

# The power of imagination

by Erivelton Nepomuceno

**E**ach time we watch a sci-fi movie, we ask ourselves if our society will achieve such scientific advances. An easier task is to analyze the same question asked one or two hundred years ago and see if there is some dreaming progress that came true.

Perhaps one of the most important geniuses of this speculation was the French author Jules Verne (1828–1905). Well known for his scientific predictions, he is acclaimed as one who could see the technological advance of the future in his own time. Even more, he wrote of this in many must-read bestselling adventure novels, such as *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas* (1870), and *Around the World in 80 Days* (1872).

Verne's special skills to predict the future of science advances have been discussed in many works. They are well accepted. However, there are questions that each of us must answer: how to become creative or use our imaginations to advance unforeseen scientific progress or find a solution for a technical and scientific puzzle is still to be understood.

Numerous works and talks have addressed our current struggle to understand how the long exposure of children to screens, games, and social media deeply impacts the mind. Many believe that this may lead to violent behavior and a decrease in human intelligence. Others hold that our current technology is a powerful weapon for strengthening our logical reasoning and soft skills. In any case, it is almost a consensus among us that the imagination is a unique human feature, capable of discoveries, art, and poems.

Students or well-established professors should always reinvigorate their imaginations. In our times,

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no secure path has been developed to avoid pitfalls on this journey. However, our accumulated knowledge can give us some direction. Regarding screen time, balanced daily activity looks like a more secure approach. Reading books, talking to friends, playing board games, practicing some

physical exercise, taking some fresh air—if present in our routine—could be good alternatives to computers and mobile devices.

Regarding books, I must confess a great project failure in my life. I designed my house to avoid shelves, and I thought that screen reading would shortly command the market. I was wrong. The U.S. first-quarter 2021 print book sales grew 29%, compared to a 17% increase in e-books. I wonder if those different shapes, sizes, and weights give us some unique perception of each book. Today I bought a shelf—it is filled with books, a great aid for the imagination.

In fact, reality is an inexhaustible source of mystery and information. It is really useful to google something nowadays. However, it might be surprising to ask a question of a friend, teacher, or relative and receive from a still-not-understood supercomputer—the mind—an incredible reply.

As our bodies are transformed by what we eat, our imaginations are fueled with the information that we receive. We must choose wisely. *IEEE Potentials* has been a good companion for uncountable readers over the past decades. Invite a friend to read it. Share your expectations with me. Moreover, empower your imagination to transform scientific fiction into fact!

## About the author

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