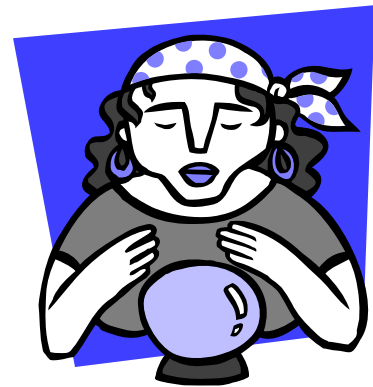


## Forecasts That Missed

People like to speculate about the future, but those crystal balls we peer into are often cloudy. Here are some of the worst predictions of all time, taken from *Forecasts That Missed by a Mile*, written by Laura Lee and appearing in *The Futurist* (September/October 2000):

- “Inventions have long since reached their limit, and I see no hope for further developments” – Said by Roman engineer Julius Sextus Frontinus in AD 100.
- “The abdomen, the chest and the brain will forever be shut from the intrusion of the wise and humane surgeon” – Said by John Eric Ericksen, surgeon to Queen Victoria in 1873.
- “Law will be simplified. Lawyers will have diminished, and their fees will have been vastly curtailed” – Said by journalist Junius Henri Browne in 1893.
- “It doesn’t matter what he does; he will never amount to anything” – Said by Albert Einstein’s teacher in 1895.
- “It would appear we have reached the limits of what is possible to achieve with computer technology” – Said by computer scientist John von Neumann in 1949.
- “The Japanese don’t make anything the people in the U.S. would want” – Said by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in 1954.
- “Nuclear-powered vacuum cleaners will probably be a reality within 10 years” – Said by Alex Lewyt, president of the Lewyt Vacuum Cleaner Company in 1955.
- “Before man reaches the moon, your mail will be delivered within hours from New York to Australia by guided missiles. We stand on the threshold of rocket mail” – Said by Arthur Summerfield, U.S. Postmaster General in 1959.
- “By the turn of the century, we will live in a paperless society” – Said by Roger Smith, chairman of General Motors in 1986.
- “I predict the Internet ... will go spectacularly supernova and in 1996 catastrophically collapse” – Said by Bob Metcalfe, *InfoWorld*, in 1995.



We can laugh about these guesses of events to come, proving that we may not know much about the future. But for believers, we can be secure in the knowledge of Who holds the future.

– Beecher Hunter