

a history of what comes next

A History of What Comes Next: Predicting the Unpredictable

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Abstract: This article explores "a history of what comes next," examining the evolution of prediction methods across various fields, analyzing successes and failures, and ultimately arguing for a more nuanced and context-aware approach to anticipating the future. We will delve into personal anecdotes, historical case studies, and contemporary examples to illustrate the complexities and possibilities inherent in understanding "a history of what comes next."

Keywords: A history of what comes next, future prediction, foresight, forecasting, technological forecasting, societal change, scenario planning, strategic foresight, prediction accuracy, future studies.

1. The Seeds of Prediction: Early Attempts at Foresight

"A history of what comes next" is not a simple linear progression. Early attempts were often rooted in mythology, religion, and astrology. Ancient civilizations relied on oracles and celestial readings to glean insights into the future. These methods, while lacking scientific rigor, highlight a fundamental human desire to understand and prepare for "what comes next." I remember, as a young student, being fascinated by the Babylonian omen texts, their attempts to decipher patterns and predict outcomes based on observed events. These efforts, however primitive, laid the groundwork for more sophisticated predictive methodologies.

2. The Rise of Scientific Forecasting: From Linear Extrapolation to Complex Systems

The scientific revolution marked a turning point in "a history of what comes

next." The emergence of statistical methods and scientific modeling allowed for more data-driven predictions. Early forms, like linear extrapolation, proved useful in certain contexts but often failed to capture the complexity of dynamic systems. Consider the case of the 1970s oil crisis. Linear extrapolations of oil production failed to anticipate the geopolitical factors that drastically altered supply and demand, leading to severe economic consequences. This underlines a critical limitation: a solely data-driven approach to "a history of what comes next" can be dangerously simplistic.

3. The Technological Revolution and its Impact on Forecasting

The 20th and 21st centuries witnessed an explosion of technological advancements that fundamentally reshaped our understanding of "a history of what comes next." The advent of computers and powerful simulation tools allowed for more sophisticated modeling of complex systems. Yet, even with these advancements, predicting the emergence of disruptive technologies like the internet or artificial intelligence proved challenging. My own research on the societal impact of AI highlighted the difficulty in accurately anticipating the unforeseen consequences—both positive and negative—of technological breakthroughs.

4. Scenario Planning: Navigating Uncertainty

Recognizing the limitations of traditional forecasting methods, scholars and practitioners developed scenario planning, a strategy focused on exploring multiple possible futures. Instead of attempting to predict a single outcome, scenario planning constructs plausible alternative futures, allowing decision-makers to prepare for a range of possibilities. This approach acknowledges the inherent uncertainties involved in predicting "a history of what comes next." A compelling case study involves Shell's pioneering use of scenario planning in the 1970s, which helped them successfully navigate the oil crises.

5. The Human Factor: Biases and Limitations

"A history of what comes next" is also a history of human error. Cognitive biases, such as confirmation bias and anchoring bias, can significantly impact the accuracy of predictions. We tend to favor information confirming our existing beliefs and anchor our predictions on readily available data, overlooking crucial contextual factors. This human element underlines the need for rigorous methodologies and critical self-reflection in any attempt to understand "a history of what comes next."

6. Case Study: Predicting the 2008 Financial Crisis

The 2008 financial crisis serves as a stark reminder of the limitations of even sophisticated prediction models. While some experts warned of potential risks, many failed to anticipate the scale and severity of the collapse. This event underscores the importance of considering complex interactions between economic, political, and social factors when attempting to decipher "a history of what comes next."

7. Contemporary Approaches: Combining Data, Intuition, and Collaboration

Modern approaches to forecasting increasingly emphasize a multidisciplinary perspective, integrating quantitative data analysis with qualitative insights, expert judgment, and collaborative processes. This holistic approach acknowledges the limitations of individual viewpoints and the value of diverse perspectives in understanding "a history of what comes next." The emergence of "citizen science" and crowdsourced forecasting further highlights the potential for harnessing collective intelligence.

8. The Ethical Dimensions of Prediction

Predicting "what comes next" raises significant ethical considerations. The misuse of predictive analytics for discriminatory purposes or the creation of self-fulfilling prophecies underscore the importance of responsible innovation and ethical frameworks in the field of forecasting.

