30/30

30 ideas for 2030

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Illustrations **Edmon de Haro**

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Ideas for the future

30 ideas for 2030 is the result of different conversations maintained over several weeks at Infonomia about some of the topics we consider to be the most transcendental in areas related to our projects: innovation, technology, the transformation of organisations and even social change and personal and professional development. The debates have stemmed from one of our favourite themes, rooted in the present but with the intention of predicting the questions and approaches that will became key over the next few years.

This document collates the result of each of these conversations in a series of key ideas. We have no desire to pontificate; our wish is that these key ideas be a source of inspiration for readers' own personal reflection on one, several or all of the topics discussed. We are convinced that the best future will not be improvised, and we offer our two cents to prove our case, exploiting once again the collective intelligence of a community of Infonomists who continue to grow through the years.

1

Business

- Today a business can be considered small according to the number of its employees yet still be international with a turnover of millions. The categories we have used to classify business during the 20th century are set to lose their meaning in the 21st.

- Small and medium businesses have a greater capacity to generate new ideas, but it is harder for them to access the market. For large businesses it is difficult to be innovative, but they have much greater reach into business markets. Collaboration between the two will have to become a more natural progression.

- Until now, the majority of businesses have given as much importance to the conception of new products as they have to manufacturing and advertising them. But increasingly, businesses must decide which part of the value chain they wish to occupy in order to focus exclusively on a particular task.

- In the 20th century, the purpose of capital was to obtain methods of production; in the 21st, it will be focussed on advancing distribution. Capital in the 21st century will be needed to achieve visibility in a different way from the methodologies of the past.

- Airbnb provides thousands of rooms for rent without owning any of them; Kiala offers a delivery service without a single drop-off or pick-up point in a building of its own. These are examples of a new level of liquid business that is becoming increasingly common.

- The main changes in what we understand by a business will be demonstrated in the relationship between the different participants and the role they each play. We are already seeing clients who have an active role as co-creators or even as capitalist members in businesses.

- Large businesses will become more powerful, but markets will tolerate the co-existence of many small businesses that have no interest in becoming larger, because their value will be in the difference that their own niche market demands.

- We are heading towards an economy of purpose, in which for many businesses creating profit will not be the objective, but the way to achieving a goal. Having a purpose that goes beyond financial gain will attract professionals and clients who are motivated by the opportunity to make history.

Children

- It makes no sense for us as adults to criticise 'the youth of today'. From the perspective of the time-old question of whether the chicken or the egg came first, this is an obvious case of when it was the chicken.

- Society needs a children's perspective just like large companies need start-up companies to change their essential way of operating. We should put less emphasis on educating children and pay more attention to how we as adults can learn from them.

- One characteristic of children today is that they get easily bored, which is a consequence of us imposing our time structure on them. We organise their time by the hour and when they find themselves with an unscheduled free hour, they don't know what to do with it.

- Children experience feelings of sadness at a younger and younger age, and they will pay a huge price for this in the future. One of our main concerns as a society should be how to ensure our children are happier.

- Children are much more than the objects of a school, yet this is the underlying focus in the majority of cases that deal with children or young people as a problem.

- We need the whole community to be involved in educating children, and go beyond the family-school environment. We need a greater inherent variety in educational activities, such as creating groups of trust with the capacity to enrich children's experiences.

- Children today no longer have the streets as an extra playground away from school or home. But this is not so much a problem of space as of time. Why can we not systematically set aside more unscheduled time at school for discovery and for playing outside the classroom?

- Education should not consist of making children tidy their rooms so much as teaching them to understand the difference of freedom and responsibility that activities outside this private environment require when they are in public spaces that they have to co-habit and share with others.

Chinanize

- The change that China might bring about to the world is currently a moot point. We find ourselves in a unique historic situation in which many factors depend on how an important part of humanity manages the present situation.

- China is an equation with many variables; a disruption in contemporary history that, like all disruptions, could have unexpected effects. We cannot speculate any further on China without specifics, because whatever happens there affects us all and will continue to do so for some time to come.

- The myth of China as a supplier exclusively of low-cost products still needs to be dissipated. We see it as some sort of factory for the world, a factory that never innovates or develops advanced technology, whose only value is in its low-cost workforce.

- It's not about knowing whether the rest of the world will follow suit, but rather knowing when and how. If businesses don't try and find a strategy that aligns them with China or with Asia in general, as the fastest-growing part of the world, they will be missing an opportunity.

- Europe lacks historic modesty in comparison with China, which for thousands of years had the technological, commercial and even cultural advantage, but which over the last few centuries has simply shown a lack of interest in the West.

- We can't blame China for becoming the world's factory. The West has facilitated and encouraged the process enormously. Many fortunes have been made buying from one there and selling to hundreds here.

- The West also holds attractions for China. As we think the Chinese influence could reach us here, the westernisation of China is equally possible, leading to a cultural and political melting pot and greater global consciousness.

- Years ago we talked of China as a threat and as an opportunity, even though the former seemed much more evident. Today there are more and more examples of European and Spanish businesses that have generated their big opportunity in the Chinese market.

4

City

- With more than half the world's population living in cities, and the percentage growing rapidly, it seems obvious that the solutions to many global problems facing humanity today must be urban solutions, created by and for cities.

- In the current climate we are reassessing the concept of a nation that we have known for the last few hundred years, and the growing prominence of cities perhaps implies a return to governmental structures like the *polis* of ancient Greece, or medieval city-states.

- The identity of a city is much more multicultural than that of a nation. Big cities are no longer the cultural property of one ethnicity or one language, as they were in the 19th and 20th centuries.

- Civilisation was created in cities, and it may well end there. Cities cannot continue to grow indefinitely. Like so many other environments, there is a size limit after which it becomes very difficult to run a city efficiently.

- My expectations for the future of cities are positive. In the past, cities have proved that they are vibrant and intelligent organisms, with the capacity to evolve and change rapidly in order to improve their circumstances.

- From now on, cities need invisible infrastructures, which will be a handicap if they are reliant on the decisions of politicians who are used to evaluating the suitability of a project according to the votes generated by an image of them cutting a ribbon.

- Paradoxically the city is both the problem and the solution. The population concentration in cities also generates the level of diversity and interaction that is the ideal environment for the innovation generation.

- The concept of the smart city emphasises software, but we must also be aware of the hardware and of a new design of urban spaces that will make cities into places where we can live and work better.

Co-creation

- Most people are still unaware of the existence and use of new tools available today that allow us to take part in hundreds of co-creation projects and to develop our skills.

- The evolution of these co-creation tools and practices could result in a totally different type of company from what we know today as the norm; organisations in which people not only co-create, but also co-capitalise, co-manage, co-produce, co-administrate and co-distribute.

- Many initiatives for open innovation still focus on opportunism. People follow them because they are on trend and they improve the image of the brand. Co-creation is not about doing people a favour by letting them take part.

