

What's Emerging?

The latest news and information ...

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

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Extra Links January 2011

Welcome to the end of January edition of What's Emerging.

We hope that those of you that have had a Christmas break are back in the swing of things. Our hearts go out to those that have been affected by the floods in Qld and Victoria here in Australia. Paul's farm was threatened for a few days and farms just 5km downstream were completely flooded out. Paradoxically the problem there now is fresh water because all of the flood waters are terribly contaminated. The scale of the water in a continent that has had 10 years of drought is almost unbelievable, from flash floods that washed away houses in the Toowoomba region, to what the ABC described in Victoria as a "vast moving inland sea 90 km long and 40km wide. You can see the scale of it in Victoria [HERE](#) and if you want to make a donation via the Red Cross go [HERE](#). While these floods have been terrible we must not forget that others have suffered greater problems, including Sri Lanka where a million people have been made homeless. The Red Cross Lists all their country by country sites [HERE](#) if you want to assist.

This month we are experimenting with a newsletter/newspaper system that takes twitter feeds and presents them in a newspaper format. The details are under the What Are We Writing About section. Take a look and tell us what you think.

We hope that you continue to find the newsletter interesting and valuable and would welcome any feedback.

Cheers

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

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What we are writing about

This month we have started using Twitter as more of a source of our scanning material. In the newsletter you will see that where we have found items of interest from someone we follow on Twitter we have credited them as the source. In addition we have set up a system via [paper.li](#) which allows you to create a newspaper type format from what you see on Twitter and Facebook. We have used the system to set up a newspaper from our Twitter feed of interesting people that we follow. The way it works is not perfect but it does provide the feed in an easy to read format. Go [here](#) to see the latest edition (it creates a new one every 24 hours). If you follow us on Twitter already then you will automatically receive a tweet when the new version is created. If you are not on twitter or would rather receive an email update you can subscribe via email by clicking on the subscribe button. This will not replace our normal newsletter because it only consists of part of what we use to scan but we believe in giving our readers the choice of what they would like to see and how they would like to see it. Have a look and tell us what you think.

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Business Tips

Our business tips are in our main newsletter, please click [here](#).

What's Emerging

Is there enough oil to pay our debt?

You may not have borrowed the money yourself, but your government has already done it on your behalf, running up massive, record-setting deficits. What's not clear is exactly how your government is going to pay that debt back. ***Paul Higgins: An interesting piece by Jeffrey Rubin on why government bond interest rates are not higher and the assumptions that might be driving that.*** [Read More...](#)

Walking speed associated with survival in older adults

In an analysis that included data from 9 studies, having higher measures of walking speed among older adults was associated with increased length of survival, according to a study in the January 5 issue of JAMA. ***Paul Higgins: Of course that does not mean that if you start walking faster you will live longer!!!*** [Read More...](#)

Baby boomers approach 65 – glumly

The iconic image of the Baby Boom generation is a 1960s-era snapshot of an exuberant, long-haired, rebellious young adult. That portrait wasn't entirely accurate even then, but it's hopelessly out of date now. This famously huge cohort of Americans finds itself in a funk as it approaches old age. ***Paul Higgins: I cross the 65 yr old threshold they are using for this study in 65 years and I am hugely optimistic about my life but I do not seem to match the surveyed Americans.*** [Read More...](#)

Positioning bits in nanowire memory

IBM's ultra-dense racetrack memory is closer to commercialization. [Read More...](#)

Can FarmVille make dealing with the IRS more fun?

No, the government hasn't decided to give away badges or other rewards for paying taxes, but that's the example gamification guru Gabe Zichermann uses to describe the whole concept of using game mechanics to make everyday life more fun (even dreadful things like dealing with the IRS) in a recent radio interview. [Read More...](#)

Facebook details leaked: Company is much more profitable than everyone thought

Facebook generated \$200 million of net income in 2009, on \$777 million of revenue. This approximate revenue figure was known, but the net income figure was not. The 25% net profit margin implied by these figures is much higher than most people thought. [Read More...](#)

Will touch screens kill the keyboard?

