

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

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Extra links that we couldn't fit in this month's newsletter...



What's Emerging

Skype iPhone App downloaded one million times in first two days

The official Skype iPhone application, announced earlier this week, hit the iTunes Store last Tuesday and since then it's seen an astonishing one million downloads to the popular Apple devices, which is nothing short of amazing. That translates to approximately 6 downloads per second. [Read more...](#)

Is this the future of the digital book?

Bradley Inman wants to create great fiction, dramatic online video and compelling Twitter stream — and then roll them all into a multimedia hybrid that is tailored to the rapidly growing number of digital reading devices. [Read more...](#)

Brain researchers open door to editing memory

Suppose scientists could erase certain memories by tinkering with a single substance in the brain. Could make you forget a chronic fear, a traumatic loss, even a bad habit. [Read more...](#)

Banks starting to walk away on foreclosures

Banks in the US are quietly declining to take possession of properties at the end of the foreclosure process, most often because the cost of the ordeal — from legal fees to maintenance — exceeds the diminishing value of the real estate. [Read more...](#)

First look: the Tesla Model S electric saloon

Tesla Motors' Model S is a stunningly beautiful car that that builds upon the cachet of the Roadster and proves the company is serious about pushing electric vehicles into the mainstream. [Read more...](#)

Ground-breaking study of video viewing finds younger boomers consume more video media than any other group

A pioneering study dispels several popular notions about video media use, finding that younger baby boomers (age 45-54) consume the most video media while confirming that traditional "live" television remains the proverbial "800-pound gorilla" in the video media arena. [Read more...](#)

Enthusiasm builds for helping a shift to fuel-efficient cars

A concept embraced by President Obama as part his effort to save General Motors and Chrysler from collapse would provide cash to buyers of new fuel-efficient cars — if they traded in a clunker. A similar idea was suggested many years ago by The Rocky Mountain Institute - a feebate where high efficiency cars would be

subsidised by the purchasers of low efficiency cars, giving a general incentive to the market to move towards efficiency. [Read more...](#)

Boats too costly to keep are littering coastlines

They often sandpaper over the names and file off the registry numbers, doing their best to render the boats, and themselves, untraceable. Then they casually ditch the vessels in the middle of busy harbours, beach them at low tide on the banks of creeks or occasionally scuttle them outright. [Read more...](#)

Tiny machines convert sunlight directly into work

Focused sunlight is locally absorbed by a nanostructured composite, creating a thermal surface tension gradient and, subsequently, motion. Controlled linear motion and rotational motion are demonstrated. The system is scale independent, with remotely powered and controlled motion shown for objects in the milligram to tens of grams range. [Read more...](#)

ReQall pro: Contextual reminders location and time based

ReQall lets people record their thoughts and tasks via mobile phone, using SMS or voice, then the audio files are converted to text and accessible from ReQall's website, the service helps people to get organized by sending reminders, creating shopping lists and share notes with friends. Today ReQall goes Pro with a set of enhanced features: it provides location based reminders, voice-to-calendar integration and an updated version of its Memory Jogger. [Read more...](#)

The mobile difference: Wireless connectivity has drawn many users more deeply into digital life

Some 39% of Americans have positive and improving attitudes about their mobile communication devices, which in turn draws them further into engagement with digital resources – on both wireless and wireline platforms. Mobile connectivity is now a powerful differentiator among technology users. [Read more...](#)

Apple patent filing suggests a safer in-car touch screen

As the Tesla Model S has amply demonstrated, while in-car touch screens can certainly turn a few heads, they aren't always the safest, or most practical solution. Apple seems to have a few ideas about how to change that, however, and one of its recently revealed patent applications details a new and improved touch screen system that it says could cut down significantly on driver distractions. [Read more...](#)

Medical scan sensitivity boosted

A technique using the fuel which powers the space shuttle could make a form of medical scan much more sensitive. The technique increased the sensitivity of the scans by 1,000 times, and hugely speeded up the process of taking a scan, potentially reducing the cost of the procedure too. [Read more...](#)

Why American traffic jams are like soviet bread lines

"Last year, the US made more progress in reducing traffic congestion than any other time in memory. New data show that in the nation's cities congestion declined by 30 percent overall and was improved at every hour of the day. How did we make these big gains? Not by adding more highway lanes or transit. Our physical infrastructure barely changed. Rather, we did it with a very modest decline in car travel. On urban interstate highways, total vehicle miles travelled in the US declined by about 3 percent compared with 2007." [Read more...](#)