- Co-creation will end up as no more than an anecdote if it is limited to simply allowing customers to give opinions on the process of designing a new product or service, but it will be a revolution if it covers needs that so far have not had a part in the mass production market.

- Traditional manufacturing technologies are designed for a type of company that is not interested in co-creation because they make their profits from millions of customers, not from thousands or hundreds. Without the ability to manufacture in a different way the idea of co-creation will not be as successful.

- The normal process is to first design a new product or service, and then to make it visible through media and advertising. A product or service that has been co-created with its users will go viral in a much more natural way, and as a result will find its space in the market with no need for promotional ploys.

- Co-creation between two brands or companies automatically presumes a competitive element of differentiation, a potential blue ocean, because the result would be difficult to obtain if it weren't as a direct product of this specific collaboration.

- One of the obstacles to a greater co-creation of products and services is the lack of a collaborative culture, and to this we need to add the lack of other more practical requirements such as suitable places, tools, processes of recognised effectiveness, and legislation.

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Collaboration

- Historically it's been easier to compete than to collaborate. As beings who are not as rational as we like to believe, to work against each other requires less energy than collaboration. But new technologies are reducing notably the effort involved in collaborating.

- The ability of organisations to collaborate has a lot to do with the type of people involved. If companies want to be more collaborative, they need to start by changing their company profile, and the abilities and skills that they look for in the people they employ.

- It's difficult to introduce a culture of collaboration to companies when we're not taught to collaborate in our professional training. How many universities encourage students from different faculties to mix, apart from on campus?

- Collaboration emerges spontaneously when there is no economic value in play, when we practice hobbies or activities with no financial gain. The current economic system prevents collaboration because it's structured as a winner/loser game; where for one to win, the other must lose.

- The basic problem facing collaboration is one of incentive. The logical response is why should we collaborate. But looking to the future, the only possible answer is because we won't have any other choice.

- Science has already furthered the business management environment with regard to the need for collaboration. For a long time now it's been difficult to write a scientific article without the input of more than one researcher.

- Before us we face the challenge of making the most of being in a position to collaborate as we never have before, to achieve social and economic advantages. We are at an important point of historic change, although we may not realise it until 30 years from now.

- We still have to invent the formula that proves it's better to collaborate than to compete. To go from competition to collaboration depends on how we do it, and this equation is yet to be defined.

Consumerism

- The reduction in the spending power of the middle class will result in a type of shopping that favours low-cost products and own brands, leaving very few circumstances in which consumers are prepared to pay more for premium value.

- This type of consumerism turns out to be problematic when buying things becomes a substitution for other parts of life, such as relationships with other people or enjoying the simple things.

- Perhaps we buy more than we physiologically need to fill a spiritual gap. Where have we come from? And where are we going? These are questions that are too complex, so I distract myself from being unable to answer them by buying things.

- Beyond the effects of the economic recession, we are currently in the middle of the process of de-greasing ourselves from the nouveau riche consumerism produced in Spain during the boom years of economic growth and the availability of practically unlimited credit.

- It's difficult to determine where consuming ends and over-consuming begins. Consumerism is essential for society, but over-consuming carries dangerous factors that can even spell its own end. Over-consuming is consuming purely for its own sake.

- The current trend for over-consuming is seen as a reaction to centuries of deprivation, and even of hunger and misery. Perhaps, when an advanced economy reaches a certain level of wellbeing, consumerism loses its momentum, but we cannot expect the same from emerging economies. The opposite is more likely.

- The first initiatives of a sharing economy promote a system of access versus possession that could work towards a solution to the problem of over-consuming, by allowing our anxiety for acquiring novelties to be sated without the negative effect it has on our wallets or on the environment.

- The increased transparency that we get today with the internet and social media favours the growing possibility to vote with our pockets, and to change the world by buying or choosing not to buy products, depending on the ethics of the companies that distribute them.

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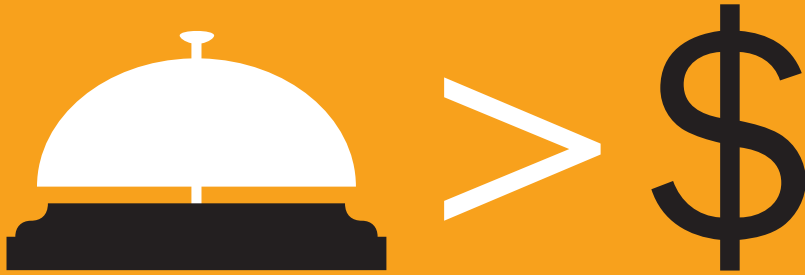
Customers

- The etymology of the word client comes from *incline*, or *to bow*, as a shop assistant will serve a customer, and from *cliere*, to esteem. These two meanings correspond with the two traditional and opposing definitions: somebody who serves and somebody who exploits.

- Within the online shopping experience, the value of the relationship with customers is vastly increased. The customer is no longer simply somebody who is buying a product, but also somebody who can take on the role of adviser, like customer service, or even co-creator.

- Whenever I hear the phrase customer-centric strategy, I ask myself, is there any other type of strategy? Then I look for some and find that very few shops actually apply the theory.

- Shops are so oriented to attracting new customers that they forget to worry about keeping the ones they already have. Although research shows that it costs more to gain new customers than to encourage loyalty from existing ones, shops give more importance to short-term results, and to the tactics of an immediate vision instead of a long-term strategy.

- A close relationship with customers creates a problem of scale. When a company builds this relationship it standardises it and tends to convert the customer into just another piece in the production line. Large businesses need to find the way to convert this art into a science.

- A long-tail distribution characterised by some niche markets favours a close relationship with the customer on the basis of shared values and a vision of the world. A customer who is treated like a friend will be more loyal, but will also be more demanding and difficult to manipulate.

- In an increasingly complex world, expert assessment will become more valuable when it comes to making a purchase decision. But companies such as the largest banks will need this value to come only from a trustworthy and reliable source.

- Companies need to stop being obsessed with their competitors and start focussing on their customers.

De-intermediation

- As the different worlds of markets, systems and participants become more complex, the need for intermediaries between them increases. These intermediaries should be seen as connectors, and we should now be substituting the idea of intermediation for that of connection.

- The idea of intermediation that is founded on maintaining a dominant position with no benefit to the chain of value will disappear. New ways of intermediation will appear and flourish, offering higher value at a more appropriate cost.

- Intermediation has not been a problem in itself, it has simply emphasised the difference between its cost and the value it offers.

- Much intermediation has based the cost of its supposed value on a context of informational asymmetry. As soon as the internet makes this asymmetrical information symmetrical, it becomes more difficult to sustain intermediation costs that don't correspond with its value.

- There are many words to define the revolution that the internet is causing in so many fields, but if we had to choose a single term it would undoubtedly be de-intermediation.