Typing more than a few sentences on the virtual keyboard of an iPad or other tablet is a pain in the neck. That experience is about to get a whole lot better. [Read More...](#)

Cities on the prowl

Cities in the modern world are beginning to share some features with the city-states of millennia past — communicating, trading, competing. But there are two differences: Today it's nation states, not city-states, that occasionally go to war. And unlike the walled cities that harboured flourishing trade in Medieval Europe, today there are literally thousands of cities on the rise, and looking outward in search not of silk and spices, but rather sources of finance, global talent, and most of all, good ideas. [Read More...](#)

Clear glasses to augment your reality

At the 2011 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas hardware company Vuzix has revealed the first clear AR glasses for consumers. The glasses, called Raptyr, use holographic optics instead of video screens to make digital objects appear in mid-air. [Read More...](#)

Nanocarriers come through

A new nanodelivery system is able to sneak cancer treatments past the defenses of drug-

resistant tumor cells—offering hope to many cancer patients who benefit little from existing drug treatments. [Read More...](#)

Measuring blood pressure with an iPhone

At the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, iHealth Labs, a start-up in Mountain View, Calif., has unveiled the iHealth Blood Pressure Dock, an attachment for iOS devices that can measure and record heart rate and blood pressure. [Read More...](#)

Car theft by antenna

Car thieves of the future might be able to get into a car and drive away without forced entry and without needing a physical key, according to new research. [Read More...](#)

Driving to the future

China could have one billion cars by mid-century--but what kind of vehicles will they be? [Read More...](#)

Game goes head to head

The original Mindflex was like playing basketball, but for your brain. It read your brainwaves to move the ball. This new Mindflex Duel uses the same idea, but now you get to go head-to-head (or brain-to-brain) against a friend. [Read More...](#)

Facebook hype will fade

Douglas Rushkoff: Mark Zuckerberg is Time's Man of the Year, the movie about him seems likely to be an Oscar winner, and now Goldman Sachs is raising \$1.5 billion from its favorite investors on behalf of the social networking company..... But appearances can be deceiving. In fact, as I read the situation, we are witnessing the beginning of the end of Facebook. These aren't the symptoms of a company that is winning, but one that is cashing out. [Read More...](#)

Spinning nano yarns

Many important technologies—from battery electrodes and superconducting wires to the catalysts in fuel cells—rely on materials containing powdered particles, which can be tricky to manage. Now, in a feat that could simplify the production of many such technologies and might point the way toward some radical new ones, researchers at the University of Texas have demonstrated a way to spin yarn out of nanotubes infused with useful powdered materials. [Read More...](#)

Why mobile shopping could be as big as online shopping

The study, which surveyed 10,000 visitors to top e-retailer sites, found that 11% of them made a purchase using their phones this holiday season, compared to only 2% at the same time last year. Thirty percent of visitors, however, used their phones to compare product details, look up prices, or find store locations. In 2009, only 11% of consumers surveyed said they used their phones to do this kind of research. [Read More...](#)

Tumblr is sending 20+ bloggers to New York fashion week

Tumblr, the image-heavy platform beloved by top fashion bloggers like Tavi Gevinson and Jessica Quirk (What I Wore), is focusing more of its energy on the fashion industry. [Read More...](#)

Are we becoming more stupid? Human brain has been 'shrinking for the last 20,000 years'

Man's brain has been gradually shrinking over the last 20,000 years, according to a new report. This decrease in size follows two million years during which the human cranium steadily grew in size, and it's happened all over the world, to both sexes and every race. [Read More...](#)

Researchers inch closer to unlocking potential of synthetic blood

A team of scientists has created particles that closely mirror some of the key properties of red blood cells, potentially helping pave the way for the development of synthetic blood. [Read More...](#)

A light in India

In the age of the iPad, it's easy to forget that roughly a quarter of the world's population — about a billion and a half people — still lack electricity. [Read More...](#)

Videogame engine serves up free brain imagery for all

Think of it as Google Earth for rodent neurology—if Google Earth were based on a videogame engine and could zoom from the scale of a continent to a ladybug. [Read More...](#)

Scientists create the world's smallest potential computer memory

University of Utah physicist Christoph Boehme created a new kind of computer memory and demonstrated that it can even be stored in a new way. The results were published in the journal Science. [Read More...](#)

The puzzling role of biophotons in the brain

Various work suggests that neurons emit and even conduct photons. Could it be that biophotons help to synchronise the brain? [Read More...](#)

Beamsteering could cut mobile power consumption by half

Mobile devices that channel their signal in a specific direction can cut their power consumption by more than half, a new study finds. [Read More...](#)

Cell-seeded sutures to repair the heart

Polymer threads coated with stem cells might one day heal damaged cardiac muscle. [Read More...](#)

Google body

Google Body is a detailed 3D model of the human body. You can peel back anatomical layers, zoom in, click to identify anatomy, or search for muscles, organs, bones and more. You can also share the exact scene you are viewing by copying and pasting the URL. [Read More...](#)

Can software that predicts performance help kids learn?

