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HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS

As forecast:

U.S. leads coup
in Venezuela

➤ An in-depth look at the bleak future of Cryptocurrencies

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Sound
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breakthroughs
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HISTORY BEFORE
IT HAPPENS®

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WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?

Each new day seems to bring with it a new geopolitical crisis, one more political debacle, more dire economic warnings, increasing social disturbance or another environmental threat. What does it all mean? What can be done? How will it end?

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Gerald Celente ("As forecast: U.S. leads coup in Venezuela." p.3, "The we love war' media!" p.7)



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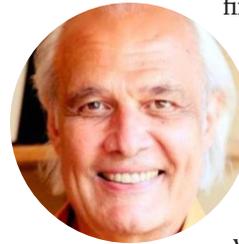
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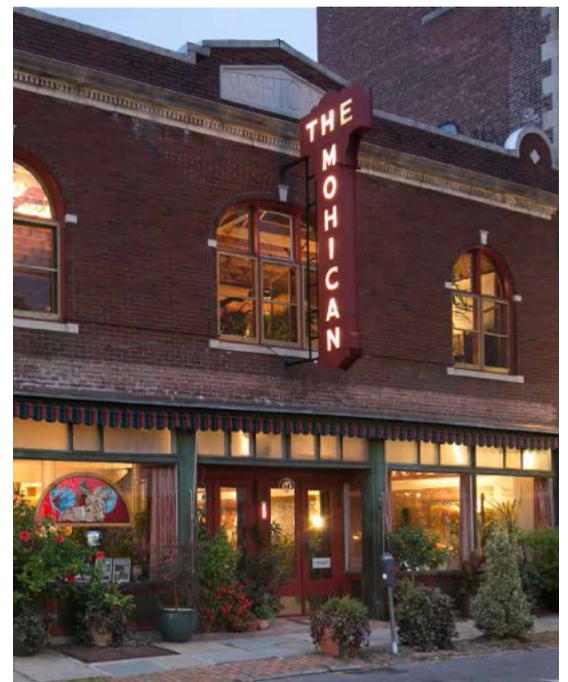
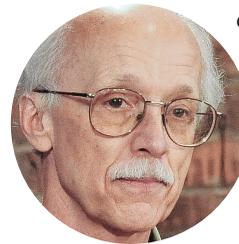
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Home of the Trends Research Institute



Venezuelan police forces clashing with protesters in Caracas. Twitter

As forecast: U.S. leads coup in Venezuela

Presstitutes and politicians banging war drums...again



Gerald Celente

Only a couple of weeks ago few outside of Venezuela knew of Juan Guaidó, the 35-year-old politician, referred to by the media as “right wing,” who swore himself in as interim president of Venezuela, directly attacking the duly elected president Nicholas Maduro.

Absent the mass media coverage is how Guaidó has been U.S.A. primed and groomed.

Barely a mention that he was brought to Washington this past December and has met a number of times with Senator Marco Rubio, a staunch opponent of Venezuelan President Nicholas Maduro, to plan strategies to overthrow Maduro.

But the current coup attempt and the implications

of a U.S. led government overthrow comes as no surprise to Trends Journal subscribers. Gerald Celente had once again forecast “History Before it Happens” in the November 2018 edition:

“Should the governments of Argentina, Columbia and Brazil team up to take out the Venezuela government – with the assistance of the United States with its long history of

inciting, planning and supporting military coups and social unrest throughout South and Central America – they all have enough weapons of mass destruction to destroy a good part of life on Earth. (See, Triangle of Death, Trends Journal, November 2018)”

Indeed, the prevailing economic conditions in Venezuela, derisively labeled the Congo of South America, was ground zero for social unrest and po-



Left: Juan Guaido, Interim President and former head of the National Assembly. Right: Nicolas Maduro, President since 2013.

Wikipedia

litical discontent.

Marked by deepening economic depression, exploding emigration, accelerating scarcity of food, clean water, electricity, housing and other basic staples of daily life, the nation has long teetered on the edge of implosion.

Once the richest nation of South America, Venezuela’s currency, the Bolivar, is essentially worthless, its inflation rate at 1.3 million percent, its unemployment rate at 40 percent... as Celente has long noted, “when people lose everything and have nothing left to lose, they lose it.” And in a radically divided Venezuela, many have now lost it.

AMERICA: MASTERS OF DESTRUCTION

On cue, after Maduro won the presidential election last May, the U.S. government – the divine authority of how every nation should obey “The Exceptional” American high immoral dictates and follow Washington’s orders – declared the Venezuelan election invalid and fraudulent.

As Nicholas Maduro was poised to be sworn in as President of Venezuela on January 10th, the U.S. implemented its coup d’état with the coronation of Juan Guaido as the country’s interim leader, in effect dismissing Maduro from office.

President Trump’s administration launched its

propaganda campaign branding Maduro’s victory as “heavily rigged,” “fraudulent,” “a sham,” “a joke” and “a disgrace.”

But, in fact, elections in Venezuela were regarded as among the most closely monitored in the world.

Indeed, the Venezuelan government asked the United Nations to send teams to monitor election fairness and accuracy last May. It was a successful U.S.-led effort that blocked that request.

However, several international monitoring organizations observed the elections and affirmed their fairness. For instance, the African Nations’ delegation stated:

“The Venezuelan people who chose to participate in the electoral process of May 20 were not subject to any external pressures... As such, we implore the international community to abide by international law and the principles of self-determination and recognize what we consider to be a free, fair, fully transparent and sovereign election.”

But these facts are disregarded by the political establishment and ignored by America’s Presstitute media who get paid to put out by their D.C. whore masters and corporate Johns. (see Presstitutes Sell War Propaganda, p.7)

SELLING FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY... AGAIN

Despite promoting the guise of bringing “Freedom and Democracy” to Venezuela as an excuse for regime change (Iraq, Libya, Syria, Honduras, Ukraine, Yemen, etc.), and a long history of proven track records of making bad situations terribly worse, the White House and media are selling it once again, and we forecast, the general public will buy it.

In proof of his point, on 23 January, his Highness, the Godly Ruler of America, President Donald “Reality Show Champion” Trump, powered into office by a mere 26 percent of eligible voters, declared: “Maduro is no longer president of Venezuela. I will continue to use the full weight of United States economic and diplomatic power to press for the restoration of Venezuelan democracy.”

Speaking for We the People, Vice President Mike Pence weighed in with a video stating, “On behalf of the American people, we say: estamos conustedes. We are with you. We stand with you, and we will stay with you until Democracy is restored.”

And to bring democracy to Venezuela, the Trump administration hired Iraq warmonger cheerleader, champion of Latin American death squads that slaughtered tens of thousands, criminal Elliott

Abrams, who was convicted in the Iran-Contra scandal in which Ronald Reagan's administration secretly funded paramilitary groups in Nicaragua.

Ignoring Abrams track record of love of lying and violence, as did the U.S. media, Secretary of State Pompeo boasted, "Elliott will be a true asset to our mission to help the Venezuelan people fully restore democracy and prosperity to their country."

Quadrupling down on the "Democracy" pitch, National Security Advisor John Bolton said, "We will continue to use the United States' economic and diplomatic power to press for the restoration of Venezuelan democracy."

Indeed, Bolton declared: "We have already informed the Federal Reserve that Guaido is the real, legitimate interim president of Venezuela."

And further demonstrating the United States' determination to bring democracy at any cost, including bloodshed, to remove Maduro, Sen. Marco Rubio stated: "It's just a matter of time. The only thing we don't know is how long it will take — and whether it will be peaceful or bloody."

And "bloody" it may be. There are reports indicating that Washington is considering a naval blockade of Venezuela to stop its oil exports and the seizure of Venezuelan assets in the U.S. on the supposed behalf of the "interim president."

Moreover, as indicated from notes seen on John Bolton's notepad of "5,000 troops to Columbia" following his address regarding the imposition of U.S. sanctions on Venezuela, there are growing expectations for direct U.S. military intervention.

CUT THE HEAD OFF

Reinforcing those expectations, appearing on Fox TV, retired U.S. Brigadier General Anthony Tata bragged that when he "was the planner for the 82nd Airborne division, we had plans for all of these countries that had dictatorships, like Haiti and Venezuela and other places and what you really look at is if you can cut the head off the snake ... so that is the key here and I'm sure the paratroopers at Fort Bragg in the 82nd Airborne division tonight are sharpening their knives and tightening up their parachutes."

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *Yes, the American way: Overthrow governments they can't control, "cut the head off the snake," and "sharpening their knives."*

Beyond Venezuela and Haiti, retired General Tata proudly admits the U.S. will take any military action necessary to overthrow any government that does not bow to its demands. As global trend forecaster Gerald Celente has stated numerous times, "America is a coun-

try that invades and destroys other nations under the guise of freedom and democracy.

THE AMERICAN WAR PARTIES

As we had reported in *Trends Journals* throughout the U.S. 2018 midterm election cycle, not a word was uttered by any of the candidates from either political party about the ongoing American wars ravaging nations that cost trillions and kill millions.

And our noting that a dozen or so newly elected officials from the Democratic Party were former members of the military/intelligence complex, further demonstrated the pro-war sentiments of the Party.

Thus, Democrats, pretending to wear the "progressive" and "liberal" labels, echoed the Trump narrative to denounce the duly elected Maduro government and support the new self-anointed Guaido as Venezuelan President.