- The internet allows the relationship between the producer and the consumer to return to how it used to be before the evolution of an industrial society caused it to disappear. The distance that grew between them has produced many intermediaries that will now become obsolete.

- To what point are we not substituting physical intermediation for digital without truly reducing the distance between the product and the consumer? One example is buying music directly from the musician while Apple takes a commission for every MP3 it sells that is comparable to what FNAC makes from selling CDs.

- After more than fifteen years of popular internet use, there are still big opportunities for re-intermediation that will come from radically different dynamics than existing ones, which will only prosper if they have the potential user as the main beneficiary.

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E-Commerce

- E-commerce must consist of something more than converting a product line or catalogue into html. The easiest, most efficient, intuitive, and generally smoothest way of shopping is still to be discovered in many areas.

- Many people would like to buy more online, but the big labels don't necessarily support this wish. Small businesses are still not really incorporated in the online system, due to the lack of greater collaboration and cooperation that is essential.

- The elimination of distributors as an inevitable intermediary in the physical world has barely started. The logic of the online process would imply that the producer and the distributor converge into one figure, so that each manufacturer or creator sells directly to the consumer.

- Many e-commerce initiatives do not appear to consider something that seems blatantly obvious: that e-commerce will only work when it offers an improvement on the physical shopping experience.

- Once the initial concerns about the slowing of the expansion in e-commerce are overcome, it is safe to say that over the next few decades the digital platform will become the predominant media for commerce.

- E-commerce must seek a closer relationship with the customer: a more intimate relationship that will end up including everything from co-creation processes with consumers to analysis and prediction tools that will go so far as to predict the buyer's own decision.

- The digital world seems to tend paradoxically towards the creation of large monopolies. It seems that each market is held up by a structure formed of one or two enormous companies that attend to the general demand, and hundreds of small companies that dedicate themselves to niche audiences.

- Is anybody wandering how everything will change, or about the social and economic implications when 50%, 60%, 70% or more of commerce ends up being digital?

Education

- What we now know about cognition should be enough to cause a revolution in education. But first schools need to stop seeing themselves as a place where citizens go to be shaped, and start seeing their primary function as the teaching of autonomous individuals.

- We learn much more when we experiment with things. We learn much more when we control our own learning process. The people responsible for education curricula ought to spend less time on WHAT to teach and more on HOW to teach it.

- We need to stop thinking of school as a physical space and start seeing it as a time for discovering, a time in which any situation can be converted into a moment of learning.

- Schools will be able to change only when we stop rating them according to short-term results (PISA reports etc), and begin to measure their success based on long-term criteria such as the ability of pupils to go on to function as autonomous individuals in the world.

- We can't change the education system without experimenting, without applying scientific methods to the new theories on cognition to learn what works and what doesn't, this is the way we will end up designing a new and more efficient education and schooling model.

- Just as with food and clothes, education became industrialised in order to reach everybody. But today the technology exists to be able to apply techniques and processes of mass customisation to this industrialised education in order to make it more suitable to each individual.

- School should educate pupils for life, and that doesn't just mean simply filling pupils with content, but providing the training for skills such as socialisation and critical thinking. As the ancient Greeks said, it's not about filling vessels, but lighting fires.

- Every school's motif should be like this one announcing a development in education application: "We design experiences that make learning irresistible".
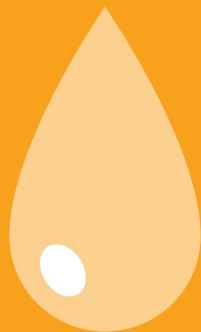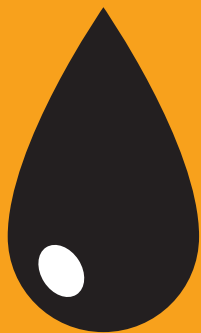
Effort

- We have lived through an era of the fatted calf, when many of us have been able to gain things with little effort. Any social, political or economic reform should have the intrinsic objective of greater meritocracy and a stronger emphasis on effort.

- A meritocratic society promotes effort, and makes it appear more attractive and more logical. Meritocracy is not only more fair, but also initiates a cycle that emphasises effort, and enriches society as a whole.

- I don't consider doing what we enjoy to be an effort. What concerns me is the effort that is overdue, which we should strive to carry out even though the results will not be immediate or for personal gain, but long-term and for the good of the whole.

- Our advance towards a greater meritocracy will not be the result of political or ethical renewal, but of technological changes that will favour greater democratisation and access to means of communication, production and even capital, which will make it easier to break down the barriers of the status quo.

- More effort will require an improved social visibility. The stories of success we see in the media have little to do with effort, and reports of how one person's effort resulted in a positive change for them or their environment are practically inexistent.

- The concept of effort needs to undergo a process of conceptual redefinition. Instead of relating it to divine punishment (you earn your bread with the sweat of your brow), we should link it with the positive feeling of being able to make the world a better place.

- Effort is a great personality former. Stepping outside your comfort zone and applying effort to overcome a situation brings about a positive return in the form of personal improvement.

- We do not emphasise enough the fact that it is the effort of others that makes everything around us function. Acknowledging things that others do for us would result in a greater and better effort from everybody to do our work well.

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Happiness

- This era has been named by some as the Great Depression. But the reference is not to the economic crash of 1929, rather to the population's increasing inability to be happy.

- The future sketches a dangerous growth in the industry of happiness. Everything points to a continuing growth of unhappiness, and the risk that the majority of unhappy people will seek out a quick chemical or technological solution, in the creation of virtual worlds where they can hide themselves away from real life.

- How much unhappiness comes from comparing our real lives to those we see in the endless fake stories that surround us, from advertising to sensationalist media? Perhaps one problem is society's inability to decode these fictitious images.

- Happiness presents two different problems: 1) how to attain it, and 2) how to recognise that we have it. The formula for happiness is extremely complex because it refers to a totally subjective human perception.

- Being happy is like being in the flow, and attaining a maximum number of our personal aspirations without becoming overwhelmed. It implies finding a balance between satisfaction and stress. Happiness is simple; the difficulty comes in achieving that simplicity.

- In the West we have formed the idea that being happy consists of possessing things. But happiness is being what we want to be. It has a lot to do with making sense of things, and that means it requires an effort to learn how to be happy.

- Learning to be happy should be a mandatory module at school. And as adults we should continue to train ourselves. Just as more and more people are taking up sport because they consider it beneficial, we should include happiness training in our daily routine.