In acquiring a maker of wireless education technology, News Corp. may help validate the market for assessment tools. [Read More...](#)

Telepresence robot in action

Technology Review's I.T. Editor, Tom Simonite, reviews a Vgo telepresence robot. Simonite is located in TR's San Francisco office and uses the robot to communicate "face-to-face" with colleagues in Cambridge, Massachusetts. [Read More...](#)

A chat with Evan Williams (co-founder of Twitter) at Gigaom

Evan Williams: There's too much stuff. It seems to me that almost all tools we rely on to manage information weren't designed for a world of infinite info. They were designed as if you could consume whatever was out there that you were interested in. [Read More...](#)

In-store signs get smart

CognoVision, has developed face-recognition software that can determine a person's gender and approximate age. This, along with cameras added to the digital displays, could give retailers a better sense of whether the ads are getting shoppers' attention. [Read More...](#)

A \$1m Netflix-style challenge for DNA sequencing

According to a release from the company, there will be seven individual challenges, each with a \$1 million prize. Only the first three challenges have been announced thus far, and all focus on Ion semiconductor sequencing. [Read More...](#)

Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs are eating America's lunch

Watch out, Silicon Valley: China and India aren't just graduating bad engineers and stealing intellectual property anymore. They're fostering innovations that will shake the world. [Read More...](#)

The year in virtual goods by the numbers

Now with social gaming on the rise and everyone from your teenage nephew to your grandma to your old rugby teammate buying a "little something" to sweeten their online game, here is a look a back at the year in virtual goods sales. [Read More...](#)

Sophisticated new Android Trojan "Geinimi" spreading in China

According to mobile security firm Lookout, a new sophisticated Trojan has emerged in China that is affecting Android devices. [Read More...](#)

Purdue, NIST working on breathalyzers for medical diagnostics

Researchers have overcome a fundamental obstacle in developing breath-analysis technology to rapidly diagnose patients by detecting chemical compounds called "biomarkers" in a person's respiration in real time. [Read More...](#)

Topologist predicts new form of matter

A link between quantum mechanics and topology implies the existence of an entirely new state of matter. And physicists have already found the first example. [Read More...](#)

Computers get help from the human brain

Tapping into the processing power of the human brain could help computers with some tasks. [Read More...](#)

MHealth: Mobile technology brings healthcare home

Normally Mr Esplugues would attend daily physiotherapy sessions. Instead, he is being monitored remotely through an interactive terminal at home. He accesses the service through a touch screen interface, which shows him what to do. [Read More...](#)

Brain volume linked to social networking

Linear regression revealed a positive correlation in amygdala size with both social network size and complexity. This effect showed no lateralization, meaning both left and right amygdala volumes followed this relationship. In addition, the effect is relatively specific, as other social factors like life satisfaction and perceived social support failed to correlate with amygdala volume. [Read More...](#)

Someday, store coupons may tap you on the shoulder

Coupons distributed online accounted for 9.8 percent of all coupons redeemed in 2009, up sharply from 1.1 percent in 2006. [Read More...](#)

Video in the C-Suite: Executives embrace the non-text web

Text remains their preferred format, but executives appear as willing to take action based on viewing a video as they do reading an article. [Read More...](#)

Atlantic circulation on the Fasttrack for change

Temperature-tracking coral reefs indicate that the circulation of water in the Atlantic Ocean has changed dramatically since the 1970's. The evidence for changing currents comes from ancient gorgonian coral reefs growing off the coast of Nova Scotia. [Read More...](#)

Antimatter caught streaming from thunderstorms on Earth

A space telescope has accidentally spotted thunderstorms on Earth producing beams of antimatter. Such storms have long been known to give rise to fleeting sparks of light called terrestrial gamma-ray flashes. But results from the Fermi telescope show they also give out streams of electrons and their antimatter counterparts, positrons. [Read More...](#)

New microscope records firing of thousands of individual neurons in 3-D

UCLA neuroscientists have now collaborated with physicists to develop a non-invasive, ultra-high-speed microscope that can record in real time the firing of thousands of individual neurons in the brain as they communicate, or mis-communicate, with each other. [Read More...](#)

