

Human inventions may impact and change our genes over time

Of all living things, why do humans alone create advanced technology?

A clue comes from a [recent paper](#) on a genetic change that helped our ancient ancestors tolerate smoke after fire was invented. It's the latest finding to bolster the increasingly compelling notion that natural selection...forces humans to adapt to our own inventions.

In th[is] paper[,],...scientists identified a genetic mutation that allows us to better break down the most toxic chemicals that make up wood smoke. The authors showed that all present-day humans carry this mutation, which is not present in chimpanzees or...any other animals.

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Harvard anthropologist Joseph Henrich observed that the invention of milking animals would have pushed the spread of genes that allowed people to digest lactose. But before that gene spread to all potential milk-drinkers, some communities invented cheese and yogurt, which are much lower in lactose. Those inventions...may have dampened the spread of lactose tolerance.

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The interplay between cultural and genetic changes represents what Henrich calls a major biological transition...In other words, when humans invent technology, we also reinvent ourselves.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [The Inventions That Changed Our Genes](#)