The Next Next Things

With its power to send knowledge around the globe at lightning speed, information technology has already changed the way we think—undermining the Internet along with a global economy of knowledge workers and even, some would say, sparking the fall of communism and the rise of terrorism. Computer power has increased exponentially since 1980, when machines like sophisticated than your cell phone filled entire rooms. And we can expect similar mind-boggling advances in the coming decades.

For a sense of what's to come, take a look at the breakthroughs on this page. Some of them may seem like the stuff of science fiction, but they're closer to reality than you may think. And they're not a small sample of the countless innovations bursting onto the scene as scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs work together to transform business, society and even what it means to be human.

These forecasts are taken from the TechCast Project, an online database where 100 experts predict the technological and scientific breakthroughs to come. To learn more, visit www.techcast.org.

— William E. Halal, author of "Technology's Promise," professor emeritus at George Washington University and president of TechCast LLC