Housing 9 billion won't take techno-magic

A vision of the future built not around technical wizardry but democracy, with the engineering on tap but not on top? Not what you would expect from a group of engineers, but the UK's Institution of Mechanical Engineers has delivered just that. A report out this week shows how humanity already has at its disposal all the tools to make room for as many as 9 billion people. [Read More...](#)

\$2tn debt crisis threatens to bring down 100 US cities

Overdrawn American cities could face financial collapse in 2011, defaulting on hundreds of billions of dollars of borrowings and derailing the US economic recovery. Nor are European cities safe – Florence, Barcelona, Madrid, Venice: all are in trouble. [Read More...](#)

Amazon: On track for \$100 billion in revenue in 2015

That revenue projection comes from Morgan Stanley analyst Scott Devitt. In a large research report that emphasized that Amazon has plenty of runway left for growth. [Read More...](#)

Key internet and mobile trends

Last couple of years have seen rapid developments in the Internet and mobile space and now the two are tightly integrated together. [Read More...](#)

Mail service costs Netflix 20 times more than streaming

Netflix currently pays up to \$1 per DVD mailed round trip, and the company mails about 2 million DVDs per day. By comparison, the company pays 5 cents to stream the same movie.

Paul Higgins: A compelling reason why the DVD business is over once the internet capacity allows streaming to most customers at a reasonable speed. [Read More...](#)

Students slog through college, but don't gain much critical thinking

An unprecedented study that followed several thousand undergraduates through four years of college found that large numbers didn't learn the critical thinking, complex reasoning and written communication skills that are widely assumed to be at the core of a college education.

[Read More...](#)

Economic optimism? Yes, I'll take that bet

Paul Higgins: An interesting piece in the New York Times about optimism versus Malthusian attitudes/thinking and who gets the most coverage in the media. I am a big fan of bets to make people have some skin in the game on this sort of stuff. [Read More...](#)

Dazzling dual-core phones and tablets

Steady improvements in performance are a given in the computing industry, but sometimes there's a big leap forward. One occurred in the world of mobile computing last week, when the first smart phones and tablet computers with dual-core processors were unveiled at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. [Read More...](#)

In 2020 we can wear Sony computers on our wrist

Developed to be worn as a bracelet, this computer concept is constructed out of a flexible OLED touchscreen. Earmarked for the year 2020, features like a holographic projector (for screen), pull-out extra keyboard panels and social networking compatibility, make the concept plausible.

[Read More...](#)

SwipeGood

SwipeGood rounds up all of your credit card purchases to the nearest dollar and allows you to donate the difference to the charity of your choice. It's the easiest way to give to charity!

[Read More...](#)

Transcend goggles

Climb every mountain and ski any path with the world's first GPS-enabled goggles. [Read More...](#)

Smart phone zombie apocalypse

If you have a smart phone, online criminals may soon have your number. Smart phone malware is getting increasingly sophisticated, and now a security researcher has created software that turns a smart phone into a "zombie" that can be controlled remotely. [Read More...](#)

UN refugee agency tops list of the most engaged charities and non-profits on Twitter

The UN Refugee Agency has topped a list of most engaged charities and non-profit organizations on Twitter, according to a report published by Empire Avenue. [Read More...](#)

In pursuit of a jet lag pill, new molecule shows promise

The technique with which longdaysin was discovered is rather novel. The researchers screened thousands of compounds with a chemical robot. The robot tested the reaction of each compound with a line of human bone cancer cells. [Read More...](#)

In the markets of the meta city

The world is moving beyond mega-cities to meta-cities. According to the United Nations' 2010/2011 State of the World's Cities report, these cities of the future will not be single political entities but will sprawl across geographic, regional, and national boundaries. [Read More...](#)

Study: We've got plenty of land for biofuels

Researchers at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign have found that biofuel crops cultivated on land unsuitable for food crops could produce as much as half the world's current fuel consumption without adverse impact on food crops or pastureland. [Read More...](#)

The Groupon of radio? Triton, deal current to bring daily deals to listeners

As radio's revenue shrinks, daily deals and other online services become a new important income stream. [Read More...](#)

Ten awesome DIY & digitally fabricated toys

There is often a playful element to the way that DIY makers push the boundaries of both traditional and emerging technologies. Sometimes the designs are toys in their own right, while others may reference toys from popular culture. [Read More...](#)

White House report on DIY and "personal factories"

Lots of good stuff in this report, titled "Factory @ Home", which was commissioned by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. [Read More...](#)

