

MIT Industrial Liaison Program Faculty Knowledgebase Report

COVID-19 and the Future of Work

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Thomas Malone

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Thomas W. Malone is the Patrick J. McGovern Professor of Management at the [MIT Sloan School of Management](#) and the founding director of the [MIT Center for Collective Intelligence](#). At MIT, he is also a Professor of Information Technology and a Professor of Work and Organizational Studies. Previously, he was the founder and director of the [MIT Center for Coordination Science](#) and one of the two founding co-directors of the [MIT Initiative on "Inventing the Organizations of the 21st Century."](#) Professor Malone teaches classes on organizational design, information technology, and leadership, and his research focuses on how new organizations can be designed to take advantage of the possibilities provided by information technology.

For example, Professor Malone predicted, in an article published in 1987, many of the major developments in electronic business over the following 25 years, including electronic buying and selling for many kinds of products. Then, in 2004, Professor Malone summarized two decades of his research in his critically acclaimed book [The Future of Work](#). His newest book, [Superminds](#), appeared in May 2018. Professor Malone has also published over 100 articles, research papers, and book chapters; he is an inventor with 11 patents; and he is the co-editor of four books.

Malone has been a cofounder of four software companies and has consulted and served as a board member for a number of other organizations. His background includes work as a research scientist at Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), a Ph.D. from Stanford University, an honorary doctorate from the University of Zurich, and degrees in applied mathematics, engineering, and psychology.

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This presentation will discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic will be like a bullet train to the future, dramatically accelerating many trends involving digital communication that were already underway and that will never return to the way they were before the pandemic. Examples discussed will include the kinds of jobs people will do, how and where they will work, how this will affect real estate, how people will shop and socialize, and how they will learn. The presentation will also suggest how new kinds of online work can help solve some of the near-term problems the pandemic creates.

[Read Thomas Malone's latest publication on The Hill](#)

[Learn more and order Thomas Malone's book *Superminds*](#)

[Learn more about the MIT CCI Pandemic Response CoLab](#)