

How Is Smart Tech Transforming Survivalism?

When we think of survivalism, most people picture living rough – making our way in the wilderness by the skin of our teeth and the sweat of our brow. Hunting and farming and building shelters from scratch with nothing more than the strength of our hands and maybe the knife at our belt. Having the skills to eke out a living out of nothing can help to keep you alive in a survival situation, but we're not restricted to low-tech survival gear anymore.

How is smart tech transforming survivalism, and how many of these fancy toys can we expect to keep using if things go badly and the world catapults itself toward an apocalypse?

The Rise of the Silicon Valley Prepper

Using the words "Silicon Valley" and "prepper" in a sentence might seem like an odd juxtaposition, but a trend is beginning to pick up some steam. It became a joke and then a trend – people coming into tech money in Silicon Valley or other similar places around the world, and the first thing they did was start prepping for the end of the world.

Now that we've spent the last two years living through a relatively easy global pandemic – and we're saying "easy" as a broad term in that the world didn't end overnight and we're working on recovering from this extended tragedy – people aren't looking at preppers as the neighborhood crazies anymore.

Silicon Valley is filled with techno-futurists – and to these innovators, the best way to prepare is to assume that disaster

is never far away. This isn't surprising when you figure that these individuals are on the cutting edge of science and technology, which involves spending large stretches on how to break a system, so they understand how to fix it. The world as we know it is just one extensive system. Once you know how it breaks, it's easier to fix it once it does and be prepared for things that might go wrong.

**An easy, dirt-cheap way to withstand not just an EMP,
but any type of disaster**

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Being ready for the end of the world doesn't mean that you have to give up all your toys, though. A new breed of smart tech survivalist gear is beginning to emerge, often fueled by the needs and desires of these Silicon Valley preppers.

Building the Brave New Smart World

The Internet of Things (IoT) is growing in value every day. In 2021, it's estimated to be worth \$165.27 billion, with a projected growth rate of 13.15% annually, totaling a value of \$350.51 billion by 2025. Most of this is focused on residential smart devices and commercial and manufacturing devices referred to as the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT).

Everything, from the app-enabled lights in your home to the GPS in your car, can all be considered part of the Internet of Things.

It's easy to assume that all our toys and tech will stop functioning when the world ends, and in specific scenarios that might be correct – at least with modern technology. Current incarnations of the smart world aren't shielded against the EMPs caused by a nuclear explosion.

A few well-placed nukes could easily knock us back into the stone age. Even a strong coronal mass ejection – fancy astronomy terminology for a solar flare – can interfere with cell phones, computers, and other modern technology.

This hasn't stopped innovators and inventors from creating tools that will help to keep us powered and connected even if the grid fails and the world as we know it comes to an end.

Smart Toys to Add to Your Collection

Most of us have a cell phone of some sort. In fact, in a country of 330 million people, roughly 300 million mobile phones are in use in the United States. Many of us have laptops, computers, smart devices in our homes, and other parts of the Internet of Things sprinkled throughout our lives.

Most of these might handle a power outage, but they're not designed for an extended period of off-grid use. Here are a few smart toys that you should consider adding to your survival gear or bug-out bags.

1. BioLite

A good fire can keep you warm and cook your food, but thanks to devices like BioLite, it can even charge your phone. These unique portable fire pits collect the fire's heat and convert some of it into electricity.

They were lifesavers – literally in some cases – during the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in 2012. New Yorkers who spent days or weeks without power could stay warm and charge their devices just by burning any renewable biomass they had handy.

2. American Red Cross First-Aid App

Taking a first aid class is a great way to learn the basics, but it's one of those things like studying a new language – if you don't use it every day, you're going to forget something important.

The first-aid app [released by the American Red Cross](#) offers step-by-step instructions on how to treat the most common injuries and illnesses if you can't immediately get access to medical attention or emergency services. You don't even need to worry about having internet access because all the information is pre-loaded and accessible offline.

3. High-Tech 3D Printed Materials

3D printing is good for more than just creating plastic figurines. It's quickly becoming one of the most valuable tools for creating a variety of different materials. A good helmet, for example, can save your life – even in an apocalypse – if you crash a motorcycle. Still, traditional materials are suitable for one crash before you need to source a replacement.

3D printed micro lattice pads can help make helmets more functional and safer to wear. These designs absorb and dissipate energy than traditional pads, [decreasing ballistic transient deformation by 66%](#) and blunt impact acceleration by 21.7%.

4. Portable Power Outlet

BioLite is great if you've got fuel to burn or a safe place to start a fire, but if neither of these things is available, you'll still need something that you can use to keep your devices charged.

A portable power pack or power outlet is essentially just a fancy battery you can use to keep things charged for a short period. The number of charges you get out of each pack and the amount of time it takes to recharge will vary depending on its size and the devices you're charging.

5. GPS

Unless the apocalypse that ends the world is a meteor shower or some massive solar flare that knocks out our satellite network, the chances are high that GPS and other satellite networks will still function for a while at least.

Don't rely on your cell phone for this, especially since most GPS apps also require mobile internet to download maps, something you might not have access to if the cell phone infrastructure has fallen apart.

Instead, invest in a separate GPS device that can access the satellite networks directly. You may only receive coordinates and directional information, but it's still better than being lost in the woods.

6. Lifestraw

Thriving in an apocalypse is challenging, but surviving only has four main requirements: food, water, fire, and shelter.

Boiling water can make it safe to drink by killing any microorganisms in the water, but this can be time-consuming or even impossible if you don't have a heat source or a pot to boil water in. Life straws make it safe to drink directly from natural water sources by filtering out 99.99% of microorganisms.

7. Graphene Clothing

Graphene is a material usually associated with tech, but it's starting to show up in outdoorsy gear like jackets, tents, and even hiking boots. In addition to being lightweight, graphene can protect you in a variety of different situations.

With ten layers, it can stop bullets easier than steel can. A graphene jacket is currently in the works, and if it's successful – and affordable – it could potentially shape the way we look at survival gear moving forward.

Stay Safe out There

We may picture living off the grid and roughing it in the wilderness when we think about survivalism, but that doesn't always have to be the case. There's a growing number of inventors and innovators who are creating new ways to keep our tech with us and use it to our advantage, even as the world is falling apart.

This isn't to say that you should neglect your survival skills and rely solely on smart survival tech. There are situations where even the hardest tech won't survive. In those scenarios, you'll have to rely on the skills you've learned and your wits to stay alive. Smart survivalist tech should supplement those situations rather than the only way you know how to survive.

If we run into an SHTF scenario, we'll need to learn and adapt quickly to survive. Be prepared for anything and stay safe out there.



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