In map of brain junction, avenues to answers

The research team, led by Seth Grant of the Sanger Institute near Cambridge, England, compiled the first exact inventory of all the protein components of the synaptic information-processing machinery. No fewer than 1,461 proteins are involved in this biological machinery, they report in the current issue of Nature Neuroscience. **Paul Higgins: Just shows how complicated this communication process is.** [Read More...](#)

AI defeats the Hivemind

How a machine learning algorithm beat the assembled masses of Mechanical Turk. [Read More...](#)

Army tanks of the future could use e-ink to become invisible

BAE Systems has worked with sensors and e-ink to camouflage tanks with its surroundings, projecting the area around it on the outside of the tank no matter how fast it rolls through changing scenery. [Read More...](#)

No McMansions for Millennials

Here's what Generation Y doesn't want: formal living rooms, soaker bathtubs, dependence on a car. In other words, they don't want their parents' homes. [Read More...](#)

Outlawed, cellphones are thriving in prisons

Although prison officials have long battled illegal cellphones, smartphones have changed the game. With Internet access, a prisoner can call up phone directories, maps and photographs for criminal purposes. **Paul Higgins: Makes you think about how valuable and pervasive the smartphone has become. Also how addictive and compelling some games are when inmates are using smartphones and risking their confiscation to play Farmville.** [Read More...](#)

Flying machines, amazing at any angle

Dr. Dial and Bret W. Tobalske, a biologist and the director of the lab, are obsessed with trying to bridge the gap in flying abilities between humans and birds. At a laboratory filled with wind tunnels, high-speed cameras, lasers, surgical equipment and a device that generates clouds of olive oil, they and several graduate students try to divine the secrets of bird flight. [Read More...](#)

Artificial life shares biosignature with terrestrial cousins

A biosignature common to both life on Earth and digital life could help to spot extra terrestrial organisms, say computer scientists. [Read More...](#)

Consumer genetic tests have little impact

The first large-scale analysis of the behavioral and psychological impact of these tests suggests they have little impact at all. [Read More...](#)

Android growth continues; passes iOS in usage

Android has grown into a hugely popular platform, according to usage tracked by ad network Millennial Media. Figures for December show that Android has leveraged an astounding 3130 percent growth in 2010 to grab 46 percent impression share in December. [Read More...](#)

Why social networks are sucking up more of your time

Think Facebook sucks up your time? Well, it's only going to get worse, according to a study that suggests users become more active in online social networks the bigger they become. [Read More...](#)

New task for phone: File taxes

Intuit, the company that makes TurboTax software, introduced an application on Friday that lets users automatically fill out the 1040EZ, the most basic of the I.R.S. personal tax forms. Filers simply photograph their W-2 and the app does much of the rest. [Read More...](#)

Thieves raid traffic lights for SIM cards to make free calls

It turns out that some Johannesburg traffic lights use SIM cards and GPRS to alert authorities to malfunctioning lights—but those SIM cards can also be harvested and used in generic phones to make unlimited, anonymous, free calls. [Read More...](#)

How the fruit fly could revolutionize distributed computing

In the eyes of a few researchers, the secrets to breakthroughs in distributed computing lies in the nervous system of the fruit fly. And new, performance-improving algorithms based around these findings could help to better detect earthquakes or cure disease. [Read More...](#)

We hold these truths to be universal

Paul Higgins: A really good Freakonomics piece on cultural differences in behavioural economics tests. [Read More...](#)

How media will relate to Facebook in the future

All media will be personalized in three to five years, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg said in September. One of the ways that's likely to happen everywhere just appeared on the UK Independent. [Read More...](#)

Internet future driven by user reputation scores

Three different trends come together at some point in the future to make this happen. These trends have been underway for a while, but come together at some tipping point in the years ahead. [Read More...](#)

Oil shortages could turn outer suburbs into slums

AUSTRALIA will be forced to rely on huge quantities of imported oil unless it radically overhauls its transport and urban policies, according to a study by the Planning Institute of Australia. [Read More...](#)

Study: Biking infrastructure projects create more jobs than auto-based initiatives

The result: pedestrian and bike infrastructure projects create 11 to 14 jobs per \$1 million of spending while road infrastructure initiatives created seven jobs per \$1 million of spending. [Read More...](#)

