

# The Washington Post

## These 31 charts will destroy your faith in humanity

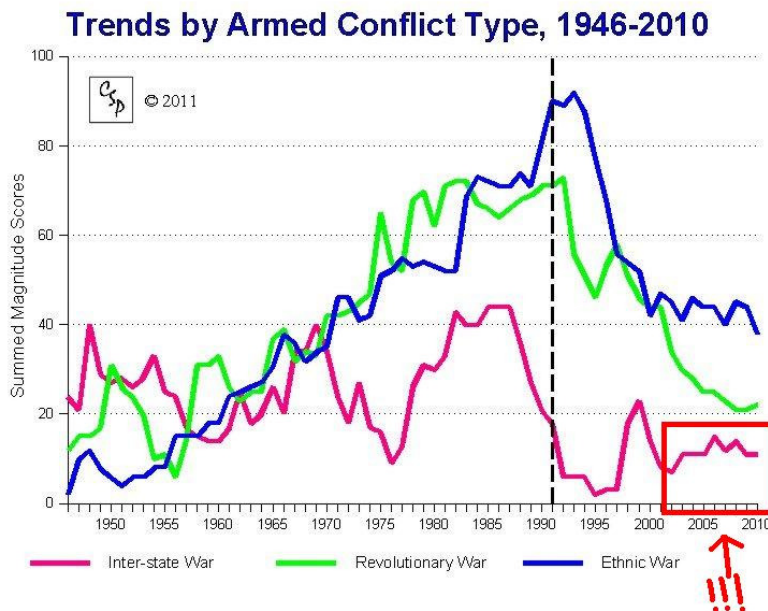
By: Brad Plumer – May 24, 2013

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Earlier this week, Rob Wile of Business Insider posted his graph-heavy opus: “31 Charts That Will Restore Your Faith In Humanity.”

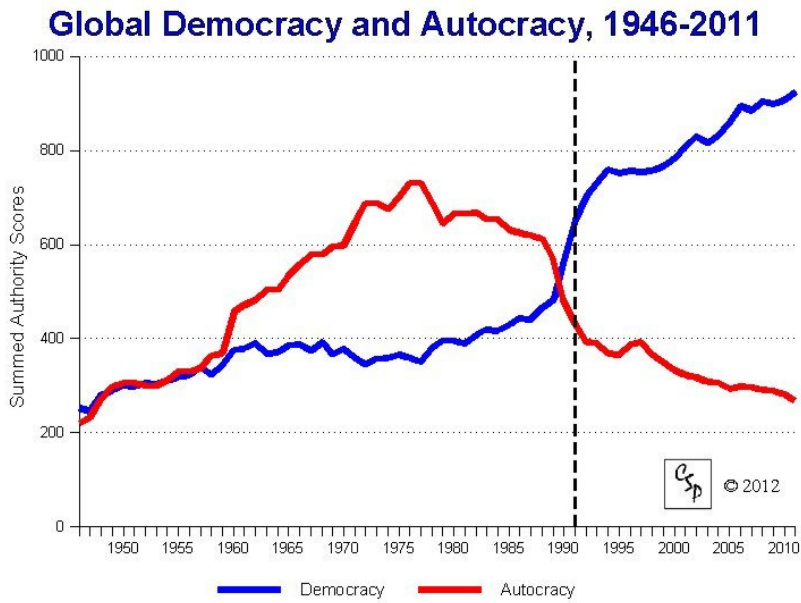
Naturally, we here at Wonkblog were all eager to see the results. But we’d quibble a bit with Wile’s interpretations of the data. His charts all struck us as *horrible* news. So we’re re-analyzing them here with the proper, gloom-heavy spin:

1) Inter-state wars are on the rise since 2002. Zoom in on that pink line:



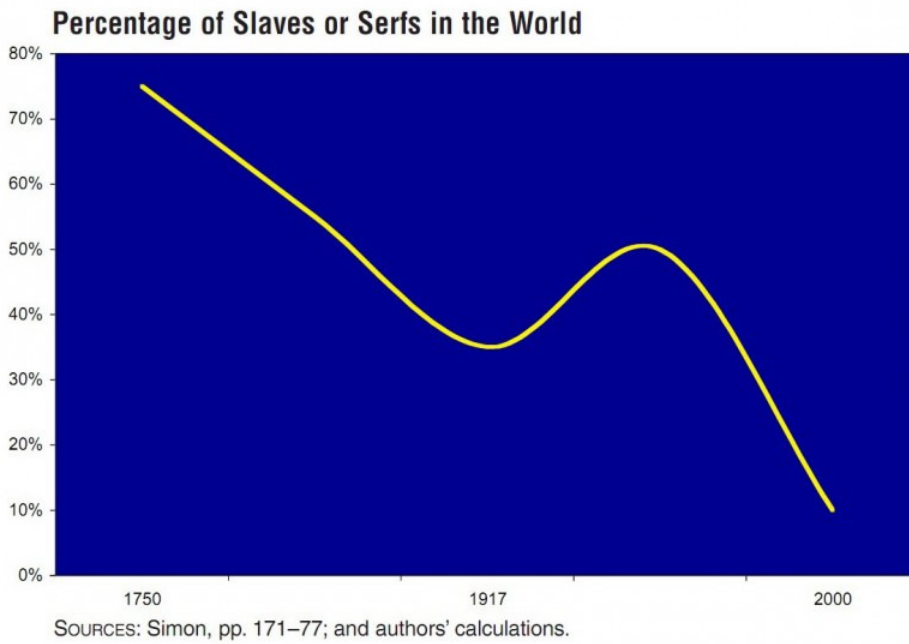
Systemic Peace

2) Dictatorships still exist:



Systemic Peace

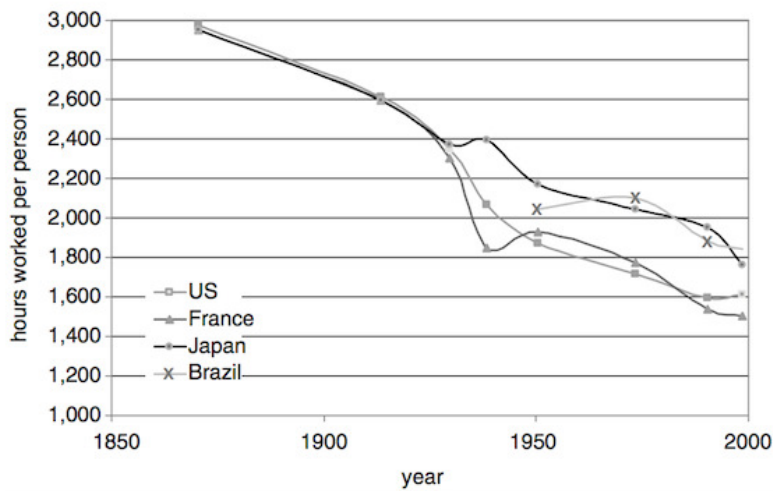
3) We haven't eradicated human slavery:



It's Getting Better All The Time / Stephen Moore & Julian Simon

4) People around the world are becoming just as lazy as the French:

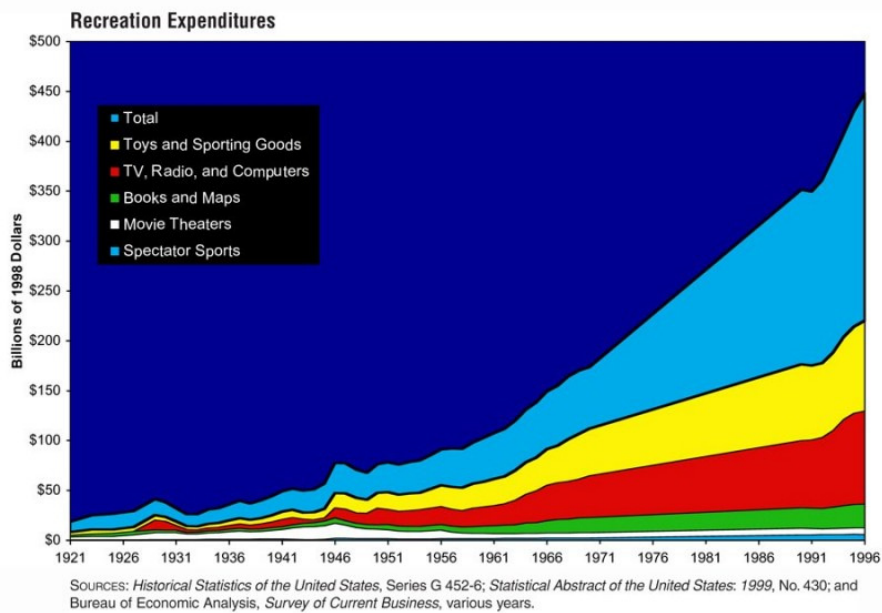
### ANNUAL HOURS WORKED PER PERSON, 1870–1978



SOURCES: Angus Maddison, *Chinese Economic Performance in the Long Run* (Paris: OECD, 1998); Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2001).

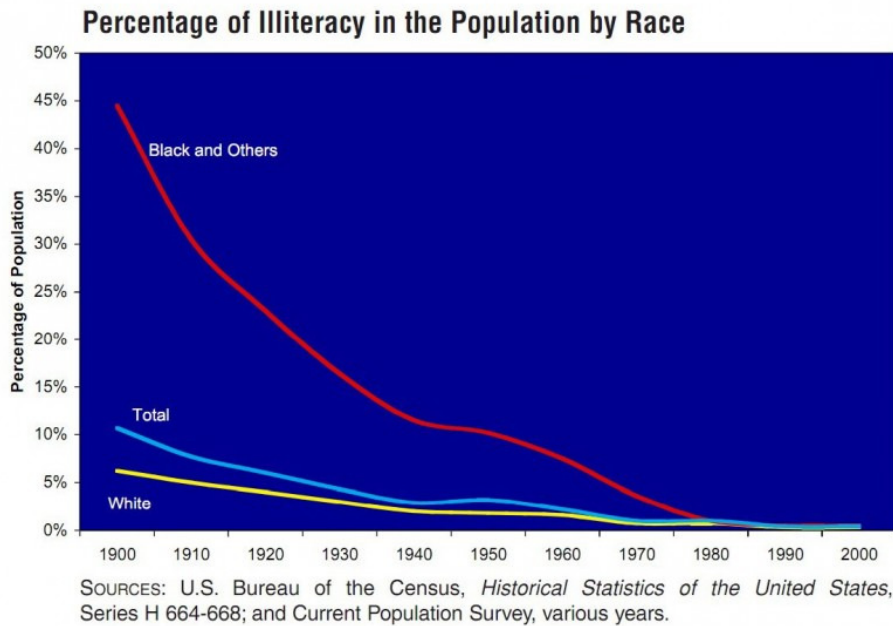
“The Improving State of the World” (c) Cato Institute 2007.

5) Look at all the frivolous crap we’re spending money on:



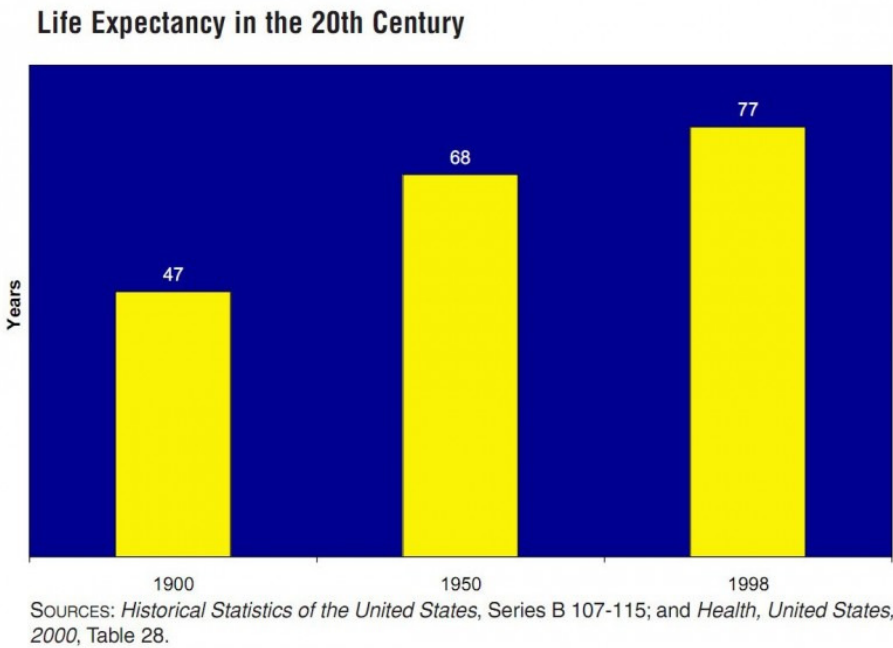
It’s Getting Better All The Time / Stephen Moore & Julian Simon

6) Pretty much everyone in the United States can now read *Fifty Shades of Grey*:



It's Getting Better All The Time / Stephen Moore & Julian Simon

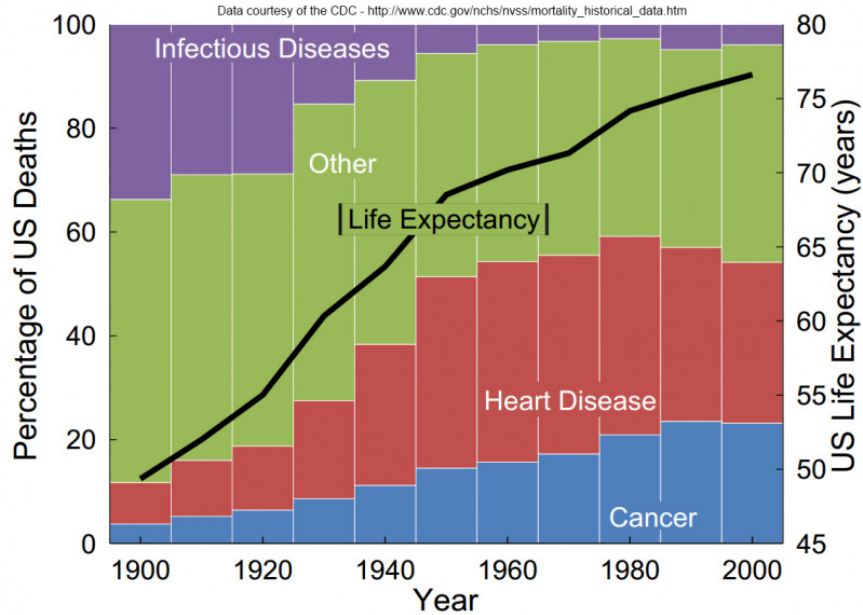
7) More 77-year-olds are dying than ever before:



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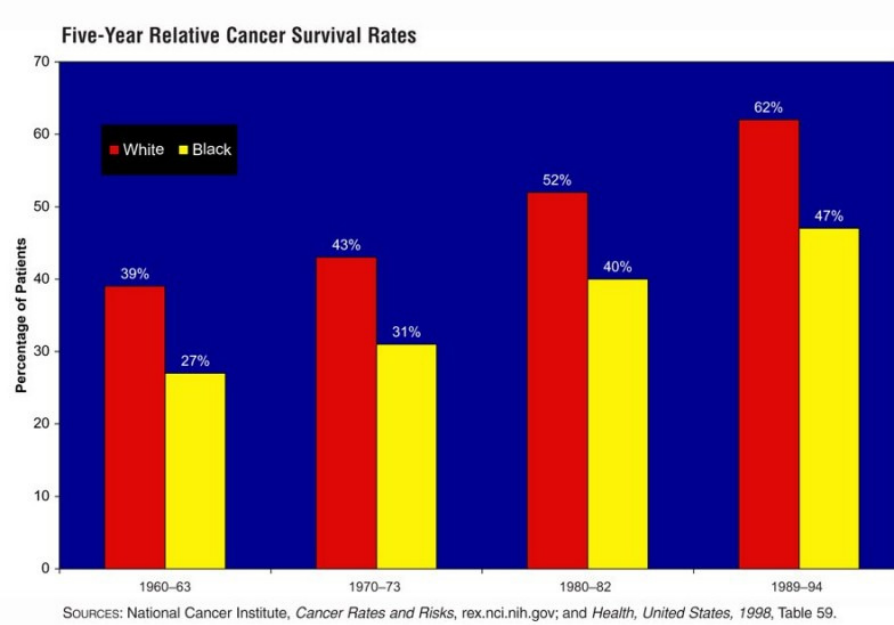
8) We vanquished infectious disease only to find more horrible ways to die:

## US Deaths Over Time By Primary Cause



Reddit

9) We're making progress on cancer treatments, but ugly charts with blue backgrounds remain a depressing fact of modern life:

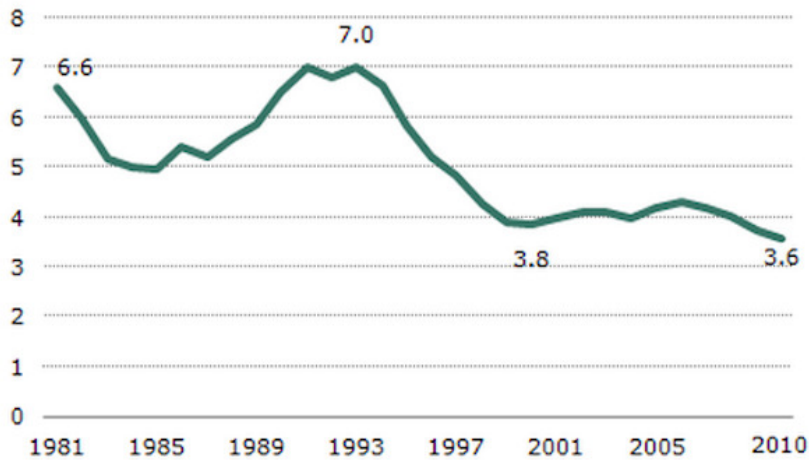


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10) There were 31,672 deaths from guns in the United States in 2010:

## Rate of Firearm Homicide Deaths, 1981-2010

Per 100,000 people



Note: Data labels shown for 1981, 1993, 2000 and 2010.

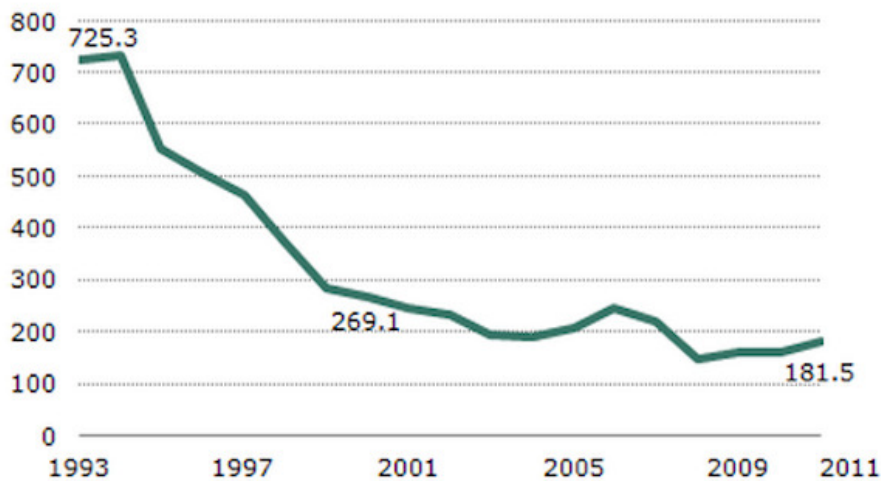
Source: CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS)

Pew

11) We're still shooting each other all the time:

## Rate of Non-fatal Firearm Crime, 1993-2011

Victimizations per 100,000 people ages 12 and older



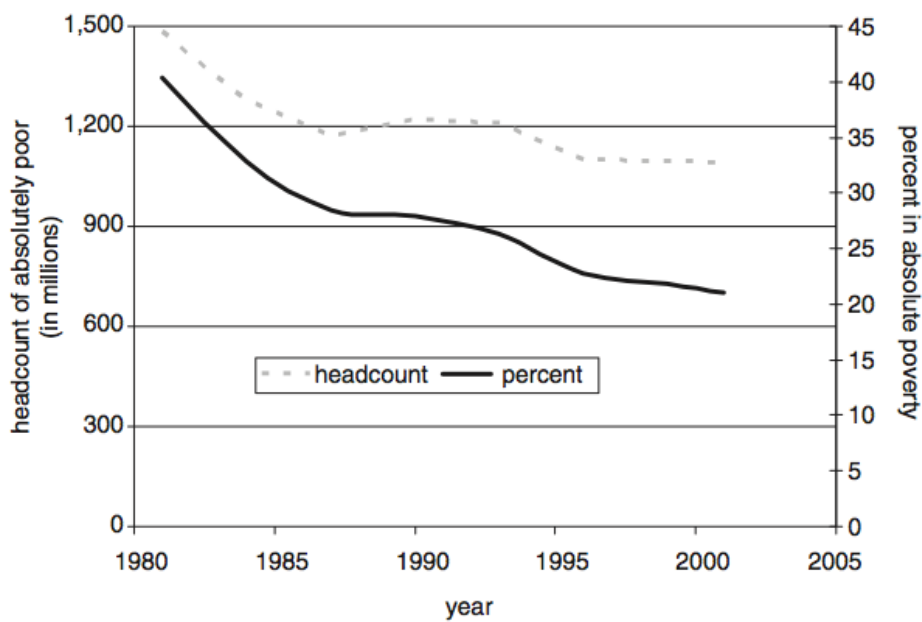
Note: Data labels shown for 1993, 2000 and 2011. 2006 NCVS estimates are not comparable with those in other years. See Methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of National Crime Victimization Survey, U.S. Justice Department

Pew

12) A fifth of the world lived in absolute poverty in 2000:

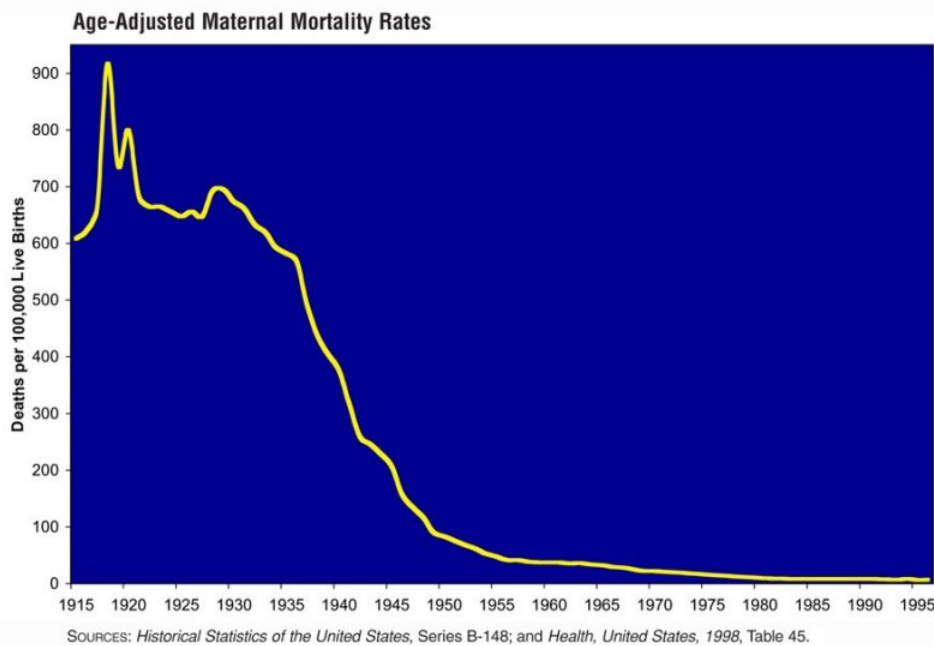
## GLOBAL POVERTY, 1980–2001



SOURCE: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, <http://devdata.worldbank.org/dataonline> (accessed July 12, 2005).

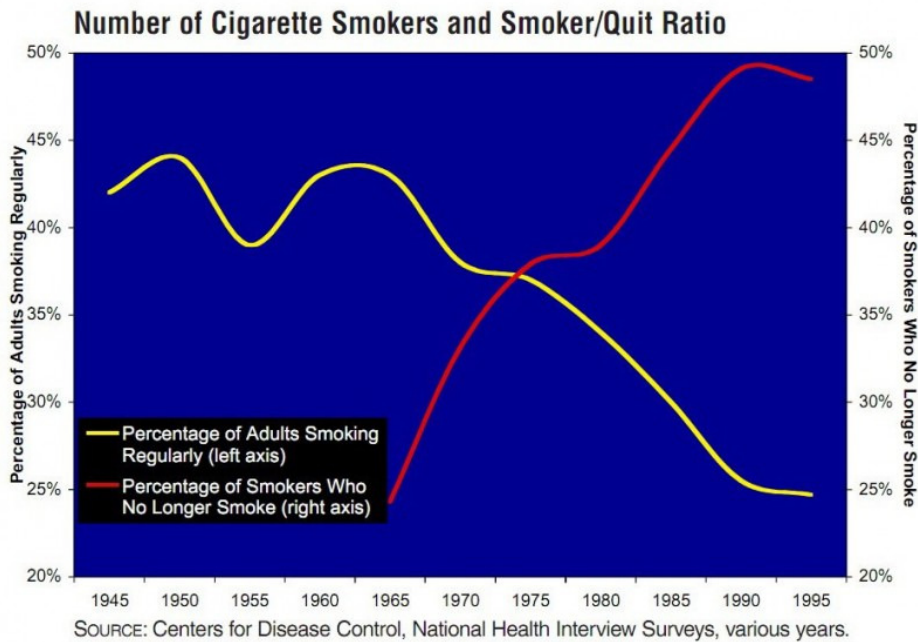
“The Improving State of the World” (c) Cato Institute 2007.

13) Again with the charts with the blue background. Stop it:



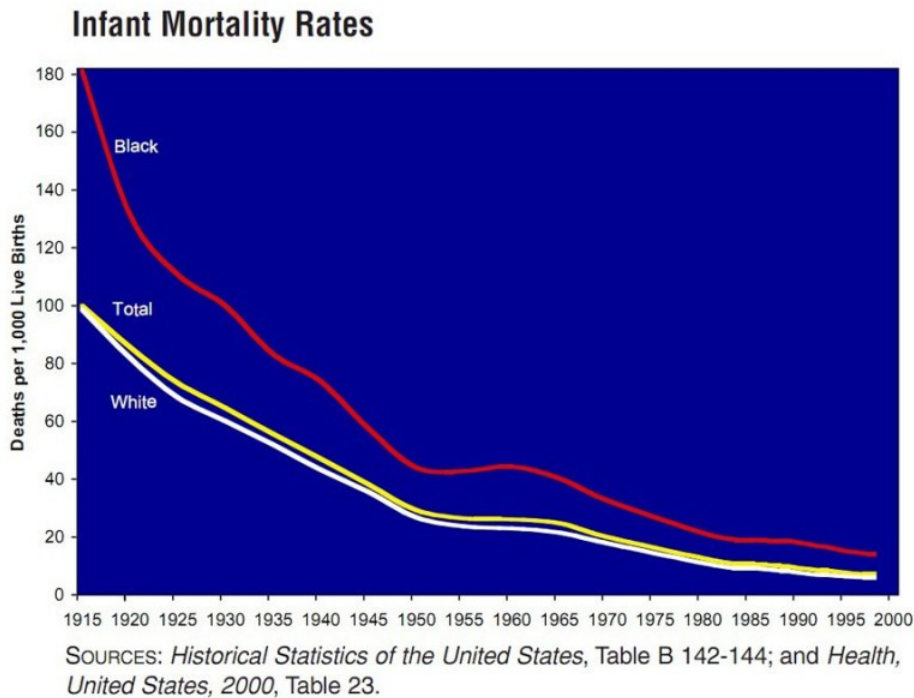
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14) The nation's supply of cool kids who smoke is reaching a perilous low:



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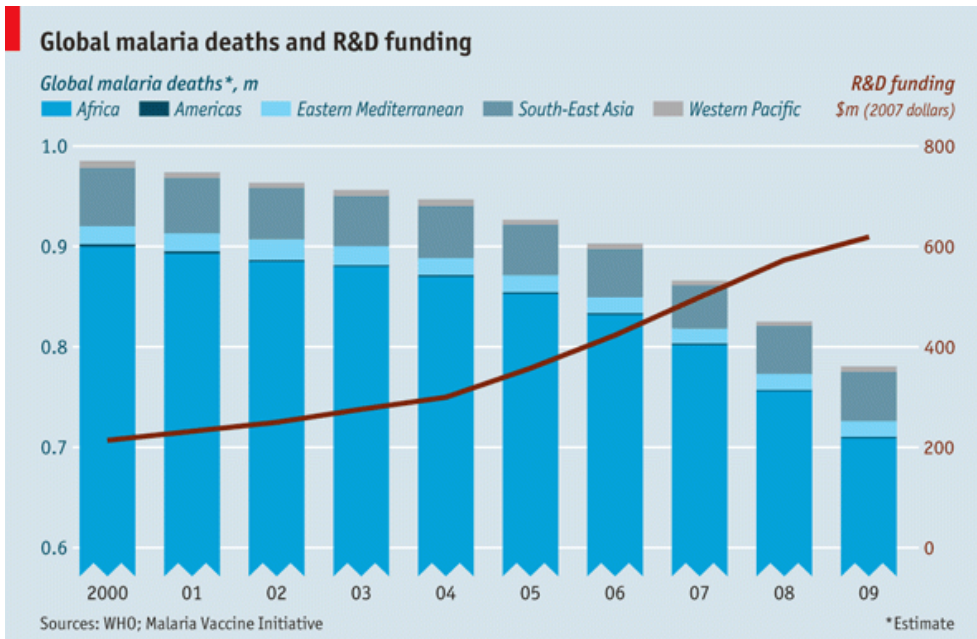
15) Annoying babies are everywhere:



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16) If these trends continue indefinitely, we'll soon be spending 100 percent of GDP on malaria research:

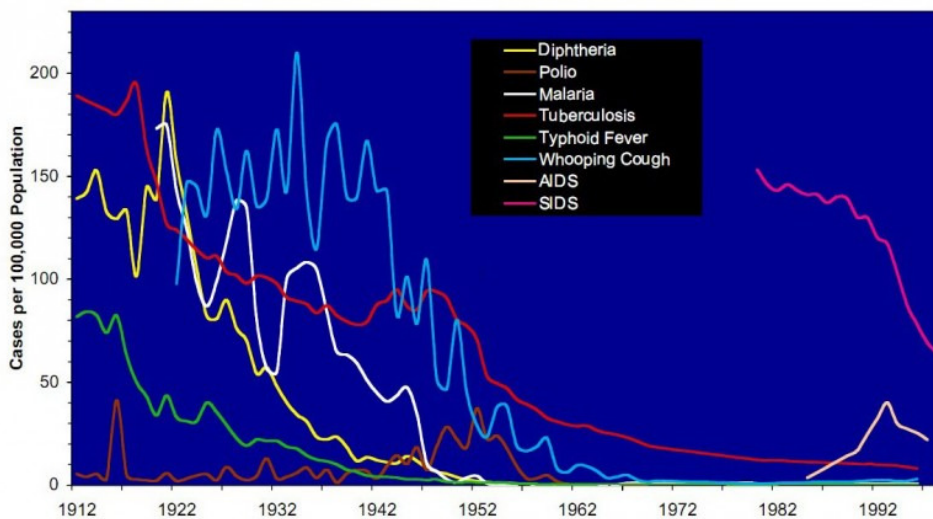




The Economist

17) This chart has so many squiggly lines you have to wonder if it's hiding something:

**Incidence of Selected Diseases in the United States**

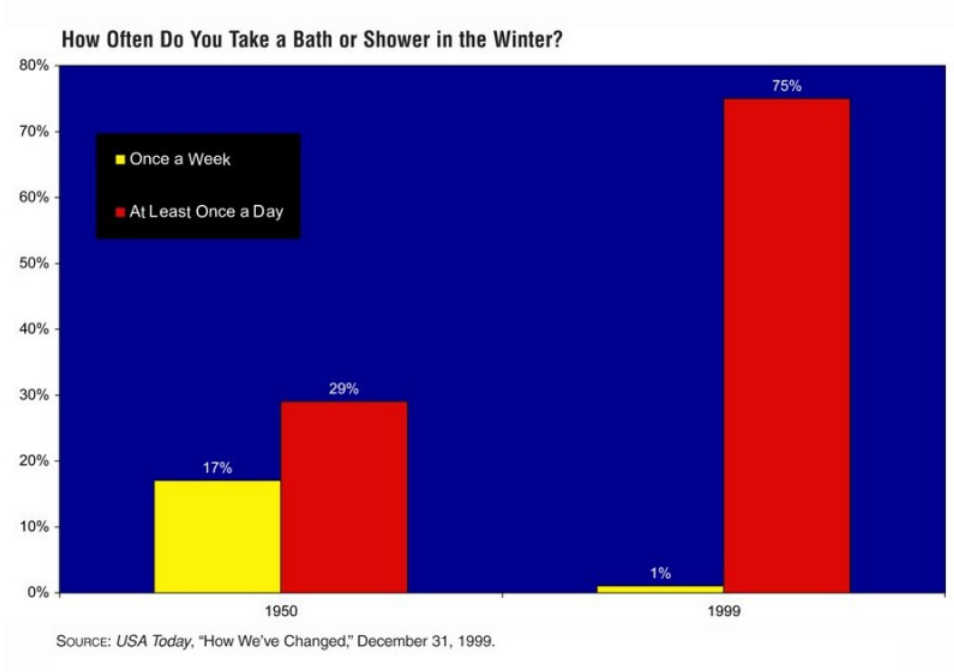


SOURCES: *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Series B 149, B 291, B 295, B 299-300, B 303; *Health, United States, 1999*, Table 53; and American SIDS Institute, [www.sids.org/rsearch/webrate/sld001.htm](http://www.sids.org/rsearch/webrate/sld001.htm).

