

[Mobile ebook] Digital vs Human: how we'll live, love, and think in the future

## Digital vs Human: how we'll live, love, and think in the future

*Richard Watson*

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**Richard Watson : Digital vs Human: how we'll live, love, and think in the future** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Digital vs Human: how we'll live, love, and think in the future:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. They are fantastic at making you thinkBy BookBuzzAs part of my research for "Future proof your", I have been reading buckets of books on future trends. I nearly missed Richard Watson's "Digital vs. Human". It is a cracker. Because it goes far beyond the technology and focusses more on the potential social implications of the speed of change. And we are running out of time. If you

don't believe me, try taking off a mobile phone from a teenager for a day. Richard Watson is one of our VUCA gurus. He wrote "Future Files", "Future Minds" (a version of "The Shallows"), and "Futurevision". Compulsory reading I would regard all of them as compulsory reading for anyone in business and policy. They are fantastic at making you think. With "Digital vs. Human", Richard Watson goes back to "Future Files" and "Future Minds". Sensemaking It starts with making sense. A challenge for anyone trying to get a fix on future trends. Information overload switches off the brain. You need to remember that when you are getting you consume your daily fix of digital candy. He calls that "transcendental self-attention". Or "informed bewilderment". Or "our memory erased by the mundane minutiae of our daily digital existence". Narrowing, not broadening, of our focus. The true pancake people from "The Shallows". Social media as an architecture of human isolation. Humanity under threat In his view, this is not about technology anymore. It is about humanity. It is about moral code versus computer code. We need wisdom and an understanding of what is truly important. Future shock He quotes "Future shock". We are now in future shock. As an example, he tells the story of Kim Yoo-Chul and Choi Mi-sun, a couple that had allowed their baby daughter to starve to death. They had become obsessed with raising an avatar child in a virtual world called Prius Online — their virtual baby was apparently more satisfying than their real-life one. The internet is not the answer Andrew Keen wrote "The internet is not the answer" and Watson thinks we should take note. The internet is destroying more jobs and prosperity than it's creating. Combine that with AI and robotics, and you understand the need for the argument for a basic income as a concept. Progress? There is an illusion of progress. Running water is progress. Solar is progress. Electricity is progress. Not sure if we can say the same about Facebook or Twitter. Worried Watson is concerned about humanity. Some quotes Between 1985 and 2004, the average number of close friends (people you can rely on in a crisis) per person fell from 2.94 to 2.08, while the number of people with no such friends increased from 8 per cent to 23 per cent According to a recent Relate survey, 4.7 million people in the United Kingdom do not have a close friend A survey by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare in 2010 found that 36 percent of Japanese males aged 16–19 had no interest in sex — a figure that had doubled in the space of 24 months In the UK almost half of the photos taken by 14-to-21-year-olds and uploaded to Instagram are selfies In the UK, the average adult sends and receives around 400 texts per month. With teens, it's a whopping 3,700 per month One in eight people is addicted to the internet Since 1998, IQ levels haven't just levelled off — they are actually declining Autistic The whole human race is becoming somewhat autistic, preferring to live largely alone, in fear, interacting only reluctantly and awkwardly with others. The distinction between the physical and the digital (the real and the virtual worlds of Kim Yoo-Chul and Choi Mi-sun) are blurring — everything will become a continuum. What we're doing is not augmenting reality, but changing it. Most notably, we are already dissolving the supposedly hard distinction between what's real and what's not real, and in so doing changing ourselves and, possibly, human nature. Honesty, authenticity, and even truth, so essential for human communication, are all in jeopardy. Future crimes "Future crimes" is in there. Cyber security, surveillance, neuro-marketing, mind reading, big data, life logging and lots of dark things companies, governments and criminals can do in the future. Perfect remembering. Or data-exhibitionism. Documenting life rather than living it. Humans will become algorithms to be maximised for efficiency. Technology The chapters on technology mention all the stuff you have heard about before. Robots, augmentation, nanotechnology, virtual reality, IOT, AI, 3D printing, self-replication, gaming, memory implants, quantified self, health, immortality (death as software error), brain uploading, self-driving cars, Asimov laws of robotics, transgalactic hitchhiker's guide, etc. And he brings it down to some extreme examples. What happens to humans when VR (virtual reality) becomes so compelling that RL (real life!) lacks lustre? Generation G (aming), for whom the world is too slow (or boring). The economy There is an interesting chapter about money and economy. Throughout most of modern history, around two-thirds of the money made in developed countries was typically paid as wages. The other third was paid as interest, dividends, or other forms of rent to the owners of capital. Since 2000, the amount paid to capital has increased substantially while that paid to labour has declined, meaning that real wages have remained flat or fallen for large numbers of people. Humans are no longer competing against each other, but against a range of largely unseen digital systems. Not digital and human. Digital instead of human. The cost of robots had fallen to 18.5. In contrast, the cost of people had risen to 151 (1990 as the base of 100). Metaskills That is why filling people's heads with knowledge that's applied according to sets of rules is a waste. That is exactly what computers do. We should be teaching people to do things that machines cannot. We should be teaching people to constantly ask questions, find fluid problems, think creatively, and act empathetically. If we don't, a robot will one day come along with the same cognitive skills as us, but with a price tag of just \$999. That's not \$999 a month. That is \$999 in total. Forever. No lunch breaks, holidays, childcare, sick pay, or strike actions, either. Maslow 70% of our jobs are under threat. Hence the need for a basic income system. He points to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, self-esteem, altruism, purpose, and spirituality don't directly contribute to GDP or mass employment. That is the argument for GDP versus GNH (Gross National Happiness. It could be wonderful. The good news One of the biggest social transformations of late has been hyper-connectivity created by the internet, which in turn has created a radical increase in transparency, corresponding

declines in privacy, and the development of collaborative communities that co-create and share. The more complex, more globalised, and more virtual the world becomes, the more we crave simplicity, slowness, and reality. The question Machines will one day give the appearance of emotion and feeling, but we must resist such silicon sirens because they will all be illusory. Consciousness, along with intuition, is not computable. Neither is enthusiasm, curiosity, sympathy, forgiveness, imperfection, embarrassment, doubt, humour, and hope. Teaching a robot kung-fu could be a maths problem. But getting a machine to think about snow slowly falling or wind on the Welsh hills, or to be moved by poetry, is different. Or the longing to belong and our love for stories. It is only poets, painters, novelists, filmmakers, and musicians who can reach out and touch the human heart. We need to remember that before it is too late.

From the author of the international bestseller *Future Files* comes the one book you need to read to prepare for the world of tomorrow. On most measures that matter, we've never had it so good. Physically, life for humankind has improved immeasurably over the last fifty years. Yet there is a crisis of progress slowly spreading across the world. Perhaps this is due to a failure of vision; in the 1960s we dreamed of flying cars and moon hotels; today what we've ended up with are status updates and cat videos. To a large degree, the history of the next fifty years will be about the relationship between people and technologies created by a tiny handful of designers and developers. These inventions will undoubtedly change our lives, but the question is, to what end? What do we want these technologies to achieve on our behalf? What are they capable of, and as they transform the media, the economy, healthcare, education, work, and the home; what kind of lives do we want to lead? Richard Watson hereby extends an exuberant invitation for us to think deeply about the world of today and envision what kind of world we wish to create in the future. In a fascinating and accessible way, *Digital vs Human* examines the possible effects of technology on every area of our lives. PRAISE FOR RICHARD WATSON 'A well-argued salvo in a social dialogue that needs to be constant, because the future is already here.' *Cosmos*