1. What would the world be without Facebook? Describe the world when the technology of social network has been out-of-fashion.

Most of us agree that our need for close social connections is so strong that the concept of a social networking service won’t be outdated. Facebook or that other social networks might be replaced, but there will certainly be replacements which will still provide people with strong social connections.

Facebook keeps people in contact more easily; however, people get too lazy to engage in real contact, prefering rather to sit in front of a screen checking out a timeline and the latest news. This is the same problem created by the Internet in general: technology does help people in life, but it has both good sides and bad sides, depending on how people use it.

In the past, long-distance connections between people were maintained through letters. Following this, people made phone calls, sent telegraphs, and then text messages. Now that the Internet is so popular, emails and blogs are new ways to send messages and share thoughts with others. Facebook combines the two with its big pool of text messages and photos where people share their thoughts and reflections from daily life. But what about the future? Maybe in the future, we will share smells, scents and tastes with each other, in the same way that we share audio and visual data today. Or maybe even we will share the five senses, and feel what other people feel, maybe like metapsychosis. That’s a cool idea.

2. Imagine what the world would be with/without more technology progress.

Our discussion on this topic was more philosophical.

One of us feels that technological progress is not a necessity. Technological progress does make for a better way to live, but at the same time it leads to even more problems in the world. The bad sides will feedback, making for a vicious cycle. For example, we created A to make a better world, but A caused some problems so we created B to solve those problems. And then we created C to solve the problems caused by B, and on and on. That’s an extreme case though. The point is that industrial development and technological progress have already caused problems. Also, he mentioned that a conventional way of life would be okay for him. Maybe this is just nostalgia for the good old days.

Another person described a movie about virtual reality. The technology in it was highly advanced and people could go experience a virtual world through a machine. The virtual world was so good that nobody needed to eat to gain energy. Everyone was free of physical suffering. Finally, some people began to think that this new world was wonderful, and didn’t want to go back to their old life. However, others felt that the virtual world is not a real world, and only normal life is a true life worth spending the rest of their life in.

Transportation would become faster and more convenient. There must be a whole new method of transport instead of airplanes, cars or ships.

There would be great strides in robotics. Robots would help people a lot in routine tasks, and then people would be able to live a happier life free of tedious tasks. However, the paradox is that people would lose their jobs and earn no money since their position would have been replaced by robots. This is a difficult question without fundamental changes in the system. For example, although the world’s food supply has already surpassed the needs of the human race, there are still many starving people. The right to buy food is just like the right to earn money, even though we don’t need people to do more work. How people can have right to live a better life is still a question. I think this is about the system or the rule that governs society; thus this is a hard philosophical question.

Also, one mentioned that pervasive data collection is intimidating, since it gives bad people or the government control over people’s lives. The monitors and sensors are all over, and although technology can easily help us to calculate information, it can also easily be used to track each person’s behavior and record what he or she has done, just as if they were being supervised by someone. The privacy issue is important in this case. And the IoT is indeed one way to collect so many data all around.

We disagreed about whether robots will surpass humans in wisdom. Artificial intelligence has long been a great issue in Hollywood movies. We all think that machines can only feedback what we have already typed or programmed, and that a creation could never surpass the wisdom of its creator. But, what if that statement were not correct? What if one day the machine had its own mind and could create ideas by itself instead of only responding to input or stimulation? It would then be able to create something from nothing. What should we do in this case? Should we embrace and admire its intelligence or should we fight against this to prevent this from happening? This is like a science fiction movie, but it is a good question. And how about cloned people? Should we embrace their humanity, or should we simply ignore the question? As technology progresses, there will be many debates about genetic engineering. It’s a hard question, but it’s a question we must face.