# Purple

# Our technological advances haven't helped solve refugee dilemma

By Project Syndicate, adapted by Newsela staff

02.09.16

DAVOS, Switzerland –- The World Economic Forum (WEF) is an annual meeting of world leaders and businesspeople in Davos, Switzerland. Its theme this year was the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It could also have been: Of Robots and Refugees. Although much of the meeting focused on the technological marvels of the near future, it also dealt with the world's inability to address one of humanity’s oldest problems: how to feed, house and care for large populations driven from their homes by war.

Number your notes here: Questions, summarize, statistics, facts, opinions, bias.

The First Industrial Revolution was the invention of the steam engine and mechanical production of goods like textiles. The second was defined by electricity and factories. The third was the digital revolution, which began in the 1960s with the invention of computers, semiconductors and the Internet.

According to WEF Chairman Klaus Schwab, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is beginning now. It started with widespread and mobile Internet, "by smaller and more powerful sensors that have become cheaper, and by artificial intelligence and machine learning.” It is creating a world in which virtual and actual systems are combined in manufacturing, services and the human body itself.

**Looking At Next New Marvels**

The WEF’s programs featured discussions on robotics, biotechnology and space travel. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England, created an interactive exhibit called “This Time Tomorrow.” It featured six possible futures. These included worlds in which full three-dimensional casts of human faces can be created from a single strand of DNA; buildings are covered with a "skin" that uses photosynthesis, like leaves, to take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen; and death can be beaten by bringing back those who choose to be cryogenically frozen.

Other exhibits, however, focused on urgent current problems. Participants were able to experience being a refugee through a virtual reality headset. They could instead put on a headscarf and spend 75 minutes being treated like a refugee and face heart-wrenching choices. Millions of real refugees have flooded into Europe, mainly fleeing civil war in Syria. They live in a world that is barely through the Second Industrial Revolution. They cram into leaky rafts to cross the Mediterranean Sea and sleep on the floors of railroad stations.

Yet the majority of the refugees had Internet access, which is part of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Many received real-time advice through social media on their smartphones on how to make the journey.

Number your notes here: Questions, summarize, statistics, facts, opinions, bias.

**Refugees' Use Of Social Media**

Michel Bauwens is the founder of the Peer-to-Peer Foundation. It studies the effect of technology on society. He said 2015 was the year in which millions of refugees "were organized by social media." These “Facebook refugees" used it not only to coordinate with smugglers who sneaked them into Europe, but also to help one another.

Alessandra Morelli is an official with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Tens of thousands of Syrian refugees have arrived on the Greek island of Lesbos from Turkey. They “know exactly where they have to go, who they have to talk to. They know what to buy,” she said. Facebook posts showed them what kinds of tents to purchase, which routes to take, and how to avoid being sent back out to sea if they were caught by Greek officials.

**Technology Is Great But It's Just Part Of Answer**

The question remains, however, whether robots and other high tech inventions can help refugees integrate into European societies or help them get back home. These countries are increasingly hostile to the refugees. It is easy enough to imagine them tracking the refugees in various ways -- for instance, scanning their irises to identify them.

Combine iris identification with new phones that identify its users, and any refugee using a smartphone could be found.

Yet no technology can successfully address the real problem: the conflicts from which millions of people are fleeing. Historically, we have been better at developing technologies to kill people than we have been at protecting them.

**But Peace Ultimately Depends On People**

Early in the Syrian civil war, the Syrian army committed many cruel acts. Rebels posted pictures of them on social media, and President Bashar al-Assad’s government claimed they were fake. At that point, it would have been possible for the United Nations to ensure the truth of the photos and videos posted. But no technology can overcome some governments’ lack of will to speak up.

Likewise, no technology can compel enemies to make peace. At the end of World War II, the United States dropped nuclear bombs on Japan to force it to surrender. However, it depended on President Harry S. Truman’s will to use the bombs.

P.W. Singer and August Cole’s novel Ghost Fleet is set in a future war between the U.S. and China. The authors describe all of the astonishing technologies that both sides actually use. Micro-drones, robots and holograms are all in the book. But the outcome of the war is still determined by human will, courage and determination. These same qualities are needed to stop human suffering in any age.

Number your notes here: Questions, summarize, statistics, facts, opinions, bias.

**Wednesday (choose a word, phrase and sentence that covers the main idea of the article)**

Word: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Why you chose it? :\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phrase: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Why you chose it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Why you chose it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Thursday (Summarize: who, what, when, where, why, how, statistics)**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Friday (Author’s purpose, Bias shown, Proof of Bias, your personal connection, real world connection)**

Author’s Purpose? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Bias? What sentence(s)? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your personal connection? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Real world connection: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_