In fact, Democratic Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin praised Trump for "appropriately" recognizing Guaido as the interim leader of the country.

On the House side, several Democrats vowed to introduce legislation to "support the people of Venezuela and hold the illegitimate President accountable for the crisis he created."

Even longtime vocal Trump opponent, Democrat Adam Schiff, who chairs the House Intelligence Committee, supported the White House move to overthrow Maduro and install self-proclaimed Guaido as President of Venezuela: "Nicolas Maduro's disastrous and dictatorial rule has devastated the economy and society of Venezuela," and recognized "the leader of the National Assembly, Juan Guaido, as the rightful leader of Venezuela."

Indeed, every so-called progressive Democratic candidate declaring his or her candidacy in the 2020 U.S. race for the White House remains silent on Trump's announcement recognizing Guaido as the interim president and the general Democratic Party support for regime change.

"I strongly back efforts by the United States to use economic and political pressure to support the restoration of democracy in Venezuela," said New Jersey Democratic Senator Robert Menendez, a ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

NATIONS BACK U.S., CALL FOR NEW ELECTIONS

Within days of the U.S. condemnation against Maduro as the legitimate president of Venezuela and backing Guaido as its interim President, many American allies have supported the American position.

On 26 January, officials from the UK, Spain, Ger-

many and France demanded new elections be called for within eight days or Guaido will be recognized as president. They joined a growing list of countries that support Guaido, including: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Peru.

As for the demand to set new elections, Maduro said: "Nobody gives us an ultimatum. All of Europe is bowing down to Donald Trump. It's that simple, especially when it comes to Venezuela."

Addressing the U.N. Security Council on 26 January, Pompeo asked to "liberate the mafia state" of Maduro in Venezuela, a statement that clashed with China and Russia that support the current leadership and say there's no evidence the May election was rigged.

In response, Russia's U.N. representative Vasili Nebenzia stated it was a of "breach of international law" and an attempt to "orchestrate a coup" to in effect appoint an interim president of a sovereign nation.

And despite other countries that support Maduro's presidency, including Mexico, Uruguay, Bolivia, Cuba, Syria, Turkey and Nicaragua, Pompeo went on to declare U.S. supremacy, stating: "We have a new president in Venezuela, Juan Guaido."

IT'S OIL, NOT DEMOCRACY

As we had noted with the U.S. overthrow of the

Libyan and Iraqi governments, if their major export was broccoli and not oil, there would have been no demands by American Presidents Obama and Bush to spill blood and destroy these oil-rich sovereign nations in the name of bringing democracy to the people of those countries.

So too with the overthrow of the Venezuelan government now under way; it is not about democracy, it's about oil.

In fact, this time, the U.S. isn't hiding its motives.

John Bolton said the U.S. has a "lot at stake" given the fact that Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves and flatly stated: "We're in conversation with major American companies now. It would make a difference if we could have American companies produce the oil in Venezuela. It would be good for... the people of the United States."

And now, in an economic act of war that will add more hardship to the general public, the Trump administration has sanctioned Venezuela's state-owned oil firm, Petroleos de Venezuela. U.S. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin declared, "We expect... that today's measure totals \$7 billion in assets blocked today plus over \$11 billion in lost export proceeds over the next year."

These sanctions will hit the nation hard. Venezuela is the world's largest oil producer and the United States is its biggest oil customer, accounting for 39 percent of the OPEC nation's deliveries in 2018.

And oil revenues account for nearly 90 percent of the country's revenue. **TJ**

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *Absent from all of the media coverage and analysis by their "experts," is the fact that the United States has absolutely no moral or legal right to intervene and dictate how other countries choose their leaders.*

Yet, this is the same America that condemns other nations for the same actions that it takes. For example, the U.S. and its media have continually condemned Russia for its involvement in Ukraine, a neighboring country. And both Iran and Russia are chastised for their involvement in Syria, even though they were invited to intervene by the nation's president.

And this is the same America that is overtly "meddling" in Venezuela's elections, while condemning Russia non-stop for allegedly meddling into its 2016 elections.

TRENDPOST

The turmoil in Venezuela is intensifying. With its political system buckling, and the U.S. and its allies demanding regime change, the chance of military action is swelling.

As evidenced by the United States led wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya, and its support for the Yemen War, we forecast that regime change in Venezuela will be another disastrous failure. The facts are indisputable.

These countries have not only been destroyed, but always absent from media and political analysis, is that foreign intervention and the mass murder committed has sown the seeds for "radical extremist," and "militants," i.e. citizens of those countries that want to retaliate for being invaded and occupied by foreign powers.

Thus, the same should be expected if the United States and its allies launch war against Venezuela.

Further, should the turmoil escalate, the explosive effects will spread far beyond the region.

On the economic front, if oil prices spike, the implications on the already slowing global economy will not only push nations into recession, it will sharply increase equity market volatility, which will in turn drive gold prices higher as investors seek safe haven assets.

Further, a war with Venezuela will spread throughout the region, escalating the Human Wave of refugees fleeing the violence, mayhem and destruction.

The “We love war” media!

Presstitutes sell pro-war propaganda

Having a long history of selling propagandized language from Washington to send the nation to war, the U.S. “Saddam Hussein Has Weapons of Mass Destruction” media is once again loudly beating the war drums.

While the Media Research Center reports that 91 percent of American news reporting on the Trump Presidency has been negative, in an about face, whatever the warmongers say about Venezuela, is now reported as solid fact and pure truth.

As noted, the “We Love War” U.S. media ignores the fact that it was Washington that blocked efforts to send a United Nations team to Venezuela to monitor the presidential elections and that several nations sent teams to observe the elections and concluded they were “fair, free and fully transparent.”

In public addresses, press releases, news talk shows – and from late night clowns and comics who have been elevated to statesmen level in a dumbed down society – the media repeat over and over the buzzwords fed to them by Washington that the Venezuelan elections were: “rigged,” fraudulent,” “illegitimate.”

- “After banning opposition candidates, ballot box stuffing and counting irregularities in a deeply flawed election it is clear Nicolas Maduro is not the legitimate leader of Venezuela.” Washington Post, Jan. 26, 2019

Nicolás Maduro, 46th President of Venezuela.

Wikipedia



- “Maduro pressured to exit after ‘fraudulent’ election,” Reuters, Jan. 26, 2019
- “Colombia President, Region is saying ‘no more Maduro’ after illegitimate election.” CNN Jan. 24, 2019
- “Diplomats urge Venezuela’s Maduro to cede power after rigged elections.” Fox News, Jan. 4, 2019

And in a video statement designed to support the anti-Maduro protesters in Venezuela, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence stated:

“Nicolas Maduro is a dictator with no legitimate claim to power. He has never won the presidency in a free and fair election, and has maintained his grip of power by imprisoning anyone who dares to oppose him.”

That statement was reported by essentially every major media outlet and news service in the Western Hemisphere. A Google search of the quote returned nearly 6,500 results.

And a review of how it was reported in outlets from the New York Times to MSNBC, and from Reuters to Breitbart News, demonstrates virtually no attempt to counter or challenge that statement with facts or other viewpoints. 

Recessions loom, will gold boom?

What a difference a year makes. Last January the mood at the World Economic Forum in Davos, where the business elite and world leaders meet, was upbeat.

Back in 2018 equity markets were flying high, global economic growth was strong... and they were cheering President Trump and his business-friendly policies.

Beyond the absence of world leaders from the U.S., U.K., France, Britain and Canada at this year's event, the realities of China's economic slowdown, the U.S. Government shutdown, the simmering Brexit bomb, weak European growth and the never-ending fears of trade wars and tariffs, cast a shadow of gloom over Davos.

The fears of a deep and sustained recession and market volatility were the business leaders' major concerns. Bridgewater Associates' CEO Ray Dalio, said: "What scares me the most longer term is that we have limitations to monetary policy which is our most valuable tool... So, the next downturn in the economy worries me the most."

And, in fact, according to a CNBC study, the chance of recession in the next 12 months spiked to its highest level in three years, largely on fears that global economic weakness will grow.

MONETARY METHADONE

Doubling down on the recessionary realities, European Central Bank President Mario Draghi warned

of weaker than expected Eurozone growth. However, he was "confident" that China, whose 2018 Gross Domestic Product grew at the slowest pace since 1990, would come to the rescue with stimulus measures, i.e., injecting cheap money into its economy, which would in turn boost EU exports into China.

Draghi also said that the ECB, while having no room to bring interest rates lower, which are now at minus 0.4 percent, would restart another round of bond buying if needed. And, despite relatively strong economic growth in the U.S., to help prop up the end-of-year diving equity markets, the U.S. Federal Reserve suddenly backtracked on its projection to raise interest rates three to four times in 2019, with Fed Chairman Jerome Powell saying the Fed would be "patient" in raising rates.

But while we forecast governments will expand fiscal spending and central banks will inject more monetary stimulus into equity markets to delay downturns, as the Davos sentiment underscores, the weight of the global economic slowdown is becoming greater than the tools left in the central banks' tool boxes to combat it.

As we warned, because central banks waited too long to begin normalizing negative/zero interest rate policies, indeed, as now finally being recognized by Davos, they have fewer tools left to avert economic recessions and equity market meltdowns. **TJ**

President Trump and Fed Reserve Chair Jerome Powell.