NOTE: SIDS rate is per 100,000 live births. AIDS definition was substantially expanded in 1985, 1987, and 1993. TB rate prior to 1930 is estimated as 1.3 times the mortality rate.

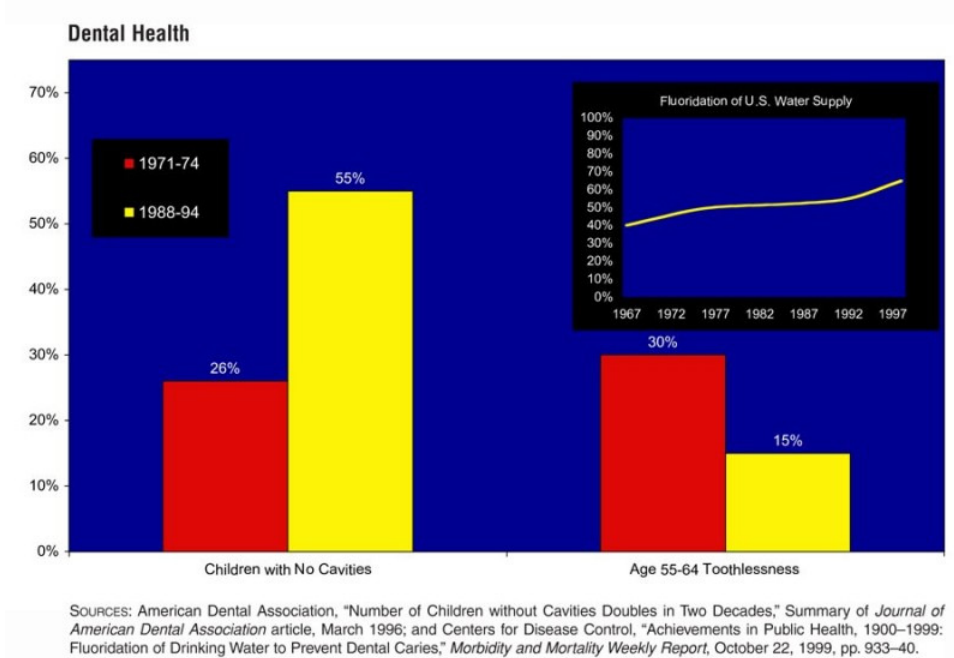
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18) We're wasting tons of water on showers:



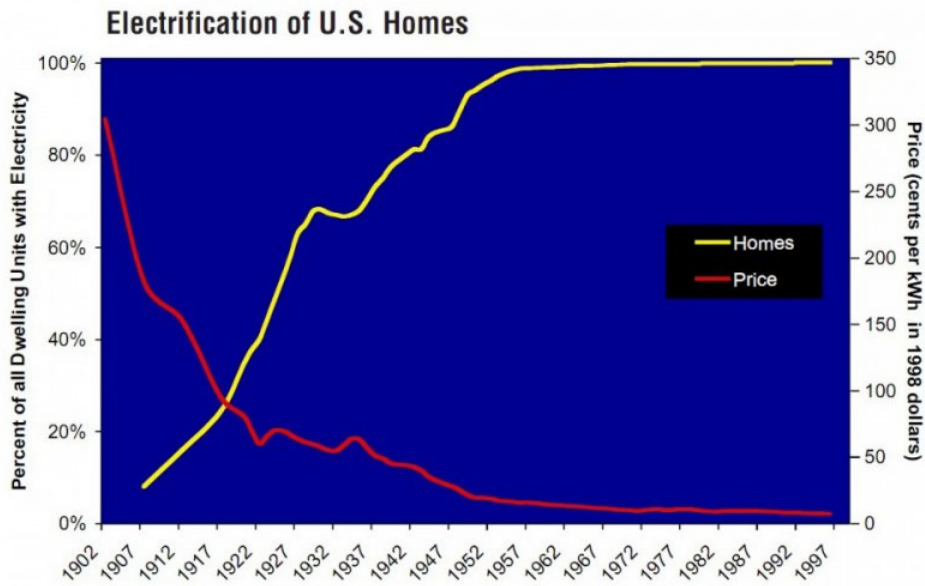
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19) Rising fluoridation of the U.S. water supply is turning us all into Communists:



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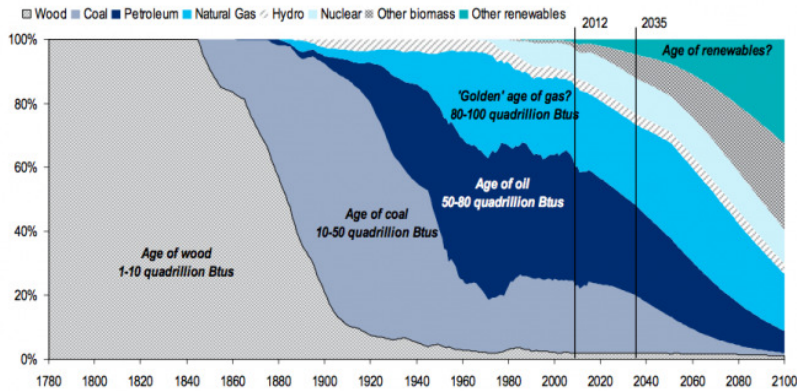
20) Electrification rates have stagnated since the 1960s:



SOURCES: *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Series S 109, S 116; and *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1998*, Table 959.

21) Some of us are still using wood for energy. Wood!

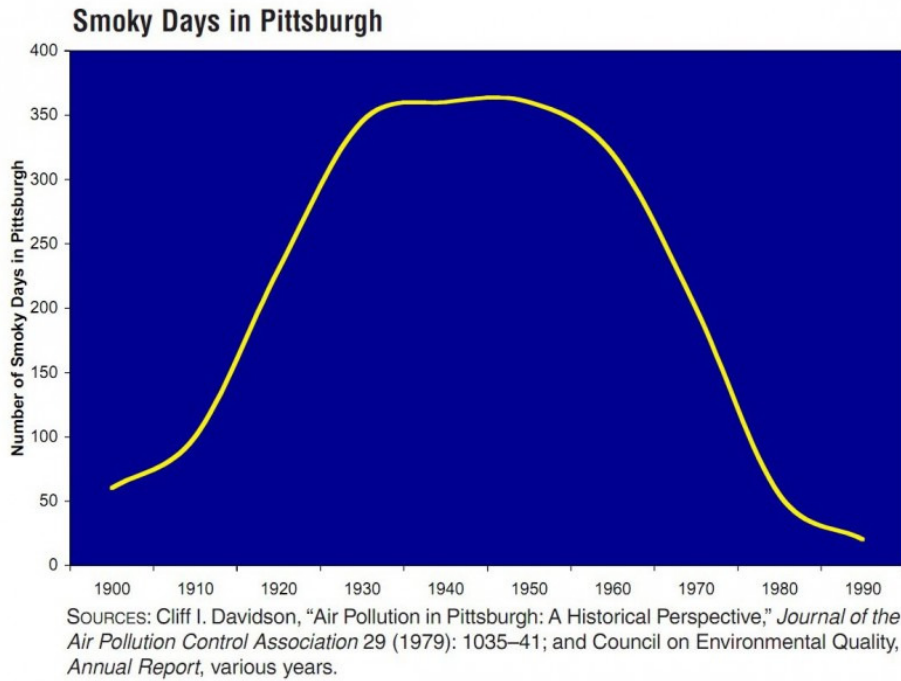
**Figure 7. The share of US primary energy demand from 1780-2100 demonstrates the substitutional nature of shifts in the generation mix, a trend that we believe is likely to continue**



