

We help you think about the future so you can act today ...

# What's Emerging?

The latest news and information ...

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## August 2010

### Welcome to the end of August edition of What's Emerging.

Our apologies for missing the mid month edition but between Paul being on holidays for two weeks and then sick with a cold/bronchitis for three weeks and Sandy still on maternity leave we had to make some choices about priorities for clients and work life balance. To make up for the missing newsletter there are a few extra links than normal. As promised the new website is now up and running ([www.emergentfutures.com](http://www.emergentfutures.com)) and the graphic design layout is aligned with our Tumblr Blog ([www.emergentfutures.tumblr.com](http://www.emergentfutures.tumblr.com)) and our Twitter page ([www.twitter.com/futuristpaul](http://www.twitter.com/futuristpaul)). Please get back to us with comments about the new look and layout – the best feedback will win a \$100 book voucher and a random comment will also be selected for a \$100 book voucher. We hope that you continue to enjoy the newsletter and find it useful in your work and thinking. As always there are extra links on the website that we could not fit into the newsletter.

Cheers

Paul Higgins, Sandy Teagle, Kim Stewart, Anitha Mendonca, Syed Muqthar, and Samantha Kyle-Little

#### SECTIONS

[What we are writing about](#)

[Business Tips](#)

[What's Emerging](#)

[More Links](#)

→ [Visit our website](#)

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## What we are writing about

### Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age by Clay Shirky

Clay Shirky sets out a startling statistic in this book. That the connected population of the world watches over a trillion hours of television a year and that only 1% of that time is the amount of attention that could be spent creating one hundred projects each equivalent to the size of Wikipedia. A lot of the rest of the book is essentially a framework for looking at what could be done with that 1% and why people are willing to contribute into joint projects. [Read More...](#)

↑ [Top of the page](#)

## Business Tips

### An app for tough decisions

Dan Ariel (author of Predictably Irrational) has produced an application for procrastinators which has been built by a graduate student. It gives you a time frame to make a decision and if you do not make a decision in that time frame makes one for you. Is only for the iPhone at the moment but there may be an android version. [Read More...](#)

### A hierarchy of failure worth following

Not all failures are the same. Here are five kinds, from frequency = good all the way to please-

don't! **Paul Higgins: A good post from Seth Godin on where to fail and how.** [Read More...](#)

## 6 cool crowdsourcing business tools

In crowdsourcing, companies leverage the work of many distributed individuals with whom they have loose, ad-hoc relationships. Doing so can offer competitive advantages. [Read More...](#)

## Offer Assistant – add on for Firefox

Shop smarter, save cash! Offer Assistant partners with you to find deals and promotions when you search for products via Bing, Google, or Yahoo! Offer Assistant flags listings within your search results where discounts and promotions are available. [Read More...](#)

## What's Emerging

### San Francisco rolls out supply-and-demand pricing for parking meters

Here's how the plan works: A network of wireless sensors let the city keep track of which parking spots are empty. If a particular block never has available spots, the city raises the meter rates until it does. In places where parking is plentiful, rates fall. [Read More...](#)

### China becomes second biggest world economy

China has overtaken Japan to become the world's second-largest economy, the fruit of three decades of rapid growth that has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. **Paul Higgins: It is always important to remember that two economies with the same GDP but vastly differing populations are totally different from each other. A billion people with \$1000 income are a much different proposition to 50 million people with \$20,000 income each.** [Read More...](#)

### Clouds, big data, and smart assets: Ten tech-enabled business trends to watch

Advancing technologies and their swift adoption are upending traditional business models. Senior executives need to think strategically about how to prepare their organizations for the challenging new environment. [Read More...](#)

### Skype, going public, hopes for \$100 million from first offering

Analysts have speculated that Skype's sale, planned for the Nasdaq market, could be the biggest initial offering in the technology sector since Google went public in 2004 and raised \$1.67 billion. [Read More...](#)

### The overconfidence problem in forecasting

Most of us think that we are "better than average" in most things. We are also "miscalibrated," meaning that our sense of the probability of events doesn't line up with reality. [Read More...](#)

### What's next for philanthropy: Acting bigger and adapting better in a networked world?

Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, What's Next for Philanthropy argues that while the cutting edge of philanthropic innovation over the last decade has been mostly about improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of individual organizations, the next practices of the coming 10 years will have to build on those efforts to include an additional focus on coordination and adaptation—acting bigger and adapting better. [Read More...](#)

### US 'reverse brain drain' to India now in full swing

Years ago, the Silicon Valley beckoned the best IT minds from India. But the exchange of ideas and innovations after nearly two decades has reversed the trend. [Read More...](#)

### New York Times bestseller Seth Godin to no longer publish books traditionally

"I've decided not to publish any more books in the traditional way. 12 for 12 and I'm done. I like the people, but I can't abide the long wait, the filters, the big push at launch, the nudging to get people to go to a store they don't usually visit to buy something they don't usually buy, to get them to pay for an idea in a form that's hard to spread ... I really don't think the process is worth the effort that it now takes to make it work." [Read More...](#)

### 4 wild predictions for the smartphones and tablets of 2030

Reto Meier is an author, futurist and self-described "Android Developer Advocate for Google.

[Read More...](#)

## Student-loan debt surpasses credit cards

Americans owe some \$826.5 billion in revolving credit, according to June 2010 figures from the Federal Reserve. (Most of revolving credit is credit-card debt.) Student loans outstanding today — both federal and private — total some \$829.785 billion, according to Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of FinAid.org and FastWeb.com. [Read More...](#)

## Why did the crisis of 2008 happen? By Nassim Nicholas Taleb

This paper —while a standalone invited essay written for a special crisis issue of New Political Economy — synthesizes the various technical documents by the author as related to the financial crisis. It can also be used as a technical companion to The Black Swan (2007-2010).

[Read More...](#)

## New nanofabrication method could be as great as the invention of the printer

Researchers have developed a new way to fabricate designs on the nano-scale. The technique might change the industry the same way printing changed the information age. [Read More...](#)

## The science of a sparkling shave

A German company hopes a synthetic diamond material, engineered at the nanoscale, becomes a shaver's best friend. [Read More...](#)

## Digital devices deprive brain of needed downtime

At the University of California, San Francisco, scientists have found that when rats have a new experience, their brains show new patterns of activity. But only when the rats take a break from their exploration do they process those patterns in a way that seems to create a persistent memory of the experience. The researchers suspect that the findings also apply to how humans learn. [Read More...](#)

## Google: More than 1 million calls through Gmail in 24 hours

Google Voice is automatically being added to Gmail accounts in the U.S. The service allows users who don't have a Google Voice number to use the service anyway for outbound calls that show a generic Caller ID number. [Read More...](#)

## Don't tell the creative department, but software can produce ads, too

BETC Euro RSCG, part of the Euro RSCG Worldwide division of Havas, has developed software that can produce elementary advertisements. The software is called CAI, pronounced Kay, for Creative Artificial Intelligence. **Paul Higgins: We have submitted this to the Gruen Transfer as an item they might discuss on the show.** [Read More...](#)

## 6 brain sensors you'll be using soon

Brain Computer Interface (BCI) - a technology that creates a direct connection from our brains to our computers - is beginning to reach the market via toys and game controllers. In the process, these thought-controlled sensors are inspiring innovations that, for instance, allow you to call someone on your phone by simply thinking about them. [Read More...](#)

## Crowdsourcing shakes up another industry

The Web continues to shake up industry after industry. The latest is academia with its well-established process of scholarly peer review.....Now a more open and transparent digital process is challenging this tradition. The New York Times reported yesterday that the 60-year old Shakespeare Quarterly is opening its reviewing to the Web. [Read More...](#)

[↑ Top of the page](#)

## More Links

We have many more links than we can fit in the newsletter - this month's 'Additional Links' are available on our [website](#)

[↑ Top of the page](#)

