

## Generations

# Things that could become obsolete soon

I've written articles on some everyday items that will become extinct in the not-too-distant future (and some are close), but [www.bestlifeonline.com](http://www.bestlifeonline.com) listed even more items, some of which took me by surprise.

According to the article, on a seemingly weekly basis, new tech, new services, practically new everything seems to replace an older version (except for people, my observation and not part of the article). It wasn't that long ago when we were still renting movies from a brick-and-mortar store and balked at the idea of watching TV on a phone. But, as everything advances at a breakneck pace, plenty of things don't evolve and are put out to pasture. Here are some.

We know that keys will soon be gone and replaced by keypads. Codes can be customized and changed easily so that you don't have to carry around a noisy key chain anymore. But in the not-too-distant future, keypads will be replaced by voice recognition, palm or thumb IDs, iris recognition, etc., and, eventually, all we'll need to get in and out of everything is our body.

Digital cameras have been replaced by smartphones, and charging up devices takes patience. However, just as Apple removed its 30-pin dock connector from its iPhone and iPods back in 2012, Brandon Carte, technology editor for [BestProducts.com](http://BestProducts.com), predicts that Apple will get rid of its Lightning Cable connector within the next few years and embrace USB-C, so all gadgets can be charged with one single cable. Hooray! Carte also suggests that there's a chance in the future that the iPhone will only charge wirelessly. Yes, we are becoming a wireless society.

Paper maps also were listed, and I haven't pulled one out in years.

However, I keep one of North Carolina in the passenger front pocket of my car "just in case" I'm ever trying to figure out where I am and happen to be in a dead zone.



**Peg DeMarco**

Another item on its way out is the parking meter, which is probably making many people elated, but it's not because cities have become generous and allowed residents to park for free. More U.S. cities are making the transition to parking apps on which people can pay for their time as they need it without having to run back and forth to their cars just to pay the meters.

Are shopping malls on their way out? In the last 15 years, consumer trends have changed, moving buyers away from commercial centers and onto the internet. Analysts predict 25 percent of shopping malls will be shut down by 2022.

The move from paper receipts to electronic ones has been happily accepted in an increasing number of establishments. No, it's not totally to save paper, but rather electronic receipts provide a sustained consumer relationship. Handing over your email address just one time is likely to cost you a lifetime of advertisements and promotional emails.

I was surprised to see that GPS devices are predicted to become a thing of the past. With phones getting longer-lasting batteries and with phone carriers offering bigger data plans as we hit 5G, GPS devices mounted to our car windshields will soon all but disappear as we use our phones to give us real-time traffic updates and directions.

Even more futuristic, predictors say it won't be long after that until self-driving cars make Google Maps

and Waze all but obsolete except when we are walking around a new town.

A major casualty of the smartphone is the calculator, but I still have one tucked in a corner on my desk when I don't have Excel pulled up for the day. And the article makes another point: Most simple functions and equations don't even have to be entered because you can always wake up and ask Alexa to figure it out for you.

What I really don't agree with is the abolition of cursive writing taught in school. Yes, most of the text we read and write is a font on a screen, and software coding will be the new language of the future, but I think it's sad when I see stick-figure printing rather than the grand old master cursive writing of yesterday.

With the decreasing use of cash, it's no surprise that ATMs are seeing their way out of relevance. The rise of contactless payments via cards and apps will largely contribute to the disappearance of our favorite machine.

There was a time when grocery store checkout lanes were lined with endless rows of glossy magazines. Though there are a few big ones that persist, such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *People* and *The New Yorker*, the selection has steadily thinned out over the last few years. Print magazines and newspapers have been moving toward digital platforms and e-books via Kindle and other readers are more popular than ever. Last year, *The New York Times* announced that it passed 4 million subscribers — more than 3 million of which are digital-only.

Bob Dylan's 1963 words "For the times, they are a-changin'" never rang more true than 56 years later.

Peg DeMarco is a Morganton resident who writes a weekly features column for *The News Herald*. Contact her at [pegdemarco@earthlink.net](mailto:pegdemarco@earthlink.net).