

Headline	Predicting the house of the future is an entertaining challenge
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Predicting the house of the future is an entertaining challenge

WHAT WILL the house of the future be like?

This is a kind of vague question that makes me pause and think for a long time before saying, "I don't really know." Yes, it is an interesting question, since a house is the one fundamental object that we spend most of our time in and no matter what the future holds, we will still live in this particular dwelling.

Even more interesting is that so far, I don't think I have been satisfied with any of the predictions I have heard or read. Scores of people from different approaches and disciplines have tried to form ideas and opinions, trying to give us the most calculated thoughts about this issue, but they have failed to convince me.

I would say I'm seeing a clearer picture with the automobile indus-

try. We are now moving towards a more environmentally friendly technology, coupled with a computerised system that will allow us to detach ourselves from the joy of driving and let the vehicle steer itself to the destination with or without us on board. And yes, they still run on wheels, not hovering above ground as in science-fiction movies.

I say this because the auto industry is now at a tipping point. These technologies have been intentionally developed for ages with everyone looking at the same objectives - to use less fuel and make the vehicle less dependent on us, who are error-prone. Also, the speed of progress in these fields of technologies has been impressive, so I think we're talking about less than 10 years to overcome the tip-

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ping point. But I don't think the same is happening with the housing industry.

Of course, in the future, there will still be a place for vehicles that cater to car enthusiasts who don't care about fuel consumption and want to take charge of cruising. But



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a vehicle, for most of us, serves only as one way for us to commute from point A to point B.

But a house might be slightly different when you look at it from this approach. A house is a place where people raise families, foster cultures and instil beliefs and values in their

descendants. Each society has its own way of doing this. It serves not as a way for different societies to do these things but rather as a core that these contexts revolve and develop around. So it might be difficult for people living in different contexts and beliefs to share the same vision of how their own house in the future will look like.

For those societies shifting towards old-age populations as a result of their previous social and economic beliefs, a computerised house that can monitor the well-being of the elderly living under the same roof with their extended families and directly connected to a healthcare-management system might be ideal and valued by them, while societies consisting mostly of desperate younger generations who restlessly move around to find jobs

might find these irrelevant.

Other factors such as geographic differences also make it hard to find a consensus on this. Flood-prone areas such as those in Bangladesh might find self-cleaning technology useless when the monsoon comes.

Having said all this, it seems very unlikely that we will be able to have some common ideas that bring us closer to the tipping point soon.

It is already very entertaining trying to figure this out alone, but it would be even more interesting if I could hear from you. So if you have any thoughts, please don't hesitate to share them with me. It could be one big idea that everyone has been looking for.

Sansiri president Srettha Thavisin contributed this article.