9. A Future of Foresight: Embracing Uncertainty and Adaptability

Ultimately, "a history of what comes next" teaches us that perfect prediction is an illusion. The future is inherently uncertain, and any attempt to anticipate it must acknowledge this fundamental truth. Instead of striving for perfect accuracy, we should focus on developing flexible and adaptive strategies that enable us to respond effectively to unforeseen changes.

Conclusion: Understanding "a history of what comes next" requires a nuanced approach that integrates diverse methodologies, acknowledges inherent limitations, and prioritizes ethical considerations. By embracing uncertainty and developing robust adaptive strategies, we can better navigate the complexities of the future and shape a more desirable trajectory.

FAQs:

1. What is the difference between forecasting and foresight? Forecasting

focuses on quantitative predictions, while foresight uses a broader, qualitative approach incorporating multiple perspectives and uncertainties.

2. Can AI accurately predict the future? AI can enhance prediction capabilities but cannot replace human judgment and contextual understanding.
3. What are some common biases that affect future predictions? Confirmation bias, anchoring bias, and availability bias are common pitfalls.
4. How can we improve the accuracy of future predictions? Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, diverse perspectives, and continuous feedback loops are crucial.
5. What are the ethical implications of predictive technologies? Issues of privacy, bias, and potential misuse need careful consideration.
6. What role does scenario planning play in understanding the future? Scenario planning helps explore multiple plausible futures, fostering preparedness and adaptability.
7. How can individuals benefit from understanding "a history of what comes next"? Improved decision-making, greater resilience to change, and better anticipation of opportunities.
8. What is the role of expert judgment in future prediction? Expert judgment provides crucial contextual insights and qualitative assessments supplementing data-driven models.
9. How can we avoid the pitfalls of focusing solely on past trends when predicting the future? By incorporating external factors, considering discontinuities, and understanding the potential for unexpected events.

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transition to fossil fuels affected everything: agriculture, industry, transportation, weapons, communication, economics, urbanization, quality of life, politics, and the environment. Smil describes humanity's energy eras in panoramic and interdisciplinary fashion, offering readers a magisterial overview. This book is an extensively updated and expanded version of Smil's *Energy in World History* (1994). Smil has incorporated an enormous amount of new material, reflecting the dramatic developments in energy studies over the last two decades and his own research over that time.

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a history of what comes next: *Stamped from the Beginning* Ibram X. Kendi, 2016-04-12 The National Book Award winning history of how racist ideas were created, spread, and deeply rooted in American society. Some Americans insist that we're living in a post-racial society. But racist thought is not just alive and well in America -- it is more sophisticated and more insidious than ever. And as award-winning historian Ibram X. Kendi argues, racist ideas have a long and lingering history, one in

which nearly every great American thinker is complicit. In this deeply researched and fast-moving narrative, Kendi chronicles the entire story of anti-black racist ideas and their staggering power over the course of American history. He uses the life stories of five major American intellectuals to drive this history: Puritan minister Cotton Mather, Thomas Jefferson, abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, W.E.B. Du Bois, and legendary activist Angela Davis. As Kendi shows, racist ideas did not arise from ignorance or hatred. They were created to justify and rationalize deeply entrenched discriminatory policies and the nation's racial inequities. In shedding light on this history, *Stamped from the Beginning* offers us the tools we need to expose racist thinking. In the process, he gives us reason to hope.

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“because you were black and for no other reason.” His profound sense of injustice is matched by a robust belief in “monumental dignity”, in patience, empathy, and the possibility of transforming America into “what America must become”;

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fact from fake, we have to equip them with new tools. Historical thinking, Wineburg shows, has nothing to do with the ability to memorize facts. Instead, it's an orientation to the world that cultivates reasoned skepticism and counters our tendency to confirm our biases. Wineburg lays out a mine-filled landscape, but one that with care, attention, and awareness, we can learn to navigate. The future of the past may rest on our screens. But its fate rests in our hands. Praise for *Why Learn History (When It's Already on Your Phone)* "If every K-12 teacher of history and social studies read just three chapters of this book—"Crazy for History," "Changing History . . . One Classroom at a Time," and "Why Google Can't Save Us"—the ensuing transformation of our populace would save our democracy." —James W. Lowen, author of *Lies My Teacher Told Me* and *Teaching What Really Happened* "A sobering and urgent report from the leading expert on how American history is taught in the nation's schools. . . . A bracing, edifying, and vital book." —Jill Lepore, *New Yorker* staff writer and author of *These Truths* "Wineburg is a true innovator who has thought more deeply about the relevance of history to the Internet—and vice versa—than any other scholar I know. Anyone interested in the uses and abuses of history today has a duty to read this book." —Niall Ferguson, senior fellow, Hoover Institution, and author of *The Ascent of Money* and *Civilization*