- We are fixated almost exclusively on external factors of happiness, and we ignore the internal factors even though we know that the people who are happiest are those who have a natural aptitude. In order to be happy, the first thing is to want to be.
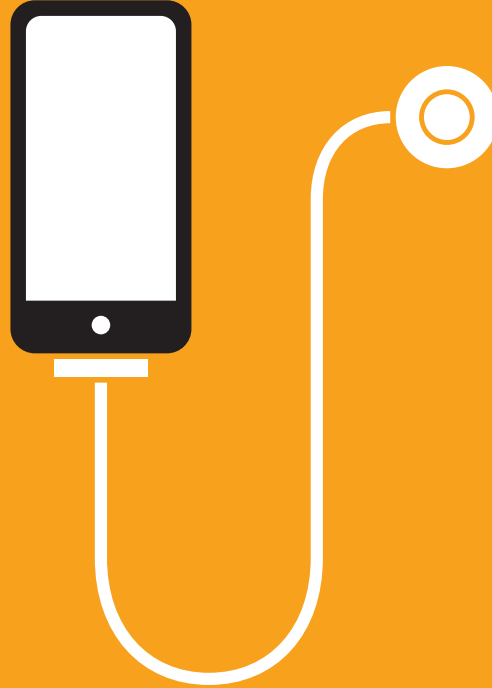
Health

- In the future health may become the main thing we all desire. In addition to the increasingly complex and expensive advances in medicine, a trend has developed that is heading towards a model in which access to healthcare depends progressively on whether we have the money to pay for it.

- Technological advances imply that health services for the prevention of illness and the provision of therapies will become cheaper. We will have access to medicines and technology that are currently only available in hospitals, and this will force today's concept of healthcare to change.

- As technology and the prevention and detection of illness become cheaper, and as patients become more aware, informed and proactive, the role of doctors will change. We will no longer go to see the doctor with a complaint, but to propose a possible diagnosis.

- In the past we have paid very little attention to researching the efficiency of the health service. One of the main challenges it will face in the future will come from the need to reinvent the system of health economics.

- Another important challenge in the future will come from our ability to manage efficiently our increasingly detailed knowledge. As a discipline, human biology has evolved into an arena even more complex than the physics of the 20th century.

- In the future healthcare will involve patients much more. The system needs to focus more on increasing the knowledge and awareness of society about the rational use of public health resources.

- Healthcare should be focussed from a new perspective that pays more attention to maintenance than cure. It shouldn't be so obsessed with living the greatest number of years possible, but focus on how to live the best quality of life.

- It is possible that scientific and technological advances will change what we understand by healthcare, by considering not only the possibility of cure, but also by improving our normal potential and converting ourselves into superhumans.

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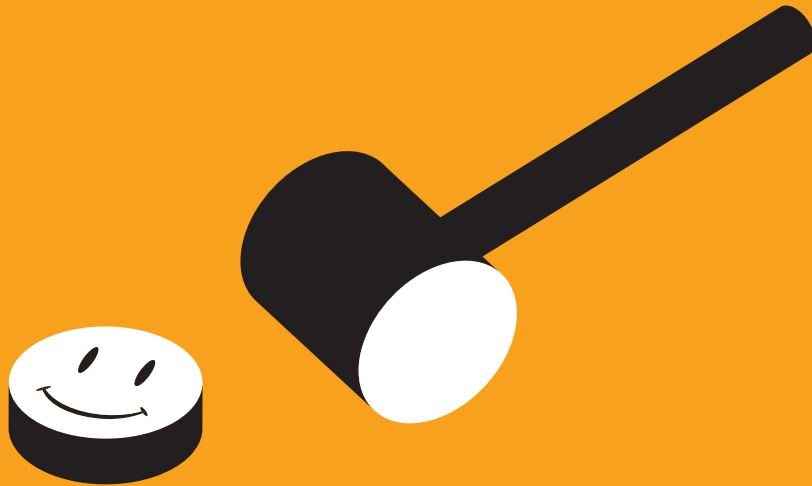
Law

- Everything suggests that over the coming years the legal system will become more complex. In addition to the accelerated appearance of new social, business and technological environments, we also have to consider globalisation and more interaction in places with a different legal structure.

- We need to change from a society of laws to one of principles. Instead of dealing with what we can and can't do, we should concentrate on establishing simpler relationships among people, with principles that are more easily adaptable to each specific situation.

- More culture and better education are the only alternative to spending more money on an increasingly complicated structured system of laws and rules and on the policing and legal infrastructure needed to enforce them.

- The less culture we have, the greater the need for rules and laws. The only way to achieve a free society with less need for regulation is culture. The next few years will see either an increase in culture or an increase in the need for the control and complexity of regulations.

- The growing feeling among the population that the law is there to punish rather than protect is not a good situation. This is something that happens with something like the increase in fines that is clearly aimed at raising money rather than increasing people's safety.

- Laws can have different effects according to how they are compiled and applied. Rules can be established to make things easier or to prevent or complicate movement. Legislation can be created with the purpose of preventing crime or simply to punish it.

- Slow justice is no justice. The application of the law should be simplified and more technical. Although the final judgement or sentence is a human decision, all procedures prior to that ought to be far more technical.

- A big problem of the law is that it is very open to subjective interpretation. Perhaps the time will come when society will demand greater impartiality in the application of the law, which will perhaps come from a system of more automated sentences.

Money

- Money was one of humanity's greatest inventions, in facilitating the social need to exchange resources. But then it started to be used to speculate on the value of those resources, which is a need that is not so social.

- There are two types of money: physical cash, which corresponds to a real value of things, and figurative money, which comes from the perception of future profit. It is this completely malleable perception that ends up generating value from nothing.

- Money needs a level of transparency that the recession has proved to still be too scarce among those who manage it. We don't need to eliminate money, but we do need a new type of relationship with it. Banking is necessary, but banks are not.

- One problem with money is that it is a universal measure of unmeasureable things: success, happiness, value of work completed, etc. The symbolic value of money, not its material worth, is what makes it so coveted.

- From the moment new technologies began to facilitate the exchange of products and services without the need for money, it has been undergoing a reinvention.

- The new online paradigm has facilitated the appearance and management of syndicates where different people or organisations share a series of resources that can be utilised by members whenever needed.

- The future of money is moneys; the generalisation of different systems of exchange that adapt to different situations of compensation, with the capacity to co-exist and to end the monopoly of money as the only possible system.

- Money today is mostly information about money; a purely countable note in the form of bits linked to the name of a person or a society. We are still at the beginning of a money revolution that will make the change from gold pieces to banknotes look like small change.

School

- The future of schools may be changing from being a space to being a time: a time of discovery and of activities that are much more varied and that can take place anywhere. Perhaps the future of school is that it should move outside.

- The children-school equation needs to be broken. I see the schools of the future as an interesting and appealing place for different generations and ages, as a place where we go at different times throughout our lives and not just during childhood and youth.

- Schools should abandon their model based on the acquisition of knowledge, and adopt a new model that develops skills; more like a laboratory where we can train for life.

- We record knowledge in books and lessons in order to publish it in a standard form, but by codifying it in this way we kill the 'why'. The best schools concur in not using books that are expressly written to be material for regulated learning.

- It's one thing to learn and another to understand. We only learn the things we think about. Every class, every lesson, should begin by commenting and working on something that has happened on that day in the world.