How video games are infiltrating--and improving--every part of our lives

Games are sneaking into every part of our lives -- at home, school, and work. Cisco, IBM, Microsoft, and even the Army depend on games. and Pretty soon, you'll be a part of one. [Read More...](#)

Printing food

Food-SFF would benefit the professional culinary domain primarily in two respects: by lending new artistic capabilities to the fine dining domain, and also by extending mass-customization capabilities to the industrial culinary sector. [Read More...](#)

3D printed concert flute rapidly prototypes sound

Amit Zoran of the MIT Media Lab -- has now printed a fully-functional concert flute with a minimum of human intervention. [Read More...](#)

For magazines, a bitter pill in iPad

Apple may offer new opportunities with its devices, but it exacts a heavy toll. Magazine publishers argue in particular that limiting magazine sales on the iPad to single issues (except in a handful of cases) has hamstrung publishers from fully capitalizing on a new and lucrative business model.? [Read More...](#)

In new military, data overload can be deadly

Research shows that the kind of intense multitasking required in such situations can make it hard to tell good information from bad. The military faces a balancing act: how to help soldiers exploit masses of data without succumbing to overload. [Read More...](#)

Will you Tweet this?

New analysis could help predict how stories will be shared. [Read More...](#)

Five industries hit the reset button

As a prerequisite for growth in the post-crisis environment, leading companies in the consumer products, telecommunications, industrial goods, automotive, and financial-services industries

are shifting their business models and operating practices. [Read More...](#)

Pure cyberwar? Not gonna happen

A pure "cyberwar" is never going to happen. That's one conclusion of a major report on cybersecurity from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. [Read More...](#)

Historical marker iPhone App maps the roadside markers along your route

Historical iMarkers includes a fairly comprehensive database of roadside markers, with data on almost 130,000 local, state, and national historical markers. Data comes from participating State Historical Preservation Offices, the National Register of Historical Places, as well as other sites and users who contribute information. [Read More...](#)

You can now 3d print in Titanium

This ultra high end new 3D printing process is one of the world's newest and most advanced manufacturing technologies and is now in the hands of consumers, inventors, designers and you, for the first time. [Read More...](#)

Dreams do come true of the day

Think a pool table that got mega-rayed with bowling ball-sized balls on a table that is 15 X 30 feet. Players stand and walk on the felt to make otherwise billiards-type shots by bowling the cue ball. The table is about a foot and a half off the ground. It's safe, fast-paced, and entertaining for others to watch. **Paul Higgins: a reminder that sometimes the best ideas are recombinations. Sometimes I just think "why didn't I think of that?"** [Read More...](#)

Monetizing mobile audio

"This is the future. We won't be buying files, moving files, and listening to files. We'll be streaming audio from the cloud onto our connected devices in our homes and offices, and onto our mobile devices at the gym, on the bike, in the car, etc.....How will the mobile audio streaming services make money? Some will charge a subscription. But I believe, like the radio industry for the past 50 years, most will make money by running commercial messages in the stream once or twice an hour. [Read More...](#)

Email evolution: Web-based email shows signs of decline in the U.S. while mobile email usage on the rise

ComScore released results from a study on U.S. consumers' evolving email behaviours using data from its ComScore Media Metrix and MobiLens services. The study found that in November 2010, the number of visitors to web-based email sites declined 6 percent compared to the previous year, while email engagement declined at an even greater rate. [Read More...](#)

A spurned Google makes its own Groupon

So what's left to do for the Mountain View tech giant after being spurned by Groupon last month, but roll its own daily-deal site? [Read More...](#)

How computer games could help us all make better decisions in life

A prototype computer game has been developed to help improve decision making skills in all aspects of our lives. [Read More...](#)

Open grantmaking in practice, not just in principle

The announcement from the Labor Department that it is requiring the work product of \$500 million (the first tranche of \$2 billion appropriated) in new grant money to be free for others to reuse represents a fundamental and laudable shift in how grants are made in government. [Read More...](#)

World future society top ten forecasts

Unlike mainstream economists, who rely on averages, econophysicists study complex systems, feedback loops, cascading effects, irrational decision making, and other destabilizing influences, which may help them to foresee economic upheavals. [Read More...](#)

For robust robots, let them be babies first

Want to build a really tough robot? Forget about Terminator. Instead, watch a tadpole turn into a frog. Or at least that's not too far off from what University of Vermont roboticist Josh Bongard has discovered, as he reports in the January 10 online edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. [Read More...](#)

Nuance launches mobile developer program: Will all apps be speech enabled?

