Exploring Nano & Society— You Decide!

Which technology would you invent?

NanoDays
The Biggest Event for the Smallest Science!

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Try this!

1. Look at the green cards with different technologies. If you got to decide, which ones would you make sure people had?

2. Place the technologies in order of importance, in your opinion. Which ones are the most useful? Which are less useful?

3. Choose one of the yellow cards with different people on them.

4. Pretend you're the person on the card. Do you think they would decide that the same technologies are important? Or would they change the order of the technology cards?


What's going on?

Different people think different technologies are important. You might put the technologies in a different order from someone else in your family, or someone else in a different part of the world. Sometimes, it's hard for us to know which technologies another person might value.

People's values determine which technologies are made and used. We all make decisions related to technologies—as individuals and as a society.

For example, security is a priority for the US government, so a lot of our national budget goes toward military funding. Safety is also a priority for many parents, who might pay for alarm systems for their home or cell phones for their children.
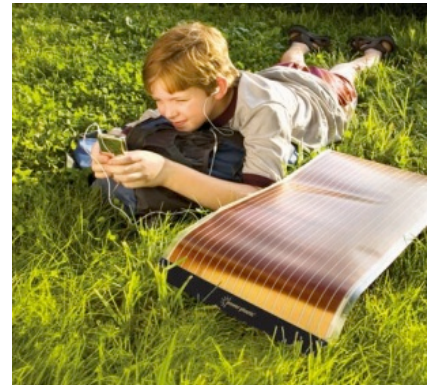
How is this nano?
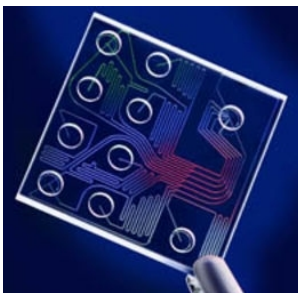
Lab-on-a-chip screens for diseases

Technologies and society influence each other. People's values shape how nanotechnologies are developed and adopted. In our country, a lot of our work developing new nanotechnologies goes toward computing, energy, medicine, and military applications. These efforts reflect what we collectively think is important. In other countries, people choose to invest in different kinds of technologies.

Nanotechnology takes advantage of the different physical forces at the nanoscale to make new materials and tiny devices smaller than 100 nanometers in size. (A nanometer is a billionth of a meter.) Nanotechnology allows scientists and engineers to make things like smaller, faster computer chips and new medicines to treat diseases like cancer.