



....What wonders are coming? A science fiction enthusiast in my younger days I wanted to witness developments. I still do.

....I was not much interested in fantasy such as riding on dragons, but fascinated by the effect on peoples' lives as technological developments came along.

As mere humans we are limited by our experiences. They limit our imagination. Nevertheless from time to time someone has a flash of inspiration and things change for the better.

In 1849 after several stages of developing aids to calculation, Charles Babbage designed a machine to reduce the element of human error. He couldn't build it with available skills, but his ideas were proved correct 1991

In 1951 Alan Turing, the mathematics genius who was instrumental in wartime code-breaking, was saying that thinking machines would not take long to outperform the human brain.

Isaac Asimov in 1956 postulated the extreme power of computers in his story "The Last Question".

Also in the 1950's the progress of computing was boosted enormously by the adoption of the transistor. As of 2011 the number of transistors in a computer was over two BILLION. As we get better at the engineering of the very small we are reducing the size, weight and cost of many products. Not all of them respond to meet the initial ambition and become niche products for certain functions. Personal jetpacks and hovercraft spring to mind.

There has been speculation that rockets into space are not the most energy efficient method, but that all the rocket scientists of the 50s and 60s grew up with stories about them and as rockets became possible no-one looked for better ways.

Now the pace has warmed up and we are at an interesting point where several new ideas are starting out. They have implications that are as yet still being explored. These things might be just coming to our notice, but have already spent several years growing from the original discovery towards being put to effective use.

Colour printers were feared because of currency fraud. Science solved that one. Digital cameras spelt the doom of the 35 mm film industry. Camera phones and iPads are making dedicated cameras a bit 'old hat'.

Google Glass is coming to a pair of spectacles near you. It remains to be seen (pardon the pun) if it will be taken up generally. Perhaps in a couple of years it will be improved to a "must have" status

3D printers that can make solid objects by building up layers of material are in the news and we may have to learn to cope with them.

Watch out for graphene. It is 200 times stronger than steel, thinner than paper and a better electrical conductor than copper - all combined with flexibility. You might be able to wear your computer. Can't wait.