- Nobody begins their day – or ought to begin their day – knowing exactly what they will spend each hour doing. There is nothing in the traditional classroom experience that remotely resembles real life. Possibly – and not by coincidence – the most similar experience is the work protocol that is still maintained in many companies.

- The more procedurised the teaching, the more codified the knowledge taught, the more intense the destruction of children's interest in discovering new things.

- Today we know that the adolescent brain is extraordinarily creative, and that these years are one of the best cognitive times of our life, in which our brains produce a unique combination of boldness and curiosity. It's a real shame that at school we don't make the most of this circumstance.

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$$€ = mc^2$$

Science

- In general we are incapable of visualising the return of science, because scientists aren't sufficiently portrayed in society. As a consequence, we don't value scientists or their work in relation to the value they bring to society as a whole.

- One of the problems of science is the gap between the results of research and their practical application. Supporters of science need a long-term vision that goes against the normal short-term policies.

- The potential for science to stimulate the economy is more in evidence than ever, but the need for agents who can translate research into practices that will benefit society is crucial.

- Interest from the private sector in science is growing, as is the number of capitalist business people who believe that backing differential science with the potential for disruption will give them an important financial advantage.

- To rehabilitate science into society, perhaps we need to convert a scientific challenge into a collective challenge that will create the type of universal and generalised excitement that has in the past been generated by something like the race to put man on the moon.

- Science is currently going through three significant changes: 1) the acceleration of advances due to the cycle of better science = better laboratories = better science; 2) science is converted into technology and products more rapidly than in the past, and 3) science is now being backed by private capital.

- We have to apply science to the arts. Social sciences need a far more scientific and less ideological focus in order to help solve the important problems of humanity, which require greater intervention from this sort of discipline.

- Scientific investigations are in need of a new Renaissance. The future is a hybrid, and we are going to need increased transversality and multidisciplinarity in order to respond to the challenges of new disciplines and to create greater transference.

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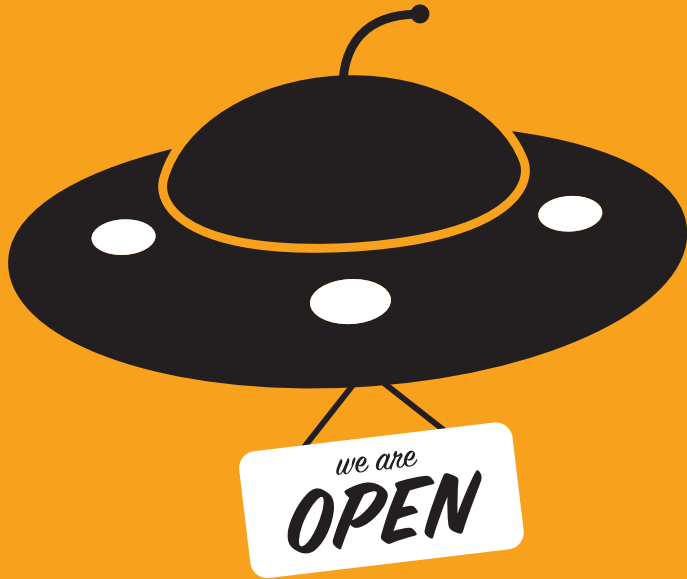
Shops

- Shop workers have the opportunity to meet and relate to their customers, and to receive feedback from them in order to refine the products they're offering. A physical shop should be the place where service is built.

- The shop needs to take on the role of the traditional marketplace. In order to survive, shops need to be a place for more than just a financial transaction. In an environment where markets are where the conversation happens, any shop that offers no more than a monologue will be left behind.

- Shops need to be more than just a space; they need to represent a time and a relationship as well. Attention has been given to interior design for shops, but not so much to designing a new time or context for shopping, or a way of relating the customer to the product and the vendor.

- According to estate agents, until now the three keys to the success of a physical shop have been location, location, location. But the new online shopping experience will focus on context, context, context.

- The interface of existing physical shops is now inadequate. A physical shop, while offering its own stock, has also to incorporate new technologies and innovative design of its space and shopping experience to be more in line with what online shopping can offer.

- Initiatives such as the one carried out by Tesco that features photos in tube stations of its products with barcodes that can be read by its mobile app, are an interesting mix of physical and virtual shopping, where the proposal of value indicates the method in order to focus on the context of the sale.

- Ideas like click and collect prove that the online/offline dichotomy is making way for a multi-channel approach through which each customer can choose one way or another at different stages of one shopping process and experience.

- A physical shop may be unable to compete with the reach of an online catalogue, but it can offer a minimum number of selected and recommended references, and in this way maintain the value of selection for those who are overwhelmed by such an excess of availability that they are incapable of making a decision.

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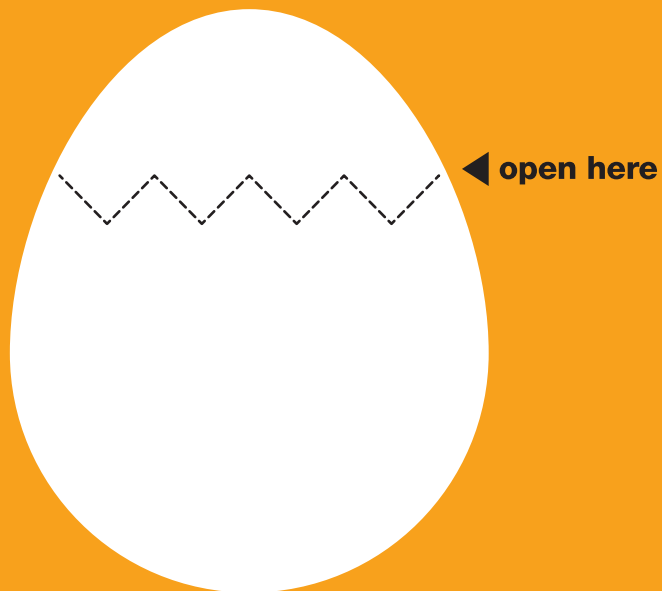
Simplifying

- Nature tends towards disorder and entropy. The normal and natural way is that things are not simple, and simplifying them or organising them requires an investment of time and energy.

- It's very difficult to make things simple; simplicity is a complex art. The principal function of design should be to reduce the gap between use and simplicity. The most useful design is an instrument that converts a complex function into a simple one.

- As long as the need to do more in less time continues to grow, making things simpler will be the only way to keep up, and simplicity will therefore become an important additional value of any product or service.

- There is a lack of social awareness that senses that we live in a time that is more complicated than we'd like. We only have to look at the number of advertising messages that use the idea of going back to simplicity, or that relate simplicity with nostalgic memories of the past.

- The book on usability, Don't Make Me Think, is about how to avoid thinking any more than necessary. But not because we're stupid, rather because there are better ways to use our brains than having to work out how a web or an app works.