a history of what comes next: *Full Circle* Scott Ludlam, 2021-05-04 A visionary book for our wild times. Scott Ludlam draws on his experience as a senator and activist to capture our world on a precipice and explore what comes next. One way or another, we are headed for radical change. We are now in the Anthropocene – humans are changing the earth's climate irreversibly, and political, human and natural systems are on the cusp of collapse. Ludlam shines a light on the bankruptcy of the financial and political systems that have led us here: systems based on the exploitation of the earth's resources, and 99 per cent of the world's population labouring for the wealth of 1 per cent. In *Full Circle*, Ludlam seeks old and new ways to make our systems humane, regenerative and more in tune with nature. He travels the globe to see what happens when ordinary people stand up to corporations and tyrants. He takes the reader on a journey through time to discover the underlying patterns of life. And he finds that we are at a unique moment when billions of tiny actions by individuals and small groups are coalescing into one great movement that could transform history. Bringing together a wealth of new ideas, *Full Circle* outlines a new ecological politics. 'Scott Ludlam's *Full Circle* ranges very far in space and time – the story stretches over hundreds of millions of years and every inch of our planet. Ludlam's insights are often cogent and deep – and more than that, they're earned. His willingness to engage in the fight he's describing gives his take on these existential questions real power.' —Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature* 'Australia lost a senator, the world gained a luminous writer. Scott Ludlam's *Full Circle* is at once a comic chronicle of the climate apocalypse, a heartbreaking work of paleohistory and a fugitive tourist diary, strange, uncategorisable and magnificent.' —Raj Patel, author of *Stuffed and Starved* and *The Value of Nothing*

a history of what comes next: *The History of Love: A Novel* Nicole Krauss, 2006-05-17 ONE OF THE MOST LOVED NOVELS OF THE DECADE. A long-lost book reappears, mysteriously connecting an old man searching for his son and a girl seeking a cure for her widowed mother's loneliness. Leo Gursky taps his radiator each evening to let his upstairs neighbor know he's still alive. But it wasn't always like this: in the Polish village of his youth, he fell in love and wrote a book...Sixty years later and half a world away, fourteen-year-old Alma, who was named after a character in that book, undertakes an adventure to find her namesake and save her family. With virtuosic skill and soaring imaginative power, Nicole Krauss gradually draws these stories together toward a climax of extraordinary depth and beauty (*Newsday*).

a history of what comes next: *Bring Up the Bodies* Hilary Mantel, 2012-05-08 Winner of the 2012 Man Booker Prize Winner of the 2012 Costa Book of the Year Award The sequel to Hilary Mantel's 2009 Man Booker Prize winner and *New York Times* bestseller, *Wolf Hall* delves into the heart of Tudor history with the downfall of Anne Boleyn Though he battled for seven years to marry her, Henry is disenchanted with Anne Boleyn. She has failed to give him a son and her sharp intelligence and audacious will alienate his old friends and the noble families of England. When the

discarded Katherine dies in exile from the court, Anne stands starkly exposed, the focus of gossip and malice. At a word from Henry, Thomas Cromwell is ready to bring her down. Over three terrifying weeks, Anne is ensnared in a web of conspiracy, while the demure Jane Seymour stands waiting her turn for the poisoned wedding ring. But Anne and her powerful family will not yield without a ferocious struggle. Hilary Mantel's *Bring Up the Bodies* follows the dramatic trial of the queen and her suitors for adultery and treason. To defeat the Boleyns, Cromwell must ally with his natural enemies, the papist aristocracy. What price will he pay for Anne's head? *Bring Up the Bodies* is one of *The New York Times*' 10 Best Books of 2012, one of *Publishers Weekly*'s Top 10 Best Books of 2012 and one of *The Washington Post*'s 10 Best Books of 2012

