

Black Mirror Reality

Saying a TV show is so good it's scary is usually a figure of speech. With Netflix's hit sci-fi drama "Black Mirror," it takes on a far more literal and terrifying interpretation. This is futurism for futurists, according to a research organization devoted to providing foresight about the world in the coming years. Part of what makes "Black Mirror" so unsettling is that its episodes take place in worlds that could easily pass for our own, save for some leaps in technology. Curious just how big those leaps might be, Business Insider analyzed some of the show's 13 episodes that might be the closest to becoming reality.

Not every episode of "Black Mirror" explores a brand-new dystopia-creating technology; some take existing technology and apply it in troubling ways. In the pilot episode, terrorists threaten to kill a hostage unless the British prime minister has sexual intercourse with a pig on national television. All of it seems to be perfectly realistic, at least from a technology perspective.

The second episode in the series imagines a distant future in which people must pedal on stationary bikes to power their building and earn currency ("merits") for food and entertainment. The episode rethinks the entire nature of society based on the trend of "freemium" mobile games, create feedback loops of desire that keep people coming back for more. This episode is the one that is found most satisfying to watch because it takes a real-world phenomenon to its most extreme. This is a very different alien society than the one we live in and one that has taken our phones and turned them into the built environment.

In a different episode, the show imagines what might happen if people could record every waking moment of their lives and rewatch the memories whenever they wanted. The device used for that is called a „grain." It is acknowledged that no such technology is capable of tapping into memories so directly, but we seem to be inching toward such a future with devices like Snap Inc.'s Spectacles – camera-equipped sunglasses that can record up to 10 seconds of video. The only leap the episode makes is saying the technology will get cheaper, better, and more widespread.

Another episode focuses on a woman whose husband dies and she learns about a service that can use machine learning to essentially bring him back to life, using photos, videos, and social media posts to recreate his essence. At first, she just chats online with him. Then they speak by phone. Finally, a real-life version is living with her and helping to raise her daughter...

Adapted from www.businessinsider.com

Ex. 1 Find the words or expressions in the text which mean the following:

- 1) not metaphoric: _____
- 2) seeing the future before it happens: _____
- 3) a world that is the opposite of ideal: _____
- 4) e.g. 200 years from now: _____
- 5) official money used in a country: _____
- 6) to think about sth again: _____
- 7) wanting sth very much: _____
- 8) whole: _____
- 9) a piece of equipment: _____
- 10) popular: _____
- 11) fundamentally: _____
- 12) sb who is taken by terrorists in exchange for money or demands: _____

Ex. 2 Match the expressions from the two columns into logical collocations:

1.	a figure	games
2.	to pass	of doing sth
3.	leaps	to extreme
4.	mobile	on sth
5.	a feedback	in technology
6.	to take sth	of speech
7.	to be capable	learning
8.	to focus	phenomenon
9.	machine	loop
10.	a real-world	for sth

Ex. 3 Provide English equivalents of these expressions:

1) niepokojący	7) bezpośrednio
2) grozić czymś	8) posuwać się w kierunku
3) obcy	9) wyposażony w ...
4) ponownie coś obejrzeć	10) media społecznościowe
5) przyznać/uznać coś	11) wychowywać kogoś
6) wykorzystać coś	12) jeśli nie

Grammar corner...

In the text you've seen a couple of phrases like: in doubt, in support of. At more advanced we use such phrases that have prepositions (e.g. in, with, on - that's why we call them prepositional phrases) to sound more formal and businessy. So, when you're not sure of sth, you're „in doubt“, while when you're for sth, you speak „in support of sth“. If sth is offered, it's „on offer“, while if sth is sold at a lower price, it's „on sale“. You can react furiously to sth, or - in other words - „with fury“, whereas treat sb respectfully, you treat them „with respect“. Simple, yet effective.

Ex. 4 Which option is correct.

1. I simply had to buy it, it was on sale / on offer for only a couple of days and the price was great!
2. We have several models on sale / on offer, so there's plenty to choose from.
3. He left the office with fury / with respect and slammed the door behind him.
4. If you don't treat your client with fury / with respect, they will take their business elsewhere...this isn't communism any more, clients have options.
5. When in doubt / in support, ask your manager.
6. I've always spoken in doubt / in support of women's rights.

GLOSSARY	
literal	dosłowny
foresight about sth	przewidywanie czegoś
a dystopia	anty-utopia
distant future	odległa przyszłość
currency	waluta
to rethink sth	ponownie coś przemyśleć
desire	pożądanie
entire	cały
a device	urządzenie
wide-spread	rozpowszechniony
essentially	w gruncie rzeczy
a hostage	zakładnik
a figure of speech	figura stylistyczna
to pass for sth	uchodzić za coś
leaps in technology	skoki technologiczne
mobile games	gry na urządzenia mobilne
a feedback loop	sprzężenie zwrotne
to take sth to extreme	posunąć coś do granic
to be capable of doing sth	być zdolnym do czegoś
to focus on sth	skupić się na czymś
machine learning	uczenie maszynowe
a real-world phenomenon	istniejące zjawisko
unsettling	niepokojący
to threaten to do sth	grozić czymś
alien	obcy
to rewatch sth	ponownie coś obejrzeć
to acknowledge sth	przyznać / uznać coś
to tap into sth	wykorzystać coś

directly	bezpośrednio
to inch toward sth	posuwać się w kierunku
equipped with sth	wyposażony w
social media	media społecznościowe
to raise sb	wychowywać kogoś
unless	jeśli nie

ANSWER KEY:

Ex. 1

- 1) literal
- 2) foresight about sth
- 3) a dystopia
- 4) distant future
- 5) currency
- 6) to rethink sth
- 7) desire
- 8) entire
- 9) a device
- 10) wide-spread
- 11) essentially
- 12) a hostage

Ex. 2

- 1) a figure of speech
- 2) to pass for sth
- 3) leaps in technology
- 4) mobile games
- 5) a feedback loop
- 6) to take sth to extreme
- 7) to be capable of doing sth
- 8) to focus on sth
- 9) machine learning
- 10) a real-world phenomenon

Ex. 3

- 1) unsettling
- 2) to threaten to do sth
- 3) alien
- 4) to rewatch sth
- 5) to acknowledge sth
- 6) to tap into sth
- 7) directly
- 8) to inch toward sth
- 9) equipped with
- 10) social media
- 11) to raise sb
- 12) unless

Ex. 4

- 1) on sale
- 2) on offer
- 3) with fury
- 4) with respect
- 5) in doubt
- 6) in support