- We have one culture and aesthetic of simplicity and minimalism, and another of excess. The society or era that gave birth to Rococo was not the same as the one that produced Bauhaus. There are cultures of 'less is more', and cultures of 'the more the better'.

- We still need to revaluate simplicity. There is still a certain disdain for the simple, and sometimes we see it as a method used for children or idiots.

- There is a certain arrogance from engineers, programmers and designers who assume that if the user doesn't understand how something works straight away the fault is theirs. Co-creation with customers can be a good formula for designing products that are simpler to use.
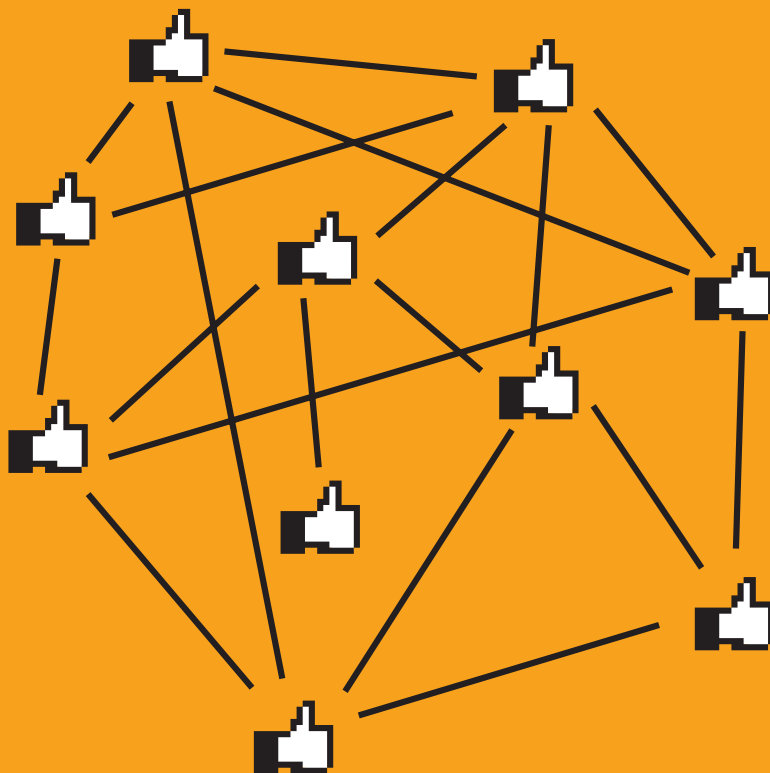
Social Networks

- It's sad to acknowledge that a system designed with the intention of facilitating contact between people has ended up as a few private systems, monitored by a single owner, with its main function as a profit-making business.

- It's a paradox that in an increasingly connected world there is so much loneliness. Social networks favour the quantity of connections, but they don't make any guarantee of their quality.

- When you send a communication to five or ten people you can have the feeling that you are creating a community. When you send it to more than 500 people, you're publishing something – and it's pure broadcasting. The quality of a network is linked to the concept of a circle of trust.

- The effect of the real connection power of social media is exaggerated. For example, it is a little-known fact that only 10% of a social network's users produce 80% of its messages.

- Social networks have been in existence since we lived in caves; they were not invented by Zuckerberg and co. We have to distinguish between the concept of social networks and the technological platforms whose objective is to use them to make money.

- The use of social networks makes sense in as far as we are able to use them to generate teams of people in real time who can work together for a specific objective.

- Social networks are neither good nor bad per se. It seems obvious, but often in the debate about the convenience of social networks we seem to forget that the quality of a network basically depends on the members that make it up.

- We ask too much of social networks. It might be true that young people waste a lot of time on them with chat that is mostly insubstantial, but the same can be said of previous generations who spent whole afternoons sitting around in bars.
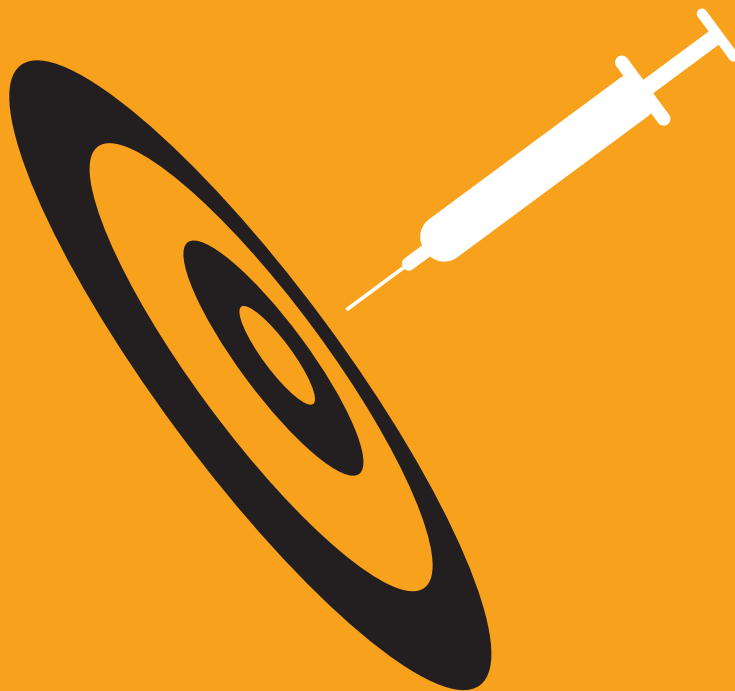
Social Politics

- You could say that the idea of social politics is an oxymoron. An initiative or a specific action is either political or it's social.

- As a society we are unaware that the science and technology already exist to overcome world hunger and poverty, and that the solution is in the hands of our governments. We are not sufficiently aware of the politics that affect the existence of poverty.

- We can't make effective social policies based on precise changes in one specific environment; we need a much more complex framework of transformations that will have a significant effect on many things at the same time.

- It would be an error to expect too much from state organisations and authorities when it comes to solving social problems. States only know how to change things with infrastructures, and these problems are about people.

- Social innovation requires a greater scientific focus; experimenting to find out what doesn't work and applying what is demonstrated to be effective in the medium and long term.

- A change in the policies of international commerce or of the use of pharmaceutical patents would offer much greater benefits than the work of dozens of NGOs on the ground. We ought to promote discussion and work to apply pressure to change these policies.

- The main challenge for the future consists of finding the mechanisms with which to transform political activism, so that we can ensure that mobilisation for social causes results in changes in legislation.

- We need a greater number of social entrepreneurs with the skills to make real changes, and the expectancy of stepping back once a specific objective is realised. The great policies designed in official offices have repeatedly proved to be ineffective.

FUTURE

Solving problems

- Children are never happier than when they've been able to solve a problem for themselves, and many scientists agree that there is no more pleasant feeling than when we find a solution to a problem we've been struggling with for a long time.

