

# World Future Society 2015 conference will focus on 'Making the Future'

---

The World Future Society recently announced "Making the Future" as the theme for the [WorldFuture 2015 Conference](#) (July 24-26, 2015) in San Francisco. The conference will celebrate the Maker Movement as well as highlight a variety of topics across the futurist spectrum. Founded in the San Francisco/Silicon Valley region, the Maker Movement is a global culture that extends and enhances the conventional, artisan DIY community to include technological pursuits such as robotics, 3-D printing and nanotechnology.

"The Conference theme was inspired by the spirit of San Francisco and Silicon Valley, where our future in technological terms is literally being built every day," World Future Society President and CEO Amy Zalman said.

Zalman added that she expects WorldFuture2015 to "speak to 21st century futurists and the kind of futures work that the world now needs."

"In the mid-20th century, futurists were people who studied what the future would and could be like. Today, the rate of change in the world demands that we begin to develop a more activist futurism," she said.

As a member of the WFS Global Advisory Council, Paul Saffo, Discern Analytics Managing Director of Foresight, provided input with regard to the organization's choice of venue.

"In 1971, Alan Kay famously observed that 'the best way to predict the future is to invent it;' and Silicon Valley has been busy doing so ever since," Saffo said. "This place doesn't merely invent; it continually reinvents the process of invention. What was once the exclusive province of garage tinkerers and venture-funded engineers has now become everyone's business."

In addition to its focus on Maker culture, the conference will encompass activities related to foresight issues as well as science fiction's role in futurism and immersive design. "Writers and designers help all of us begin making better decisions that will impact the future by prototyping the potential consequences of our decisions," Zalman said.

## **Registration information**

[WorldFuture 2015 Conference](#) takes place July 24-26, 2015 at the Hilton San Francisco Union Square.

# Sci-fi track highlights WFS [WorldFuture 2015 Conference](#)

---

*Press release written under contract for the World Future Society, 2014*

One of the most anticipated aspects of the World Future Society's [WorldFuture 2015 Conference](#) is the Science Fiction track. The conference, which will celebrate the Maker Movement as well as highlight a variety of topics across the futurist spectrum, will feature several sci-fi panel discussions.

What follows is an interview by [Brenda Cooper](#), science-fiction track organizer for the conference, respected science fiction writer and futurist.

**WFS: What is the purpose of the sci-fi track and how does it relate overall to the [WorldFuture 2015 Conference](#)?**

**BC:** First, hard science fiction has historically been valuable as a futurist tool in two ways. While science fiction is no more a predictor of futures than futurist work is, it can act as a beacon to help define what's possible. Examples of this include Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy and *2312*, which both explore colonizing the solar system; Neal Stephenson's *Snowcrash*, which helped develop our vision of cyber-based communities; David Brin's *Existence* acts as a lens into numerous short-term possibilities.

We should remember the countless gadgets from the communicator to the tricorder in *Star Trek* of which we have either outright copies or are trying to copy. Science fiction can also act as a warning. Paolo Bacigalupi's *Pump Six* collection of short stories paints numerous warnings about current trends. Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* showed us the dangers of reality television and George Orwell's *1984* provided insight into the possible evils of a surveillance society. Daryl Gregory's recent novel, *Afterparty*, explores the social dangers in a world where we can 3D-printed drugs.

**WFS: Why do you think science fiction connects so well with futurism and to what degree does it affect futurists?**

**BC:** Science fiction can connect with human beings on a story level – which is more visceral and emotional than more PowerPoint presentations. In other words, science fiction can tell the story of the future in a way that can be heard and remembered.

Futurists can also use science fiction storytelling and multimedia capabilities to make the scenario work --- more fully-fleshed out and multi-sensory.

Many science fiction writers are also working futurists. These include David Brin, Madeline Ashby, Greg Bear, Karl Schroder, Cory Doctorow, Charlie Stross, me and others. The two

disciplines go well together. Many futurists are fans of science fiction writers, and frankly, the reverse is also true.

**WFS: How does science-fiction related specifically to the conference theme surrounding the Maker movement?**

**BC:** Science fiction writers wrote about 3D printers long before they were hot in the real world. So that's one way. For example, Nancy Kress has a lovely story called "Nano Comes to Clifford Falls." Alternatively, in science fiction we design worlds and build them with words. This is Making.

Although the track is still in the planning stages, Coopers hopes offerings will include speeches, movies, talks and readings. More information will be released as the conference draws closer.

The World Future Society's [WorldFuture 2015 Conference](#) will take place July 24-26, 2015 in San Francisco.

# World Future Society raises awareness of nonstate actor roles in global affairs

---

*Press release written under contract for the World Future Society, 2014*

WASHINGTON - How do governments and nonstate actors interact and how will their ever-changing roles evolve going forward? How are nonstate actors held accountable?

These and other questions were the focus of “Being There: The Nonstate Role in Multilateral Cooperation,” an interactive workshop co-organized on Nov. 19 by the World Future Society in collaboration with the National Defense University and the Stanley Foundation.

Workshop organizers said they planned the event to empower decision-makers, policy planners, and strategists to explore the role of nonstate actors in global governance institutions and plan effectively for their participation.

Nonstate actors could include any entity from traditional non-governmental organizations to private corporations as well as grassroots citizen groups and moneyed individual.

“The influence of nonstate actors has been growing exponentially over the past generation,” World Future Society President and CEO Amy Zalman said. “Despite such growth, we don’t always have a clear picture of how nonstate actors affect global governance on a broader scale,” she added.

Former U.S. Ambassador Peter Galbraith delivered the workshop’s keynote address. Galbraith, who served as the first Ambassador to Croatia during the Clinton Administration, currently serves as Senior Diplomatic Fellow at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation where his work focuses on conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

In his keynote address, Ambassador Galbraith highlighted two different ways that nonstate actors from corporations to grassroots organizations affect governance, through independent action and through efforts to influence policymakers. While the latter group is larger, the former may ultimately be more impactful.

The workshop, held at the National Defense University in Washington, gave participants the opportunity to join roundtable discussions and hear papers on wide-ranging topics such as G20 economics, nuclear security and online transparency.

“Partnering with like-minded institutions to spark this level and depth of dialogue not only equips our members to better understanding the future of nonstate/state interface issues but it will also hopefully create more robust international institutions going forward,” Zalman said.

---

Founded in 1966, the World Future Society is a nonprofit educational and scientific organization dedicated to empowering and nurturing futurists everywhere, igniting dialogue about possible futures, and thought leadership on global future-related issues. With members in 130 countries, the World Future Society is the largest membership organization in the world for futurists and foresight professionals.