Source: Citi Research, IEA, EIA

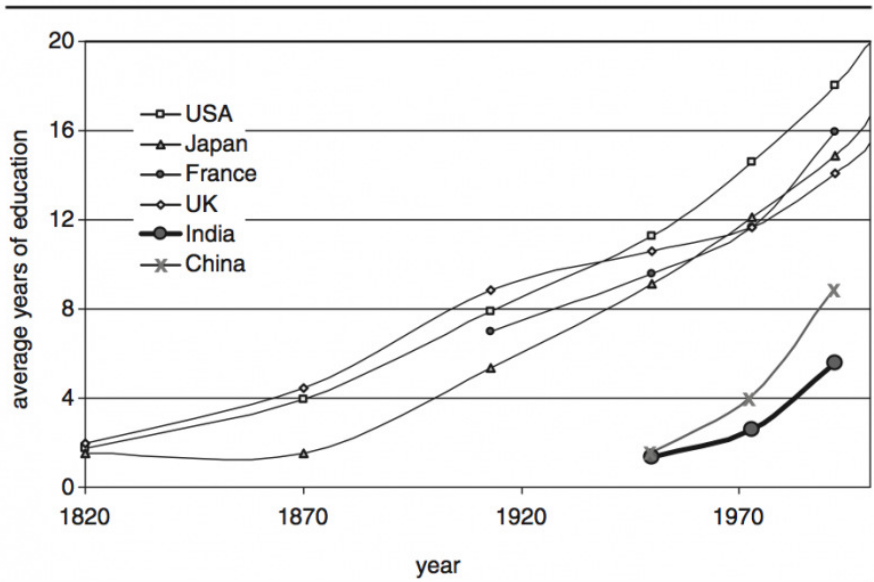
Citi

22) Pittsburgh is reverting to 1900-era conditions:



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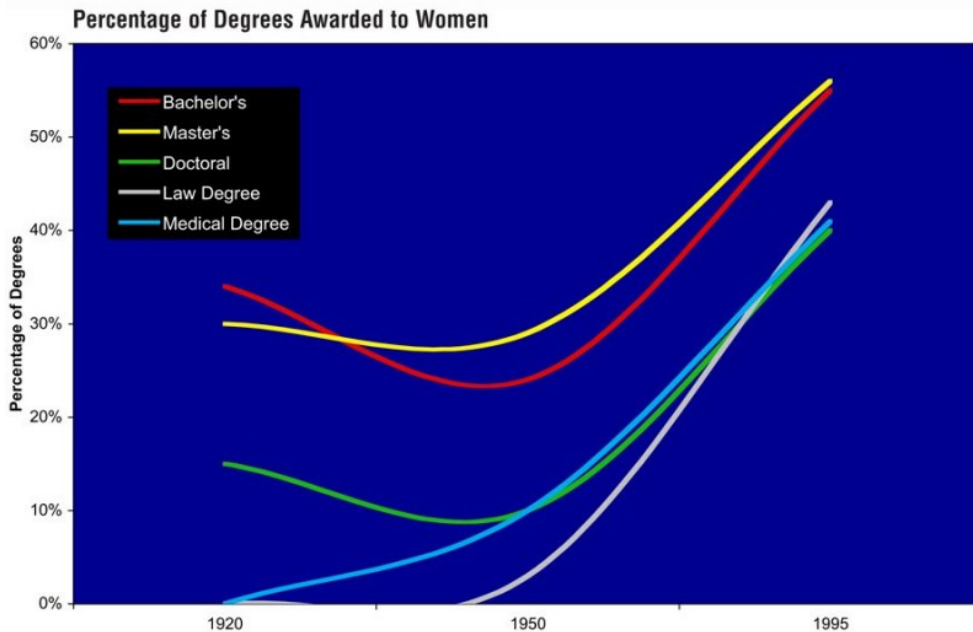
23) The number of nerds keeps growing:  
**YEARS OF EDUCATION PER PERSON, 1820-2001**



SOURCES: Angus Maddison, *Monitoring the World Economy, 1820-1992* (Paris: OECD, 1995); Angus Maddison, *Chinese Economic Performance in the Long Run* (Paris: OECD, 1998); Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD, 2003), <http://ggdc.net/~maddison> (accessed July 1, 2005).

"The Improving State of the World" (c) Cato Institute 2007.

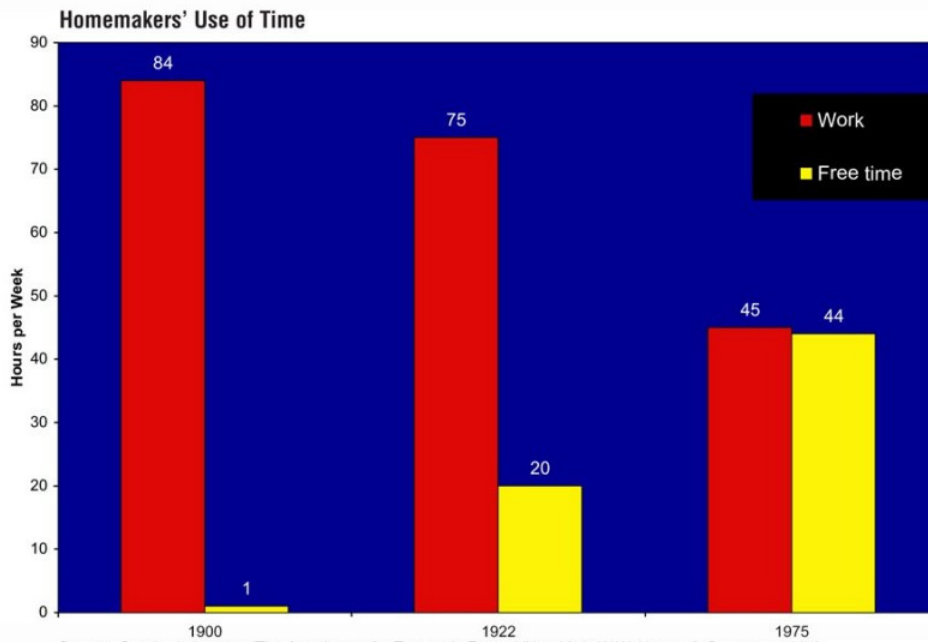
24) Lady nerds, even:



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems, *Completions*, Washington, various years.

