WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE FUTURE? Daniel T. Britt, University of Central Florida, Department of Physics, 4111 Libra Dr, Orlando FL 32816 and the Center for Lunar and Asteroid Surface Science, dbritt@ucf.edu

Introduction. Since the 1950's visions of our future in space were common. They included massive habitats, moon bases, asteroid mining, human Mars exploration, Phobos refueling bases, and many other features. In these visions the "future" always seemed 20-30 years away. But it has been 49 years since the first lunar landing and the future has remainded 20-30 years away. A major factor was, of course, the large drop in post-Apollo space exploration funding. However, there are several other structural reasons for this retreat of the future. These include:

- The political cycle vs. the planning cycle
- The rocket equation and gear ratio problem
- Launch costs
- The tyranny of TRL

I will review these factors, some of which are features that cannot be changed and some which can be changed. I will suggest some strategies that can advance us toward the future.