

**FUTUREtakes**

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### **Futurist Book Group Discussion**

### ***The Next Big Thing is Really Small***

**by Jack Uldrich and Deb Newberry  
Crown Business, ISBN 1400046890**

*Synopsis of the July 7, 2004 Futurist Book Group meeting; summarized by Ken Harris*

On July 7, 2004, the chapter resumed its book discussion program with a discussion of ***The Next Big Thing is Really Small*** by Jack Uldrich and Deb Newberry. The book is a good non-technical summary of the prospects for nanotechnology – the technology of the very small. It is intended primarily for business executives but also is a good primer on nanotechnology for anyone interested in this important emerging field.

Uldrich's and Newberry's key thesis is that the nanotech revolution, which is just now in its early stages, is an even more profound revolution than the Internet revolution. They note the driving forces for this revolution today – large-scale government R&D expenditures (particularly in the USA and Japan), university centers devoted to nanotechnology research, and many private initiatives, some of which have already resulted in innovative products on the market like stain-free clothing. At the end of each chapter, the authors offer a series of questions "Nanopoints" to help executives clarify how nanotechnology will hurt or enhance their businesses.

Chapter members and friends at the discussion generally agreed with the vast potential of nanotech for economic and social good. However, they thought the authors were too optimistic about when the predicted nanotechnology developments would actually happen. They also noted an almost complete failure of the authors to discuss potential illicit uses of nanotechnology such as to aid in criminal enterprises.

The July 7 discussion marked the beginning of a new approach to this long-standing chapter program. Previously, we held discussions in chapter members' homes. With the series that began July 7, we are holding them at **Politics and Prose**, a well-known independent bookstore, at 5519 Connecticut Ave., NW. **Politics and Prose** has generously reserved its book discussion space on the lower level for our discussions on the first Wednesday of the month. It also sells discussion books at a 20 percent discount if you mention The Futurist Book group.