



## FutureScape Issue 15 – November 5th 2010 – Big Ideas, Bad Ideas

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Welcome to the latest issue of FutureScape I hope you enjoy it. If this is not your copy and would like to subscribe, please sign up [here](#)

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### 1. **Convention 2020 Pulse Survey**

This is just a gentle reminder to complete our current Convention 2020 Pulse Survey. This survey is designed to provide a snapshot of how the conventions and business events sector may develop over the next 1-5 years. Here's the link:  
<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22BCDQ5WCBP>

Please share the link with anyone who might be interested. The survey closes on November 8th at 9am Eastern Standard Time, 1pm London, midnight in Melbourne and Sydney.

The survey is open to those who attend events as well as those who work in the events industry. Please share the link with your colleagues. The report will be published in mid-November.

## 2. Launch of Hotels 2020 - Beyond Segmentation – November 10th 2010

We are running a complimentary seminar in London to launch the report on our latest foresight study **Hotels 2020 – Beyond Segmentation**. This will take place in the Visit London Boardroom in London from 3pm - 4.30pm on Wednesday 10th November 2010. The report draws on research, expert interviews, international workshops and a global survey and focuses on future strategies for hotels in the next decade. Please share the invite with colleagues who might be interested in attending.

The study was undertaken by Fast Future Research in partnership with Amadeus. At the launch, **Rohit Talwar - CEO of Fast Future** and **Fabrice Marchand - Head of Product Strategy & Marketing, Amadeus Hotel IT** will share key findings from the study - including:

- Key drivers of change for the hotel sector - including the changing economic, customer and industry landscape
- Potential impact of personalisation and immersive technologies on hotels
- Emerging strategic and operational opportunities for hotels
- Beyond segmentation - what's next?
- Mapping hotel strategy in a turbulent world
- Key characteristics of successful branded hotel chains in tomorrow's world.

All attendees will receive a copy of the Hotels 2020 report. Place are strictly limited so to reserve a place at the seminar please email [hotels2020@fastfuture.com](mailto:hotels2020@fastfuture.com)

If you are unable to attend but would like to schedule a presentation on the study, please contact [rohit@fastfuture.com](mailto:rohit@fastfuture.com)

*Venue: Visit London Boardroom, 6th Floor, 2 More London Riverside, London SE1 2RR, UK*

## 3. When Futures Work goes Wrong

I recently had the misfortune to sit through a truly pointless discussion forum on preparing our children for the future world of work. The issue is real – the forum was pitiful. I get invited to quite a lot of events about the future of work as a result of our study on the [Shape of Jobs to Come](#). These are normally very good – this forum was the exception. Anyway as I observed this truly appalling piece of futures thinking, I had an epiphany – a chance to crystallise my thoughts on why futures work goes wrong. Here are four common reasons why futures projects fail:

- **When we want to address a current issue for government.** All too often, when faced with a real and present challenge, government commissions a 'futures study' to address it. In my experience, when the government does futures work, or hears the term futures, all too often it thinks or hears '**this is**

***something we can put off to a much later date or the next parliament.*** In the case of this education discussion, the challenge is how we get accelerated change to equip our children now and in the near future to step into the science and engineering careers that will support the growth industries of today or tomorrow. This is not an issue for 2020 or beyond – it is a burning platform with the UK slipping on many educational indices – for example falling from joint third to below the OECD average in 15th place in their rankings for the number of graduates produced .

- ***We use obscure or complex language.*** All too frequently concepts and developments are described in somewhat impenetrable terms. In the case of technologies, they are often described in terms of other technologies rather than their potential functionality, applications and impact.
- ***We assume the future will be much like the present.*** The discussion about the world of work in 2020 and 2030 was simply projecting a single view of the global economy, the nature of business and the role of work in our lives. The assumption was that the only real driver of change would come through the technologies we use. In practice, we have to be prepared for a range of possible futures – hence the interest in the use of scenarios and simulated worlds to consider a range of possible futures.
- ***We play down the impact of game changing developments.*** As futurists we often talk about breakthroughs that could literally change or reinvent the rules of the game for many industries. Often the ideas are seen by those on the receiving end as too far away or too far-fetched and so they end up talking about developments which are already in the marketplace. Current examples of such game changers could include genetic profiling, vertical farming and machines that can literally self-replicate themselves – see the [RepRap project](#) for more details.

What are the features that you think make for good and bad futures projects – we'd welcome your thoughts.