- What most distinguishes humans from other species on the planet is our ability to solve problems. To feel alive we need to confront our problems as challenges to resolve. Civilisation has advanced by solving problems, not by avoiding them.

- Over the coming years we will have even easier access to tools that will help us to solve thousands of tiny problems without having to rely on others (companies, authorities, etc) to solve them for us. This empowerment will be a historic revolution, and it will change the world.

- There are many problems that don't have a solution because we don't even see them as problems. And not because they aren't problems, but because they are so normal and every-day that we simply don't perceive them as such.

- Social problems tend to come from ideological principles or 'truths' that we usually assume must have a magic or unique solution. The resolution of these problems requires a greater level of experimentation, and that we consider many and varied routes.

- The resolution of problems supposes a self-sufficient system. Its number can be infinite, because every new solution and every change to the existing situation generates new problems to be solved. This is an extraordinary stimulus for the economy, for society and for people.

- Genuine entrepreneurs are driven by the satisfaction they feel when they resolve a problem. They can't help it, it's this stimulus that enables them to confront all the difficulties that come with being an entrepreneur.

- The processes aimed at detecting talent still place too much value on academic qualifications and experience. A CV should not be limited to listing these things, but should also include a description of resolved problems.

Talent

- We tend to think of talent as a gift with which we are born, but the development of true talent requires effort and determination. It is reckoned that to dominate a skill we need at least 10,000 hours of practice.

- We all have talents, but we need a series of conditions to discover them and to nurture them. Unfortunately, the school system is not designed to do this. Standardisation works against our talents.

- As the mass production system, and standardisation, disappear, it will become more important to detect and develop our unique and different talents.

- The need to develop our own talents constantly will make jobs and projects that favour the cultivation of these talents more attractive, granting less value to other incentives like a larger salary and better work conditions.

- We shouldn't see the development of talent from a purely utilitarian point of view, or as something to nurture only as something for hire. The development of our talents should be a primary source of happiness and *joie de vivre* for us.

- We are wrong if we expect people to acknowledge us for our talents. In fact, the economic system traditionally exploits the talents of others without them even being aware.

- The current system requires the management of talent according to demand. The focus should become the opposite, according to what's on offer, and the question should be, how can your talent give my project higher value? The best companies select people for their potential.

- Professional life in the future will become the personal management of our own talents. And even the best talents will therefore be worthless if they are not managed so as to be seen as valuable to others.

Teams

- At school we were never taught how to work in a team. We were made to work in groups, which is not the same thing. A group is a total; a team should be a multiplication.

- Teams allow a connection between the agility and energy of motivated individuals and the need for structure and organisation, and of the standardised procedures required by companies. Creating teams will be a skill that becomes more and more essential for every organisation.

- Projects and teams are concepts we know well. Teams will become more important within organisations as all tasks become projects.

- Knowing how to form capable teams in real time to solve problems, or come up with specific projects to solve specific needs, will be an increasingly essential skill for the survival of modern companies.

- Working in a team should be the antithesis of bureaucratisation. The future of innovation will not come so much from companies forming teams but from teams forming companies. If the 20th was the century of the organisation, the 21st will be the century of the team.

- A challenge for the coming years will be developing the skills to generate teams in real time to solve specific and precise problems. Traditionally teams have been created to last as long as possible, when the most effective teams are fundamentally transitory.

- A company works through a contract; a team works through a pact. The results can be very different. A team working to multiply its skill set and personal motivations can become an extremely powerful instrument.

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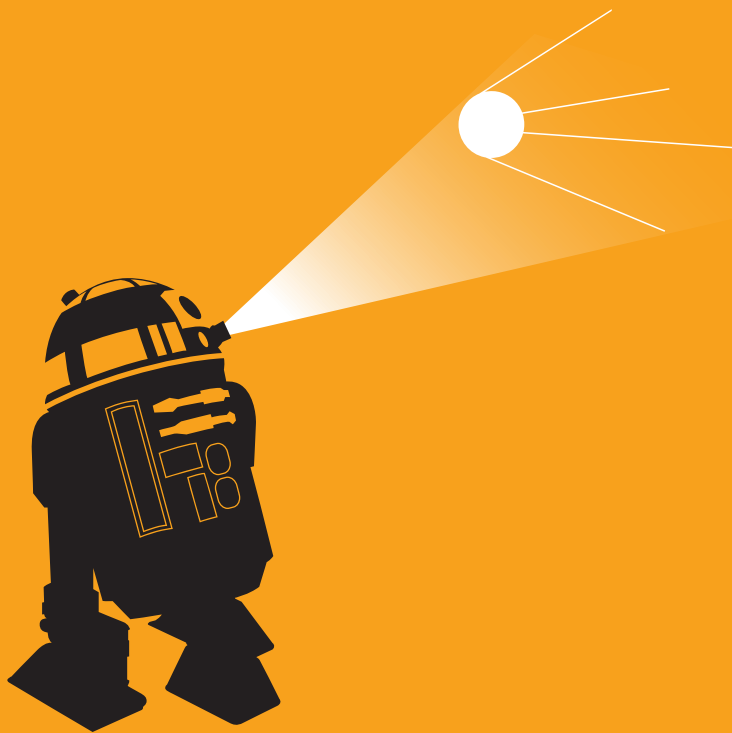
Technology

- 'The Nature of Technology' explains the relationship between science and technology in the following way: science seeks to discover natural phenomena; while technology is the programming of these phenomena in order to solve the needs of humanity.

- The human race has been technological since its first steps. The use of technology was what distinguished the first humans from other primates, and the level of ability to connect the brain with the hand and with the tool was our species' great advantage.

- The technological evolution of the 20th century, with a few exceptions, has been the continuation and refinement of the technologies discovered in the 19th century. But today we are faced with the emergence of new technologies that have the potential to cause real disruption.

- Technology today is advancing faster than we can work out how to make the most of it. We make very delimited use of new technology, as though we had just discovered fire and we could only gaze in marvel at it while eating our raw food.

- We need to make the ways in which new technologies are presented more usable and intuitive. Too often we fail to see things as a tool for improving skills, instead we see them as something in which we need to invest energy before getting any benefits.

- Either be a programmer or be programmed. You need to know how to exploit technology by understanding it and knowing how to use it to increase your human talents, or you'll be no more than an intelligent ape.

- If we put all our hopes in technology and only in technology, we will be disappointed. Without a purpose or basic skills to improve, technology is little more than useless and can even be harmful.

- We can expect two main disruptions in our relation with technology: 1) the accelerating capacity of machines to replace us completely in many tasks, and 2) the fusion of human and machine in technology as an integral element of our organism.

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Time

- Our bad relationship with time comes from not living in the present moment. We dedicate too much energy to thinking about the past and the future, and too often the time we are living is unrelated to the present.

- We mainly associate time with production capacity, and we have disassociated it with other factors and values. We feel we need to dedicate all our time to doing something, and if we spend time not doing something we feel like we're wasting it.

- Frustration often comes from spending our time doing something we haven't chosen ourselves. We should avoid things that waste our time, such as a work meeting that has no purpose and that with better organisation would not be necessary.

- Time is a value on the rise. The demand for time is becoming more generalised. Any product or service that is really able to save its users time will have a real competitive edge.

- Our frustration with the lack of time often comes from wishful thinking. We say we lack the time to do what we think we ought to be doing but that we don't really want to do or have the motivation to finish.

- The perception of time has a lot to do with the possibility of developing our own talents. Every minute spent on doing something we want to do is a minute of happiness, and every minute spent doing something else is a minute of frustration.

- The excess of information and our inability to manage it is strongly related to our growing anxiety about time. This situation creates a great opportunity in the development of systems that make understanding information more easy and intuitive.

- There are many things that require taking a break, such as ruminating on an idea. We should be recuperating the value of downtime, instead of obsessing about immediacy.
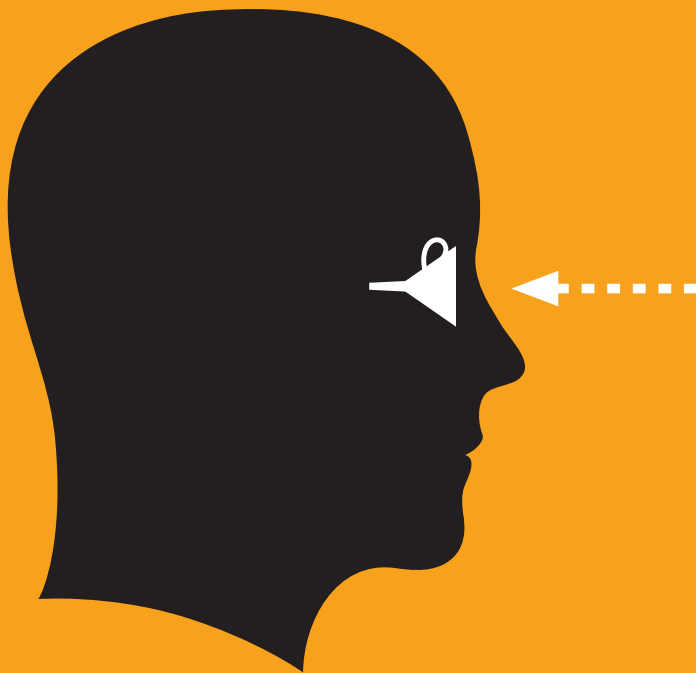
Visualising the information

- Over the coming years, as the need to facilitate understanding and interpretation of the growing amount of information and generated data becomes more urgent, the discipline of visualising information will become increasingly important.

- Contrary to what many people think, communication through images is more complicated than using text. To link ideas with images is no simple matter, and those who can do it well are few and far between.

- Schools should be including the image as an element of communication as part of their teaching. Drawing is still something that tends to be limited to primary school, and is then left until students opt for it as a technical or artistic speciality in later education.

- A new method for education and teaching in the 21st century should include how to look for information, how to analyse it critically, and how to associate it with visual images.

- Are design schools working with the latest developments in big data? In general, design continues to be tied to the use of the image more as an aesthetically attractive element than a functional semantic tool.

- We already have languages and tools for visualising information. The problem is that they are still not fully exploited, perhaps because the weight of several centuries of textual culture still considers the image as no more than an inferior substitute for words.

- What's the point of having the technical ability to obtain information in real time if we don't have the cognitive tools to analyse it also in real time? Well-organised visual information helps us to make these decisions.

- A semantically powerful image is more productive. The lack of time and the increase of information to process will force us to seek the productivity offered by an efficient way of visualising information.

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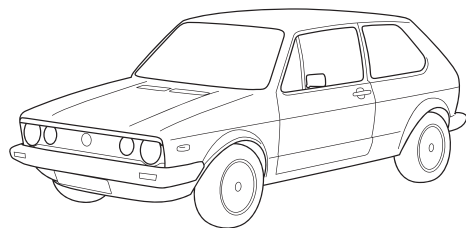
DIY

Work

- We are nowhere near prepared for the fact that in the near future existing technology will challenge many of the tasks that humans do today. Not just manual activities, but also mental and cognitive tasks.

- We need to begin a greater intellectual, political and social debate on the imminent changes in the standard of new technologies and how they will affect the world of business. The current economic downturn is distracting us from another crisis that may have an even wider effect.

- The future of work is not in competing with machines but in working with them, with an emphasis on the human characteristics we can use: intuition, sensitivity, artistic skill, the ability to convert the complex into the simple, etc. The future of work lies in being more human.

- In parallel to the work revolution, we are also due another education and training revolution, which will have to make the recycling of professional skills more easy, accessible and efficient. A new labour context will require a constant recycling of skills, and for this we will need new ways of learning.

- Companies will need fewer people, and those they do need will be required to do different things from the work we do today. The changes in the world of work will need people who are more flexible, autonomous, versatile, and who come with multi-functional training.

- One option for the future in work consists of enjoying better emotional health, based on personal discovery about what we like to do, and about being more aware of what we do well and how to convert it into something of value to others.

- Not only will we need new skills, but also a different personal relationship with them. Until now we have used our skill to hire out to a third party, but now it is more likely that we want to direct it ourselves for a personal objective and a personal project.

- We live in an employment market that is based on giving money in exchange for time dedicated, but we are moving towards a labour market that will work by exchanging money for value provided.

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The Next Big Thing

- As proposed in 'The Second Machine Age', the next great opportunity should be the appearance of mechanisms with the capacity to filter the huge amount of ideas produced by humans and locate the most appropriate ones to solve each of humanity's problems.

- We are due a revolution or reinvention of food, which will bring about a new way of producing and distributing provisions so that they reach the whole world easily and simply.

- As the sharing economy becomes mainstream and the majority of consumers give priority to access to goods over possessing them, the formula behind the capitalist system of the last few centuries will undergo a radical change.

- In the last fifteen years, the digital network has barely taken its first steps. In the next fifteen years, the babies born at the millennium will become adults and we will see how important changes begin to materialise from the theories we have now.

- We are heading towards a society in which machines will be capable of carrying out the majority of tasks that humans do today, including cognitive tasks, and we need to start to think of radical new ways to organise our society and our economy.

- The phenomenon of mobile apps still has not developed from an initial level, limited to viewing things on a screen. With the interaction of multiple gadgets, more sophisticated apps will become tools for carrying out daily activities.

- In the near future it will be essential to implement a new form of education that breaks away from the schooling method initiated by the industrial revolution and mass society, and focusses on training individuals to be more critical and entrepreneurial.

- The near future will require an important evolution of the current political systems, which no longer respond to a world that is more connected and that can no longer be based on the asymmetrical information that gave them their existence.

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30 ideas for 2030

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