2020 Year of the Metal Rat

The Rat is the first of all zodiac animals. According to one myth, the Jade Emperor said the order would be decided by the order in which they arrived to his party. The Rat tricked the Ox into giving him a ride. Then, just as they arrived at the finish line, Rat jumped down and landed ahead of Ox, becoming first.

The Rat is also associated with the Earthly Branch and the midnight hours. In the terms of yin and yang the Rat is yang and represents the beginning of a new day.

In Chinese culture, rats were seen as a sign of wealth and surplus. Because of their reproduction rate, married couples also prayed to them for children.

The last year of the metal Rat was 1960

Rats are clever, quick thinkers; successful, but content with living a quiet and peaceful life.

Predictions for 2020: Here's what people thought would happen by this year

Computers will be invisible

Futurist Ray Kurzweil had several prophecies for the year 2019, including invisible computers.

"Computers are now largely invisible. They are embedded everywhere — in walls, tables, chairs, desks, clothing jewelry and bodies. People routinely use three-dimensional displays built into their glasses or contact lenses. … This display technology projects images directly into the human retina."

Keyboards and cables would also become rare, he said.

It's true — Computers are embedded everywhere these days. We have smart homes, smart tables, smart chairs, smart desks and more. While we may not project images directly into our retinas, Google Glass comes pretty close.

(Per Kurzweil's previous prediction, scientists are also developing smart contact lenses capable of monitoring the physiological information of the eye and tear fluid and could provide "real-time, noninvasive medical diagnostics." Several groups are testing smart lenses that would measure glucose levels in the tears of people with diabetes.)

Books will be dead

"Papers books and documents are rarely used or accessed. Most twentieth-century paper documents of interest have been scanned and are available through the wireless network," Kurzweil predicted.

Wrong. While the net revenue of the U.S. book publishing industry has been decreasing since 2014, the industry still sold 675 million print books and brought in nearly $26 billion in 2018, according to the Association of American Publishers annual report.

Your every move will be tracked

Kurzweil predicted that privacy would be a huge political and social issue and that "each individual's practically every move (will be) stored in a database somewhere."

True, most say. Your TV watches you. Your smartphone follows you. Your web browser traces your digital trail. In an era when some populations worldwide are living under 24/7 high-tech surveillance, most U.S. adults now say they do not

think it is possible to go through daily life without having data collected about them by companies or the government, according to a new survey of U.S. adults by Pew Research Center.

More than 80% say that the potential risks they face because of data collection by companies outweigh the benefits.

Nuclear will replace natural gas

In 1968, Stanford University professor Charles Scarlott predicted that nuclear breeder reactors would make up the majority of U.S. energy production by 2018 as natural gas fades.

"Energy from water power, solar radiation, the wind, tides, or earth heat will not figure large in the totals. Power from nuclear power plants should be available in large amounts at low cost," Scarlott wrote.

Wrong: In 2018, fossil fuels — petroleum, natural gas and coal — accounted for about 79% of total U.S. primary energy production in 2018, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. About 12% was from renewable energy sources, and about 9% was from nuclear electric power.

We'll have 'personal companions'

In his 1999 book "Business @ the Speed of Thought," Bill Gates predicted personal devices that "connect and sync all your devices in a smart way, whether they are at home or in the office, and allow them to exchange data."

"The device will check your email or notifications, and present the information that you need. When you go to the store, you can tell it what recipes you want to prepare, and it will generate a list of ingredients that you need to pick up. It will inform all the devices that you use of your purchases and schedule, allowing them to automatically adjust to what you're doing," Gates wrote.

Hey, Alexa: Add milk to my shopping list.

Just about - While Alexa isn't sorting through your emails (that we know of) and your smart thermostat isn't tracking your purchases, Gates isn't far off. Siri, Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa and an array of smart tech in the Internet of Things now readily exchange data with your other devices and respond to commands.

Americans will work 26 hours a week

In 1968, it was thought that, by 2020, Americans would work 1,370 hours a year (or 26 hours a week), instead of the 1,940 hours (37 hours a week) that was average at the time, according to physicist Herman Kahn and futurist Anthony J. Weiner.

Unlikely: While we are working less than we were in 1968, the average American worked nearly 1,800 hours in 2018 (35 hours a week), according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

In 2020 Lobo Internet will go paperless

For years customers have asked us if we had a paperless option. I mean you'd think a tech company would have this in the bag right? Well, it's not that simple. Our billing and ticketing system is decades old and didn't have that option when it was developed and the ability to add that functionality to that system wasn't an option. Scrapping an entire billing and ticketing system and migrating all it's decades of content and 100's of customers isn't an easy task, but we're finally here!

It's true - We are currently migrating to a new billing system that has the option for us to automatically email our customers their monthly bills. So please let us know if you'd like to go paperless by sending in the provided orange sheet with your email address. We know that some companies and even some individuals would still like to have a paper bill, we will still send those if you wish. We're even going to have our newsletters downloadable on our website for those that want to get the paper bill just to keep getting our newsletter.