A STEWARDSHIP BRIEFING

Abundance, Merger, and the Good Life in the Soup of SI

Two passages from The Singularity Is Nearer*, tested against economic data, philosophy and Scripture*

IN THIS BRIEFING

Part I — Economics: Kurzweil vs. ITR. Kurzweil forecasts technology-driven deflation and cheap luxury in the 2030s. ITR Economics forecasts a Great Depression in the same decade. Where they collide, how both could be partly right, and what it means for your planning.

Part II — Merger and the Extended Mind. Kurzweil argues our devices have already become parts of us, with nanobots to follow. A scorecard of his predictions, the slide from dependence to identity, and the stewardship questions it raises for you and your family.

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PART I

Economics: Kurzweil vs. ITR

> *Kurzweil's most testable prophecy is economic: technology-driven (i.e., artificial general/super intelligence-driven) deflation making today's luxury cheap in the 2030s. ITR Economics forecasts the same decade as a Great Depression. Setting them side by side tests a bold prophecy against hard economic data.*

Kurzweil's claim

Kurzweil predicts benign, supply-driven deflation. Cheap energy, cheap materials and automation lower the cost of producing nearly everything, so prices fall while real living standards rise.

- **The 2030s promise.** He expects it to become relatively inexpensive to live at a level considered luxurious today.
- **The productivity puzzle.** GDP undercounts the gain. When a free app replaces a costly device, measured output looks flat while real benefit soars. He expects the gap between nominal productivity and real benefit to widen.
- **The macro forecast.** As these effects spread beyond the digital sphere, he expects national inflation to fall and eventually turn into outright deflation.

The claim matters because it is where his vision of the future becomes concrete, dated and testable.

ITR's 2030s forecast

ITR Economics forecasts growth through the late 2020s, then a Great Depression from about 2030 to 2036. It calls the drivers baked in and unchangeable.

- **Drivers.** Aging demographics, healthcare costs, entitlements, inflation and federal debt, with interest payments on that debt a central pressure.
- **Inflation path.** Alan Beaulieu has forecast inflation rising again to 6 to 8 percent by the end of this decade, before the downturn.
- **Assets in the 2030s.** Brian Beaulieu expects housing and stocks to suffer, with gold the top asset class in a depression.
- **Scale.** ITR's Michael Feuz notes the 2030s low point would roughly equal the size of today's economy.
- **2026 stance.** ITR's Lauren Saidel-Baker said in June 2026 that she is more convinced than before, citing a Fed trapped between rates and the federal budget, a widening wealth gap and boomer aging.

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- **After.** ITR projects robust growth resuming in the late 2030s.

Where they collide

Both say the 2030s break sharply from the past. They disagree on why prices fall and whether falling prices are a blessing or a symptom.

Question	Kurzweil	ITR Economics
2030s outlook	Abundance; luxury becomes cheap	Great Depression, about 2030 to 2036
Engine	Technology: energy, materials, automation	Demographics, entitlements, debt
Kind of deflation	Supply-driven (good): costs fall, real wealth rises	Demand-driven (bad): output and asset prices fall
Late 2020s	Inflation easing as tech spreads	Inflation rising to 6 to 8 percent
Role of AI	The cause of the transformation	A possible offset, not a rescue
Who benefits	Broadly everyone, in time	Holders of liquidity and hard assets
Method	Exponential trend extrapolation	Leading indicators and business-cycle data
Track record	Self-graded on a curve, per critics	Claims about 95 percent accuracy four quarters out

Reconciling them

The forecasts are less opposed than they look. Three mechanisms let both be partly right in the same decade.

1. **Goods deflate; services and land resist.** Automation cheapens what machines make. Healthcare, education, insurance, eldercare and housing (because of land) resist it, which economists call Baumol's cost disease. You may see cheaper devices alongside dearer care, the very costs ITR's aging thesis points to.
2. **Debt is the hinge.** Falling prices raise the real weight of fixed debts: Irving Fisher's debt-deflation spiral. Heavy federal debt meeting tech deflation is the point where Kurzweil's optimism turns into ITR's warning. Good deflation for consumers can be bad deflation for debtors, including the government.
3. **Who captures the gain.** Kurzweil's cheap luxury assumes broad sharing. Critics such as Forbes's David Teich argue the gains go to whoever controls the AI, energy and data. The likelier result is K-shaped: abundance for owners, displacement for wage earners. That matches ITR's widening wealth-gap concern.

On timing, ITR's call is nearer and better grounded in measured data. Kurzweil's may describe the longer arc, after the reset ITR expects.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Plan for both scenarios rather than betting on one; ITR's own advice is that preparing does no harm if the downturn never comes.

- **Stress-test leverage both ways.** Fixed-rate debt that helps in an inflationary late 2020s can hurt in a deflationary 2030s. Match debt to durable cash flow.
- **Watch labor-scarcity margins.** Businesses priced on scarce human labor face automation pressure on margins and on succession value. Revisit buy-sell valuations and exit timing.
- **Own what stays scarce.** Productive capacity, energy, well-located land, and trusted relationships hold value when commodity goods deflate.
- **Keep dry powder.** If ITR is right, liquidity buys good assets cheaply in the downturn.
- **Budget for the costs that resist deflation.** Long-term care, healthcare and education should be modeled at above-inflation growth, even if goods get cheaper.
- **Time generosity.** Giving capacity may be greatest before 2030. DAFs, CRTs and front-loaded gifts can lock in today's values for Kingdom work through the downturn.