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25) People have more opportunities to get bored than ever before:

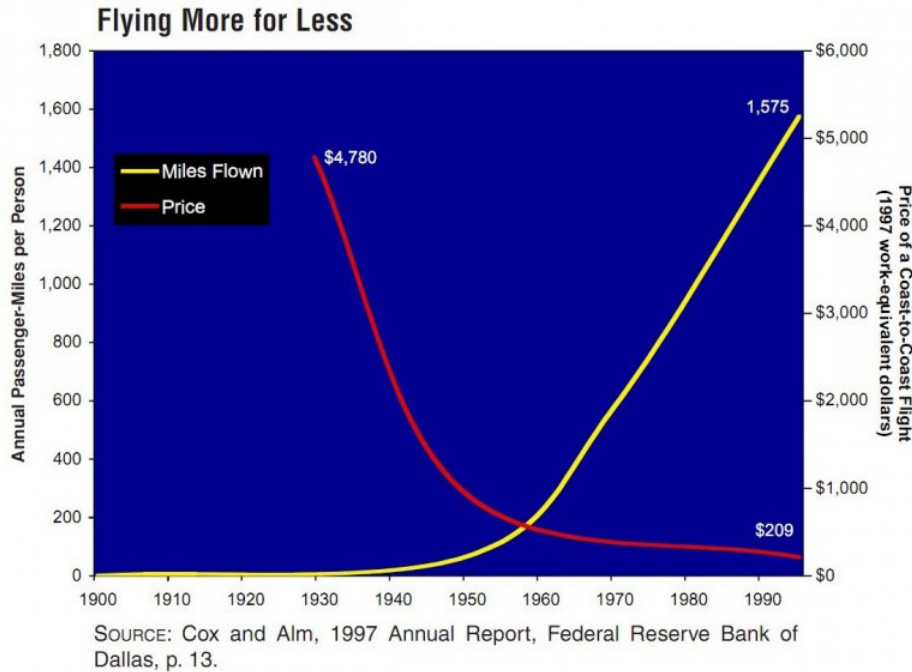


SOURCE: Stanley Lebergott, *The Americans: An Economic Record* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984).

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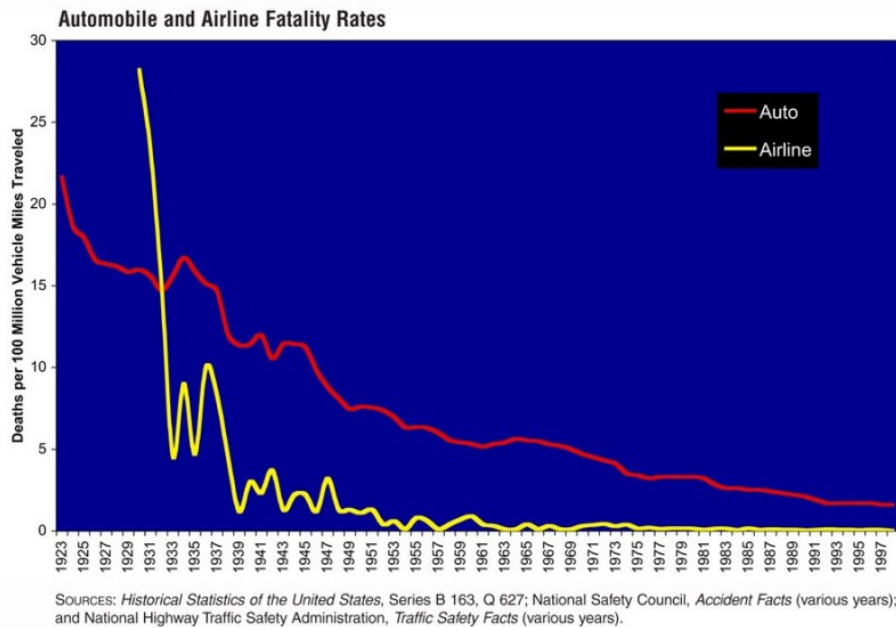
26) It's getting cheaper and cheaper to generate toxic e-waste:





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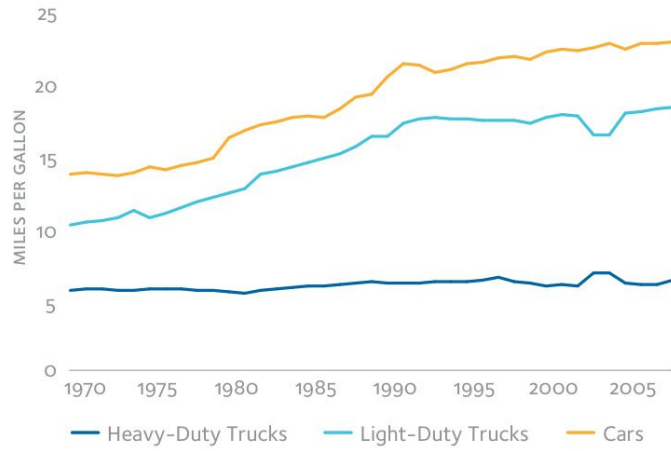
29) This chart doesn't include fatalities from flying cars because — oh right — *those still don't exist*:



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30) Again, no flying cars. We were promised flying cars. And jetpacks:

## U.S. MOTOR VEHICLE FUEL ECONOMY



Source: DOE, EIA. Data is observed fuel efficiency for the full fleet based on miles traveled and fuel consumed.

### Securing America's Future Energy

31) BONUS CHART: People actually have to work *more* hours than they did back in 1895 just to afford a simple sterling silver teaspoon:



**Exhibit 5: Labour time costs of commodities (1895-1997)**

Commodity	Time-to-Earn in 1895 (Hours)	Time-to-Earn in 1997 (Hours)	Productivity Multiple
Horatio Alger books (6 vols.)	21	0.6	35.0
One-speed bicycle	260	7.2	36.1
Cushioned office chair	24	2.0	12.0
100-piece dinner set	44	3.6	12.2
Hair brush	16	2.0	8.0
Cane rocking chair	8	1.6	5.0
Solid gold locket	28	6.0	4.7
<i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i>	140	4	35.0
Steinway piano	2400	1107.6	2.2
Sterling silver teaspoon	26	34.0	0.8
Oranges (dozen)	2	0.1	20
Ground beef (1 lb.)	0.8	0.2	4
Milk (gallon)	2	0.25	8
Television	∞	15	∞
Plane ticket: SFO-BOS	∞	20	∞
Antibiotic strep throat cure	∞	1	∞
Dental x-ray	∞	2	∞
Laptop computer	∞	70	∞

Source: 1895 Montgomery Ward Catalogue

Jefferies

Don't believe the optimists. Everything is terrible.