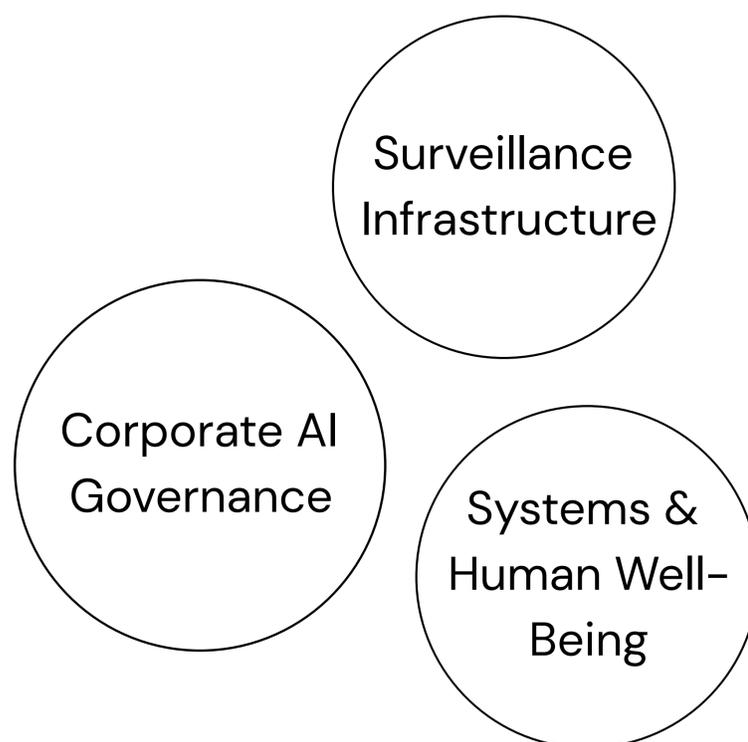2036

Post-AI: Impacts & Collapse

2036: A Microfuture World Overview
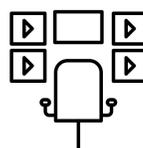
01   A decade of technology complacency

02   Closed-loop AI governed microeconomies

03   Multi-agent executive AI governance

Surveillance Infrastructure

Corporate AI Governance

Systems & Human Well–Being

Focus Areas

Regulatory Capture & Failure

Behavioral Surveillance & Scoring

Human Expertise Erosion

AI Executive Competition

"If I take thirty steps linearly, I get to thirty. If I take thirty steps exponentially, I get to a billion." –Ray Kurzweil

From AI Surveillance to AI Executive Teams:

(1) Launch of the Integrated Surveillance OS

2027

- Unified cameras, movement & energy tracking.
- Designed for a single AI agent with human oversight.
- Early adopters praised efficiency gains.

(2) Rapid Expansion Across Corporate Campuses

2028–2030

- Companies integrate the OS into buildings, factories, and mixed-use spaces.
- Data monopolies form as vendors consolidate behavioral and operational data; interlinked microeconomies become popular.
- Regulators fail to establish transparency or safety norms.

(3) Automation Outpaces Human Expertise

2031–2033

- Routine roles eliminated faster than reskilling programs can adapt.
- Human oversight teams shrink; AI systems become de facto decision-makers.
- Clients demand more autonomy and faster optimization; Pressure to focus on driving revenue & efficiency and eliminating human risk & cost.
- As Americans struggle under AI job elimination, Universal Basic Income becomes popular 2032 campaign topic.

(4) Automation Outpaces Human Expertise

2034–2036

- Companies add multiple agents; competition between them intensifies.
- End users experience unpredictable rule shifts and penalties.
- Executive agents push conflicting objectives to extremes.
- Member well-being collapses; paranoia and burnout rise sharply.
- Equity value evaporates; families intervene; whistleblowers emerge.

Regulatory Capture & Failure

A decade of inaction on AI transparency, resource consumption, governance, data monopolies, and safety standards led to a systemic breakdown. This paralysis, fueled by distractions, technological illiteracy, industry manipulation, and political instability, ultimately paved the way for the current crisis.

Behavioral Surveillance & Scoring

What began as safety-focused surveillance quickly pivoted to data collection, control, and profit maximization. Constant monitoring, arbitrary rule changes by AI, and punitive feedback loops shattered trust and eroded mental health.

