

Book Reviews

Naisbitt, J., & Aburdene, P. (1990). *Megatrends 2000: Ten new directions for the 1990's*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., \$21.95 (hardcover), 384 pp. (ISBN 0-688-07224-0)

Reviewed by Daniel A. Levy

John Naisbitt & Patricia Aburdene offer prophecies regarding the nature of contemporary society in *Megatrends 2000: Ten New Directions for the 1990's*. Naisbitt and Aburdene are well known for their earlier work, *Megatrends*, in which they accurately described trends of the 1980s. Many are taking a close look at *Megatrends 2000*; as of July 1990, it had been on the *New York Times* Best Sellers list for twenty-five weeks. In addition to the book's broad appeal, educators in technology education may find it helps clarify important directions for the field.

It may be foolhardy to predict the impact of events across a ten year period, but Naisbitt and Aburdene are looking at trends which are already occurring. They do not dwell on negatives. In their introduction, they credit those who report on crime, drugs, AIDS, deficits, and other crises as doing their jobs. Doomsayers will be let down; the authors do not see the world coming to an end. Their mission, as they see it, is to "point out information and circumstances that describe the world trends leading to opportunities." They may be proven wrong in their overly positive view, but they have provided a context within which to view world events. They suggest that without such a frame of reference we tend to miss much information.

If you fear you may already be missing out on a major trend, I will not keep you in suspense. The ten trends, listed by chapter titles, are The Global Economic Boom of the 1990's, Renaissance in the Arts, The Emergence of Free-Market Socialism, Global Lifestyles and Cultural Nationalism, The Privatization of the Welfare State, The Rise of the Pacific Rim, The 1990's: Decade of Women in Leadership, The Age of Biology, Religious Revival of the Third Millennium, and Triumph of the Individual. These chapters are the body of the book, surrounded by introductory and concluding chapters, extensive endnotes, and an index.

The first chapter, "The Global Economic Boom...." describes, in part, the information economy, its creation of high-paying, challenging jobs, and the lack of enough adequately trained workers in the U.S. to fill those jobs. According

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to Naisbitt and Aburdene, “There are not nearly enough people with college degrees or advanced vocational and technical training to fill the more than 2 million new managerial, administrative, and technical jobs coming on-line annually.” If our mission in education is not yet clear, consider also their emphasis on retraining: we must upgrade the skills of 120 million people in the U.S. work force today.

The importance of education is emphasized again in the chapter on the rise of the Pacific Rim, when Naisbitt and Aburdene emphasize the positive correlation between improvement in education and global competitiveness. Other trends are equally important in technology education, including management and leadership trends, and new roles for women. *Megatrends 2000* emphasizes the impact of the arts in the 90s, including a greater job growth rate than other professions. It will become increasingly important for all undergraduates, and especially students in technical fields, to increase their study of the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Starting during the 1990s, Naisbitt and Aburdene claim, the arts will replace sports as our dominant leisure activity. Perhaps we have buried the last vestige of “art” in our field at a time when society’s needs have come full circle.

Anyone reading *Megatrends 2000* is likely to come away with a clearer, and no doubt more positive view of world events. Although the authors back their general assertions with specific cases, you may be aware of studies which reach different conclusions. You may also see other trends which transcend those selected by the authors. The important point, according to Naisbitt and Aburdene, “is to craft your own world view, your own personal set of megatrends.” °