
Afterword

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The future is often regarded as the realm of visionaries, prophets, and science fiction writers. It is also the province of planners, those who have an understanding of how the threads of the past have woven the future, and sufficient foresight to see the possible ways those patterns may continue beyond the present day. Unlike dreamers -- who may muse, "What if....?" and speculate about those possibilities -- planners ask "What if...?" and work to bring the best possibilities into reality.

The Futures Working Group encompasses dreamers and planners alike. In the short term, we each work in our respective areas to craft effective change, anticipating and meeting the challenges of the near future. Over the longer term, we engage in informed speculation about the impact of larger trends, considering both preferred and adverse developments. In the latter area, we examine more abstract possibilities, laying the groundwork for shaping and responding to trends and events beyond our immediate sphere of influence. The evolutionary change of Levin and Jensen's contribution is similar to Myers' and Melis's "Wild Cards," which nevertheless embody differences akin to the overnight introduction of new technologies. These shifting possibilities produce a constant stream of change, each of which forces us to adapt, question, and reconsider what we once accepted as fact, and to look beyond the comfortable understandings of what is to the more uncertain realm of what might become, and be coming.

In doing so, we take guidance and inspiration from those whose profession is the future: from Alvin Toffler, who inspired the first Futures course at the FBI Academy, to John Smart, whose presence and contributions inspired us at our meeting in Phoenix.

The work of John Smart and of Richard Clarke provided direct inspiration for this volume of the Future Working Group's papers. Several of this volume's authors note that envisioning our world ten years into the future takes us well beyond the familiar near-term future that is the focus of our "day jobs." As a result, working independently of one another, we evoke multiple possibilities, interweave common and diverse themes, and arrive at vastly different visions of the world in 2015. We have indulged in more fanciful imaginings for this volume than is our usual fare, with results we hope are both entertaining and thought-provoking.

We have not explored all the possibilities, nor asked all the questions that we might have. Many of those questions will evolve over time, and may provide the grist for future volumes of the FWG:

- Can government logistics at any level (but especially at the local level) keep pace with the accelerating change of technology, and what are the implications for governance if not?
- Will the New Luddites be technophobes, or scientifically sophisticated enough to infiltrate and destroy systems from within?
- What recourse is available to an armed but polite society against the predatory mechanisms of the sophisticated online banditry, operating from halfway around the globe?
- Is human nature malleable enough, or sensible enough, to make the cognitive shift from "number of persons robbed this year" to a SEAP model of "number of persons not imposed upon by crime"?
- How would a loosely-linked network of Ted Kaczynskis work, and what kind of havoc could they wreak?

Is it possible to broaden the use data-mining from the identification of toxic individual patterns to the identification of toxic local trends, in support of SEAP goals? Will there be enough political will to make such a transformation?

Is a polite but armed society only possible in places already polite and relatively homogeneous, like Smallsville?

What are the implications of being “an agent of the State” in an era of increasing privatization, and/or of accelerated marginalization of nation-state governance?

How will the Smallsvilles of the nation and the world react to the imposition of outside pressures, whether economic change or ethnographic and cultural changes wrought by migrations?

Will biometrics prove to be the salvation of electronic commerce, or merely a longer string of ones and zeros to be stolen, compromised, altered, and suborned?

How many variations of the Smallsville self-policing model might evolve if the public police of today disappear as a legitimate enterprise? Is the likelier result a broader democratic network, or a return to social Balkanization?

What social dislocations and individual adaptations can we anticipate if privacy becomes impossible in fact, and transparency is imposed upon the populace by fiat, either by evolutionary change or developmentally?

These and many other questions remain, and more will emerge from the process of trying to answer them. The published works of the Futures Working Group began with the idea of localized nodes of self-governance, and hence police work: the Smallsville model of this volume. The other

pieces in Volume 1 were responses to that central idea.

In this work, Volume 2, that concept serves as a springboard for a longer leap of faith and supposition, and an exploration of broader themes. The questions and possibilities depicted in these essays may be considerably more salient if we revisit the issues in five years’ time; some may have achieved considerable resolution—politically, a National ID card may be a reality within that time, or the idea may have been banished—and the others will be entwined with new, emerging issues.

Subsequent volumes planned for the Futures Working Group return to the focus on a common theme. The third volume follows on the heels of Hurricane Katrina and the centennial anniversary of the San Francisco earthquake. The essays will examine the future demands and needs of disaster preparation. The fourth volume will revisit a theme raised in this volume by several authors: the merging trends of militarization of police operations, and the military’s adaptation to a post-invasion policing role. That volume will also address changes in the intelligence community, and the potential impacts for the American police.

In this as in all our other works, we hope to inspire and challenge. We invite responses, whether in agreement or rebuttal, and invite any and all interested readers to join in the ongoing effort to create a better future.