Wikipedia



TREND FORECAST

With all signs pointing to central bank intervention to boost equity markets and economies with increased flows of cheap money, plus exploding global debt, declining economic growth and geopolitical instability, we forecast gold, the ultimate safe-haven asset, will trend higher.

Currently gold is hovering around \$1,320 per ounce. We maintain our forecast that gold will have to break above \$1,450 per ounce to leap back to the \$2,000 range it neared in 2011.



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Why Bitcoin will never become digital gold

Cryptos slide while Blockchain grows more essential

By Jonathan Cho
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Satoshi Nakamoto created Bitcoin in response to the 2008 financial crisis, when governments inflated the supply of fiat money on a massive scale to save the banking system. He feared this would result in currency devaluation, so he designed Bitcoin to be a form of money that could never be inflated, and thereby hoped Bitcoin could become a store of value as enduring as gold.

The problem is Nakamoto was more focused on preventing inflation in the style of central banks than on what ultimately matters for a store of value – preventing devaluation in general, and he was not able to replicate the properties in gold to do that.

This is why Bitcoin is failing, whether HODLers (Bitcoin holders) recognize it yet or not. To understand why Bitcoin could never be the “digital gold”

envisioned, it’s important to discern the properties in gold he was unable to replicate.

GOLD VS. CRYPTOS

Gold has intrinsic value that creates natural demand — non-arbitrary beauty. Intrinsic value is critical for a store of value because it means that the price of gold always has a floor. Gold will always be prefer-

Demand for Bitcoin is therefore unlike demand for gold. Bitcoin has no intrinsic value—no one wants it for itself. The value of Bitcoin is entirely socially-predicated, so there is no price floor, as no one will buy if he thinks no one else will.

able in jewelry to metals that rust and that preference results in demand, even amid market turmoil at sufficiently low prices. And this means that drops in the value of gold will always be mitigated, rather than fear-inspiring enough for people to lose confidence in its ability to retain value. A floor ensures no rush for the exits is ever permanent.

Second, gold has a truly limited supply. It cannot be recreated under a different name, and it's historically only been mined at a rate matching population growth, resulting in purchasing power stability. Its only competitors are three other precious metals, which each share similar supply constraints.

To understand why Bitcoin's demand and supply properties differ from gold's, it's important to know what Bitcoin is. Bitcoin is the name for 21 million digital tallies on a distributed ledger, called a Blockchain. A ledger is a record book intended to keep track of items, like an inventory book at a jewelry store. Each tally in the book refers to a piece of jewelry, and the tallies themselves can be drawn into the book.

THE TECHNOLOGY IS NOT VALUE

The jewelry is what matters—the tallies only refer to them. If a store drew an absolutely limited number of tallies, cut them each out of the ledger book, distributed them to people, and said they were to be money but no jewelry was attached, it would be clear how absurd this seems.

That technology evolves to allow them to be sent digitally through an intermediary confers no additional intrinsic value, nor if technology evolved once more to allow peer-to-peer transactions on a distributed ledger.

The mechanism to transfer ownership may have evolved but what's sent remains the same—tallies that refer to nothing, just as fiat paper was originally receipts for gold that then referred to nothing. Bitcoins are such tallies, a digital equivalent of fiat paper.

Demand for Bitcoin is therefore unlike demand for gold. Bitcoin has no intrinsic value—no one wants

it for itself. The value of Bitcoin is entirely socially-predicated, so there is no price floor, as no one will buy if he thinks no one else will.

Thus, any form of devaluation has the potential to create a rush for the exits as fear takes over that a decline will not bottom-out, a process that can collapse price to the point that any confidence it can be counted on to store value is lost completely.

The supply properties of Bitcoin are also very different. The supply of digital tallies with the Bitcoin name is fixed at 21 million. But the supply of Blockchains is unlimited, so the supply of digital tallies is, too. While gold cannot be recreated under a different name, Bitcoin can, which allows for the creation of direct competitors, a condition that gold does not have and that governments historically protected their fiat money from by outlawing them.

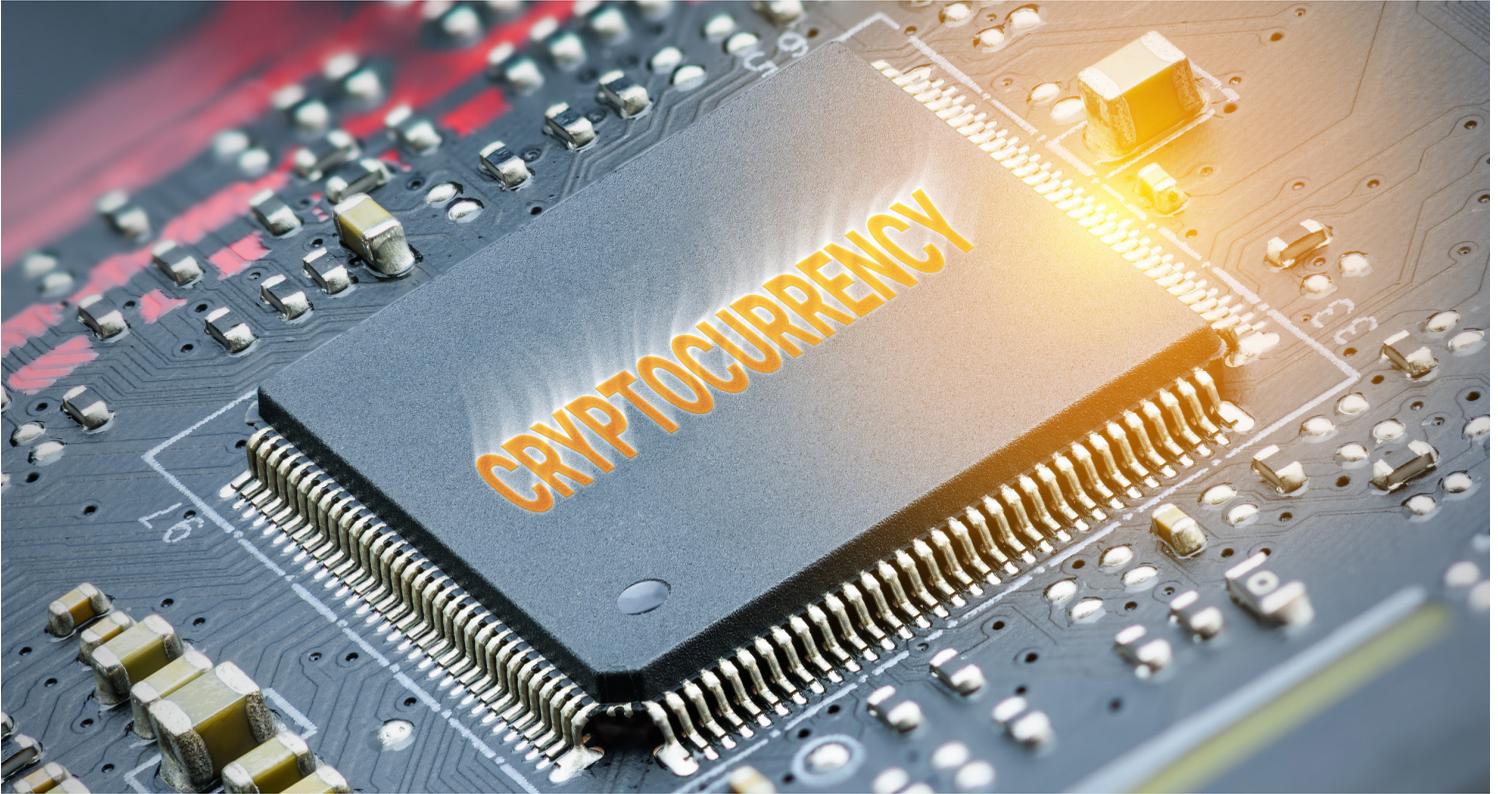
Thus, while Nakamoto protected Bitcoin against government-based devaluation, he did not protect Bitcoin against private free market competitors in the way governments protect their own fiat paper. And a money with no price floor, devalued through competition, is as much at risk of collapse as one devalued through inflation, as the prospect of any decline feared irrecoverable spurs people to sell in anticipation that others will.

If something with little to no intrinsic value is created in a free market, is marketed as money, and is priced beyond the value of producing it, the excess profit margin attracts competitors that drive it down.

Because the profit margin from creating Bitcoin is extravagant, incentives outside of HODLing have been twofold: creating competitors – alternative distributed ledgers with their own tallies (altcoins), and investing in them. By providing potentially higher risk-adjusted returns, competitors incentivize divestment and redirection of capital out of and away from Bitcoin, decreasing its price.

The result is devaluation. And while the process is not inflation, it's inflationary because it produces the same result that actual inflation would.

Competitive devaluation is already occurring but the effects have been masked because money has



moved into and out of the sector largely together, hiding that much of the capital invested in altcoins would otherwise be in Bitcoin. That Bitcoin now only has 50 percent of cryptocurrency market share attests to this, along with the sheer number of altcoins, 2,000-plus, that exist.

Ultimately, the profit motive driving people to HODL is also driving them to divest out of Bitcoin and into competitors, for no network is secure if loyalty is predicated on the promise of riches.

The greater the price of Bitcoin, the greater its profit margin, attracting more competitors that are essentially the same thing, like generic drugs flooding the market after the name-brand version loses its patent.

