

# Tim Leary

*defined a youth rebellion in the late '60s with the words, "turn on, tune in, drop out." His adventures with hallucinogenics earned him notoriety, jail, and an appreciation for artificial intelligence.*

If one is asked to predict the next stage of human evolution, practical common sense suggests selecting the identifying survival characteristic of our species. What are our survival assets?

The instant-glib answer would be that our species is defined by our enormous brains. Our survival asset is not hive intelligence, as in the case of the social insects, but individual intelligence. Our species is classified as *homo sapiens sapiens*. Victorian scholars apparently decided that we are the creatures who "think about thinking." Our growth as a species centers on our ability to think and communicate. Predictions about our future then would focus on improvements in the way we think.

Our young, rookie species has recently passed through three stages of intelligence:

1. For approximately 20,000 years (20,000 B.C. to 1 A.D.) the technologies for sapient thinking/communicating were those of a five-year-old child: bodily oral gestures.

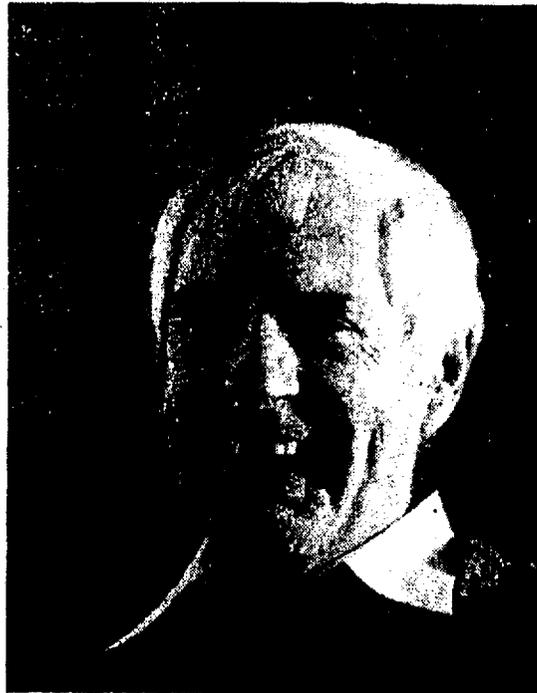
2. During an exciting period of approximately 2,000 years (500 B.C. to 1775 A.D.) humans living north of the 35th parallel latitude developed highly organized feudal-agricultural societies. The technologies for thinking/communicating were hand-tooled hieroglyphics — illuminated manuscripts. Their philosophy was enforced by authoritarian priesthoods, caliphs and kings.

3. It took approximately 200 years (1775 to 1988 A.D.) to co-opt the feudal kings and to establish the Mechanical-Assembly Line-Managerial society. In this age, the technologies of thought-communication were mechanical — printing presses, typewriters, telephones, produced by efficient workers in highly organized factories, run by centralized bureaucracies.

By now, in 1988, most people in the industrial sectors are extremely dependent upon digital thoughts and images presented on screens. The average American household watches television 7.4 hours per day. Almost all business transactions are run by software programs communicated on screens. Without conscious choice or fanfare we have migrated from the "real" worlds of voice, hand, machine into the digitized info-worlds variously called hyperspace, cyberspace, or digital physics.

This migration across the screen into the digital info-world marks the first phase of the post-industrial society. I suggest that by 2008 A.D. most humans living in post-industrial habitats will be spending as much time "jacked-in" to info-worlds on the other side of the screen as they spend in the material world. In 20 years we will spend 7 hours a day actively (rather than passively) navigating, exploring and colonizing the oceans and continents of digital data. Interscreening — creating mutual digital-realities — will be the most popular and growthful form of human communication.

Interscreening does not imply a derogation or neglect of flesh-interactions. Intimacy at the digital level enriches exchanges in the warm-skin levels. You do not lessen the rich-



Ken Kely

ness of your murmur-touch contact with your lover because you can also communicate by phone, fax and hand-scrawled notes. Warm-breath interactions with your touch-friends will be more elegant and pleasant with the digital reality option added.

Future global business will take two directions:

Cyberectics (management of the left brain). Mapping and colonizing the digital data-worlds located on the other side of the screens. Interpersonal computing. Interscreening with others. Building communal info-structures. Protecting cyberspaces from invasion and exploration by others.

Psybernetics (management of the right brain). Mapping and colonizing the next frontier — one's own brain. Constructing info-environments in one's own neuro-world. Linking one's neuro-space to others. Marketing, leasing, sharing one's brain power with others. Protecting one's brain from invasion and exploration from without.

Digital business will be run by multinate corporations based in Japan and Switzerland. The multinates will use individual brains as tools. Just as slaves, serfs, and prostitutes were forced to lease their bodies during the three pre-digital stages, people in 2008 will be leasing their brains. Work will hardly exist. Most physical tasks will be performed by automated machines. Work will be considered a primitive form of slavery. No human will be forced by economic-political pressure to perform muscular-mechanical tasks which can be done better by robots.

In the 21st century, the old Judaeo-Christian-Moslem sects are still around, but they have little power beyond entertainment and amusement. The future global religion is, of course, Higher Intelligence. The two main functions of a human being are consumption and production of thought. Our genetic assignment: the receiving, processing, and producing of digital information. Could it be any other way? ■

**SPECIAL INAUGURAL REPRINT ISSUE: INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT TOOLS  
AND IDEAS Whole Earth Review Dedicated to the Incoming Administration 20 January  
1996 - Link Page**

[Previous](#)      [Art Kleiner, Gossip \(Winter 1988\)](#)

[Next](#)      [Ted Nelson, Gossip \(Winter 1988\)](#)

[Return to Electronic Index Page](#)