#### 4. **Wired's 25 Big Ideas for 2011**

The December 2011 issue of Wired highlights 25 fascinating 'concepts and theories' which they feel 'will shape your thoughts next year'. Here are five which we liked and haven't already discussed in some form in our previous issues:

- ***Cloudliving*** – The increasing shift away from owning to renting or sharing. Examples cited include car sharing schemes such as [Streetcar](#); streaming media rather than downloading it via [Spotify](#) for music or [Blinkbox](#) for TV and film; community lending schemes such as [SnapGoods](#); projects like [Landshare](#) in the UK that enable growers to access landowners' unused land.
- ***Ambient Thought Fusion*** – Understanding and leveraging how touch and tactile senses can influence our thoughts and behaviours. For example, MIT experiments found that sitting in an unpadded chair led people to drive a harder bargain.
- ***Natural User Interfaces*** – We are already familiar with the use of these devices to control gaming consoles such as the Wii. The suggestion is that 2011 will see the emergence of a range of gesture and motion sensitive interfaces to control household objects such as TV's and toasters.

- **Unitasking** – Driven by cognitive burnout and stimulus overload, people will increasingly seek out physical and mental space and web services to focus on a single issue.
- **Organ Electronics** – electronic devices that display ‘tissue-like mechanical properties’ to wrap around organs such as the heart and brain – enabling less-invasive mapping of cardiac signals and brain functions.

What are the most interesting ideas and developments you expect to be talking about in 2011?

## 5. Bad Ideas – Killing the Water Carrier

As I write, the future of Visit London (VL) is in doubt because its government funding is expected to be cut in March 2011. Let me declare immediately that they are one of our sponsors - however that's not my motivation. My concern is that short sighted actions could kill off a vital engine of economic development and source of inward investment. VL promotes tourism and attracts business events into London. Tourism is an activity where you can see an instant impact from your marketing efforts and is one of the sectors best positioned to drive up employment when an estimated 500,000 public sector jobs are forecast to disappear.

However, the biggest concern is that at the same time as government is talking about developing East London into a new silicon valley and attracting foreign entrepreneurs, we are suggesting shutting down one of the key mechanisms for attracting knowledge based sectors into the capital. The UK's [Business Visits and Events Partnership](#) estimates that conferences, meetings, exhibitions and trade shows bring in approximately £28.1 Bn in revenues and that the events sector has over 25,000 businesses employing around 530,000 full time equivalent staff across the UK.

Whilst all these events, revenues, businesses and jobs do not land in London's lap, as a capital city, it is essential that we continue to bring in our share of knowledge economy events from medical congresses to green technology fairs. As research from the [Business Events Council of Australia](#) in particular shows, these knowledge based sector events lead to funding and creation of research centres, create research grants, generate business opportunities for local firms and lead to the formation of vital international business and research networks. VL's role is to promote London internationally, target the key events which will bring most benefit and lead or support bids for key congresses.

In our last issue we highlighted concerns over a lack of vision driving the programme of UK public sector budget cuts. Killing off this vital engine of economic development is a prime example of how little some governments understand of the true levers job creation and long term wealth generation.

## 6. Rohit on the Road

In the coming weeks, Rohit will be delivering keynote speeches on Hotels 2020, the future of business intelligence, strategic innovation, Convention 2020, financing future infrastructure, new business models, winning in a downturn, the future of the

global economy, drivers of change, outlook 2020 and a number of industry focused themes. He is currently scheduled to be in London, Dublin, Barcelona, Geneva, Eindhoven, Mumbai, Seoul, Orlando, Las Vegas, Cancun, Los Angeles, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Santiago Chile. If you would like to meet with him or organise a speech for your organisation while he is in your city, please contact [rohit@fastfuture.com](mailto:rohit@fastfuture.com)

## **7. About Fast Future**

Fast Future is a research and consulting firm which focuses on helping clients anticipate and develop innovative responses to the forces, patterns of change and ideas shaping the future. To discuss your needs for research, consulting, a speech or workshop, contact [rohit@fastfuture.com](mailto:rohit@fastfuture.com) or call +44 (0)20 8830 0766

## **8. Forthcoming Dates for your Diary**

**November 12th – Future of Business Intelligence - SAP Value Vision Conference – London** <http://sapevent.co.uk/valueevision/>

November 17th-18th – Globe Forum Dublin  
<http://www.globeforum.com/en/Header/Forums/Dublin/>

November 24th-25th – Seoul MICE Expo  
[http://www.koreamice.kr/eng/eng\\_main.asp](http://www.koreamice.kr/eng/eng_main.asp)

December 1st – 2nd – Food Service Network – Eindhoven  
<http://www.foodservicenetworkeurope.com/>

## **9. Republishing FutureScape Content**

A number of people have asked to re-publish our content in their magazines, blogs, websites and newsletters. We are happy for you to do this – if you want to republish any articles, please acknowledge the source, provide a link back to our website and let us know you've done it.