The higher Bitcoin gets, the lower its potential return, and the greater that of altcoins, fueling further divestment into the latter until the point at which it becomes clear what's happening. Bitcoin cannot continue to rise without moving the risk-adjusted return differential further in favor of alternatives. **TJ**

TRENDPOST

Bitcoin is stuck in quicksand, and the quicksand will win. Because while a name-brand drug can retain value in a market flooded with generics, Bitcoin is not intended to be a drug or a stock, but a store of value. And no store of value has any value if it can lose 5 percent or more per year of market share to competitors, because eventually, new money stops coming in to mask this dynamic.

The recognition that it cannot store value amid perpetual competitive debasement will eventually induce people to rush out in the way they have in every fiat money collapse, a process that is now well under way.

Nakamoto created Bitcoin to be free market money, without protection from free market competition. No store of value can survive unless it withstands devaluation of any kind, government-based or otherwise, and only precious metals like gold have done this.

While it's less convenient than Bitcoin, convenience cannot replace value, no more than the relative convenience of paper fiat to gold did before.

As the market takes the price of Bitcoin and others masquerading as money down to their intrinsic worth, this reality should become clearer to even ardent HODLers.



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Cryptocurrencies are losing steam, what does 2019 hold in store?

Government control, evolving technology are Bitcoin's enemies

By Jonathan Cho
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Bitcoin is flawed as money on a systemic level for two reasons often regarded as strengths. The first flaw is that it's a technology, and the second flaw is that it's a threat to government-controlled money. Both make Bitcoin unlikely to succeed.

First, that Bitcoin is a technology itself is problematic, because technology is impermanent. If Bitcoin is to be money, it must store value reliably over time.

The reliability cannot be a hope but a near certainty that you can rely on the money to retain its purchasing power over decades unattended, without concern for changes that can result in loss of value.

The ability for a form of money to have relative permanence regarding purchasing power over time is critical, as otherwise it cannot be relied upon to store value.

But Bitcoin is a technology, and technology changes. It evolves, and what was new ten years ago is often not even old but obsolete today.



Is it "Rest In Peace" BTC?

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To bet on Bitcoin long-term is to bet that technology won't progress, for people do not stay with old technology but migrate out of it. The Bitcoin Blockchain is not even scalable; it can only potentially be made so with "add-on" solutions, akin to programs to make Windows 95 faster.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES CHALLENGE BITCOIN

More efficient, scalable distributed ledgers have already been created, like Hashgraph, the equivalent of an entirely new, more advanced operating system. But whether it's Hashgraph or another matters less than that technology is already evolving, and to bet on Bitcoin as sustainable money for decades ultimately means that a first-generation technology will be the final generation used.

Sony was first in portable music until Apple; MySpace was the first social network until Facebook. No one uses the first computer now anymore than they use the first cell phone. First-mover-advantage only remains an advantage so long as the first mover is not inferior, and Bitcoin will inevitably reach that point, if it hasn't already.

That Bitcoin can be an exception to this pattern is unlikely.

The second systemic flaw is that private cryptocurrencies are a threat to government power via their

monopoly on money. A human law throughout history has been that power seeks to remain in power and does whatever necessary to retain it. Whether dictatorships, monarchies, or the American "deep state," those in power have done what was needed to keep it.

THE LIBERTY DOLLAR EXAMPLE

A telling example for Bitcoin is what the U.S. government did to the Liberty dollar, a private precious metals-backed currency created in rebellion of the Federal Reserve in the 1990s. The founder was forced to shut it down with six-months house arrest after being threatened with long-term imprisonment; a government prosecutor called the currency a "unique form of domestic terrorism...to undermine the legitimate currency of this country."

This reaction was not a product of the time but a symptom of what occurs when any competitor threatens to destabilize the control of power by those in power.

This is not isolated to governments but extends throughout society. Corporations spend money to eliminate competitors, to the point that anti-trust laws are necessary to prevent the natural drive towards monopolies. But business competitors cannot be eliminated with certainty, due to variables like innovation.

Regarding the control of money, governments do not have this uncertainty. Governments can create the laws they want, print money nearly unchecked, and employ law enforcement or the military to get what they want done. All these tools have historically been used to maintain power.

While the reach of Bitcoin is further than the Liberty dollar's, what it takes to destroy Bitcoin is not.

But unlike threats in business, eliminating Bitcoin largely comes down to cost – spending a certain amount (estimated now at \$30 billion) to take control of 51 percent of mining power to rearrange ownership of Bitcoin, and thus destroy confidence in it as secure money.

This means that governments can guarantee their monopoly with certainty if Bitcoin or any other cryptocurrency gained enough traction. To think they won't when they need only print the money to do so is to believe that governments will relinquish their control of money and thus their power willingly, which has little precedent. **TJ**

TRENDPOST

What must be understood but what crypto people evade facing directly is this: when a money is created in opposition to a power that can destroy it at a definable cost with near total certainty, that that power will do so must not be hoped against but counted on if the threat ever became large enough.

Dear HODLers, cryptos are not gold... and here's why



Wikipedia

Gold bullion in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

HODLers believe Bitcoin can become a store of value like gold because the value of both is subjective, based on arbitrary “beliefs.” This assumption is flawed.

Gold has intrinsic value, beauty, and beauty is timeless. It’s not hard to imagine that the beauty one experiences looking at a sunset or the Grand Canyon struck people similarly millenniums ago - “belief” has little involvement.

Differences in architecture between the wealthy and poor over thousands of years reflect this as well—the former’s are still comparably more beautiful to us now as to them, as has been true through each period of history, on every continent.

Similarly, it should be self-evident upon reflection that an element of rare color and non-tarnishable shine requires no set of beliefs to be preferable for physical expressions of beauty like jewelry and architectural design to elements of duller, common shades that do tarnish. **TJ**

TRENDPOST

That the beauty in gold is this objective is evidenced in its history—across every continent, whether the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Greeks, or the Mayans, gold was valued for its beauty for these purposes. While individual preferences always vary, what matters is mean preference across a society, and that has remained consistent for thousands of years.

Gold has intrinsic value, beauty, and beauty is timeless.

Our Top Trends for 2019

Global trends forecaster Gerald Celente's Top Trends for 2019, covered in the December edition of the *Trends Journal*, offers detailed, essential predictions that pinpoint the critical trends ahead as 2018 ended riding a powerful wave of economic, geopolitical and societal volatility into the new year.

According to Celente, rarely do so many converging trend lines signal the unprecedented risk and reward opportunities ahead as do the Top 10 Trends for 2019.

And already, just a few weeks into the new year, many of these trends are taking shape and, in fact, accelerating.

From declining equity markets and economies globally, to the diving value of cryptocurrencies, to the rising number of explosive geopolitical trends threatening social unrest, to powerful social trends that will dramatically alter the status quo for many and much more... 2019 is off to the wild ride we forecast ahead.

Here's a summary of the Top Trends for 2019, with links to each story:

ECONOMIC 9/11: "Economic 9/11" is poised to strike and cause equity and market meltdowns worldwide, as many economies already in recession or headed for recession, crash. Can it be stopped?

HUMAN WAVES: The Great Migration trend accelerates across the globe in 2019. So, too, do populist movements that will begin to dismantle entrenched governments and push nationalism.

AMERICA: PURITAN 2.0: Welcome to Puritan America. Watch what you say, how you say it, where you say it, when you say it and who you say it to. America and other countries will increasingly impose Puritan standards across all aspects of life.

CENSORSHIP 2019: Governments across the globe, regardless of what political doctrine they profess, in collusion with social media giants, will accelerate the Censorship 2019 trend. But opportunity exists to circumvent the media monopolies by creating alternatives.

READY TO EXPLODE: The effects of America's and other nations' obesity will continue to take its toll and bear a heavy price tag. But opportunities exist for OnTrendpreneurs® to address this epidemic.

BYE, BYE BOOMERS: The world is not prepared



for the impact the Bye, Bye Boomers trend is about to unleash. The golden years for millions of seniors in 2019 will be marked more by how to survive rather than how to thrive.

GET HIGH, GET HEALTHY: The cannabis industry breaks through, making the transition from a strong entrepreneurial and small business playing field to big industry.

BLESSED ARE THE GEEKS: The King James Bible got it wrong. The Geeks, not the "Meek," have inherited the Earth. Celente outlines the consequences.

GEN Z=GEN ZERO: It's the 21st century Generation and much of their future will resemble very little of the past. What will define this generation is its over reliance on digital communication, missing opportunities for self-expression, creative thinking and collaborative endeavors.

DYING BRANDS: As more iconic brands die, new and old brands that create products and a marketing message that reflect uniqueness and relevance to specific audiences who are not satisfied by the product offerings of traditional brands will succeed. **TJ**



The border wall separating Tijuana, Mexico, right, from the United States.

Wikipedia

Wall or no wall?

The Celente solution: Let the people vote

It's time for the U.S. to join the 21st Century... Vote online!

This past December, President Donald Trump, demanding Congress fund his signature campaign promise to build a wall on the southwestern border, declared "If we don't have border security, we'll shut down the government."

Rejecting his request, Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi ridiculed Trump's threat saying, "It's like a manhood thing for him. As if manhood could ever be associated with him."

