

## Are we doomed by our own creations?

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?The only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation.?

Bertrand Russell

World renowned physicist Profes



or Stephen Hawking says our species could be wiped out by our own creations within the next century.

Hawking said basically our own curiosity has led to our undoing. Our crazy fast pace to improve life and technology could very well lead to our end.

He has suggested in the past that colonizing other planets will be the only way that the human race can survive. But, given our relative ignorance in that regard, we'll likely lose our home planet to a major disaster before we have a chance to resettle somewhere in the cosmos.

?Although the chance of a disaster to planet Earth in a given year may be quite low, it adds up over time, and becomes a near certainty in the next thousand or 10,000 years.

?By that time we should have spread out into space, and to other stars, so a disaster on Earth would not mean the end of the human race.

?However, we will not establish self-sustaining colonies in space for at least the next 100 years, so we have to be very careful in this period.?

From artificially intelligent robots running amok to malevolent aliens, our future is filled with challenges to be sure.

Hawking's latest warning comes with the footnote that further research into science and technology will provide ?new ways things can go wrong.

?It's important to ensure that these changes are heading in the right directions,? he said.

?In a democratic society, this means that everyone needs to have a basic understanding of science to make informed decisions about the future.

?So communicate plainly what you are trying to do in science, and who knows, you might even end up understanding it yourself.

?We are not going to stop making progress, or reverse it, so we must recognize the dangers and control them.?

Maybe we should heed his warnings. After all, Hawking is one of the most brilliant people on the planet. He's also beaten the odds ??he's lived with motor neurone disease for more than 52 years; is confined to a wheelchair and communicates through a computer. He's likely one of the most recognized scientists there are.

But Stephen's predictions are only part of the numerous warning signs that abound all around us.

There are many reasons why humankind deserves what it gets.

I?love those TV?spectals that speculate what the modern landscape would look like after humans were wiped off the face of the planet. It doesn't take long for nature to ?reclaim??what once was. Flora and fauna would thrive and our cities would resemble majestic forests and jungles, instead of steel and concrete monoliths.

I will provide some real world examples of why the flora and fauna should reign supreme.

Like many others, I?was surprised to hear that Goodwill is struggling financially, and a ?cash flow crisis??forced it to close stores.

Hundreds were out of work, many of whom live pay cheque to pay cheque. I'm sure the CEO, who earns over \$200,000 a year, got hers. ?There is something wrong with this picture, right?

A?bank losing money? Well, apparently, Deutsche Bank has lost millions of dollars in its most recent quarter, and has to do some major restructuring. A severance from the Swiss Franc and some bad investments in the auto industry (can you guess which one?) have led to the losses.

Cut thousands of jobs and dividends to shrink the balance sheet. That's how these types refer to people and their livelihood.

Perhaps the top brass of this bank (and others)?should help shrink the balance sheet by taking a pay cut!

Technology has, and will continue, to eliminate human jobs.

Can you image what would happen if the Internet went down for even just a day? Total chaos.

Every time I venture into my bank, I am asked whether I do online banking. ?If I do, won't that mean you will be out of a job,??I?ask the tellers plainly.

As I?line up patiently to do my banking, I'm approached and encourage to use the ATM inside the branch. Again, doesn't anyone see the trend here?

Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but I?enjoy interacting with my fellow human beings. Going to the bank and chatting with tellers is a simple pleasure in life. Don't take it away!

This technology has also affected characters and social interaction. For some, their only human contact is over the Internet, through social networking and via email and Facebook.

Whatever happened to picking up the phone to chat, or actually visiting someone or shooting the breeze over coffee?

Our devices, which for many are glued to their hands, are turning us into cold, self-indulgent automatons. We may not be destroying the planet as Hawking says, but we aren't improving our social skills. Emoticons be damned!

But the doomsters may be right in saying our planet will blow up long before we ever achieve world peace or ?Heaven on Earth.?

As long as we're motivated by greed, success, status and material wealth, we are doomed. Even self-driving cars won't save us from ourselves!