A conversation with entrepreneur and software engineer Marc Andreessen

Worth listening to if you want to try and understand where the web and social networking and newspapers are heading. It is a 54 minute video. [Read more...](#)

Forging a hot link to the farmer who grows the food

The maker of Stone-Buhr flour, a popular brand in the western United States, is encouraging its customers to reconnect with their lost agrarian past, from the comfort of their computer screens. Its Find the [Farmer](#) Web site and special labels on the packages let buyers learn about and even contact the farmers who produced the wheat that went into their bag of flour. [Read more...](#)

The next generation of workplace?

The ability to work from home is a trend that is here to stay. Technology allows it, legislation permits it and

employers often now encourage it. An OfficePOD provides a working environment that is separate to home life. The hassle free OfficePOD service deals with everything from site survey and installation through to customer services and POD relocation in the case of moving house or employer. [Read more...](#)

iPhone dominates in mobile Web traffic, Android already on its way up

Some interesting mobile Web traffic numbers were released today from AdMob Mobile Metrics that put the Apple iPhone way ahead of the other smartphones. How far, you ask? Well, let's just say that the iPhone is totally dominating with almost 50 percent of mobile Web traffic from smartphones in the U.S, but worldwide, smartphones running on the Symbian OS are still holding the majority of the share. The Symbian OS has mostly Nokia phones and holds 43 percent of mobile Web traffic. [Read more...](#)

Organic foods in demand, despite recession

World demand for organic foods is expected to grow by 46pc over the five years ending 2012, despite the world economic crisis. This bullish outlook is contained in a United Nations Trade and Development Agency (UNCTAD) report. [Read more...](#)

Vernacular video in culture and education

The 6.5 minute vlog post is a great summary of how video is being integrated as a communication medium in culture and education. [Read more...](#)

Consumers swing to grass-fed beef

A major shift appears to be taking place across the global beef industry as consumers everywhere rein in their spending patterns in the wake of the current global financial crisis. [Read more...](#)

Twitter traffic explodes...and not being driven by the usual suspects!

Reuters reporter Alexei Oreskovic recently authored an interesting blog post about the demographics of Twitter users. What he discovered was that 18-24 year olds, the traditional social media early adopters, are actually 12 percent less likely than average to visit Twitter (Index of 88). It is the 25-54 year old crowd that is actually driving this trend. More specifically, 45-54 year olds are 36 percent more likely than average to visit Twitter, making them the highest indexing age group, followed by 25-34 year olds, who are 30 percent more likely. [Read more...](#)

New study examines technology generation gap in the legal workplace

A national survey of legal professionals found that while technology is widely embraced among attorneys, significant gaps exist among generations regarding its use and application in the workplace. The newly released Technology Gap Survey found generational differences in the effect of technology on workplace etiquette, the blurring boundaries between personal and professional tasks, and the impact of technology overload. [Read more...](#)

The geneticist in the garage

Meredith Patterson is not your typical genetic scientist. Her laboratory is based in the dining room of her San Francisco apartment. She uses a plastic salad spinner as a centrifuge and Ziploc plastic bags as airtight containers for her samples. But the genetically modified organism (GMO) she is attempting to create on a budget of less than \$500 (£350) could provide a breakthrough in food safety to thousands of infants. [Read more...](#)

Innovation takes a hit in recession

Australia remained one of the worst performers in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on innovation and education and risked entering the global upswing in "very bad shape", Cutler review panel member John Foster has warned. [Read more...](#)

Pay for your own tea and coffee, IBM tells staff

Free tea and coffee are necessities in an office, but if new cost-cutting measures get the nod at IBM Australia, staff will be paying for their own. [Read more...](#)

Car payment or else: engine shut off systems

Business is booming for makers of shut-off devices, which turn engines off when car payments are late. Sales at one manufacturer, Littleton, Colo.-based Passtime, are up 33 percent over last year. CEO Stan Schwarz says the company is cranking up production to meet the demand. [Read more...](#)

Nokia's net profit falls 90 percent

Nokia reported a 90 percent fall in first-quarter net profits as the global recession took a big bite out of demand for mobile devices. For the first quarter, which ended March 31, Nokia said that net profits fell to 122 million Euros (\$161.3 million). A year earlier the company reported net profits of 1.22 billion Euros. Analysts had expected the company to report net profits of about 306 million Euros. [Read more...](#)

