

# 125 MIT Technology Review



## Front

- 2 Letter from the editor
- 4 From the publisher: *TR* at 125

### THE DOWNLOAD

- 9 A mind-controlled bionic leg; African farmers using satellites to help grow their crops; coffee made without coffee beans; a new way to recycle clothing; a cube that artificially creates climate conditions; and an op-ed on what AI could do for accessibility.

### EXPLAINED

- 18 **What are AI agents?**  
AI tools that can do more complex tasks are the next big thing. Here's how they will work. By Melissa Heikkilä

### PROFILE

- 20 **This designer looks for magic in everyday materials**  
Skylar Tibbits coined the term "4D printing"—and immediately moved on to his next blue-sky idea. By Anna Gibbs

## The innovation issue

### 23 The big questions

As *MIT Technology Review* celebrates its 125th anniversary, we asked seven writers and thinkers to imagine what the next 125 years might look like.

### 34 Unnatural selection

Gene edits will get easier and easier to administer. What does that mean for the future of our species?

BY ANTONIO REGALADO

### 42 The future starts now

A look at what the coming decades hold for those born today. BY KARA PLATONI

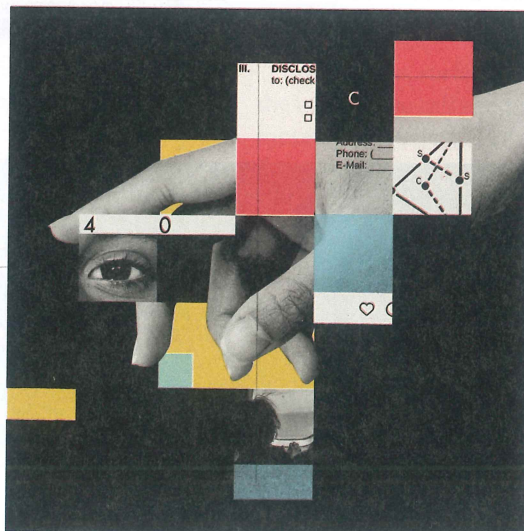
### 50 The sustainability spiral

What one element can tell us about the next century for our planet's resources.

BY CASEY CROWNHART

### 56 What we leave behind

We're making more data than ever. What do we save for future generations? And will they be able to understand it? BY NIALL FIRTH



## Back

- 64 **Escaping Spotify's algorithm**  
The streaming service seems to offer endless choice. But what if all this personalization is actually killing the thrill of discovering new music?  
By Tiffany Ng
- 72 **Close listening**  
Three books explore the wonders of sound on land, in the sea, and in our heads.  
By Bryan Gardiner
- 76 **The character of progress**  
Two books on Chinese writing illustrate how tumultuous and meandering technological evolution can be.  
By Veronique Greenwood
- 80 **TR35's Innovator of the Year: Shawn Shan**  
By Melissa Heikkilä
- 82 **The year is 2149 and ...**  
Fiction by Sean Michaels
- 88 **Responsible machines**  
The future (and impending demise) of artificial intelligence has been a source of debate for decades.  
By Bill Gourgey