**Human 2.0 Is Coming Faster Than You Think. Will You Evolve With The Times?**

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"Our technology, our machines, is part of our humanity," author, computer scientist, and inventor Ray Kurzweil once said. "We created them to extend ourselves, and that is what is unique about human beings." In the past few years, there has been considerable discussion around the idea we are slowly merging with our technology, that we are becoming *transhuman,* with updated abilities, including enhanced intelligence, strength, and awareness.

Considering Kurzweil's words is a good place to begin this discussion. […] For years, Kurzweil has been pushing the cultural conversation toward the idea of human transcendence with thought-provoking books: *The Age of Spiritual Machines* and *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*.

Although Kurzweil has gained much notoriety for proposing provocative ideas in the latter book, such as, "The Singularity will represent the culmination of the merger of our biological thinking and existence with our technology, resulting in a world that is still human but that transcends our biological roots," the term "singularity" originated in a 1993 essay, *The Coming Technological Singularity,* by science fiction author and professor Vernor Vinge.

To truly grasp the significance of Vinge's thinking, it's important to realize where we were as a society in the early 1990s. Back then, the invention of smartphones and social media platforms were years away. The Internet itself, now so vital to all aspects of our life — communication, commerce, and entertainment — was in its infancy. Yet, here was Vinge boldly proclaiming: "*Within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be ended.*"

Just consider: Here we are, a little shy of 30 years from Vinge's prediction and the reality of transhumanism has not just caught on with the general public as a distinct possibility — it has become a living, breathing reality. Recently, Michael Ashley, my coauthor of the upcoming book, *Uber Yourself Before You Get Kodaked: A Modern Primer on A.I. for the Modern Business,* and I sought to tap into the cultural zeitgeist on this subject by interviewing Ben Goertzel. Goertzel is just the right person to speak about human potential in the age of A.I. The founder and CEO of SingularityNET, Goertzel is also the chairman of the Artificial General Intelligence Society and the OpenCog Foundation. Along with David Hanson of Hanson Robotics, Goertzel co-created Sophia, the first robot to gain national citizenship.

Like Vinge and Kurzweil, Goertzel is fascinated by the idea of transhumanism and makes the case it's not just pie-in-the-sky conjecture — transhumanism has been occurring for some time, albeit in analog form. "In a way, it's happening bit by bit," Goertzel said. "If you take my glasses away, I become heavily impaired, I can't participate in the world." Goertzel also points to more recent developments to illuminate the subtler ways we have been merging with computers in recent years. "And, of course, if you take the smartphone away from my wife or kids, they will go into withdrawal and also become heavily impaired."

Still, many people fear transhumanism. Critics warn of designer babies and chips implanted in our minds. Theologians fear we will denigrate the soul's sanctity by achieving immortality. In the early 2000s, the editors of *Foreign Policy* asked policy intellectuals: "What idea, if embraced, would pose the greatest threat to the welfare of humanity?" Francis Fukuyama, professor of international political economy at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, pointed to transhumanism, calling it the "world's most dangerous idea."