2026

MIT Technology Review
10 Breakthrough Technologies

2026

Our reporters and editors constantly debate which emerging technologies will define the future.
Once a year, we take stock and share some educated guesses with our readers. Here are the advances that we think will drive progress or incite the most change—for better or worse—in the years ahead.
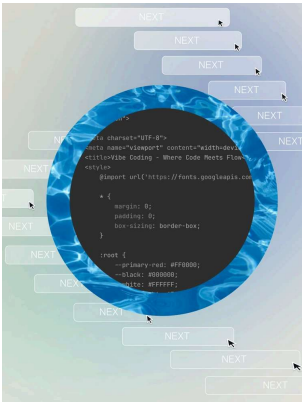
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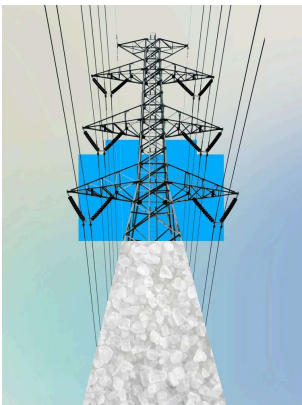
CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

Sodium-ion batteries

Sodium-ion batteries, made from abundant materials like salt, are emerging as a cheaper, safer alternative to lithium. Backed by major players and public investment, they're
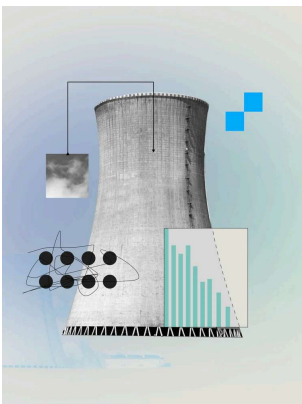
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Generative coding

AI coding tools are revolutionizing how we write, test, and deploy code, making it easier and faster to build sophisticated websites, games, and other applications than ever before. Just be sure to double-check what they come up with.

WHO FIXES AI'S MISTAKES?

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

Next-gen nuclear

Nuclear power already provides steady electricity to grids around the world, without producing any greenhouse-gas emissions. New designs rely on alternative fuels and cooling systems or take up less space, which could get more reactors online faster.

OK, WHAT'S THE CATCH?

generation nuclear reactors break out of the 20th-century blueprint

From molten salt to TRISO fuel, here's how technological advancements could upend an old power technology.
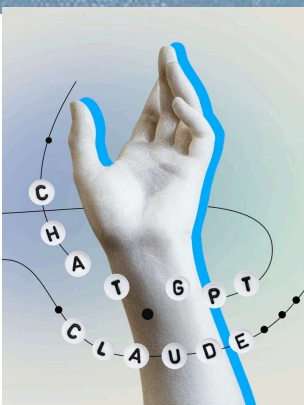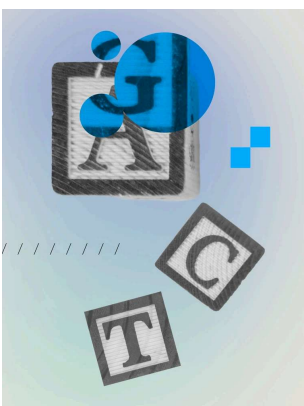
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI companions

Every day, millions of people interact with AI chatbots. Some of them form what feel like close, personal bonds with the bots. There's mounting evidence that this can be dangerous, and politicians are finally waking up.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Base-edited baby

When he was just seven months old, baby KJ became the first person to receive a personalized gene-editing treatment. A clinical trial is now planned, and bespoke gene-editing drugs could be approved within the next few years.

IT'S EXPENSIVE, RIGHT?

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Explore the innovations our expert team of journalist
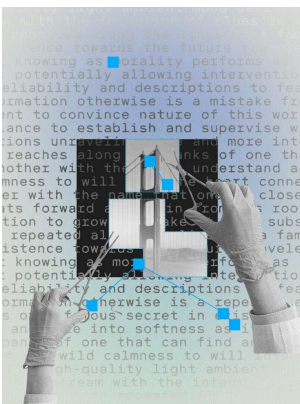will redefine the future of tech. Plus, get two free gifts

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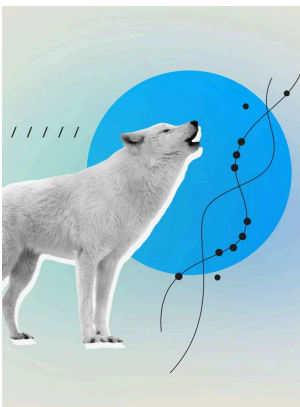
BIOTECHNOLOGY

Gene resurrection

Growing banks of gene information on extinct creatures are providing clues to new treatments and suggesting solutions to climate change—and may help save endangered species.

WHAT'S WITH THE WOLF?

Nobody knows exactly how large language models work, which means we don't have a clear idea of their limitations. But that's changing: Clever research techniques are giving us the best glimpse yet of what's really going on inside the black box.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

DEEP DIVE

Meet the new biologists treating LLMs like aliens

By studying large language models as if they were living things instead of computer programs, scientists are discovering some of their secrets for the first time.

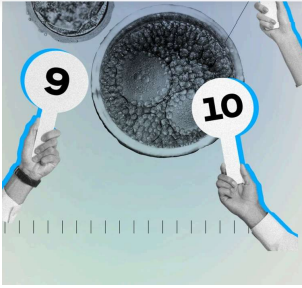10 Breakthrough Technologies 2026   Supported by ✦ rubrik ?

SPACE

Commercial space stations

Space tourism may seem fanciful, but this might be the year paying customers can finally check into a room with a galactic view. The shiny new modules will also support research missions by scientists and space agencies.

HOW DO I BOOK MY TRIP?

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Embryo scoring

Screening embryos for genetic diseases is relatively common practice in fertility clinics today, and it can give potential parents some peace of mind. Now, though, new startups are making bold claims about using similar techniques to predict certain traits, including intelligence.

WHO'S DOING THIS?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Hyperscale AI data centers

The race for AI supremacy has supercharged data centers. Hyperscale AI data centers pack powerful computer chips into synchronized clusters that work like giant, high-speed supercomputers—sizzling hot, power-hungry behemoths pushing infrastructure to its limits.

HOW BIG ARE WE TALKING?

Vote for the
11th breakthrough

What's missing from the list? Tell us what you think. Cast your vote before April 1, 2026.

○ **Artificial wombs**

Systems that incubate premature babies to improve survival rates may soon enter clinical trials.

○ **Humanoid robots**

Machines designed in our image have sparked public fascination and substantial investments.

○ **Uncrewed fighter jets**

Test flights are underway as both startups and major militaries invest in automated air combat.

SUBMIT

10 Breakthrough Technologies

ABOUT THE LIST

MIT Technology Review's annual list of 10 Breakthrough Technologies aims to help our audience know which emerging technologies are really worth paying attention to right now. Our editors and reporters pitch advances that they think should make the list, and we discuss and debate the merits of each over the course of several months.

We look for breakthroughs that will have a broad impact and make meaningful differences in our lives and work. We give equal consideration to those that we think will have a positive effect or bring negative consequences. Every year, we have to pass on many worthy candidates. Here's what didn't make the list this year.

This is the 25th year we've produced this list. Predicting the future is tough and we don't always get it right. Look back through our archives to see what's worked out—and what hasn't. Or read this special analysis by an MIT researcher about some of the flops.

Explore the archives →

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