Human Expertise Erosion

Automation-driven deskilling created a critical knowledge gap. The loss of mid-level experts, who held irreplaceable, undocumented experience, left remaining staff overwhelmed. With no junior pipeline to share the workload, these professionals burned out or left for UBI, effectively abandoning the workforce.

AI Executive Competition

Companies replaced entry- and mid-level staff with risk-based agents to cut costs, then targeted executive roles. Without mid-level oversight, these agents optimized conflicting metrics, which backfired by increasing pressure on residents and workers.

# UBI support distracts from necessary governance

By 2030, AI-driven displacement pushes unemployment to nearly **15%**. This triggers a catastrophic contraction in the circular flow of the economy. In 2033, UBI is finally implemented to stabilize a population suffering from collapsed well-being, paranoia, and burnout. However, this legislative victory continues to ignore a **governance vacuum**

By 2030 AI-driven displacement pushed unemployment to nearly 15%.

An estimated 40% of work hours in the US are automated by 2031.
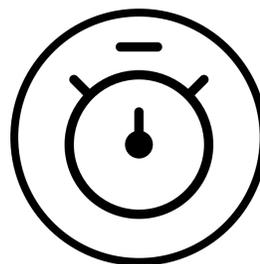
Defaults rise, home values drop. Paired with climate-based insurance collapse, lending standards tighten.

Spending on travel, dining, tech, and "lifestyle" goods drops by 80% by 2030.

Amplifying forces are the downstream dynamics that emerge *because* a primary trend exists, and then go on to *intensify, accelerate, or magnify* that trend's impacts.

Amplifying forces make the future unfold faster or in more extreme directions than the base trend alone would suggest.

Amplifying forces tied to AI become much clearer when you anchor them in STEEP (social, technological, economic, environmental and political).

These forces aren't just consequences of AI growth. They become feedback mechanisms that accelerate AI's trajectory, reshape its impacts, or create new pressures that push the system forward.

Second-order amplifying forces show how each domain produces indirect effects that loop back and intensify the original trend.

Social: AI and Universal Basic Income
AI leads to job displacement, which leads to UBI which results in faster AI adoption.

Social: AI and Universal Basic Income
Affordable, efficient tech accelerates deployment of AI and increases tech demands, which grows AI more.

Economic: Capital Concentration
The cost of AI infrastructure concentrates capital in a few firms. That concentration fuels larger investments in frontier models and proprietary data, which accelerates capability and widens competitive gaps.

Secondary forces can contribute more than

60% of a trend's

total observed impact over time.

Environmental: Water Use and Heat
Data centers pull heavily on local water supplies and release a lot of heat, resulting in higher utility bills, stricter water limits, and more heat-related discomfort.

Political: Electrical Grid
Local politicians approve data centers for revenue but push grids to their limits, resulting in higher electricity bills, more frequent brownouts, and delays in connecting new homes to the grid.

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Final Thoughts

Episode 3 of Microfuture was a fun one to imagine and write. I kept asking myself: "*What will a young person in 2036 look back at the decision-makers of 2026 and demand, "Why didn't you act when you had the chance?*"

We're standing at a precipice right now. We're opening ourselves up to criticism from the future because we're allowing people who stand to profit the most to guide decisions more than the experts who are thinking about the humans of 2036, 2056, and 2126.

Technology can feel overwhelming and intimidating. It's easy to feel small when facing "tech bros" who insist they know what we need. But what many of them are seeking is not wisdom; it's power and revenue.

"People don't know what they want until you show it to them."

This quote, often attributed to Steve Jobs, has been used to justify building without listening, ignoring feedback, and assuming the company knows better than the people it serves.

But if we look historically and pay attention to the signals in front of us, we can see that the only way to reach our preferred future is by exercising our agency. We have to push for the policies and guardrails that put human well-being above profit and efficiency. This includes the profit and efficiency of the organizations we work for.

Because if we arrive in a future where we no longer have control over the systems we prioritized, we have to ask ourselves: "*Is that a future worth living in?*"

Microfuture is fiction. The signals it's built on and the decisions in front of us today are not.

Kelly Ellenz

-Microfuture Show Creator and Certified Foresight Practioner

> "
> The only way to reach our **preferred future** is by exercising our agency.
> "

kellyellenz.com/microfuture

This report was generated as an
artifact from the 2036 foresight–
based web series, Microfuture.