

Battery Future (working title)

Emerging Future, Milestone 02

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For Milestone 02, I expanded and refined the map I made last week by using the design tools that were introduced during the class. I used the “Cone” to understand how battery technology has developed from the past to the present and to think about which direction it might take in the future. My first conclusion was that batteries will keep improving until it reaches an “ultimate battery” level. However, I started to feel that this kind of magical, perfect battery is not realistic. I thought it would be more useful to imagine a future where there is a limit to battery development, so that I could describe that future in a more concrete way. Because of this, I decided to extend my cone by applying Jim Dator’s Four Futures.

I used the “Discipline” in Jim Dator’s Four Future tool. In this scenario, battery technology never reaches the level of an “actual ultimate battery” and stays at something like the current lithium-based level(or a bit above). One reason for this could be the failure of full commercialization of new battery technologies. I push this idea further, and reached a “Decline/Collapse” future. Lithium is the 33rd most abundant element on Earth, but it is still a limited resource that could eventually be used up. If that happens, industries related to lithium battery recycling might expand, and people might look for ways to extract lithium from other planets or celestial bodies.

Even after exploring these wider possibilities with Jim Dator’s Four Futures, I still felt that the central area of my original cone was the most convincing and likely. In particular, I realized that I needed to make the idea of the “Battery Driven Human” much more specific. If we really arrive at a future where humans live with batteries inside their bodies, what kind of world would we see? After imagining many different versions of this

future, I finally chose one key aspect. “[Government: Battery Management Division] Battery Replacement Order.” Using the backcasting tool, I tried to list what kinds of events and phenomena would have to happen between my assumed near-future and that far-future. Through this process, I was able to think not only about the logical structure of that world, but also about the emotional experiences that people in that future might have.

The goal of my final work is to let participants briefly experience the dystopian future that I imagined. I want to create a small installation that shows the moment when a government office demands a battery replacement and when a person’s body battery is actually changed. If I can also design clear penalties for refusing the government’s order, I believe the experience of this work will feel even more vivid and powerful for the audience