

This is what the future of work will look like (and how you can prepare for it)

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Imagine what your work life will look like in the year 2045. Apart from the fact that the lease on your flying car will be exorbitantly expensive (we'll have one

by then, right?) there's another curious fact about the office, how a business will run, and future tech advancements:
You won't even be there.

All signs point to a future when most of us will work from home, but not in the classic sense of telecommuting once in a while or camping out at Starbucks for the day. The modern office won't even exist in the classic sense.

Corporate campuses will transition from a place where office workers have a permanent desk and come in every day to more of a tech center. Here, they will meet with coworkers occasionally to discuss projects and interact with customers in person, but for the most part, will work from home

This modern tech center will be a marvel of engineering. For one thing: It will cater to the myriad of remote workers — some not based in the U.S. and most living in rural areas — who send a digital avatar to the office in their place. In a recent example of how this will work, a Samsung subsidiary called Star Labs announced the Neon avatars, which look and act like real humans.

In one demo, an office worker looked so realistic you have to look twice to spot any defects. The "office" will be more like a movie set than the headquarters we know today. Telepresence systems will look so realistic you will send your avatar to a meeting superimposed over a spacious home office, one that is a virtual representation. And you won't be the only employee doing this. Entire teams will rely on avatars as well and will project a virtual environment of their own. It will look so realistic you will hardly notice.

There's a recent example of how this might work. In filming the Disney+ television show *The Mandalorian*, the effects team used a projection system on a soundstage. What looks like actors in real-world locations is actually a digital re-creation. The actors never even went outside.

A corporate office might look the same in the next 25-30 years, allowing workers to "walk" through hallways, sit at meetings, discuss projects, and even pick up and interact with products in a virtual environment. It will look and feel like a realistic office simulation.

The important point to make here is that workers will be remote, and an A.I.-powered avatar will act on our behalf. We'll still be actively involved behind the scenes, working on projects and making decisions, but the avatar will "visit" the campus for mundane tasks. Our avatar will fill out expense reports, attend meetings, and even run presentations. He or she will represent us during

shareholder discussions and will be the initial point of contact for visiting customers. A corporate office will essentially transition into a meeting space that caters to our every whim when we do visit in person — offering a coffee-bar, tennis courts, elaborate meeting spaces, free food in the cafeteria — but has no actual desks or cubicles.

At home, we'll focus on the more complex tasks. (It's possible that the "home" will be more like an office than we currently envision today.) While the avatar communicates about deliverables, almost like an email or Slack message does today, many of us will become expert programmers who know how to create A.I. routines and instructions for our avatar to perform.

Technology will be far more advanced by 2045, and we won't use phones or laptops anymore. We'll mostly rely on voice interaction, and for real productivity work, we'll interact with touchscreen surfaces at home that look like the televisions of today — and they'll be in every room of the house. In fact — about your house. It will become more like a high-tech data center with more computing power than some companies have today for their entire workforce.

One benefit of working at home and interacting with computers so fluidly, sending a digital avatar to meetings and letting your bot communicate on your behalf, and rarely if ever driving to the office, is that you will work less often. While the concept of a four-day work-week is popular these days, the future is even brighter — imagine only working one or two days per week. We'll spend more time adjusting how our avatar performs and making low-level decisions about work and the strategy involved and less time doing repetitive and boring tasks.

Another curious benefit to this is that we'll have far more time to do the things we love — spending time with family and friends, educating ourselves, and growing in our knowledge and expertise. Our avatar won't mind that we won't have to work as hard. Even the concept of "remote work" will fade away eventually. We'll just start calling it work.