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Foresight

Mankind has always dreamed of being able to glimpse into the future. Scientists are already trying to create things that others still regard as pie in the sky. For example, innovative medical procedures or new industrial materials, intelligent communication technology or revolutionary approaches to environmental conservation. But all this is only possible if researchers are independent and creative, and if they have the courage to break new scientific ground. But how much of the research being carried out into futuristic projects is “fiction”, and how much of it is “science”? What methods are employed? What are the positive and negative aspects of trying to anticipate the future?

01 The Mystery of Long Life

Researchers know very little about the genetic factors that determine longevity. Why are we generally living longer, and why do some people live longer than others? It's a puzzle that scientists around the world want to solve.

02 The New Electric Cars

Drive technology is heading for a new era. Experts predict that the combustion engine will have served its time by 2025. But what kind of engine will power our cars thereafter? An electric engine is one possibility – but what will be the source of power and how will it be stored?

03 Space Race

Forty years after man first landed on the moon, the celestial body is again the most coveted destination for spacetraveling nations – as a precursor to an eventual mission to Mars. But is all this only about prestige? Just how scientifically useful would it be to put man on the moon again? Or is the Earth's natural satellite simply an attractive prospect for scientists as long as Mars remains an elusive goal?

04 Hospital of Tomorrow

Promising healthcare innovations are being put into practice at the University Hospital in Jena. Intelligent building construction optimizes logistics. For example, medication and food are distributed by magnetically controlled robots, and mini cameras enable doctors to carry out detailed and direct internal examinations.

05 Garbage – The Gold of Tomorrow?

Thousands of millions of tonnes of garbage are produced every year in Europe alone. Processing this waste was long viewed as problematic. Now, worldwide demand for the raw materials found in garbage is growing, and recycling garbage has become a business turning over billions of euros.

06 Genetic Manipulation

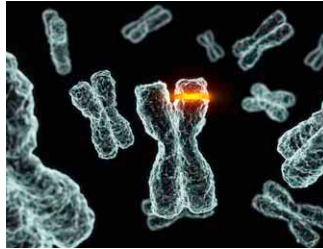
Faster, higher, further... you could be mistaken for thinking sport is about little more than breaking records these days. Experts fear that the problem of illegal doping may have shifted up a gear into the realm of genetic manipulation. That could usher in all kinds of new ways to artificially enhance strength and endurance.

07 Daily Drugs

As the pace of life speeds up in industrialized societies, and the pressures of daily life grow accordingly, people are increasingly turning to medication to help them cope. Even otherwise healthy individuals are using an increasing volume of biochemical products to compensate for personal weaknesses, to suppress normal physical needs or to enhance efficiency. The chemical optimization of man has become a huge money-spinner.

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08 Motorized Farming – The Next Agricultural Revolution

They sow seeds, pull up weeds and spread fertilizer. It's hoped that small farming robots will one day be able to work completely autonomously and carry out all the jobs that need to be done out in the fields. Researchers all over the world are working on high-tech solutions to one of the most urgent problems facing humanity: To produce enough food as the world's population continues to grow.

09 Supersonic Race

In four-and-a-half hours from Europe to Australia. It may sound like pie in the sky, but it may soon become a reality, with a supersonic plane currently being developed by engineers in England. And they are not alone. Researchers in other parts of the world are also working on ideas to usher in a new era of civilian flight. Their common aim is not just to make air travel even more rapid, but also profitable and environmentally friendly.

10 Mega Metropolis – Architecture as Selling Point

Cities are growing in many parts of the world. They compete on an international level for investments and labor. Architecture can become a key factor in location appraisal, as well as an expression of a globalized working environment. But does urban planning on such a gigantic scale necessarily lead to fresh economic momentum?

11 21st Century Sport – Performance-Enhancing Technology

Technical equipment in top-level sport is gaining in importance. Research institutes are continually developing new materials and devices to help athletes break records and win medals. Using examples from the world of winter sports, we demonstrate how even small changes in equipment can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

12 The Food of Tomorrow

Researchers and inventors are at work in laboratories and trial kitchens to develop the foodstuffs of tomorrow. Technically speaking, there are few limits. German scientists have for example succeeded in manufacturing a fat-free sausage – something food technologists had thus far deemed to be impossible. But are these new foodstuffs also effective in counteracting diet-related illnesses?

13 Mankind 3.0 – The Future of Information

Modern man produces and consumes a vast amount of data around the clock. And in the face of such a tremendous tide of information, he is dependent on the services of data providers and communicators. But just how reliable are service providers in the electronic sphere? Do we have everything under control – or are we under control? How will we use information in the future, and what kind of information will it be?

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14 A Bright Future for Robots **HD**

Will robots soon be able to do the housework, to talk, clean and cook independently? That looks unlikely in the short-term, despite huge advances in robotics. The picture is quite different in industry and space travel though, where robots already play a key role – and their performance is improving.

15 The Synthetic Materials of Tomorrow

Today's world would be inconceivable without synthetic materials such as plastic. But crude oil as the basis for most plastics is finite, and non-degradable materials represent a huge environmental problem. So scientists are busy developing bioplastics made out of vegetable matter.

16 Aeroplanes of the Future **HD**

People don't just want to fly safely, comfortably and quickly, they also want air travel to be environmentally sound and good value for money: Scientists and engineers are developing new propulsion systems aimed at making that possible. Initial results of their work are encouraging. The future belongs to quiet and comparatively clean aeroplanes.

17 Life Saving Cells

Stem cells are cells that can in principle differentiate into other specialized kinds of cells: For example, they can be used to replace damaged blood cells or repair organs. A great deal of hope is being pinned on stem cells in the fight against many so far incurable diseases. But it is still difficult to contain the risks of such therapies, and their application throws up ethical questions.

18 The 3D-Effect **HD**

3D movies are impressive to watch, but viewers need to wear clunky glasses and some people report negative physical reactions. Medical researchers, camera manufacturers and graphic designers are working on new technologies that could soon address these problems.

19 The Hunt for Genetic Treasure

Genetic researchers worldwide are searching for the key to illnesses such as cancer, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. They assemble their insights and clues as to the origins of these diseases like pieces of a giant puzzle. It might eventually be possible to simply switch off defective genes that cause diseases.

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