## Precis 4

For most of history, technological change unfolded over decades and centuries of incremental advances that refined and combined existing technologies. Even radical innovations could over time be fitted within previous tactical and strategic doctrines: tanks were considered in terms of precedents drawn from centuries of cavalry warfare; airplanes could be conceptualized as another form of artillery, battleships as mobile forts, and aircraft carriers as airstrips. For all their magnification of destructive power, even nuclear weapons are in some respects an extrapolation from previous experience. What is new in the present era is the rate of change of computing power and the expansion of information technology into every sphere of existence. Reflecting in the 1960s on his experiences as an engineer at the Intel Corporation, Gordon Moore concluded that the trend he had observed would continue at regular intervals to double the capacity of computer processing units every two years. —Moore's Lawl has proved astoundingly prophetic. Computers have shrunk in size, declined in cost, and grown exponentially faster to the point where advanced computer processing units can now be embedded in almost any object-phones, watches, cars, home appliances, weapons systems, unmanned aircraft, and the human body itself. The revolution in computing is the first to bring so many individuals and processes into the same medium of communication and to translate and track their actions in a single technological language. Cyberspace—a word coined, at that point as an essentially hypothetical concept, only in the 1980s—has colonized physical space and, at least in major urban centers, is beginning to merge with it. Communication across it, and between its exponentially proliferating nodes, is near instantaneous. As tasks that were primarily manual or paper based a generation ago-reading, shopping, education, friendship, industrial and scientific research, political campaigns, finance, government record keeping, surveillance, military strategy-are filtered through the computing realm, human activity becomes increasingly -datafied and part of a single -quantifiable, analyzablel system.

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