumors and hatred increase conflicts and tear the society apart, it's a thing of the past. Real personalized learning

finally arrives with customized AI companions that calibrate creativity, communication and compassion to each individual equally. Educational technology no longer exacerbates class divisions. With digital twins enabled by natural language processing and XR technologies, Kobe Bryant, Maradona and Whitney Houston would be reborn and become immortal virtual characters in your customized entertainment experience.

04:36

2041 is just around the corner. Only 20 years away. And most of us watching this talk will, if lucky enough, be alive to experience it. That's why, together with the artificial intelligence expert, Dr. Kai-Fu Lee, I chose to write a book that blends science fiction realism with the analysis, not just of technology, but also the big ideas that animate technology. When most think of AI in science fiction, it's often dystopian. HAL 9000, Terminator, Ex Machina -- The AI always feels competitive, hostile, the outlook for humanity bleak. But with our book, we explore a different approach.

05:32

We spent almost two years visiting labs and AI scientists, entrepreneurs, researchers and scholars, trying to figure out the most realistic road map of AI development over the next 20 years. The AI technology we researched into for the book range from natural-language processing to GPT-3, to augmented mixed virtual reality, computer vision, GANs, brain-computer interfaces. We put all this solid know-how into predictions and futuristic storytellings, set in 10 different cities all around the world.

06:20

It was not easy to tell stories in that way. But without disregarding AI's faults and nuances, Kai-Fu and I endeavor to portray a future where AI technology could influence individuals and societies positively. We wish to represent how individuals from disparate cultures and industries, with different identities would react to the future shock induced by AI.

06:53

Let's get back to 2021, the present. The pandemic still spans the world. The people are still unemployed, isolated from friends, family and nature. Will AI really solve all these problems? From modern submarine to the laser gun, from mobile phones to CRISPR, many scientists will admit inspiration from fiction. Imagination does shape the world. So for every future we wish to create, we must first learn to imagine it. By imagining the future through science fiction, we can even step in, make changes and actively play a role in shaping our reality.

07:50

Thank you.