

Crossing the Cognitive Chasm, Circa 2017

Many many pundits have made their predictions for cognitive technologies in 2017. Here we provide a sampling of links to those predictions. However, let's also raise our perspective and look at the state of cognitive from a macro perspective. We can use Geoffrey Moore's 1991 classic "Crossing the Chasm," but update it with a parallel update to Joseph Schumpeter's 1942 "creative destruction," the "process of industrial mutation that revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one." To wit, look at Amazon's impact on the retail industries with the once new technology of e-commerce (remember Borders Bookstores?). Now a new technology, cognitive technology, is driving creative destruction so it's time to introduce the notion of the "*cognitive destruction*" of established industries.

In their book *Smart Customer Stupid Companies... Why Only Intelligent Companies Will Thrive, and How to Be One of Them* – the authors Michael Hinshaw and Bruce Kasanoff articulate four excellent points as they relate to cognitive computing:

1. The greatest possible competitive advantages stems from having knowledge of customers that your competitors lack. Companies can't be competitive if they can't stay ahead of their customers.
2. Disruptive forces are changing customer experience...which is changing customer expectations...
3. Dramatically reduce complexity to gain competitive advantage. Your company must be able to act smarter than its customers, or it will cease to exist.
4. If you're a company putting your customer through a mindless robotic voice recognition system that requires you to navigate through layers of menus to retrieve a simply answer, then your company is endangered of ceasing to exist.

The book captures the true essence of disruptive changes with a quote from General Eric Shinseki, Retired Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, "If you don't like change, you're going to like irrelevance even less."

"We are on the cusp of a change as big as when e-commerce hit," said Chris McCann, president and CEO of 1-800-Flowers.com. "It's giving us the opportunity to have such deep relationships with our customers that it'll be like the company hasn't existed before. It can change our market, our supply chain. Everything. It will drive change all through the company. *It is as if we were starting a new company.*"

The awesome changes being ushered in go beyond the creation or modernization of companies and their ROIs, it goes on to societal change... on to ethics: the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation.

Below are number of discussions and actions related to *ethics*, esp. in light of Fake News and Alt-Facts:

[Google purges nearly 200 websites in fake news crackdown](#)

[Facebook Inches Timidly Forward In Fight Against Fake News](#)

[The Future of Work](#)

[The Future of Work and Workers](#)

[Partnership on Artificial Intelligence to Benefit People and Society](#)



[Transparency and Trust in the Cognitive Era: Gini Rometty](#)

And here is a short collection of predictions from the pundits, including master cyber criminals, super-trojans, workforce shifts, advanced analytics and more:

[After a big 2016, next year may be A.I. tipping point](#)
computerworld.com

[5 Big Predictions for Artificial Intelligence in 2017](#)
<https://www.technologyreview.com>

[2017 Will Be the Year of AI | Fortune.com](#)
fortune.com.

[Artificial intelligence to drive China VC investments in 2017: KPMG](#)
www.cnbc.com

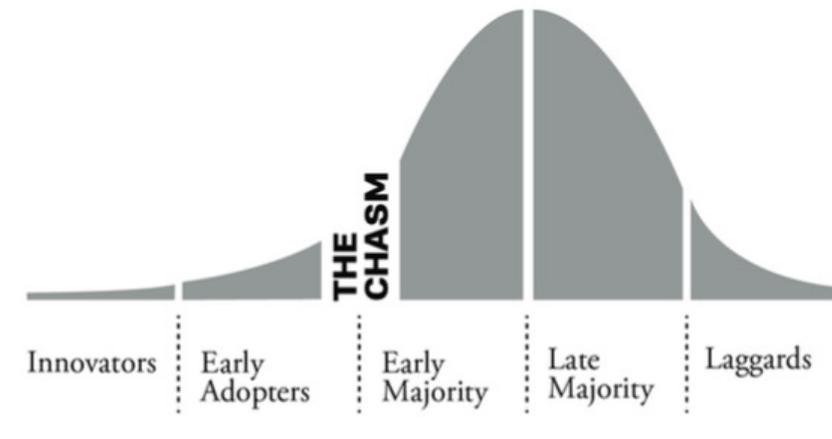
[2017 will be big year for AI thanks to Apple, Facebook, Microsoft and ...](#)
[4 Predictions for Artificial Intelligence in 2017](#)
www.inc.com

