

## Broad thoughts on the future of CHM

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The computer – a universal machine that is the most important human invention of all time – is changing society dramatically and forever. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to:

1. collect, preserve, and communicate the story of how this came to be
2. understand the ongoing impact on the world
3. envisage, debate, and help create the future we want

In its 40-year history, CHM has grown to become the world leader in 1. We have the opportunity to grow in new directions so we can also become a major contributor to 2 and 3. This will require that we:

- Move beyond “computer” to “computing” in all the forms now embedding itself within the fabric of society. Computers as machines are disappearing, because they are becoming part of everything we make and do.
- Emphasize what is happening now, and the possibilities for the future, without neglecting history.
- Expand our audiences to multiple new segments: younger, more diverse, less technology-focused, more geographically dispersed, policy-oriented, philosophical. and humanities-centric.
- Create new programs and products to reach those audiences at scale. We reach hundreds of thousands in Mountain View; we could reach hundreds of millions worldwide.
- Collaborate in major ways with partners who can help with both content and distribution.

History is interesting to some, but the appeal of the “now” and “future” of computing is visceral for everyone. There are deep and unsettling questions about what might come: the possible dangers of artificial intelligence, the effect of automation on jobs and the economy, the vulnerability of our critical computing infrastructure, the loss of privacy, the impact of “big data”, the effect of computerized social media on the democratic political process, the role of computing in perpetuating or eliminating gender and other biases, and much more.

We are in a unique position to help people understand these issues, and to facilitate the important conversations that need to happen. We are authoritative, independent, grounded in history, have the world’s best collection, and are located at the center of the action. We should teach, inspire, and help prepare the world for the future.

The challenge is to manage this expansion of mission without abandoning our responsibility to preserve and present history for the benefit of humanity now and in 100 years. Collecting pioneer stories and artifacts while they are available creates the granary which will feed the future customers of the museum. We must proactively preserve the present as it becomes tomorrow’s history.

We can do it. There is no other institution in the world better positioned for this dual mission.