

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

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*Welcome to the end of month April edition of What's Emerging. This month we have an article on the perils of relying on forecasts as well as a book review.*

*We have also started a new Tumblelog on not-for-profit sector issues – you can view it at this link: <http://emergentfutures-nfp.tumblr.com/>*

**Cheers**

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



## Business Tips

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### 'Goals gone wild': how goal setting can lead to disaster

New research by Wharton operations and information management professor Maurice Schweitzer and three colleagues documents how corporate goal setting can cause more harm than good. [Read more...](#)

### Top laser printers: ZDNet's guide to the best

Here is ZDNet's roundup of the best monochrome and colour laser printers, from inexpensive to more expensive. [Read more...](#)

### Google releases similar images

Refine your image search with visual similarity. [Read more...](#)

### Product planner

Product planner is a website which shows you the user-flows on popular websites so you can get ideas for your own website design. [Read more...](#)



## What's Emerging

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### Nine-year-old whiz kid writes iPhone app

While most children his age sketch on paper with crayons, 9-year-old Lim Ding Wen from Singapore, has a very different canvas--his iPhone. Lim, who is in fourth grade, writes applications for Apple's popular iPhone. His latest, a painting program called Doodle Kids, has been downloaded over 4,000 times from Apple's iTunes store in two weeks. [Read more...](#)

### Are "great" companies just lucky?

Studies that examine high-performing companies to uncover the reasons for their success are both popular and influential. But there's a problem: The "great" companies from which these studies draw their conclusions are mostly just lucky. Many of the "great" companies cited are, in fact, nothing special; consequently, the

researchers are simply imposing patterns on random data. That's not science—it's astrology. [Read more...](#)

### **I am just a poor boy though my story's seldom told**

How poverty passes from generation to generation is now becoming clearer. The answer lies in the effect of stress on two particular parts of the brain..... The crucial breakthrough was made three years ago, when Martha Farah of the University of Pennsylvania showed that the working memories of children who have been raised in poverty have smaller capacities than those of middle-class children. [Read more...](#)

### **What good are economists anyway?**

A Business Week Article on why they failed to predict the global economic crisis—and why their help is still crucial to a recovery. [Read more...](#)

### **Batteries not included**

Better Place is trying to create a robotic system for electric cars where the batteries are swapped in and out instead of waiting to recharge the battery. Their goal is to have battery change take the same time as putting petrol in your tank so there is no time difference for consumers. Sort of like the swap and go system for gas cylinders. Looks like a good idea to me and goes with the principle that we are very strong on - that you have to make a great product that is easy for people to use if you want real change that will affect climate change. [Read more...](#)

### **What is happening now**

This is an ad but it is a good one and shows a range of internet and social media in a clever way. [Read more...](#)

### **Social media in plain english**

A really good explanation of social media for those that don't really understand it. [Read more...](#)

### **How the e-book will change the way we read and write**

Author Steven Johnson outlines a future with more books, more distractions -- and the end of reading alone. [Read more...](#)

### **New venture capital investment nearly comes to a halt**

It's official: Institutional investors have put the kibosh on investing in new venture capital funds, though established firms with track records have been able to scare up some money. That's the big news out of a report about fund raising trends in the first quarter of 2009 from Thomson Reuters and the National Venture Capital Association. [Read more...](#)

### **Protests in Moldova explode, with help of twitter**

Moscow — A crowd of more than 10,000 young Moldovans materialized seemingly out of nowhere to protest against Moldova's Communist leadership, ransacking government buildings and clashing with the police. [Read more...](#)

### **Scientists warn of rapid -fire media dangers**

Rapid-fire TV news bulletins or getting updates via social-networking tools such as Twitter could numb our sense of morality and make us indifferent to human suffering, scientists say. [Read more...](#)

### **Amazon: Now one-third of all U.S. e-commerce**

Amazon.com (AMZN) could be responsible for close to a third of all U.S. e-commerce transactions, RBC Capital analyst Stephen Ju asserted in a research note. [Read more...](#)

### **Ten principles for a Black Swan-proof world**

Great article on the financial crisis by Nicholas Taleb - *a veteran trader, a distinguished professor at New York University's Polytechnic Institute and the author of The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*. [Read more...](#) (requires registration but well worth it)

### **Six technologies soon to affect education**

New report describes the emerging technologies that will shape K-12 education in the near future. [Read more...](#)

### **Electricity grid in U.S. penetrated by spies**

Cyberspies have penetrated the U.S. electrical grid and left behind software programs that could be used to disrupt the system, according to current and former national-security officials. [Read more...](#)

### **Universities will be 'irrelevant' by 2020, Y. professor says**

Last fall, David Wiley stood in front of a room full of professors and university administrators and delivered a prediction that made them squirm: "Your institutions will be irrelevant by 2020." [Read more...](#)

### **Was earth day bad for the environment?**

Don't pat yourself on the back too hard on Earth Day — it could be bad for the environment. [Read more...](#)

### **More links**

We have many more links than we can fit in the newsletter - this month's 'Additional Links' are available on our [website](#).



## What We Are Writing About

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### **Article – How Wrong We Have Been**

Paul's article on the failure of forecasts and the folly of placing too much faith in them was published in the Melbourne Age on 30 April. [Read more...](#)

### **Book review – Strategic Intuition: The Creative Spark in Human Achievement by William Duggan**

William Duggan opens his final chapter in this book by describing two statements that he uses in his classes to ask students which one they most agree with:

- 1. You can achieve anything you want if you believe in yourself, set clear goals, and work hard.***
- 2. You can achieve many things if you prepare for opportunity, see it, and act on it.***

He says that most American students, business executives, army officers and non-profit leaders say that the first statement is the one they agree with more. Non-Americans tend to agree with the second statement more but the longer they have been in America the more likely they'll agree with the first statement.

If you read the first statement critically it is clearly nonsense...

This book is essentially about the difference in strategy approaches between the "that is our goal lets go and get it" school of strategy and what might be termed anticipatory awareness, which we would argue is far more needed in a fast changing and modern world. Essentially Duggan asks where we get the flashes of inspiration that create great goals in the first place, and innovative ways of achieving them. [Read More...](#)