Keeping to his word, Trump shut down the U.S. Government for 35 days, the longest in history. The unwillingness of the two ruling parties to strike a deal to end the deadlock that affected 800,000 government workers and cost the nation some \$11 billion in lost revenue, exemplified the incompetence and ineptitude of America's political system.

And despite all the bluster and grandstanding from

politicians on both sides of the aisle, Trump didn't get the money to build the wall, he ended the shut-down but the threats still loom of another government shutdown if no agreement is reached.

As Gerald Celente has long forecast, it is time for America to embrace the Swiss system of Direct Democracy: Let the people vote on major critical issues that affect their lives and livelihoods.

The Wall or No Wall ballot would be a simple Yes or No vote.

A) Yes, I want a Border Wall that will cost \$XX billion to build.

B) No, I do not want a Border Wall and I am willing to pay \$XX more in taxes for the social needs of each immigrant entering the country.

Again, considering the blatant ineptitude of the two entrenched political parties – each with dem-

“Let the people decide, and Blockchain Voting is the 21st century system that will put the future in their hands and not those of political parties.”



Left: Pro-immigration supporters gather at the border.

Right: Trump visiting the US/Mexico Border in McAllen, Texas.

Wikipedia



onstrated track records of economic, social and geopolitical failures – clearly it is their self-interests and those special interests that enrich them with campaign contributions (bribes and payoffs) that they serve, and not those of the general public.

And the public agrees: The Democracy Fund Voter Study Group’s 2018 VOTER survey reported that sixty-eight percent of respondents said, “a third major party is needed.”

IT’S TIME FOR BLOCKCHAIN VOTING

As vividly exemplified in the United States mid-term elections, with many key races not resolved for weeks, claims of voter fraud, massive system breakdowns, voter registration compliance disputes, ballot confusion, etc... the nation’s archaic electoral systems proved their antiquated ineffectiveness.

Therefore to finally enter the high-tech 21st century in which even the populations of the poorest nations are hand-held/app connected, the time for Blockchain Voting is now. The new technology would not only update and accelerate the current

archaic voting system, most importantly, it would put the decision making process in the hands of the people.

Rather than entrenched career politicians deciding the nation’s future, especially on such issues as wars, defense budgets, tax deals and other critical matters, Celente says, “let the people decide, and Blockchain Voting is the 21st century system that will put the future in their hands and not those of political parties.” **TJ**

TRENDPOST

Secure and simple. Blockchain technology is being embraced by the biggest banks and financial institutions, insurance giants, technology companies, major industries and governments worldwide.

What will it take to make Blockchain Voting a reality?

"The will of the people," said Celente.



Israeli fighter jets take off on a bombing mission.

Shutterstock

Stepping closer to war: Target Iran

The Wall Street Journal reported in January that this past September the U.S. National Security Council Advisor John Bolton requested the Pentagon draw up plans for a “strike” against Iran after militants, allegedly aligned with Iran, fired three mortars into Baghdad’s diplomatic quarter which hosts the U.S. Embassy.

The shells landed in an open lot and no one was harmed.

This report that the U.S. was planning a military strike directly confirms one of Gerald Celente’s Top Trends for 2018, “Market Shock, Mass Murder,” forecast in the *Trends Journal* December 2017:

“Branding Iran and Hezbollah as a common enemy has formed a historic and unprecedented alliance among Saudi Arabia, the Arab League, the United States and Israel, giving them license, at the slightest provocation, false flag or real, to strike at will against Iran and/or Lebanon.

“The battle lines have been drawn. In Washington, there is absolute support for Israel and absolute hatred for Iran. Should these trend lines continue on their current path, we forecast war will ignite throughout the Middle East... and possibly worldwide.”

Affirming Celente’s forecast, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has set the stage for military action against Iran. In a recent speech in Egypt he said: “We strongly support Israel’s efforts to stop Tehran from turning Syria into the next Lebanon” and will act “to expel every Iranian boot from Syria.”

Totally ignoring the facts of history, Pompeo went on to make the absurd statement that “America has always been, and always will be, a liberating force, not an occupying power. We’ve never dreamed of domination in the Middle East. Can you say the same about Iran?”

America never dreamed of domination in the Middle East?

The U.S. led mass destruction and involvement in its holy alliances with its Arab League partners in the Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen wars is not a dream of domination in the Middle East, it’s a living nightmare.

BEATING THE WAR DRUM

During a trip to Israel in January, Mr. Bolton suggested that President Trump was willing to strike Iran if he thought Tehran was close to developing a nuclear weapon.

And Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in January: “We have little doubt that Iran’s leadership is still strategically committed to achieving deliverable nuclear weapons.”

Then later that month, Israel announced it had launched an air attack against the Iranian Quds forces stationed in Damascus.

In confirming the bombing raid, Netanyahu said, “We have a constant policy to curtail Iranian attempts to establish their presence in Syria,” and “we have a permanent policy to strike at the Iranian entrenchment in Syria.”

Celente has repeatedly warned that the “alliance” is poised to escalate military conflict quickly and decisively using whatever justification – false flag or factual – and with the majority support from America’s political parties and its general public, just as they

have with all of U.S. foreign entanglements over the past 30-plus years.

No longer infected with the “Vietnam Syndrome” (the public disgust and aversion to America’s unjust and murderous foreign wars), Celente notes that conspicuously absent from the U.S. 2018 midterm elections was any mentions by Democrat or Republican candidates about America’s ongoing wars, the massive Defense Budget, or calls for peace to end the violence perpetuated, nourished and normalized by its military/industrial/intelligence complex, its politicians and the mass media.

PUBLISHER’S NOTE *In January, in an interview on Ron Paul’s Liberty Report, Celente said, “America is a country that invades other nations under the guise of freedom and democracy. It once again shows that the U.S. uses war as a solution rather than to Occupy Peace,” he said.*

Putting his money where his mind heart and soul are, in 2015, Celente launched OccupyPeace.com, a peace movement backed by a legislative, social and political Action-Plan for peace like no other in the world.

With war drums beating from the Middle East to South America, there’s no better time to hear what Gerald Celente and Ron Paul, two titans of peace and prosperity, have to say on this topic... and what you can do about it.

And there is no better time to put your money where your mind, heart and soul are by supporting Celente’s OccupyPeace.com movement and Ron Paul’s Peace and Prosperity Institute. 



TREND FORECAST

On the economic front, Celente forecasts that a war with Iran will drive oil prices above \$100 a barrel and equity markets across the globe will crash... along with the dollar, euro, yen, yuan and other fiat currencies.

Above left: Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel. Bottom: The Pentagon was requested to draft up plans for military action against Iran.

Wikipedia





Shutterstock

The legalize marijuana trend is picking up momentum.

As forecast, pot is on fire worldwide

2019 is the year legal marijuana goes mainstream

The “Get Healthy, Get High” trend for 2019 is growing strong across the globe, ensuring that this will be the year that legalized marijuana for both recreational and medical use will break into the mainstream in the U.S. and many other countries.

As we forecast in December: “In 2019, the legalization of marijuana in many states and the new federal Farm Bill that will legalize hemp will open the floodgates of explosive growth for both the marijuana and hemp industries that, because of their recreational, industrial and medicinal qualities, will be much bigger than booze when prohibition ended in 1933.”

Marijuana did very well in 2018 by reforming antiquated marijuana laws and, in the U.S., racking up

victories in the November midterms.

Further, the 2018 Farm Bill, legalizing hemp cultivation in all 50 states, passed the House of Representatives in a 386-47 vote. The parallel hemp industry is now positioned to experience explosive growth, exceeding \$22 billion by 2020.

Already an \$800 million industry, hemp products range from apparel, food, health and well-being remedies to building materials. Moreover, in its many

pot on fire

configurations, the natural fiber will be recognized as a replacement for a wide range of synthetic materials, including plastics.

Ten states and the District of Columbia now have legalized marijuana for adult recreational use and 33 allow medical use. And some nine more are expected to legalize marijuana this year.

On the global stage, last October, Canada became the latest country to legalize recreational marijuana, joining Uruguay, Spain and the Netherlands where recreational pot is legal.

Marijuana is already legal for medical use in Australia, Puerto Rico, Poland, Croatia and Macedonia. And in Turkey, citizens are allowed to grow marijuana for personal medical use.

Further, while in most countries cannabis is still illegal, a significant number will not prosecute for personal use. For example, in Columbia and Chile, cannabis is not legal but decriminalized in most forms. Both Jamaica and the Czech Republic have rapidly developing cannabis tourism industries and are moving forward with decriminalization and eventually legalization. In Columbia and Portugal, there is strong support for full legalization.

Fulfilling a campaign promise, French President Macron has eliminated mandatory prison sentences for small amounts of cannabis. The U.K. legalized medical cannabis late last year following other EU members Malta, Luxembourg, Greece and Denmark who passed laws in 2018 to allow medical use and decriminalized some possession and cultivation by citizens.

And recently, Mexico's incoming government sub-

mitted a bill to allow medical marijuana and recreational use. The bill would also permit companies to grow and sell marijuana, allow possession of up to 30 grams, and cultivation for private use. Smoking pot in public places would also be permitted.

In fact, the global legal pot industry is expected to reach \$146 billion by end of 2025, according to Grand View Research, Inc., and the explosion in expected revenue will create a booming job market. In the U.S. alone, the industry is expected to create 250,000 jobs, according to the research firm New Frontier Data.

