THE TRENDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE • FORECASTING WORLDWIDE SINCE 1980

## Top 11 Trends of 2011

The mid-January issue of the *Trends Journal* will feature our "Top Trends 2011" — The Trends Research Institute's compendium of the dominant trends for the year ahead. The following synopses of these trends provide insights into some of what to expect.

After the tumultuous years of the Great Recession, a battered people may wish that 2011 will bring a return to kinder, gentler times. But that is not what we are predicting. Instead, the fruits of government and institutional action – and inaction – on many fronts will ripen in unplanned-for fashions. Trends we have previously identified, and that have been brewing for some time, will reach maturity in 2011, impacting just about everyone in the world.

1. Wake-Up Call In 2011, the people of all nations will fully recognize how grave economic conditions have become, how ineffectual and self-serving the so-called solutions have been, and how dire the consequences will be.

Having become convinced of the inability of leaders and know-it-all "arbiters of everything" to fulfill their promises, the people will do more than just question authority, they will defy authority. The seeds of revolution will be sown....

2. Crack-Up 2011 Among our Top Trends for last year was the "Crash of 2010." What happened? The stock market didn't crash. We know. We made it clear in our Autumn Trends Journal that we were not forecasting a stock market crash – the equity markets were no longer a legitimate indicator of recovery or the real state of the economy. Yet the reliable indicators (employment numbers, the real estate market, currency pressures, sovereign debt problems) all bordered between crisis and disaster.

In 2011, with the arsenal of schemes to prop them up depleted, we predict "Crack-Up 2011": teetering economies will collapse, currency wars will ensue, trade barriers will be erected, economic unions will splinter, and the onset of the "Greatest Depression" will be recognized by everyone....

- 3. Screw the People As times get even tougher and people get even poorer, the "authorities" will intensify their efforts to extract the funds needed to meet fiscal obligations. While there will be variations on the theme, the governments' song will be the same: cut what you give, raise what you take.
- **4. Crime Waves** No job + no money + compounding debt = high stress, strained relations, short fuses. In 2011, with the fuse lit, it will be prime time for Crime Time. As Gerald Celente says, "When people lose everything and they have nothing left to lose, they lose it."

Hardship-driven crimes will be committed across the socioeconomic spectrum by legions of the on-the-edge desperate who will do

whatever they must to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table....

- **5.Crackdown on Liberty** As crime rates rise, so will the voices demanding a crackdown. A national crusade to "Get Tough on Crime" will be waged against the citizenry. And just as in the "War on Terror," where "suspected terrorists" are killed before proven guilty or jailed without trial, in the "War on Crime" everyone is a suspect until proven innocent....
- **6. Alternative Energy** In laboratories and workshops unnoticed by mainstream analysts, scientific visionaries and entrepreneurs are forging a new physics incorporating principles once thought impossible, working to create devices that liberate more energy than they consume. What are they, and how long will it be before they can be brought to market? Shrewd investors will ignore the "can't be done" skepticism, and examine the newly emerging energy trend opportunities that will come of age in 2011....
- **7. Journalism 2.0** Though the trend has been in the making since the dawn of the Internet Revolution, 2011 will mark the year that new methods of news and information distribution will render the 20th century model obsolete.

With its unparalleled reach across borders and language barriers, "Journalism 2.0" has the potential to influence and educate citizens in a way that governments and corporate media moguls would never permit. Of the hundreds of trends we have forecast over three decades, few have the possibility of such far-reaching effects....

**8. Cyberwars** Just a decade ago, when the digital age was blooming and hackers were looked upon as annoying geeks, we forecast that the intrinsic fragility of the Internet and the vulnerability of the data it carried

made it ripe for cyber-crime and cyber-warfare to flourish.

In 2010, every major government acknowledged that Cyberwar was a clear and present danger and, in fact, had already begun. The demonstrable effects of Cyberwar and its companion, Cybercrime, are already significant – and will come of age in 2011. Equally disruptive will be the harsh measures taken by global governments to control free access to the web, identify its users, and literally shut down computers that it considers a threat to national security....

9. Youth of the World Unite University degrees in hand yet out of work, in debt and with no prospects on the horizon, feeling betrayed and angry, forced to live back at home, young adults and 20-somethings are mad as hell, and they're not going to take it anymore. Filled with vigor, rife with passion, but not mature enough to control their impulses, the confrontations they engage in will often escalate disproportionately.

Government efforts to exert control and return the youth to quiet complacency will be ham-fisted and ineffectual. The Revolution will be televised ... blogged, YouTubed, Twittered and....

10. End of The World! The closer we get to 2012, the louder the calls will be that the "End is Near!" There have always been sects, at any time in history, that saw signs and portents proving the end of the world was imminent. But 2012 seems to hold a special meaning across a wide segment of "End-time" believers.

Among the Armageddonites, the actual end of the world and annihilation of the Earth in 2012 is a matter of certainty. Even the rational and informed that carefully follow the news of never-ending global crises, may sometimes feel the world is in a perilous state. Both streams of thought are leading many to reevaluate their chances for personal survival, be it in heaven or on earth....

**11. The Mystery Trend** ... will be revealed upon publication of the *Trends Journal* in mid-January.

## Are you ready for the future?