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Editor

## Encouraging innovation

Most of us are only vaguely aware of the incredible enhancements that science has brought to our everyday lives. From mundane achievements like the ability to keep our milk cold and speaking over the telephone, to popping an aspirin for a headache or having 24/7 access to electricity, these capabilities exist almost on the periphery of our awareness. In general, science has largely been overlooked by the population and considered something that concerns 'other people' hidden away in labs.

However, the last five to ten years has seen a significant change in everyday attitudes as the general population has become increasingly aware of all that science has to offer. There are a variety of reasons for this shift, one of which being the huge number of technological developments we've seen recently. It's hard to ignore the amazing advances made in recent years when we live in a time when it's possible to video message someone on the other side of the world, hunt augmented reality creatures in your neighbourhood using 'Pokémon Go,' or now that surgical operations can be performed remotely via robot.

In parallel with this increasing technological awareness is the emergence of a new class of celebrity, quite different from the movie stars we've become used to. Mechanical engineer Bill Nye ('the Science Guy'), astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, and physicist Brian Cox have all become major household names alongside the expanding reach of popular science. Popular psychology is old news today as STEM subjects, particularly space science, are truly coming to the masses. Netflix alone has 76 documentaries under its 'Science and Nature' category, demonstrating that niche programmes are becoming a global phenomenon. Sci-fi, too, is becoming much more mainstream with the success enjoyed by films like 'The Martian,' 'Interstellar,' and the Star Trek, Star Wars and Marvel franchises taking over our cinemas and bursting onto our screens.

As scientific awareness and understanding throughout the general population improves, so too does the potential for innovation and original thought across many fields. In 2013, for example, it occurred to Scott Sobhani and partners that, despite the popularity of cloud storage by consumers, governments and corporations alike, no one had considered building an independent, space-based cloud network to provide secure storage for sensitive data. By combining cloud storage techniques and satellite technology, enterprises and governments will be able to relay sensitive data all over the world without hopping between different Earth stations, vastly improving security. Sobhani, Co-Founder of Cloud Constellation Corporation, plans to launch the SpaceBelt solution in 2019.

Encouraging students and adults alike by bringing science into mainstream society through factual programming from well-liked and expert celebrities can only open the door to more ground-breaking developments in the years to come. The changes brought about by scientific breakthroughs are things that everyone can benefit from, ranging from the poorest gaining access to e-health and distance learning in developing countries, to those of us in developed countries being offered more advanced entertainment systems, such as the new virtual reality devices sweeping the nation. In the words of 'System of a Down', science is 'Making impossibilities a reality.' ■

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