Job opportunities will cover a wide spectrum, including technology, product development, customer service, health care management and more. Zip Recruiter estimates that job growth stemming from both legal recreational and medical marijuana will outpace growth in the hottest job sectors, including health care and technology.

BACK IN THE USA, MORE STATES EYE LEGAL POT

Already in 2019, the number of states freeing marijuana for adult recreational and medical usage is on track to grow significantly based on the numerous pro-marijuana gubernatorial candidates on the ballot that won in the mid-terms. With the substantial revenue for states via taxes on marijuana sales, state legislatures are likely to be supportive as well.

Mason Tvert, spokesman for the Marijuana Policy Project, sums up the potential for broader legalization across the country in the year ahead:

“2019 could be a banner year for legalization via state legislatures. Several states across multiple regions of the country are strongly considering ending prohibition and regulating marijuana for adult use... The steady growth of public support we've been seeing around the country will likely translate into some major state-level victories for marijuana policy reform.”

For example, in Connecticut during his campaign, Democratic Governor-Elect Ned Lamont stated repeatedly that cannabis legalization is “an idea whose time has come,” calling it one of his top initial priorities for his first year in office.

Connecticut state Senate President Martin Looney sponsored a bill last year that went nowhere because of opposition from then Governor Dannel Malloy. Looney says that marijuana legalization is “a significant revenue item for the state.”

With many who have opposed legalization no longer in the Connecticut legislature, the current Republican deputy minority leader says he “would think it would pass.”

Weed World vans in New York sell CBD laced lollipops to passers by.

Shutterstock



New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has changed his tune over the last few years from labeling marijuana a “gateway drug” to saying the time is right to “legalize recreational use once and for all.”

A study from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute and the University of Illinois reported that legalizing marijuana would not only create 24,000 jobs throughout the state but would generate over \$500 million in tax revenue and inject over \$1 billion into the state economy by 2020.

Legalizing cannabis was a major part of incoming Illinois Governor Jay Pritzker’s campaign right from the start of the primaries. He even held a press conference at a medical marijuana dispensary. He beat Incumbent Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner, who opposed legalization. Pritzker has promised to push for legalization “right away.”

Incoming Minnesota Democratic Governor Tim Walz is replacing the former Democratic governor who opposed legalization. Walz campaigned to “replace the current failed policy with one that creates tax revenue, grows jobs, builds opportunities for Minnesotans.” He will get help from the newly elected Democratic House majority.

New Hampshire does not have a governor who supports legalization. Republican Governor Chris Sununu signed a bill to decriminalize cannabis possession in 2017 but says he is unwilling to go further and will veto any legislation “regardless of what the language looks like.” Democrats, however, took over the house and senate in the midterms and the house speaker believes he has enough support to override the veto.

Despite disagreeing on many of the specifics, including tax rates and the regulatory structure, New Jersey lawmakers are moving forward with a bipartisan bill legalizing marijuana to put on the governor’s

desk this year.

The midterms were good news for marijuana in New Mexico with the election of Michele Grisham as the state’s next governor, who supported legalization when she was a member of Congress. During the campaign she said legalization will bring, “hundreds of millions of dollars into New Mexico’s economy.” The state’s speaker of the House said it would probably pass.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has changed his tune over the last few years from labeling marijuana a “gateway drug” to saying the time is right to “legalize recreational use once and for all.”

He had the New York State Department of Health take a hard look at legalization. The report said, “positive effects” of ending cannabis prohibition “outweigh the potential negative impacts.” The midterms also helped the cause. It gave Democrats the state Senate which had been controlled by the Republicans who had roadblocked legalization.

Rhode Island’s Governor, Gina Raimondo has been tentative about legalization as has House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello. But both recognize the pressure from legalization in surrounding states make it inevitable and the revenue is too significant to pass up. Republican House Minority leader is all in.

The Vermont legislature passed a bill legalizing possession and home cultivation in 2018. That law does not allow commercial production and sale which means the state does not generate any tax revenue. The Democratic-led legislature is likely to send a bill legalizing commercial sales to Governor Phil Scott this year.

Other states to watch in 2019 are: Kansas, whose neighbors Missouri and Oklahoma have legalized medical use; Wisconsin where Gov. Tony Evers says he wants to decriminalize marijuana and allow medical cannabis; Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf (D), who says that he’s ready to take a serious look at the issue; Texas, which re-elected Gov. Greg Abbott who indicated that he is open to some form of marijuana decriminalization.

Looking ahead to 2020, states like Arizona, Florida, Ohio and North Dakota could start to move forward. **T**

TREND FORECAST

Besides not locking up people and ruining their lives for getting high on what is clearly not proven to be a “gateway drug,” the many health benefits of marijuana are now being recognized both scientifically and by those who believe if the planet can feed us, it can heal us.

Thus, we expect medical marijuana legalization to grow especially fast, while recreational pot becomes more commonly accepted in states across the U.S. and in other countries that have been to reluctant to legalize pot, because they are seeing that the revenue and jobs development benefits are increasingly becoming not only appealing, but essential.



Once a unique characteristic of Amsterdam, Marijuana infused food products are selling well in states where legal and will explode into new markets as legislation is passed.

Shutterstock

Eat, drink and be pot merry

Bank on this: Edible, beverage cannabis products will soar in 2019

There is much more to the expanding cannabis industry than just smoke. THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) and CBD (cannabidiol) can be ingested into the human body in a wide variety of ways to achieve the desired result whether it be “getting high” or relieving a specific medical condition.

They are called alternative consumption options and include eating and drinking.

Cannabis entrepreneurs and large corporations developing their own cannabis strategies, with the goal of expanding the cannabis market beyond smoking, vaping and oils, are aggressively looking into new ways to increase their product lines.

They see drinks, candy, cookies, snacks and other forms of edibles as the natural next step product cat-

egory to develop as the number of U.S. states legalizing recreational use continues to grow.

According to projections in a recent report from ArcView Market Research and BDS Analytics, edible cannabis was a \$1.5 billion industry last year and is on track to be more than \$4 billion by 2022. Edibles are projected to grow from 12 percent to 14 percent of the total cannabis market by 2022, while flower drops from 50 percent to 36 percent. Edibles are clearly the growth area.

Now small companies, operating exclusively in states such as Colorado where recreational use is legal, are dominating the edibles market. But this will change as legalization spreads and each state sets its own regulations and taxes.

Smaller companies will have a difficult time meeting those different state-by-state regulations and competing with major corporations. **TJ**

TREND FORECAST

The Trends Journal has projected significant growth in the cannabis industry in 2019. This will be driven by three major factors: newer users, including Boomers, looking for inconspicuous ways to enjoy weed without smoking; more states will legalize recreational use, including New York state; and legislation on the Federal level to end Marijuana prohibition, such as H.R. 420, will motivate large corporations to go where the money is.



Where has all the sex gone?

Intimacy is on a sharp decline... here's why.

The number of Americans who approve of sex between unmarried adults is at an all time high. The HIV virus is at an all time low. Birth control is readily available; the morning after pill doesn't require a prescription.

Hook up sex is a computer click away on Tinder, Grindr, and dozens of others.

So physical sex among teenagers and young adults should be on the rise.

In fact, it's declining.

According to the results of an extensive study in the Archives of Sexual Behavior and data from dozens of recent articles, Millennials in their 20's and 30's along with teenage Generation Z are having sex less often than their parents and grandparents did when they were young.

The trend, while particularly prominent in the U.S., can be found in studies worldwide, including Great Britain, Finland, Sweden, Holland, Japan, and Australia.

WHAT THE DATA SAY

According to the survey in the Archives of Sexual Behavior, almost half of twenty-somethings have not had sex at all in the last year; one in three 20-somethings have never had sex.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey finds that the percentage of high-school students who'd had intercourse dropped from 54 to 40 percent during the last five years.

For a quarter century, fewer people have been marrying, and those who do have been marrying later. The share of people living together hasn't risen enough to offset the decline in marriage.

What's behind this strengthening trend?

In a new survey of just over 2,000 people for the BBC, 45 percent of adults said they had experienced negative impact on their sex life due to stress; 32 percent of people said their physical health was a factor; while 26 percent named mental health issues as the cause.

Meanwhile, sex doll brothels have opened in Paris, Barcelona, Turin, Moscow, and Toronto.

A British Millennial journalist writing about this subject had an interesting take.

“The truth, for many of us, is that we’re simply stressed out and at our wits’ end, with a million things on our minds that could be interfering with our libidos. We’re worried about finding a stable job, our university loan debt, moving out of our parents’ homes and more.”

This statement sums up as well as any other the reason for less sex. Rates of anxiety and depression have been rising among Americans and young adults worldwide for decades now, and since the year 2000, particularly among teens and those in their early to mid-20s many saddled with college debt and a loss of faith in the economy and job market going forward.

Anxiety suppresses desire for most people. And, in a particularly unfortunate catch 22, both depression and the antidepressants used to treat it often suppress physical desire.

The emergence of hook up culture has not increased sexual activity overall. The prospect of casual sex within the hour is available on sites like Tinder, but the latest data show that while the average user spends over an hour a day on the site, most don’t actually hook up. And ones that do are often dissatisfied.