HAL exoskeleton can boost strength 10 times

Anyone who has seen *Aliens* will remember the exoskeleton forklift that Ripley wears to fight the alien queen at the end of the movie. Well, Japanese company Cyberdyne has unveiled a robotic suit that works on a similar idea of a robotic suit capable of augmenting human motion and strength. The Robot Suit Hybrid Assistive Limb (HAL for short) is a wearable robot that uses a "voluntary control system" first to interpret the wearers' planned movement and then assist them in it. [Read more...](#)

TV viewing at 'all-time high,' Nielsen says

Americans are watching more video online, on their cell phones and on television, according to the Nielsen Company's latest "three screen" report. [Read more...](#)

Apple's new weapon

To help soldiers make sense of data from drones, satellites and ground sensors, the U.S. military now issues the iPod Touch. [Read more...](#)

Ning: 1 million social networks strong

[Ning](#) is going to be reaching a big milestone this week, when it sees its one millionth social network created on its self-serve platform. Ning, which had its initial beta [launch](#) in 2005 and 'full' [launch](#) in 2007, makes it easy for people to create niche social networks focused on the topics they care about. [Read more...](#)

The gift-card economy

Mother's Day is coming up. Which do you think Mom would enjoy more—a day-spa gift certificate that expires at the end of June, or an otherwise identical gift certificate that expires a year from now? [Read more...](#)

Apple offers another fleeting glimpse at the app store's all-time leaders

Yesterday Apple announced that it was closing in on its whopping 1 Billionth application download from the App Store, which now features over 25,000 apps built by thousands of developers. In honor of the milestone, Apple has also posted an updated version of the store's most popular apps ever. [Read more...](#)

'Hyperlocal' web sites deliver news without newspapers

If your local newspaper shuts down, what will take the place of its coverage? Perhaps a package of information about your neighborhood, or even your block, assembled by a computer. [Read more...](#)

Putting Twitter's world to use

The first reaction many people have to Twitter is befuddlement. Why would they want to read short messages about what someone ate for breakfast? But taken collectively, the stream of messages can turn [Twitter](#) into a surprisingly useful tool for solving problems and providing insights into the digital mood. [Read more...](#)

Earning your media

This is a slideshare of a presentation that Fred Wilson gave at the Ad Age Digital Conference on earned media versus paid media. [Read more...](#)

Duckweed could replace corn in ethanol

Duckweed could be a faster and cheaper resource than corn for the production of ethanol. According to researcher Dr Jay Cheng, growing duckweed on pig wastewater can produce five to six times more starch per acre than corn. [Read more...](#)

Measuring corn ethanol's thirst for water

Ethanol from corn consumes three times more water than previously thought. [Read more...](#)

Digital album puts focus on kids' health

Julie Kientz at the University of Washington has built a high-tech tool that takes photos and video, creates an online diary and family newsletters, and at the same time tracks a child's developmental milestones. The multimedia system, called Baby Steps, combines sentimental snapping with medical record-keeping. Researchers found in a small pilot study that having it on their home computers doubled the parents' collection of medically relevant information. [Read more...](#)

Honda's prototype walking assist devices demonstrated in U.S.

[American Honda Motor Co.](#), Inc. is demonstrating its prototype walking assist devices for the first time in the U.S. The devices will be part of a technical exhibition at the 2009 Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) World Congress at Detroit's Cobo Center April 20 – 23. Prior to the Detroit event, Honda will demonstrate the devices for selected media in New York. [Read more...](#)

Bakery tries to attract customers using Twitter

A bakery is trying to attract customers by using [Twitter](#) to send messages when fresh bread and cakes are ready. The system, named Baker Tweet, uses a control panel next to the oven. As bakers remove hot food, they turn a dial to select the product and press a switch. A twitter update - or "tweet" - is sent. [Read more...](#)

Why advertising is failing on the internet

The following is a guest post by [Eric Clemons](#), Professor of Operations and Information Management at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. In it, he argues that the Internet shatters all forms of advertising. "The problem is not the medium, the problem is the message, and the fact that it is not trusted, not wanted, and not needed," he writes. [Read more...](#)

General Motors, Segway unveil electric two-wheeled, two-seat vehicle

PUMA designed to do 25-35 mph in the city, and travel up to 35 miles on one charge. [Read more...](#)