



## So soon, the year has flown by...

Remember twelve months ago, when we wrote about Dr. Seuss' "How did it get so late so soon?" It is that feeling again...2020 was known to me as the perfect vision (ref: the [visual acuity measurement](#) developed by H. Snellen in 1862.) It is quite a different thing

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when it is the new year just on the horizon.

Before we start talking about 2020, let's celebrate the end of 2019's holiday season! There are many in December, we can continue our Black Friday's shopping spree with [Cyber Monday](#), light the candles for the Jewish's [Hannukah](#), or eat the tangyuans for the Chinese' [Dōngzhì \(冬至\)](#), and of course, join the Christmas festive fun. Talking about Christmas, I am sure that everyone knows about Saint Nicholas, but how about Krampus, the other Christmas character popular in some European countries? Find out [Who is Krampus?](#) with Nat Geo's clip.

There is a lesser-known but equally passionate observation of Christmas known as the "[Blue Christmas](#)" or the "Longest Sleep." Traditionally, some churches hold a service around 21st December (the Winter Solstice), i.e., the longest night to pray for the comforts and healings of those who face difficult times. You may have heard of the famous song by Elvis Presley: [Blue Christmas](#), but I wonder if many actually knew the meaning of "Blue Christmas."

This is also the time we see "year in review"s and coverage on "what worked, what didn't, and why?" in media. Regardless of how 2019 has been for you, we hope you have lived it fully!

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The image above with human dots that made up 2019 can be from any place on this planet!

You and I can be any of those persons in that picture. This is because we have each been a part of the human story in 2019!

Thank you for being in our journey for an eventful 2019!

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The answer for November's Photo Contest is:

# INDONESIA

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago (17,508 islands.) The photo was taken in

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Bali, an island between Java and Lombok. Popular with tourists for its great waves, beautiful beaches, and mesmerising landscape, it also has fascinating cultural practices and arts scenes.

Click the link below to learn about Bali. (long but good clip by Expoza Travel):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FB8z58imvQ>

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## A Journey A Month...

Your Story. Our Story. The Human Story.

Many years ago, I attended a motivation conference while living in the USA – I can still remember the speaker’s opening line: We, humans, are the greatest products ever “manufactured.” He then used the Hominin timeline to illustrate the theory of human evolution. Compared to earlier apes around 10 million years ago, instead of climbing trees, we were sitting in an air-conditional arena, in our business attires to listen to his

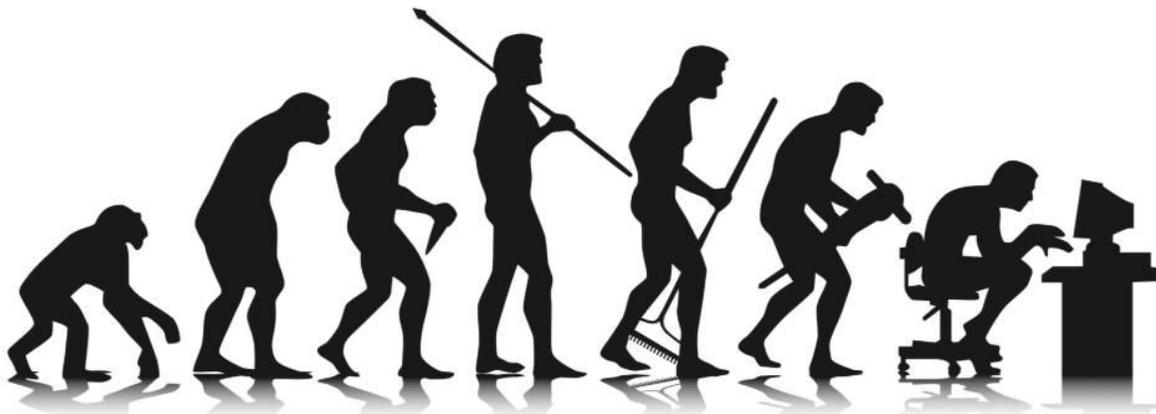
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talk. All of us, each, an impressive end-product of our fore-parents, is the story of human evolution!



