



Written by [James Heiser](#) on January 27, 2010

Bill Gates: Prophet of Doom

Bill Gates, a man whose company's primary product gave the computer industry the infamous "blue screen of death" is apparently stepping up to the role of becoming the prophet of more traditional disasters: famines and floods; plague and pestilence; wars and rumors of wars.

[According to InformationWeek.com:](#)

Bill Gates said he fears Earth might become a post-industrial wasteland plagued by heat, chronic food and energy shortages, and rampant disease unless governments and private organizations invest more time and money solving what the Microsoft chairman believes are the world's most pressing problems.



"If we project what the world will be like 10 years from now without innovation in health, education, energy, or food, the picture is quite bleak," said Gates, in his annual letter from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, published earlier this week.

"Health costs for the rich will escalate, forcing tough trade-offs and keeping the poor stuck in the bad situation they are in today," Gates wrote. The damage won't be limited to the Third World, Gates said. "In the United States, rising education costs will mean that fewer people will be able to get a great college education and the public K-12 system will still be doing a poor job for the underprivileged," he said.

Gates added that stalled innovation could ultimately lead to a hotter planet where food and energy are in short supply.

Gates' Microsoft has long faced accusations that its products weren't "innovative" when they were originally released by his primary industrial competitor, Apple. Now it appears that Gates is acquiring even his "doom and gloom" scenarios from a member of the board of directors at the Cupertino, California-based competitor: former Vice President Al Gore.

However, Gates' "ten-year" projection appears to be an upgrade from Gore's original version — Gore plays it much safer, selling books projecting the end of the world several generations hence.

But why, one might wonder, has Gates suddenly begun to preach environmental Jeremiads? Another citation from InformationWeek might provide a few answers:

But Gates said the [sic] all this bleakness can be avoided if enough money is spent developing technological and social innovations that add efficiency to agriculture, medicine, education, and other key fields.

"Rich governments need to spend more on research and development," said Gates.



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A year into an American presidency that appears to be driven by the conviction that every problem known to mankind can best be addressed by a government bailout with borrowed money, Gates' call for "rich governments" to "spend more" comes at the very moment that even the Obama administration appears to be waking up to the fact that they do not have enough money to do everything their hearts desire. Meanwhile, someone needs to get Gates a memo explaining that the looming disasters he's proclaiming didn't make it past to a "beta release" after they crashed in Copenhagen, and they appear to be failing to hold up under post-Climategate scrutiny.

In the meantime, get ready to watch for Bill Gates wandering through Seattle's Pike Place Market wearing a sandwich board declaring that the end of the world is at hand.

Photo of Bill Gates: AP Images



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