

**Maseena Ziegler** Contributor*If it's entrepreneurial, inspirational or chutzpadik, I'm on it.*

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FORBESWOMAN 7/14/2014 @ 2:08PM | 10,717 views

# The Mind-Blowing Way Selfies Will Change Our Future. Yes, Selfies

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An advanced civilization millions of light years away would surely be forgiven if they described the human race in 2014 using just one word: *Duckface*.

What with the current affliction of pouting and puckering the lips for all its worth showing no signs of decline – fueled by a culture of selfies, with millions, including presidents, princes and even the pope taking them.

So on behalf of humanity, I posed the question to a world-renowned futurist:

*When will selfies become seriously uncool and just go away?*

[Dr. James Canton](#) has advised three White House Administrations and over 100 companies. Recognized by *The Economist* as one of the leading global futurists, named a “Digital Guru” by *CNN* and “Dr Future” by *Yahoo*, he has lead the [Institute for Global Futures](#), a leading think tank, as CEO and Chairman since 1990.

He believes that selfies are not a fad but actually part of our future.

“Selfies are not going to go away,” he tells me. “In fact, they’re going to morph and change as part of a rich and dynamic media.”

He then proceeds to paint a picture of how a new generation of selfies will form an integral role in our lifestyles – where TV, Internet and phone will all converge – creating a new arch or arm.

The selfie, he says, will be the evolution of that.

In predictions that [Dr. Canton](#) shares for the very first time, here's how he sees it playing out:

### **[Video](#) selfies**

In the near future – or the second generation of selfies, standard picture selfies will be replaced by video selfies. We're already seeing a movement in that direction, so nothing new there.

### **Augmented reality selfies**

Third generation selfies will be used as part of [telepresence](#) or [augmented reality](#). The video trend from the second generation of selfies will evolve in a way that allows us to produce selfies on top of other objects or in other places.

"I live in San Francisco," he explains, "but let's say I want to do an 'augmented selfie' on top of the Eiffel Tower, I would be able to produce that. There will be apps that will help me in real time to become a producer of my own selfie media, and turn my friends into my audience. People will start creating *festivals* of 'selfie augmented realities' and layered experiences. This will become part of a new cultural meme of how people use selfies."

Expect to see augmented reality selfies in about three to five years, he says.

### **The Rise of the 'Selfie Economy'**

“ Companies such as [Apple](#), [Nike](#) and [Philips](#) will be sponsoring the creative producers of the 'Selfie Economy' – just as we see right now with YouTubers. People will be able to make a living from creating augmented selfies. We're on the edge of this augmented reality right now. We already have apps in which we can use our phone and hold it up in our environment and see embedded intelligence in objects – like QR codes. Eventually there will be more embedded information built into the landscape which will allow us to become more geo-intelligent. When we're able to layer digital information on top of the physical landscape, the implications for commerce are tremendous,” he tells me.

When everything – every object surrounding us – has an IP address, when our car can talk to our home, our phone, our TV – when all these objects connect and form part of what [Dr. Canton](#) calls a 'blended reality'; where the physical and digital realities merge and converge to form part of our lifestyle – *boom*.

The Selfie Economy takes off.

What we see now with the culture of sharing and the ubiquity of selfies, he says, is just the beginning.

“Selfies will eventually form part of an energized soup of connectivity of media intelligence. You will be able to say, ‘I will be in every place and connected to everyone and everything.’”

Unsurprisingly, the prospect of a widening selfie culture is viewed with some reticence by those who consider to it a sign of growing narcissism in society, accelerated by social media.

[Kim Stolz](#), a former contestant on [America’s Next Top Model](#) and author of [Unfriending My Ex: And Other Things I’ll Never Do](#) is one such opponent.

“ Right now, it’s as if we are in a big worldwide digital reality television show. We are all contestants competing for who has the best friends, the best Saturday nights, the best relationships, the best trips and the best puppies. I believe in time there will be a pushback against this new normal and I think the detrimental effects of our addiction to social media and the insecurity and narcissism that comes along with it will slowly find harsh obstacles. Those obstacles will come in a very personal way from each of us as we digest the ways it has changed our lives.”

Perhaps the obstacles Kim mentions in her comment to me, while of concern, may turn out to be not all that bad.

And there is, also, the possibility that Dr. Canton’s predictions may never come to pass.

Forecasting future events, as the saying goes, is much like searching for a black cat in an unlit room that may not even be there.

But, what history has shown time and time again – what has remained a constant through the ages, remarkably, is: our desire for connection. This alone has driven the development of game-changing technologies such as the telephone, the internet, the mobile, VoIP – and of course social media.

When we created [Facebook](#) profiles using our real identities, and when we did it in the hundreds of millions – even though scepticism abounded, we were allowing ourselves as individuals and as a society to become more intimate with technology – merging more of our real selves with our virtual selves.

What the current culture of selfies has done is made it permissible for us to share even more of ourselves, creating more intimacy with technology.

Whether you think that's a good thing or bad thing, it's *that* growing intimacy with technology deepened by the culture of sharing and selfies, I believe, that will lead to the development of 'the big one': the next game-changing technological invention that will enable us to connect with each other in a new, likely mind-blowing way.

What exact form that takes or when, I have not a clue but I do know that your kids or grandkids will one day be asking how you could have possibly lived without it back in 2014.

For now, having to endure a couple of "Look at me! I'm so pretty posing in my bathroom right now. Muah! <3" pics on our newsfeeds, might be a small price to pay – for that future.

***Hit me up on [Twitter](#) @maseenaziegler, [Facebook](#) @maseenaz or [Cyber Dust](#) @maseena and check out these selfies from Stanford:***

Engineering students at [Stanford University](#) introduced to [counterintuitive habits of truly authentic leaders](#) (see my previous post) at their Thursday night class take a group selfie in anticipation of my post on selfies. Thank you to their lecturer Rebeca Hwang for taking these!



Better than Ellen's! To think, one of these bright faces may just be behind the next big thing in tech. Photo credit: Rebeca Hwang

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