Two years ago, I began to pen this newsletter because I wanted to share my thoughts gathered from the discussion on Robots and Artificial Intelligence (AI) – (click to reread: [TCG's Dec 2017 Newsletter.](#))

Recently, another article caught my attention. It is about the “fascinating human system that turns air into speech.” It tells how our lungs, voice box, vocal tracts, tongue, and lips make up a system for us to produce sounds, and then how our brain further turns those sounds into words, and eventually develop words into languages so that we can interact

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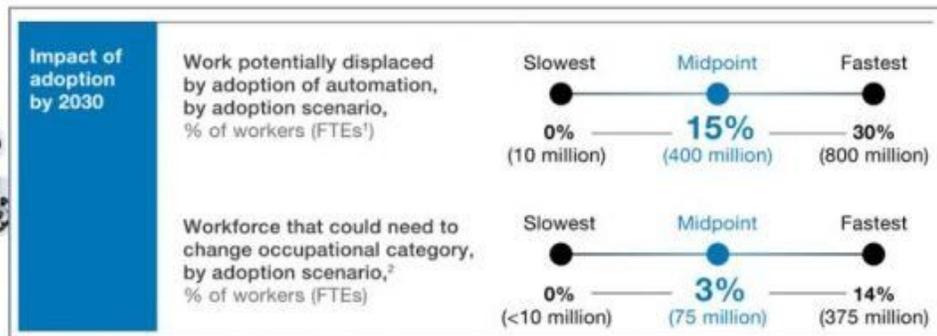
with each other. This complex process allows us to develop sophisticated intelligence and form the society we have today.

Fast forward to today, we are now confronted with our own genius creations – robots and AI. According to McKinsey’s study, as high as 800 million jobs may be replaced by automation and robots in 2030 (that is just 10 years from next month,) and by 2050, AI will have the ability to learn like us, human. Many begin to see the threat and challenge – will we one day be replaced by our own creations?

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# 2030

## 800 millions workers may be replaced by ROBOTS



Source: McKinseys 2017 MGI Study

# 2050

## A.I. will have the same ability to learn as humans...

To be honest, I do not know the answer. Trained as an engineer, I am equipped with structured thinking and curiosity to solve the unknowns. On this one, my opinion, or instead, my question is, “who says that robots may not be our next evolution story? Just like us branching out from our apes-cousin, is there any difference if there will be human-robots branching out from today’s humans?” There are many documentaries

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(BBC, National Geo, CuriosityStream, etc.) on what scientists are studying and working on creating “super-humans.” It is not just about AI and robots, but literally using them to make humans live longer, better, and even extend our physical powers. How many hearts implants we have out there? How many amputated body parts being replaced successfully? We are talking about using 3D printing to create our body parts, computer powers to retain our memories and thoughts as we pass. Today, we are merging technology even more intimately into human lives. That is the world we created and live in!

So, is that frightening as we seem to stretch ourselves to play “Gods”? To me, it is a part of being human. The reason we are where we are (vs. our apes-cousins) today is that we have the desire to evolve, and the capacity to create. This “Evolution of Humanity” will continue as long as we continue to exist.

With that thought, I now begin to see robots differently because they may be a part of our human stories. If evolution is inevitable, instead of ignoring, strategically embracing it will undoubtedly be a better option. With 2020 coming, striving a 20/20 perfect vision will be crucial as we chart our personal (happy living) and professional (future of jobs) development plan. How can we play the human part in the evolution of our human-robots’ future?

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As humans, we always try to develop ourselves with the skills to adapt to new challenges. Now, we will need to add in AI and robots in our plan. I leave you with that as fruits for thoughts during this time of transition from 2019 to 2020.

Meanwhile, since we came to this world as humans, let's have a full and complete human experience with our fellow humans in this festive season

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*We, at TransCultural Group (TCG), are determined to play our parts in making the world a better place, and we have teamed up with the Cultural Intelligence Centre, U.S.A to bring their well-researched and designed CQ assessment tools to our clients in the Asia Pacific.*

*We are passionate about building bridges and breaking down walls. Please join us in our journey,*



***Beyond Boundaries - Crossing Cultures***

***Wishing you a very happy holiday season!***

***Bonnes fêtes de fin d'année!***

*May it continue to be filled with precious and joyous moments for you and your dear ones!*

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youths) worldwide, beyond time, space and cultural boundaries. [www.transculturalgroup.com](http://www.transculturalgroup.com).

A typical TCG's workshop will start with a CQ assessment (either CQ Pro for Professionals, or CQ for Youth for students) as the first step, followed by discussion and interactive sessions to understand how they may further increase their cultural intelligence. If you are interested in TCG's programmes, please reach out to us: [contact@transculturalgroup.com](mailto:contact@transculturalgroup.com).



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