[Artificial intelligence: The 3 big trends to watch in 2017](#)
techrepublic.com

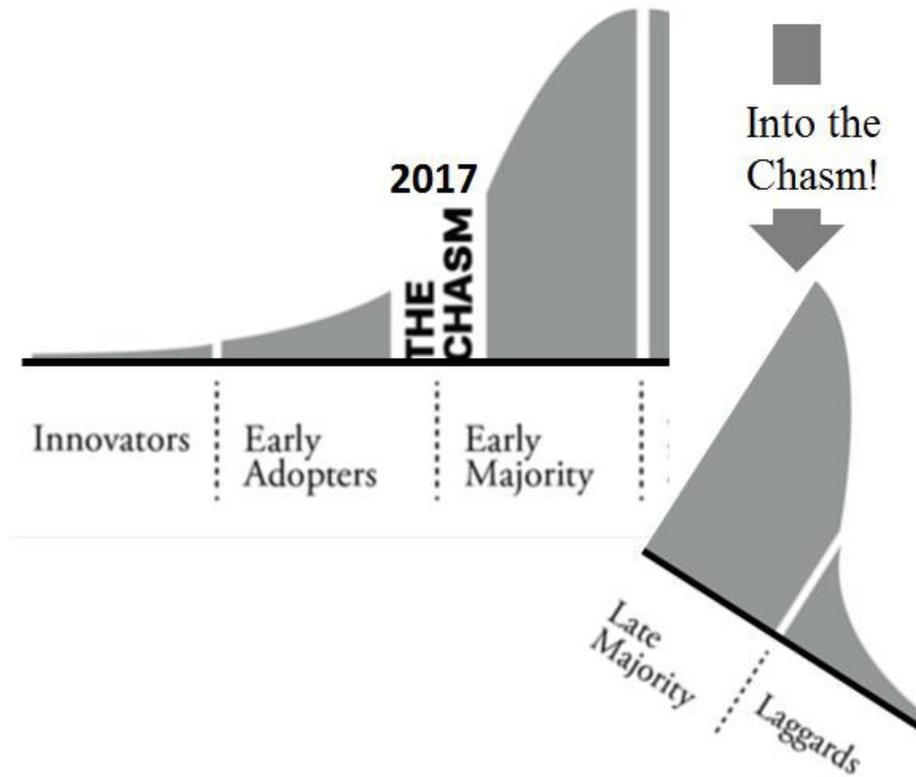
[Baidu's Andrew Ng on the Future of Artificial Intelligence | Time.com](#)
time.com

[15 Artificial Intelligence Predictions for 2017: Expect AI-as-a-Service ...](#)

Welcome back from pundit-ville. Let's go on to some macro-perspectives. Here is Geoffrey Moore's classic model for adopting new technologies, esp. from a consumer's point of view.



But let's move on from consumers of radical new technologies to the business and other organizations that need to adopt them for competitive reasons, for reasons of staying relevant. Forget Moore's familiar bell curve, which is good for statistics classes. Let's look at the "S" curve, where the Late Majority and Laggards are made irrelevant.



So, how **big** is this change being brought to us by cognitive destruction?

“Artificial Intelligence (AI) is likely to change our civilization as much as or more than any technology that’s come before, even writing.”

—Miles Brundage and Joanna Bryson, *Future Tense*

“The smart machine era will be the most disruptive in the history of IT.”

—Gartner “The Disruptive Era of Smart Machines is Upon Us.” Sep. 2013.

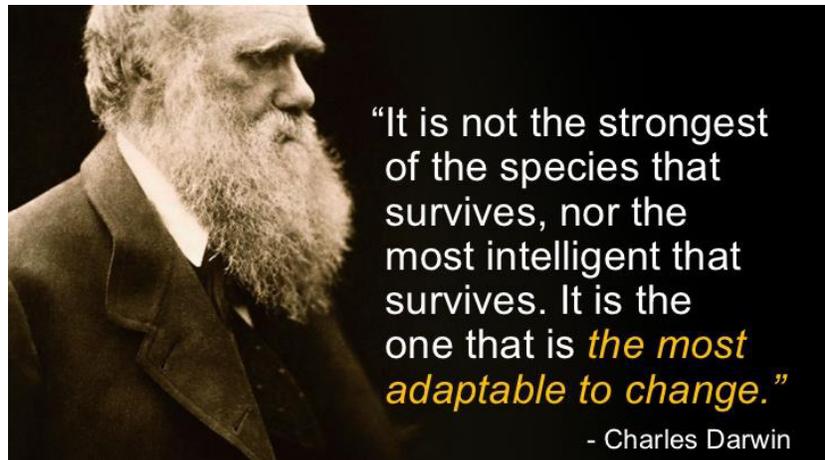
“Reverse-engineering the human brain may be regarded as the most important project in the universe.”

—Ray Kurzweil, *How to Create a Mind: The Secret of Human Thought Revealed*.

“It’s hard to think of a single technology that will shape our world more in the next 50 years than artificial intelligence.”

—President Barack Obama, *Wired*, August 2016.

Speaking of “change,” let’s listen to this guy ...



With regard to business, we can revisit CEO Chris McCann’s quote from above, “*It is as if we were starting a new company,*” and without further ado, let’s consider two questions:

Will you be the doer?

Or the one done in, in the cognitive era?

How to get started with crossing the chasm?

Start with Tom Davenport’s HBR article, [*7 Ways to Introduce AI into Your Organization*](#) and gain insights from the short book, [*Cognitive Computing: A Brief Guide for Gamechangers.*](#)