a history of what comes next: *Hollow Kingdom* Kira Jane Buxton, 2019-08-06 A finalist for the 2020 Thurber Prize for American Humor! *The Secret Life of Pets* meets *The Walking Dead* in this big-hearted, boundlessly beautiful romp through the Apocalypse, where a foul-mouthed crow is humanity's only chance to survive Seattle's zombie problem (Karen Joy Fowler, PEN/Faulkner Award-winning author). S.T., a domesticated crow, is a bird of simple pleasures: hanging out with his owner Big Jim, trading insults with Seattle's wild crows (i.e. those idiots), and enjoying the finest food humankind has to offer: Cheetos ®. But when Big Jim's eyeball falls out of his head, S.T. starts to think something's not quite right. His tried-and-true remedies—from beak-delivered beer to the slobbering affection of Big Jim's loyal but dim-witted dog, Dennis—fail to cure Big Jim's debilitating malady. S.T. is left with no choice but to abandon his old life and venture out into a wild and frightening new world with his trusty steed Dennis, where he suddenly discovers that the neighbors are devouring one other. Local wildlife is abuzz with rumors of Seattle's dangerous new predators. Humanity's extinction has seemingly arrived, and the only one determined to save it is a cowardly crow whose only knowledge of the world comes from TV. What could possibly go wrong? Includes a Reading Group Guide.

a history of what comes next: *The Years of Rice and Salt* Kim Stanley Robinson, 2003-06-03 With the same unique vision that brought his now classic Mars trilogy to vivid life, bestselling author Kim Stanley Robinson boldly imagines an alternate history of the last seven hundred years. In his grandest work yet, the acclaimed storyteller constructs a world vastly different from the one we know. . . . “A thoughtful, magisterial alternate history from one of science fiction’s most important writers.”—*The New York Times Book Review* It is the fourteenth century and one of the most apocalyptic events in human history is set to occur—the coming of the Black Death. History teaches us that a third of Europe’s population was destroyed. But what if the plague had killed 99 percent of the population instead? How would the world have changed? This is a look at the history that could have been—one that stretches across centuries, sees dynasties and nations rise and crumble, and spans horrible famine and magnificent innovation. Through the eyes of soldiers and kings, explorers and philosophers, slaves and scholars, Robinson navigates a world where Buddhism and Islam are the most influential and practiced religions, while Christianity is merely a historical footnote. Probing the most profound questions as only he can, Robinson shines his extraordinary light on the place of religion, culture, power—and even love—in this bold New World. “Exceptional and engrossing.”—*New York Post* “Ambitious . . . ingenious.”—*Newsday*

a history of what comes next: *Childhood's End* Arthur C. Clarke, 2012-11-30 In the Retro Hugo Award-nominated novel that inspired the Syfy miniseries, alien invaders bring peace to Earth—at a grave price: “A first-rate tour de force” (*The New York Times*). In the near future, enormous silver spaceships appear without warning over mankind’s largest cities. They belong to the Overlords, an alien race far superior to humanity in technological development. Their purpose is to dominate Earth. Their demands, however, are surprisingly benevolent: end war, poverty, and cruelty. Their presence, rather than signaling the end of humanity, ushers in a golden age . . . or so it seems. Without conflict, human culture and progress stagnate. As the years pass, it becomes clear that the Overlords have a hidden agenda for the evolution of the human race that may not be as benevolent as it seems. “Frighteningly logical, believable, and grimly prophetic . . . Clarke is a master.” —*Los Angeles Times*