The significant drop in teens going out on dates coincides with another key trend—lack of free time. Millions of high schoolers have scheduled supervised activities from the time they wake up right through dinner. In his book, “Kids These Days: Human Capital and the Making of Millennials,” author Malcolm Harris identifies the trend in the decline of unsupervised free time probably contributes significantly to the decline in physical intimacy.

This lack of unsupervised free time extends to the workplace where stress and anxiety continue to rise

even in more “laid back” cultures such as Sweden. There a local councilman has proposed that his municipality’s 550 employees be given paid time off to have sex. “There are studies that show sex is healthy he told an interviewer, adding that couples in Sweden weren’t spending enough time together.”

TRENDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE’S ANALYSIS

Generation Z, those born between 1996 and 2010, will comprise 32 percent of the global population’s 7.7 billion in 2019, surpassing Millennials, who will count for 31.5 percent.

This is the first generation whose connection to the world around them is principally defined by that small device they hold in their hand... the smart phone.

Hiding in their devices is a good way to escape the uncertain world around them and to train themselves into thinking intimacy and human connection are not critical dynamics in their lives.

Indeed, studies worldwide have shown that for many teens, their smartphone “is the most important thing in their life (Nottingham Trent University study).”

This is also the first generation raised in the War on Terror and Panic of ’08 eras. Fear – fear of no money coming in, fear of a terrorist attack, fear that the institutions that bind their world will crumble before them – defines this generation.

Communication through texting, Instagramming and other social media in a smartphone is safe and something they can control. In contrast, meeting and talking with people can be messy and stressful. So why bother?

A spring 2018 study by the independent, nonprofit Common Sense Media found that 35 percent of teens would rather text than talk face-to-face; the option of face time only garnered 32 percent.

Overall, more than two-thirds of Zers surveyed preferred remote communications of some kind – texting, e-mailing, social media, even old-fashioned phone calls – to meeting in person.

More than half of the respondents said that they take time away from people they’re with to use social media; 40 percent said their dedication to social

A spring 2018 study by the independent, nonprofit Common Sense Media found that 35 percent of teens would rather text than talk face-to-face

media cuts into time they might otherwise spend with friends.

TEXT, DON'T TALK

In Pew focus groups, teens admitted relying on texting to avoid difficult or confrontational conversations. And that includes having face-to-face, eye-to-eye conversations about feelings, emotions and sharing intimate thoughts and expressions.

Beyond how these characteristics are leading to less sex, this social awkwardness can lead to isolation – one factor behind increases in teen depression (up 33 percent) and suicide attempts (up 23 percent) from 2010 to 2015.

A study done by researchers at San Diego State University found that the increase was consistent across races, regions, and economic classes. The researchers traced these appalling numbers to the rise of smartphones and social media in the hands of teens.

Social human interaction will decrease with the post-Gen Z generation. Today's toddlers are already addicted to the Internet of Things. Go to any public setting and observe toddlers and their parents... all glued to their handhelds.

A POSITIVE SIDE?

Some observers see positive signs in the trend of younger generations having less sex. For example, many of the young adults surveyed over the past few years point to the importance of friendship over a need to find a mate and have kids.

They are challenging the mind set of older generations that to be a complete, successful person one has to be in a couple relationship (most of which fail), have regular sex, have kids, and support a family whether you enjoy your work or not.

As a corollary to this, many of the young people interviewed in recent sex studies are aware that more sex doesn't necessarily equal better sex. Young women are feeling much more empowered than women their age of past generations are saying 'No,' not necessarily to sex overall, but to unsatisfying sex. **TJ**

TRENDFORECAST

“Generation Z, Generation Zero” is one of our Top Trends for 2019. In making this forecast, we stated that what will define this generation is its over reliance on digital communication, missing opportunities for self-expression, creative thinking and collaborative endeavors that emerge from human dynamics and interaction.

The declining rates of sexual intimacy is a byproduct of this generation's obsession and reliance on digital communication. We forecast this trend only strengthens and that the alarming rates of anxiety, depression, and stress felt by younger generations today will accelerate, as will their lack of interest in sex.



Scooter craze is big business

Not your father's auto industry but a growing inner-city trend

After announcing last April that it will virtually abandon production of cars in North America by 2020, the Ford Motor Co. has spent \$100 million to buy Spin, an electric scooter-sharing company.

Spin operates in 13 U.S. cities and on several college campuses. Its scooters rent for \$1 a trip plus 13 cents a minute.

In 2017, electric scooter-rental services quietly and unannounced began showing up in cities, especially those with universities worldwide.

These services allow riders to locate and unlock scooters with an app. When they reach their destination, they just walk away.

Ford will inject capital into Spin so it can compete with scooter heavyweights Bird and Lime, which have angered municipal officials by entering cities without notice and complicating traffic. In contrast, Ford says Spin will “work hand-in-hand” with cities and campuses and not enter a jurisdiction without permission.

Ride-hailing leaders Uber, Lyft and Alphabet – Google’s holding company – also have bought heavily into the e-scooter industry.

Moving with the trend, German carmakers Daimler and BMW have announced their collaboration around “urban mobility” – a term under which the companies are lumping car sharing, ride hailing, and sniffing out parking spots and e-charging stations, all available through a single app. **TJ**

Spin is a scooter and bicycle-sharing company owned by Ford

spin.app



TRENDPOST

Ford has seen the future of personal transport and it looks more like an e-scooter than like a four-door sedan. Young adults increasingly see mobility as a service to rent, not a car sitting in the garage. For city dwellers who do buy, they'll be increasingly likely to choose an electric scooter or hoverboard, such as the Swagtron's Swagboard, instead of a vehicle that costs more than their parents' first house.

More auto makers will follow the trend and reconceive personal transport outside the four-wheel box.

No more canned tuna?

The veggie millennial movement craze and the Boomer counter trend



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A December 2018 Wall Street Journal article accused Millennials of killing off the canned tuna industry. Sales are down, the paper claimed, because Millennials “can’t be bothered to open and drain the cans or fetch utensils and dishes to eat the tuna.”

Actually, Millennials are still fetching dishes and using utensils. They’re just not using them to eat canned tuna – or meat in general.

Millennials are vegging out.

According to a new report from the NDP Group, a market research firm, Millennials are eating 52 percent more fresh vegetables and 59 percent more of the frozen kind than their counterparts were ten years ago. Also, 40 percent of under-40s are following plant-centric diets.

The Organic Trade Association reports that parents under age 40 make up 52 percent of organic food customers, compared to 35 percent of Generation X and just 14 percent of Baby Boomers.

BOOMERS TAKE OPPOSITE PATH

Meanwhile, Baby Boomers are eating 30 percent less fresh vegetables and 4 percent less frozen vegetables.

That’s a fact consistent with our “Bye Bye Boomers” Trend for 2019. As we have forecast: “Adding to the dismal plight of many Boomers is the dawn of an unprecedented era of chronic poor health, brought on in large part by a diet of fast, processed food.”

Among the conditions that are rising at historic rates are: diabetes, heart failure, cancer, circulatory conditions, kidney and liver diseases and related illnesses.

In fact, more than 25 percent of Americans over the age of 65 have been diagnosed with diabetes. Astoundingly, some 70 percent of boomers are overweight, and nearly 40 percent are clinically obese. 

TRENDCAST

Millennials’ trend in taste toward fresher, plant-based foods reflects their preferences for less processed fare and for companies whose marketing reflects values of health and environmental care.

As a result, companies such as Kraft or General Mills that are rooted in processed foods are scurrying to gobble up smaller firms with greener identities.

These larger companies may shift from being mainly producers to being mainly holding companies that own a portfolio of smaller, greener brands.



Got a cut? Spray it away

Avita Medical, a California biotech firm, has developed a spray-on skin to treat burns.

Making the spray takes only 30 minutes, the company says. Technicians take a skin sample from the patient and turn it into a liquid suspension that can be sprayed over an area 80 times the size of the sample.

Trial outcomes show that burns treated with the spray-on suspension healed faster and looked better than treatments using conventional skin grafts, the company says. The better outcomes are due in part to the speed with which the spray can be made and applied.

TRENDPOST

The spray can not only improve recovery from burns, but also could be used to repair other kinds of skin abnormalities – including being sprayed over areas from which tattoos have been removed, likely a booming business in the next decade.

Stem cells from skin can rebuild the body

For the first time, scientists have been able to transform ordinary skin cells into stem cells that could be used to repair or regrow any part of the body.

