Moore's Law(1) says that the number of transistors in a circuit will double every two years. So far this has proven accurate but there are doubts as to how long this rule will continue to be accurate If we assume for now that this law will apply in the near future it means that computers will continue to get more powerful at that rate too.

The singularity(2) occurs when the pace of technological change has accelerated to the point that artificial intelligence(3) has taken over human intelligence. This suggests that computers will be more intelligent than humans.

At the moment I cannot see that happening. Computers are built and designed by humans. Computers are also programmed by humans. I can see some repetitive tasks being done by “intelligent” computers, but I don't see them able to replace humans. In order to do that they would need to be able to have emotions and we are along way off enabling a computer to do that.

There are many fiction books written under the premise that the singularity has already happened and the effects on mankind. These range from authors like Isaac Asimov to Iain M Banks. There also have been films such as the Terminator series or the Matrix. All tend to have the premise that the computer or robot using artificial intelligence goes bad and humans struggle to overcome them and save the future of mankind.

In this context steampunk(4) I think refers to the ideals in post-apocalyptic novels where some kind of disaster has fallen on the world and everything goes back to steam power. This happens in films and novels and I think it is highly unlikely this will happen in real life.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moore%27s\_law

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological_singularity>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steampunk