2020 trends forecast

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Michael Zylstra, Chief Strategy Officer at DAN SSA, shares his 2020 trends forecast.

It's refreshing to be able to include a predictions list at the end of a year that does something more interesting than simply looking ahead to the new year. Let me fill in this year's set for you while you're here: AR (again), VR (again), games-as-important-media-vertical, personalisation (again), small groups rather than big networks (again), slowness and disconnection (again) blockchain as a service…

Can we stop now? Good! Here are seven overarching predictions for the new decade based on 2019 headlines.

1. Protest goes mainstream.

A protest of fuel prices in Zimbabwe ends with 68 people shot; a few days later, tens of thousands of protesters pour into the streets of Venezuela to contest the re-election of Nicolás Maduro. There is near-constant environmental protest in major cities.

➡ Protest Movements Will Boom and Become Harder and Harder to Understand.

2. A rapidly fragmenting media landscape.

Netflix announces that *You,* a drama it lifted from Lifetime, is "on pace" to be viewed by 40 million "accounts". All of the entertainment we used to consume in more independently quantifiable ways – via TV ratings, box office reports or album sales, for example – has moved to streaming, where we just have to trust Netflix, Spotify or Apple to tell us how popular it is. And they'll most likely fudge the truth.

➡ We Will Never Know If a Movie Is a Hit.

3. The changing nature of media and influence

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez talks to her followers via a *Donkey Kong* Twitch livestream. She reaches a live audience of about 17,000 viewers and calls for "equal rights for all, no asterisks, no fine print" and says "trans rights are civil rights are human rights".

➹ The Television Era of Politics Will End

4. Our changing language, first it was emoji and text speak…

OpenAI claims its newswriting AI is too dangerous to publicly release. This sort of writing (think of the strange and stilted language in the pages that come up when you Google something like "how to tie a tie") represents a kind of bot-human pidgin, a simplified language meant to be used between two groups that don't speak the same native language.

➹ We'll Read and Write Like Robots

5. A decade of guilt.

An editorial in *Nature* warns that changes to the human diet are urgently needed to avoid catastrophic climate change. "We don't want to tell people what to eat," Hans-Otto Pörtner, an ecologist who co-chairs the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) working group on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability, said in a summary release of the IPPC report. "But it would indeed be beneficial, for both climate and human health, if people in many rich countries consumed less meat, and if politics would create appropriate incentives to that effect."

➹ We Will Feel Guilty About Many More Things

6. The changing face of culture, from K-pop to social media, is going to come from the East.

TikTok passes 1 billion downloads around the world. According to app analytics site Sensor Tower, TikTok, the Chinese short-form video app, is the fourth most-downloaded non-game app for 2018, behind WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Facebook.

➹ We Will Import Our Pop Culture From China

7. Location backlash.

Instagrammers trample California "superbloom." Geotagging will become a social faux-pas in the future as it becomes ever more important for people to have a unique experience and not expose areas of natural beauty to further human degradation by telling people they exist.

➹ Geotagging Will Be Extremely Uncool

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