With the move, Nuance will create a self-service site so mobile developers can use the technology found in Dragon Dictation and Search apps and the Vocalizer text-to-speech.

[Read More...](#)

The era of the PC is over

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu has just released its tenth annual Predictions for the next 12-to-18 months. [Read More...](#)

World hunger best cured by small-scale agriculture: Report

A move from industrial farming towards local food projects is our healthiest, most sustainable choice, says Worldwatch Institute. [Read More...](#)

Lowering medical costs by providing better care

One of the criticisms of the US health care reform bill enacted last year is that it expanded coverage without doing enough to control rising health care costs. Surgeon and journalist Atul Gawande says there are hopeful signs that costs can be contained — not by cutting back, but by providing more intensive services to chronically ill patients who incur huge costs with long stays in hospital rooms and intensive care units. **Paul Higgins: We reviewed Atul Gawande's book *the Checklist Manifesto*. If you want more on his work read the review at the *Emergent Futures* [website](#).** [Read More...](#)

Gestures that your TV will understand

The company behind Microsoft's Kinect controller wants to kill the remote. [Read More...](#)

Scientists create injector for generating megawatt-class laser beams for US navy's next-generation weapon system

Scientists at Los Alamos National Lab, N.M., have achieved a breakthrough with the Office of Naval Research's Free Electron Laser (FEL) program, demonstrating an injector capable of producing the electrons needed to generate megawatt-class laser beams for the US Navy's next-generation weapon system. [Read More...](#)

Yahoo!7 acquires online voucher website

Yahoo!7 has announced it has acquired online deals and voucher website Spreets. Spreets was the first group buying site in Australia and New Zealand and has been in operation for almost a year. [Read More...](#)

Police tweet on the beat during flood crisis

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) is a traditional and conservative organisation, not known for its savvy. But as the Queensland floods crisis worsened, the Queensland Police Service used social media tools Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to get its message to the public directly. [Read More...](#)

In pursuit of qubits, uniting subatomic particles by the billions

In a step toward a generation of ultrafast computers, physicists have used bursts of radio waves to briefly create 10 billion quantum-entangled pairs of subatomic particles in silicon. The research offers a glimpse of a future computing world in which individual atomic nuclei store and retrieve data and single electrons shuttle it back and forth. [Read More...](#)

Wired and wireless broadband in India, the next big thing

While mobile communication (voice+text) has seen incredible growth in India, broadband connectivity hasn't been taken as seriously. Last year, India announced a National Broadband Plan with the intention of connecting close to 160 million households compared to an estimated 10.3 Million connections as of now. [Read More...](#)

Swinburne University of Technology to go it alone with its online courses

SWINBURNE University of Technology will expand online degrees in a marketing deal with internet recruiter Seek designed to capitalise on galloping demand by off-campus students. [Read More...](#)

Fluid keys boost iPad typing speed

Researchers at the University of Technology, Sydney have developed a keyboard that lets users type faster on touchscreen devices like the iPad. [Read More...](#)

8 companies and sectors that could be transformed by Starbucks mobile payments

Starbucks is rolling out its mobile payment nationwide. You can now use an iPhone app to pay for your morning frappalatta. [Read More...](#)

Shift in Earth's Orbit Transformed 'Green Sahara' into Planet's Largest Desert

A change in the Earth's orbit, many scientists believe, transformed the "Green Sahara" into what is now the largest desert on the planet. While scientists are still trying to find out if the slow shift in orbit had rapid or gradual environmental consequences, they say Earth's orbit will continue to change today and into the future. [Read More...](#)

Nanolasers heat up

Plasmon lasers could make possible new biosensors and optical computers. [Read More...](#)

Dating sites try adaptive matchmaking

New software is inspired by algorithms that target online ads or recommend books and movies. [Read More...](#)

Mindfulness meditation training changes brain structure in 8 weeks

Participating in an 8-week mindfulness meditation program appears to make measurable changes in brain regions associated with memory, sense of self, empathy and stress. In a study that will appear in the January 30 issue of *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*, a team led by Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) researchers report the results of their study, the first to document meditation-produced changes over time in the brain's grey matter. [Read More...](#)

Internet gains on television as public's main news source

In 2010, for the first time, the internet has surpassed television as the main source of national and international news for people younger than 30. Since 2007, the number of 18 to 29 year olds citing the internet as their main source has nearly doubled, from 34% to 65%. [Read More...](#)



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