THEOLOGICAL READING

Kurzweil's abundance borrows the imagery of the messianic feast without the Host. Isaiah 25:6 and Amos 9:13 promise plenty, but as the fruit of God's reign, not of engineering.

- **Abundance does not cure the heart.** “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money” (Eccl. 5:10). Cheap luxury leaves greed, envy and loneliness untouched.
- **Scarcity moves; it does not vanish.** When goods are cheap, what stays scarce is meaning, trust, time and eternal purpose. That is the territory of stewardship.
- **Paul's charge holds in either scenario.** Whether the 2030s bring abundance or depression, “the rich in this present age” are to be “rich in good works” and to lay up treasure for the age to come (1 Tim. 6:17–19).
- **A rival telos.** Kurzweil's endpoint is the Singularity. The Christian endpoint is the gospel preached to all nations, and then the end (Matt. 24:14). Both abundance and downturn can be stewarded toward that end, through good works prepared beforehand (Eph. 2:10).

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PART II

Merger and the Extended Mind

> *Kurzweil's case for merging with AI rests on one move: from "we depend on our devices" to "our devices are part of us." If that holds, nanobots in the nervous system are just smaller phones. It doesn't hold.*

Kurzweil's claim

Kurzweil says the merger has already begun. Smartphones are "brain extenders" so woven into work and learning that our devices have become parts of us.

- **2020s.** Search becomes seamless question answering; real-time translation removes language barriers; AR is projected onto our retinas through glasses and contact lenses; ever-present AI assistants anticipate our needs by watching and listening.
- **2030s.** Medical nanorobots begin integrating these extensions directly into the nervous system.

The argument runs on continuity: each step is only a smaller, closer version of the last.

Scorecard

His near-term calls are mostly landing; the 2030s step is where evidence runs out. Assessments are as of late 2026 and approximate.

Prediction	Status	Note
Search becomes question answering	Largely here	AI assistants now answer directly rather than list links
Real-time translation, any language pair	Mostly here	Strong for major languages; weaker for low-resource ones
AR on glasses	Early	Consumer smart glasses with displays exist; adoption is limited
AR on contact lenses	Not yet	No consumer product
Assistants anticipating needs by watching and listening	Emerging	The privacy stakes concentrate here
Nanorobots in the nervous system (2030s)	Speculative	Today's brain-computer interfaces are surgical implants, not nanobots

The philosophical slide

Kurzweil moves from dependence to identity without arguing for it. Being unable to work without a tool does not make the tool part of the self.

- **The borrowed thesis.** "Our devices have become parts of us" echoes the extended-mind thesis of Andy Clark and David Chalmers (1998). Even they framed it as cognition extending into tools, not the self dissolving into them.
- **An old pattern.** Writing was the first brain extender. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato already worried it would weaken memory. Libraries did not become persons.
- **Why he needs the slide.** If the phone is already "you," then a nanobot is just a smaller phone and uploading is just a larger one. Grant the first step and the Singularity follows by degrees. Deny it and each step needs its own justification.
- **What it leaves out.** A self is a subject who loves, chooses and answers for itself. Tools extend reach; they do not bear responsibility or receive love.

THEOLOGICAL READING

Scripture affirms technology as a gift while denying that the gift can become the self or replace the Giver.

- **Tools are a good gift, not the self.** Tool-making belongs to the dominion mandate (Gen. 1:28) and appears early in human culture (Gen. 4:22). The *imago Dei* is embodied and relational, not an information pattern that can migrate into silicon.
- **We become what we behold.** Those who make idols become like them (Ps. 115:8). Devices that hold our attention all day form our loves, not only our capacities.
- **A counterfeit omniscience.** An assistant that is always watching and listening imitates Psalm 139. God's knowing of us is covenantal and loving; a platform's knowing is often monetized.
- **The body as temple.** Wiring devices into the nervous system raises real questions under 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 about who owns and governs what is inside us.
- **Resurrection, not upgrade.** The Christian hope for the body is not enhancement by degrees but transformation by God (1 Cor. 15:42–44).

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

The merger is already a planning issue: attention, digital assets and neural data now need deliberate stewardship.

- **Attention is a stewardship asset.** Family governance can set device norms, especially for the rising generation, alongside financial and philanthropic training.
- **Digital estate planning.** Accounts, data, AI agents and AI-generated assets need fiduciary access provisions and clear instructions in wills and trusts.
- **Neural data is a fast-growing privacy frontier.** Four states have neural data laws on the books: Montana, California, Connecticut and Colorado. California's SB 1223 treats neural data as sensitive personal information under the CCPA, effective January 1, 2025; Connecticut's version takes effect July 1, 2026. Nine more bills appeared in six states in early 2026 alone.
- **If your business touches neurotech or wearables.** Most states are folding neural data into existing sensitive-data rules, so compliance can extend current privacy programs.
- **Close to home.** Neither Arkansas nor Florida is yet among the states with neural data laws, but the trend is spreading quickly so keep an eye out for developments.

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