

Where's my hoverboard? What 'Back to the Future Part II' (1989) got right and wrong about 2015



Twenty-six years ago, Marty McFly jumped forward to 2015, a time featuring hoverboards, flying cars and more in 1989's ["Back to the Future Part II."](#)

Last week, Newsweek spoke to a handful of futurists ("scientists and thinkers who study and make predictions about the technologies of the future") about what the film got right and wrong about 2015. As Newsweek notes, the film doesn't take place until October 21, 2015 - so, we still have a few months to buy our new hoverboards.

We've pulled a few choice passages below, and [you can read the full Newsweek story here](#).

Michael Rogers: Futurists have been predicting flying cars almost ever since the car itself was invented. But the barriers are big. In terms of basic design, flying vehicles need lift; cars shouldn't have lift. In terms of driver skills, a car is basically two-dimensional navigation; an airplane is three dimensional. Big difference in the driving skill required.

Anne Lise Kjaer: If you look at the pollution, they predicted [a] gloomy future which was very, very polluted. This was [after] you had the energy crisis in the '70s. The thinking was already there. They portrayed the future as very polluted. I think they got that right.

Glen Hiemstra: Obviously the hoverboard was wrong. But there's a hoverboard company now. It uses magnetic repulsion. They're called [Hendo Hoverboards](#). They have to be on a certain kind of metal surface. It's a company with big dreams of having a big impact in the warehousing and factory business, where you could move things around on big hoverboards. As of six months ago, we would've said, "Well, they got hoverboards wrong." But Hendo appeared in the past six months.

Ross Dawson: They have video glasses. It's interesting that that is now coming into play with Google Glass and a number of other competitors.

Glen Hiemstra: The number one thing they got wrong was the dominance of fax machines in 2015. That's characteristic of a common forecasting pitfall, which is to

overestimate the importance of something that is dominant in the current time. Fax machines were relatively new in the late '80s.

Michael Rogers: One other great prediction: Old electronics had become antiques in 2015. A couple of weeks ago, an Apple I from the mid-'70s sold at auction for \$360,000. Don't ditch that 1984 Mac yet!

Anne Lise Kjaer: Of course, when they did this film, the Internet wasn't big. They have all the right ideas, with the flat tablet, the thumb print biometric. All of that will be done through the Internet of Things. Smart clothing as well. You will be wearing healthy, healing clothing. It will go through the Internet of Things. I call it the "Global Brain."