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This **Special Edition** for February is to announce our **new EF QuickScan service** and the **update to our website** – the look is the same but you will find added **details on our services, copies of our papers and presentations** for you to download, and we also have a **Blog** to keep you posted on things we find of interest. You can also find the archived versions of our newsletter and all of the **downloads are now fully searchable** as well as the site.

As a special offer to the people on our newsletter database we are offering a **free membership to EF QuickScan Premium** for anybody who gathers a group of 8 people to participate. This entitles you to free participation in our new scanning service for a year, plus 2 hours of free telephone consultations on the subject of your choice. But wait, there is more. In addition, the first person to form a group will also receive a complimentary foresight primer workshop at their workplace and a set of steak knives (ok so the steak knives were a joke). See below for further details.

We hope you find the new site useful; we welcome any feedback you may have.

Cheers

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

EF QuickScan

Are you focusing so hard on doing your job that you get hardly any time to look up and see what might be heading towards you and your organisation? If so then you are not alone, it is a common story that we get told by many people. In response we have created EF QuickScan, a low cost sensing, and sense making process that combines foresight processes with the wisdom of groups. If you are interested in more detail then download our **EF QuickScan document**. If you are interested in participating in this exciting development after you have read the detail then email us at info@emergentfutures.com with your proposed area of interest in the subject line. Initial areas of interest are listed below, or propose an additional area and we will list it on the site.

- Future of oil
- Future of biofuels
- Effects of oil pricing and biofuels on the future of agriculture
- Future of the dairy industry
- Future of podcasting
- Future of the internet
- Future of the grain industry
- Future of the pork Industry
- Future of transport
- Future of supermarkets

Special Offer – anybody on our newsletter database who gathers 8 people to form a QuickScan group will receive free Premium Membership worth \$895.

Emerging issues from around the world

Click on the titles to read the full stories

Education equals a longer life

There are many factors that contribute to people living longer on average. This article from the International Herald Tribune states that the one consistent factor that overrides others is the level of education.

Google map complaints

The Geuzenveld local council has created a Google map that local citizens can put photos and location information on for a complaint about a pothole, garbage problems etc. The system makes the problem visible to the council but also to the whole area. An example of Mashups leading to more transparent government processes.

Ethanol from rubbish

A company called Integrated Environmental Technologies has developed a process to produce ethanol from organic waste. Whether it will be cost competitive remains to be seen.

Protein drugs from chickens

The Roslin Institute in Scotland has developed a flock of transgenic chickens that can produce large volumes of therapeutic proteins in their eggs. This is an example of the burgeoning phenomenon of “pharming” - using animals to produce products more cheaply than they can be manufactured.

Farecast

Farecast is an internet business in the USA that provides a service predicting whether air fares will rise or fall by sifting searches and historical data on seasonal demand. An opportunity for a business in Australia or is the duopoly too tight to make it work?

Streaming movies

Netflix in the USA has introduced a video streaming service as an add-on to its post out DVD service (similar to the BigPond and Quickflix services in Australia – disclosure: Paul’s super fund owns Quickflix shares). The service allows free streaming of movies up to one hour per hour of your DVD subscription. If you pay US\$18 a month for the DVDs they send out you get 18 hours of streaming, and you are metered by the minute so if you get 15 minutes into a movie you don’t like you can scrap it. The model only allows you to stream so you cannot download and watch it at your leisure and you have to do it on your PC and be internet connected so it is not very sociable but the flexibility is high. This is just one of the new business

models that is reshaping the movie and TV business.

Bush petrol goal a problem

David Victor, head of Stanford University's program on Energy and Sustainable Development, thinks that the President's aim to reduce US petrol consumption by 20% mostly through ethanol could lead to significant problems.

Meat industry worries about ethanol

The American Meat Institute has requested that a working group be set up by the USDA to investigate the effects of the growth in ethanol production on the meat industries. Expansion of the corn based ethanol industry has contributed to a sharp rise in US corn prices. Meat producers are concerned that the Federal Government subsidy, delivered in the form of an excise credit, may create unprecedented demand for corn and drive them out of business.

Emission cuts and standard of living

A senior scientist at CSIRO has stated that cutting greenhouse emissions would not significantly affect living standards. Full article is available at http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=EC134p12.pdf

Gas from coal

GreatPoint Energy claims to have a technology to change coal to natural gas at a cheaper rate than finding and exploiting new gas fields and they have convinced major venture capital funds to give them US\$37 million to develop the technology.

Nano engineered concrete

The production of cement accounts for somewhere between 5 and 10 per cent of all global CO₂ emissions. Researchers have identified that the alignment on nano particles in concrete is responsible for its strength. If this knowledge could be used to replace cement with a material that takes less energy to produce then global emissions would be significantly reduced.

Pay more as music gets more popular

Amie St is an internet company that sells songs on its website. The songs get more expensive the more people download them, providing an incentive to get in early and pay a lower price. Also if you recommend a song and its price rises you get a credit for the site that is the difference between the price when you recommended it and its final price. Another interesting web business model that may change how business works.

What we are writing about

Paul's presentation and written paper on impact of biofuels on agriculture provided for the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) Southern Farming Update seminars this month are available for download on the website:

- **Biofuels and Agriculture:** How to Think About Uncertainty – presentation 1.6Mb
- **Energy in Agriculture:** The Effects of Biofuel Developments on the Grain Industry - paper 43Kb

You can find these at our website downloads section:

<http://www.emergentfutures.com/page.php?pid=10700>