

@ Emergent Futures | New Around the World | What Are We Writing About

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Welcome to the June edition of What's Emerging. Some great links this month including one must-view link on image manipulation which will leave you amazed at just how different viewing, storing and experiencing information may become.

Compiling the newsletter each month is a dangerous task – being drawn ever deeper into obscure and fascinating spaces through links on websites and emerging hours later scratching you head and wondering 'what was I looking for again?' (now a recognized condition known as wilfing!!) can be a risk to productivity. But if you read the personal productivity business tip below, thankfully not all procrastination is bad!

We hope you enjoy this month's wilfing efforts.

Cheers

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



Business Tips

An emerging movement?

Author Paul Hawken has written a thoughtful and insightful article on the emergence of what he believes is the largest social movement in history. If he is right every business and every policy maker needs to read this and think through what it means for their long term future.

Tips for virtual teams

MIT Sloan Management Review has an online article with tips on improving the productivity and teamwork of virtual teams.

Personal productivity

Netscape founder, Marc Andreessen, has an alternative view and tips for improving personal productivity including not keeping a schedule, anti-to-do-lists and structured procrastination. Amusing and useful.



What's Emerging

Image manipulation

The TED (Technology Entertainment and Design) Conference showcases new technologies and ideas for the planet as well as awarding prizes for stunning community projects. You really must look at this 7 minute presentation on Microsoft's Sea Dragon and Photosynth technologies which show the potential to manipulate and connect images in ways never before imagined. One of the simple ways it will change things is on the reading experience of a newspaper or book on a standard computer screen.

Touch screen computing

Microsoft has released Milan – its new system of surface computing that looks a little like the system out of the Tom Cruise movie Minority Report. This video from popular mechanics shows the system in use.

Second earth

What will happen when the virtual world Second Life, Photosynth and Google Earth and services like them actually meet? A Second Earth is already predicted, which will be like a 3-D Wikipedia of the planet, a virtual laboratory and display centre – giving 'try before you buy' a whole new level of meaning.

Cellulosic ethanol breakthrough

A company in Brazil claims that it has found a breakthrough to reduce the cost of producing ethanol from Bagasse (the cane stalk left over after sugar is pressed out) to US 27 cents per litre, making it highly competitive with oil at \$42 a barrel.

Fungi eat radiation

Researchers have discovered that fungi that are able to thrive in high radiation environments appear to use a process like photosynthesis to get energy from the radiation using melanin instead of chlorophyll. The initial discovery opens up a number of possibilities from methods to dispose of nuclear waste, to food growing opportunities for space voyages, to massive fungi farms producing future biofuels.

Praise, praise and more praise

Has the recent parenting style of praising and rewarding children for everything changed a generation's attitude and need for praise and feedback at work?

Hidden talent

We couldn't resist this feel-good story about a fellow with a hidden talent for singing. Watch the video clip and wait for the goosebumps. Someone who really deserves some praise...

Lab grown meat

The Dutch are working on growing pork in the lab. It may seem far fetched and not something that people would like to eat but if significant pressure on cutting greenhouse gas emissions changes price relativities it may be more viable than we think.

Can IT deployment beat the Prius

Researchers have demonstrated the possibility that the deployment of advanced telematics could provide as much fuel saving as a Toyota Prius. The telematics system predicts traffic movements and stops excessive braking and acceleration.

EBay buys StumbleUpon

Those of you that are long time subscribers to our newsletter will recall that we put a link in about StumbleUpon last year. StumbleUpon is a great plug in you can add to your web browser so that you can view new random web sites based on your preferences. EBay has just bought the company for US\$75 million.

Science prize for happiness

A book examining human happiness has won the prestigious Royal Society annual prize for science books.

Rice vaccine

Researchers in Tokyo have created a rice plant that can be used to vaccinate against Cholera. A gene from the Cholera bacteria inserted into the rice plant produces small amounts of cholera toxin in each grain. When the rice grain is eaten the toxin produces an immune response, vaccinating against the disease. This sort of research promises easy vaccine technology that does not require needles or refrigeration as the rice can be stored normally – a big boon in developing countries with poorly refrigerated supply chains.

Unexpected consequences

Researchers have raised the issue that energy efficient washing machines that are being produced in response to consumer reactions to climate may change increase allergy problems because the wash cycles do not get rid of dust mites at anywhere near the same level as previous systems.



What We Are Writing About

Tumblelog

We have started a Tumblelog which is a blog where we upload links, photos, videos, etc as we scan the internet for interesting stuff. Our blog entries are also included within the Tumblelog. To access the log go to: <http://emergentfutures.tumblr.com>

You can also link to the log via news aggregators like Google Reader. Just set up a Google reader account and then click on the RSS feed link on the logs. This applies to our regular blog as well.

Book Review - [How You Can Be More Interesting by Edward de Bono](#)

The reason we bought this book was not to make Paul more interesting (apparently a task which is beyond anybody) but because it is about being more interesting by understanding connections between things and getting your mind to look at things differently. In foresight work one of our main tasks is to help people from being blinded about the future because of set ways of thinking and seeing the world, especially where ingrained patterns have been set in place.

As well as talking about what it means to make new connections and have new ideas, de Bono presents 74 simple exercises for you to help develop these skills. Some of the exercises are simplistic and some are just a rehash from his previous books but there are enough good ones to make the book worthwhile and it is a very easy read. If you are looking for ways to jump your mind, or the mind of your organisation, off its standard tracks so you can see more clearly a wider range of future possibilities then the book is worth buying. We will certainly be using some of the exercises in our work.