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Welcome to the January edition of What's Emerging.

This edition is a little late due to travel and work commitments slowing down the finalisation of the article on oil pricing that Paul has written for this edition, but we believe that the article is worth the wait. You should read the article if you are interested in how oil will affect you or your business, and if you don't think it will then think again.

We hope that you all had a happy and safe Christmas and New Year and that you continue to find the newsletter informative and useful.

Paul Higgins, Sandy Teagle and Samantha Kyle-Little

Business Tip

Two business tips this month - click on the titles to get the full story

Tips for Reducing Spyware on your Computer

This blog from zdnet gives handy tip on protecting your computer from Spyware and adware

Handsets for Skype

Those of you who have been receiving this newsletter for a while will know that we believe in VOIP (voice over internet protocols) or internet telephony for reducing telephone costs. There are a number of developments going on in handsets that connect to your computer and allow you to make and receive calls over Skype with a phone you can walk around with instead of having to sit with your computer and have a headset connected to it. We have just purchased two mobile handsets to move from using the computer to using a normal phone but using the Skype system.

Emerging issues from around the world

Click on the titles to read the full stories.

10 Top Business Ideas

Strategy and Business has published a survey on the ten most enduring business ideas

along with references and arguments. Worth reading as you move in to the new year.

Nanofibers Protect the Heart

Researchers at Harvard have injected self assembling peptide Nanofibers with a pro survival factor attached that protects heart cells from damage.

Mind Over Pain

Researchers at Stanford are using brain imaging and mind control techniques to give patients control over chronic pain conditions

Wikipedia versus Encyclopedia Britannica

Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia that anyone can edit or add information to. Therefore it can't be accurate, right? Nature has published a study comparing the accuracy of Wikipedia to Encyclopedia Britannica and found that, while there were errors in both, their accuracy is almost the same. Makes you think about what the future may bring.

Does Arguing with Your Partner Make You Sick?

Two studies are showing up greater links between stress and the ability of the body to heal itself. In the first study married couples who argue for as little as half an hour have been shown to heal slower from wounds and trauma, while in the second study scientists have identified a specific gene in mice related to stress reactions and its effect on the immune system.

Are we Running out of Fertile Land?

A satellite mapping study has shown that we are now using 40% of the world's land to produce food compared to 7% in 1700. The balance between food supply, environmental issues, and possible production of renewable fuels from crops is a delicate and complex one.

Will Europe get Cooler?

The gulf stream is an ocean current that carries heat from the equator to Europe, keeping the land warmer than it might otherwise be. Evidence is emerging that the gulf stream may be reducing in volume, which would result in a cooling of Europe. Scientists warn that the data is not yet complete and may be due to natural variation rather than global climate change.

Nano Environmental Concerns

Following up from our nanotechnology special newsletter the US EPA has released a draft regulatory paper on nano products. Beware – the paper is 134 pages long.

Shortcuts for Mobile Phone Web Browsing

Lots of people have mobile phones and other wireless devices that can browse the web and mobile phone deals which give them plenty of free minutes to use for this purpose. One of the difficulties is that typing in a web address is a slow and painful business. Now a company called Shotcode has released an application which allows mobile phone cameras to capture an image which links to a web address. Putting the image on an advertisement or on packaged food allows users to take a photo of the image and then go directly to a website that supplies more information on the product. One of the many applications that will change how we use wireless internet services and increased bandwidth.

Carbon nanotubes Used for Solar Energy

Researchers in Queensland have used carbon nanotubes to improve the efficiency of solar cell polymers. While not as efficient as silicon cells at this stage, the carbon nanotubes version is flexible and can be used for low power devices.

Internet Control in China

A number of companies including Yahoo and Microsoft are cooperating with the Chinese Government in blocking sensitive material on the internet. There is a tension in China between the growth of the economy, the need for the information exchange to drive that growth, and the political tensions that exist with a one party state. The common view that China will drive a large part of the world economy in the next 50 years needs to be tempered with the political realities of the tensions that continue to exist.

Broadband Uptake

The number of Australian subscribers to broadband has doubled in the last year to 2.6 million. Of course these figures have to be taken with a dose of salt because broadband is defined in Australia as 256Kb and above, a speed which would be laughed at in Japan and South Korea. Despite these issues the implications for the use of the internet are enormous.

What Are We Writing About

This month's article examines the factors that will affect the future price of oil. There are six key factors that will affect supply and demand for global oil, and keeping an eye on them may be vital for your business. There are some that believe that we have already reached the peak of global annual oil production. If they are right then the mismatch between the demand for oil and its supply will cause havoc across the globe in the next few years. Unfortunately we have some technical problems with the website at the moment and cannot upload new articles. Once we have fixed the problem we will send an email out notifying you that it has been posted to the website. Meanwhile anybody that would like a copy straight away can email Paul at paul@emergentfutures.com for a copy.