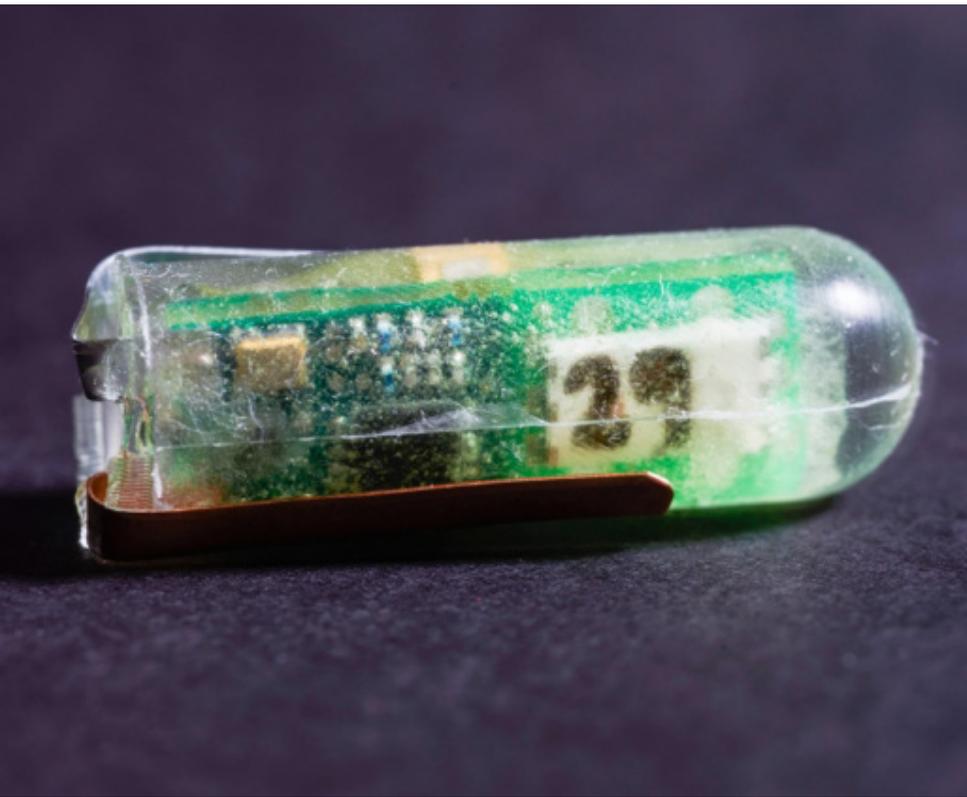
At the University of Helsinki and the Karolinska Institute, researchers found a way to simplify the process of using CRISPR gene-editing technology to harvest the skin cells without introducing foreign genes into the skin. They also improved the conversion by finding a way to turn on a crucial gene that guides the earliest steps in the development of human embryos.

The technique could be used to simplify the con-

TRENDBOOST

In the future, this new method could be used to “biobank” a small amount of skin from a child to create new, individually compatible tissues or organs later in life when parts of the body need to be repaired or replaced.

version of other types of tissue – liver, bone, or tendon, for example – into these master or “pluripotent” stem cells.



"Smartcapsule."

MIT

TRENDBOOST

Human trials could begin within two years. Eventually, miniaturized versions of the capsule could not only be swallowed but also inhaled or injected at other sites in the body.

Multi-purpose sensor in your stomach

Swallow the smart capsule just developed by an MIT-led coalition of bioengineers and it can stay in your stomach for weeks, delivering drugs, diagnosing conditions, or monitoring treatment of infections, among other tasks.

The device responds to commands from a smartphone app and reports its readings back to you or to your doctor's computer. The capsule also can combine its findings with those from other wearable sensors that might pool data to enable doctors to read a range of information at one time.

The 3D-printed gadget has three arms that fold so it can be slipped into a capsule, then swallowed. In the stomach, the capsule dissolves and the arms unfold, enabling the device to hold its place in the stomach. After about a month, the device dissolves into smaller pieces, which then are excreted.

The Y-shaped pod is printed with compartments that can hold drugs, which can be time-released. Alternatively, a compartment could be opened by a wireless signal from outside the body and dump its drug payload into the stomach all at once.

3D-printing the device also allows the engineers to make a device that resists corrosive stomach acids for a specific period – perhaps only a day or two to take readings and help pin down a diagnosis; or up to 36 days to deliver a steady flow of drugs over time.

Research versions of the device have been powered by a tiny silver-oxide battery. The developers are working on a way to power the capsule wirelessly or even using stomach acid itself.

A company has been formed to refine and commercialize the invention.

Businesses see green in going green

More and more US companies see the changing climate as a threat to their brand images and bottom lines, according to a December 2018 report from CDP Worldwide. Formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project, CDP gathers environmental impact reports from businesses around the world.

While some companies are explicitly highlighting the business risks that a shifting climate throws their way, other companies cloak that information. A number of businesses tout their strategies to deal with these risks; others are mum.

However, a common theme among the businesses was dismay at a lack of coordinated policies around environmental issues from the federal government and among states.

As an example, telecoms giant Verizon recently announced that it will derive 50 percent of the energy it

uses from renewable sources by 2025 after more than 33,000 people signed a petition calling on it to go greener; it previously had set the target at 4 percent.

The report gathered data from companies in Texas, Florida, Arizona, Colorado, California, Ohio, and Illinois.

TRENDPOST

Some businesses use government's policy chaos or vacuum as an excuse to stay away from issues of sustainability. Companies with a broader vision increasingly are stepping into the vacuum that regulators have left and establishing their green credentials by showing investors and customers that environmental awareness and stewardship

Electronic bandage speeds healing

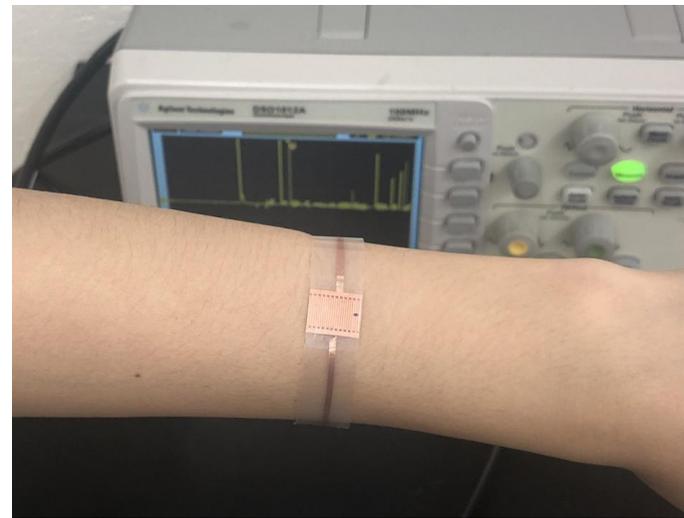
Sometimes wounds don't heal – a particular risk for people with diabetes – risking infection, scarring, and protracted pain.

Physicians have been using electric currents to speed the knitting of broken bones and the closing of wounds, but the required gear has been bulky and sometimes forced patients to be hospitalized to use it.

But now a collaboration of scientists from China and Wisconsin have created a self-powering bandage that can achieve the same results unobtrusively.

The team stacked sheets of Teflon, copper, and a thermal plastic to make a tiny generator that converts movements of the skin into a weak electric current. The bandage also contains two little electrodes; one is placed on either side of the wound so the current flows through the injury. The current accelerates the production of skin and other cells that close the wound.

In a test on rats, the bandages closed injuries within three days, compared to 12 days needed to achieve the same results on rats with unelectrified bandages.



wisc.edu

TRENDPOST

The use of various forms of energy, including electricity, light, and sound as healers is just now beginning to be explored in earnest by medical researchers. Over the next few years, expect to see significant scientific advances that accelerate this high-tech self-healing trend.



Factory roof covered in solar panels to help offset nonrenewable energy requirements.

Shutterstock

And speaking of decarbonizing the atmosphere...

Researchers at the University of Waterloo have created a powder that plucks carbon gas out of waste streams from factories and power plants. The powder does the job far cheaper and twice as efficiently than any other method, the developers say.

The scientists devised a process that uses salt and heat to reduce plant matter to a carbon powder. The powder's spheres are shot through with microscopic pores, most of them no bigger than one twenty-five-thousandth of an inch.

Waste gases from industrial processes flow through the powder and carbon molecules stick to their relatives in the pores. When the powder is fully clogged with carbon, it's trucked away and buried so that the carbon stays sequestered from the air.

TRENDPOST

Capturing carbon before it gets into the air is more effective and efficient than trying to suck it out once it's on the loose. Using a cheap, abundant material like carbon from plant waste to achieve that goal is the most promising, and resource-efficient, way demonstrated so far. Once commercialized, it's likely to become a standard technique.

TRENDPOST

Although the developers prioritize medical applications, industrial and military researchers also are paying attention.

Sound cancels gravity

A team of European scientists has used sound to move and position small objects without touching them.

Sound waves exert a slight physical force. By generating the waves at frequencies above the range of human hearing, the researchers were able to create enough "sound force" to move tiny objects.

The team then created a computer program that managed the distribution of the sound waves among 256 tiny speakers. By adjusting the volume of sound precisely, speaker by speaker, the scientists were able

to move, steer, turn, and position the objects.

To demonstrate, the researchers used "acoustic tweezers" to sew a length of thread into a scrap of fabric. They say that their orchestration of sound also can simultaneously control as many as two dozen tiny plastic balls in mid-air.

Within two years, these acoustic tweezers could be tested inside biological tissue. The research team ultimately wants to see the technique used in surgery to work inside the body without make the huge incisions needed today to let surgeons put their hands through the abdominal wall.

Bioplastics research and breakthroughs keep rising

Petro-plastic is forever – or at least it is now, with billions of tons of it swirling through our oceans and taking over landfills. Researchers have developed biodegradable plastics made from plants instead of oil, but they require acreage and fresh water to grow the raw materials.

Now a Tel Aviv University research team may have found a way to make bioplastic without the need to sacrifice land and water in the process.

The scientists have developed a process that uses seaweed – a form of algae – as a raw material. The

algae are digested by single-celled organisms, which then excrete a form of polymer suitable to make a biodegradable plastic.

TRENDPOST

Bioplastics will remain a growth research area for years to come, with new feedstocks and processes creating myriad opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors.