We Thought the Future Would Be Cooler

Experience the dorm of 2047 • Explore careers in automation • Touch imaginary things

In this installation, students from a transdisciplinary collaboration commandeer the challenge of Virginia Tech’s university-wide Beyond Boundaries initiative. We explore Virginia Tech’s possible futures, but we also question who has a say in imagining them, and to what ends. The project results from STS 6614: Origins of Innovation, a seminar that challenges our beliefs about, and our participation in, innovation.

Making Time
Matt Grimes, Marie Stettler Kleine, & Lei Zhang

Who will build the world of 2047? In search of inclusive visions, we materialize the ideas described by middle schoolers (~10 years old), undergraduates (~20 years old), and graduate students (~30 years old) who will make and inherit the future. We engaged students in a futures card game that generated unique interpretations of how people and objects might interact. We then charted their views across time, and brought their designs to life with physical prototypes. We encourage visitors to connect with these visions and to play the cards themselves.

Within Boundaries
Navid Fallah, Amanda K. Philips, & Zachary Risha

In 2047, the mythologized dorm room will remain a fixture of collegiate life. The dorm is many things—a study den, a rite of passage, a safe haven, a negotiation. It is where the personal and intimate are shared with another human being. It is a canvas of institutional change through the eyes of those most impacted. It allows for a diverse commentary on globalization, the environment, and the future of higher education. Socio-political conflicts and new educational models are embodied in the dorm’s artifacts and in the narratives of its inhabitants.

Play the Future
Andrew Kulak, Najla Mouchrek, Dr. Manisha Sharma, & Bono Shih

Our touchscreen arcade game opens a space for discussing ideas and values around autonomous technology. Rapid developments in automation promise to reshape societies and cultures worldwide, the consequences of which could range from improved quality of life to catastrophic income inequality and unemployment. In our game, you pick a career from three areas of research that VT excels in (drones, transportation, and robotics) and explore dilemmas of choice and determinism as you progress.

Thanks to University Libraries, VT Beyond Boundaries, ICAT, the Human Centered Design IGEP, and many individuals. STS 6614 is facilitated by Matthew Wisnioski of the Department of Science and Technology in Society. mwisnios@vt.edu

For much more on Beyond Boundaries please visit: http://www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/

Join our reception in the Newman Library lobby, Tuesday, April 26, 10:00 - 11:30