



## James Canton On The Future

### ***What's one thing you were sure would happen, but didn't?***

I would have thought that global corporations would have developed a capacity to look beyond six months when it came to planning for their future. The lack of strategic long-term thinking is the greatest Achilles heel of global business. The inability to look long term detracts from short-term business execution.

I was sure that artificial intelligence would grow up faster and develop more autonomous mobility, personality and be integrated into society more both as robots and decision-support software.

I was sure that global climate change would have been identified with more public health effects and this would have led to more research being done, showing a link between public health and the environment.

I thought there would be faster emergence of

alternative financial products and trading exchanges based on alternative energy markets such as solar, hydrogen, wind and carbon credit. I thought there would be a faster emergence of a global alternative energy trading marketplace.

***What's something that totally surprised you?***

What surprised me was how fast the Internet became a success driver of business. The Internet, as one of many innovations, proves how the intimate link between technology and commerce is fundamental to competitive advantage across all industries.

The rapid adoption of innovation has been mostly underestimated in its power to alter markets, find customers and generate sales. I fully expect new disruptive innovations from nanotechnology to quantum computing to create faster change that will even astound futurists like myself.

Another important surprise was the mapping of the human genome, which will lead to the death and rebirth of health care. I did not anticipate how fast health care would be influenced by personal DNA. This will lead to longer lifetimes and healthier people. Other areas ranging from tracking criminals to creating new agrafoods and materials will be dramatically transformed by the post-genomic revolution.

*James Canton is a futurist, social scientist, lecturer and business adviser. He is the author of The*

Extreme Future: The Top Trends That Will Reshape the World for the Next 5, 10 and 20 Years *and* Technofutures: How Leading-Edge Innovations Will Transform Business in the 21st Century. *He founded and chairs the Institute for Global Futures, a think tank.*