a history of what comes next: *What Happened* Hillary Rodham Clinton, 2017-09-12 "An engaging, beautifully synthesized page-turner" (Slate). The #1 New York Times bestseller and Time #1 Nonfiction Book of the Year: Hillary Rodham Clinton's most personal memoir yet, about the 2016 presidential election. In this "candid and blackly funny" (The New York Times) memoir, Hillary Rodham Clinton reveals what she was thinking and feeling during one of the most controversial and unpredictable presidential elections in history. She takes us inside the intense personal experience of becoming the first woman nominated for president by a major party in an election marked by rage, sexism, exhilarating highs and infuriating lows, stranger-than-fiction twists, Russian interference, and an opponent who broke all the rules. "At her most emotionally raw" (People), Hillary describes what it was like to run against Donald Trump, the mistakes she made, how she has coped with a shocking and devastating loss, and how she found the strength to pick herself back up afterward. She tells readers what it took to get back on her feet—the rituals, relationships, and reading that got her through, and what the experience has taught her about life. In this "feminist manifesto" (The New York Times), she speaks to the challenges of being a strong woman in the public eye, the criticism over her voice, age, and appearance, and the double standard confronting women in politics. Offering a "bracing... guide to our political arena" (The Washington Post), *What Happened* lays out how the 2016 election was marked by an unprecedented assault on our democracy by a foreign adversary. By analyzing the evidence and connecting the dots, Hillary shows just how dangerous the forces are that shaped the outcome, and why Americans need to understand them to protect our values and our democracy in the future. The election of 2016 was unprecedented and historic. *What Happened* is the story of that campaign, now with a new epilogue showing how Hillary grappled with many of her worst fears coming true in the Trump Era, while finding new hope in a surge of civic activism, women running for office, and young people marching in the streets.

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a history of what comes next: *The Dark Forest* Cixin Liu, 2015-08-11 The inspiration for the Netflix series *3 Body Problem*! Over 1 million copies of the *Three-Body Problem* series sold in North America PRAISE FOR THE THREE-BODY PROBLEM SERIES: "A mind-bending epic."—The New York Times • "War of the Worlds for the 21st century."—The Wall Street Journal • "Fascinating."—TIME • "Extraordinary."—The New Yorker • "Wildly imaginative."—Barack Obama • "Provocative."—Slate • "A breakthrough book."—George R. R. Martin • "Impossible to put down."—GQ • "Absolutely mind-unfolding."—NPR • "You should be reading Liu Cixin."—The Washington Post *The Dark Forest* is the second novel in the groundbreaking, Hugo Award-winning series from China's most beloved science fiction author, Cixin Liu. In *The Dark Forest*, Earth is reeling from the revelation of a coming alien invasion—in just four centuries' time. The aliens' human collaborators may have been defeated, but the presence of the sophons, the subatomic particles that allow Trisolaris instant access to all human information, means that Earth's defense plans are totally

exposed to the enemy. Only the human mind remains a secret. This is the motivation for the Wallfacer Project, a daring plan that grants four men enormous resources to design secret strategies, hidden through deceit and misdirection from Earth and Trisolaris alike. Three of the Wallfacers are influential statesmen and scientists, but the fourth is a total unknown. Luo Ji, an unambitious Chinese astronomer and sociologist, is baffled by his new status. All he knows is that he's the one Wallfacer that Trisolaris wants dead. The Three-Body Problem Series The Three-Body Problem The Dark Forest Death's End Other Books by Cixin Liu Ball Lightning Supernova Era To Hold Up the Sky The Wandering Earth A View from the Stars At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

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a history of what comes next: The Shape of Things to Come H. G. Wells, 2016-09-14 First published in 1933, The Shape of Things to Come is science fiction novel written by H. G. Wells. Within it, world events between 1933 and 2106 are speculated with a single superstate representing the solution to all humanity's problems. A classic example of Wellsian prophesy, this volume is highly recommended for fans of his work and of the science fiction genre. Herbert George Wells (1866 - 1946) was a prolific English writer who wrote in a variety of genres, including the novel, politics, history, and social commentary. Today, he is perhaps best remembered for his contributions to the science fiction genre thanks to such novels as The Time Machine (1895), The Invisible Man (1897), and The War of the Worlds (1898). Many vintage books such as this are becoming increasingly scarce and expensive. We are republishing this book now in an affordable, modern, high-quality edition complete with a specially commissioned new biography of the author.

a history of what comes next: A History of What Comes Next Sneak Peek Sylvain Neuvel, 2020-11-24 Showing that truth is stranger than fiction, Sylvain Neuvel weaves a sci-fi thriller reminiscent of Blake Crouch and Andy Weir, blending a fast moving, darkly satirical look at 1940s rocketry with an exploration of the amorality of progress and the nature of violence in A History of What Comes Next. Download a FREE sneak peek today! Always run, never fight. Preserve the

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people, its land, and its government.

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we tell ourselves.

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