

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

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Welcome to the end of August edition of What's Emerging. All the usual suspects plus a book review.

Help us make a difference with our "Help Charity - Make Us Pay" initiative:

You can help us raise funds for charity by getting friends and associates to sign up to our newsletter. Emergent Futures will donate \$2 to charity for every person who signs up and stays signed up for 6 months. Plus they get a chance to win one of five \$100 book vouchers. For more details click [HERE](#).

Cheers

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



Business Tips

Google website optimizer case study: Daily burn, 20%+ improvement

We are big fans of Tim Ferriss and his four hour working week book. Here is a great post on optimising your website. [Read more...](#)

BattCursor

Do you have a laptop with Windows Vista? Are you tired of always having to look in the System Tray area of the taskbar to see how full your battery is? Then BattCursor will help – continually showing the battery levels with your cursor – only from Windows Vista and beyond. [Read more...](#)

Idea Exchange provides tool for idea generation and support

It's basically a virtual suggestion box where users can publish their own suggestions, large or small, and browse ideas submitted by their colleagues. Besides better sharing, there's another big difference between Idea Exchange and a shoebox with a hole in the top-the software lets users support other's ideas by purchasing shares in them. [Read more...](#)



What's Emerging

Virtual reality could keep you from being a surgical guinea pig

New pilots train on flight simulators before flying their first 757. Scientists experiment on animals before giving their new drug to patients. And fledgling surgeons perform their first few operations on... real people. Now a small but growing group of doctors are trying to make surgical training safer by bringing virtual reality into the operating room. [Read more...](#)

Sea worm inspires novel bone glue

The natural glue a sea creature uses to build its home has offered scientists a new way to repair bones

shattered in car crashes and other accidents. [Read more...](#)

Wi-Fi via white spaces

A network design that uses old TV spectrum could produce better long-range wireless connectivity. [Read more...](#)

Robots 'evolve' the ability to deceive

An experiment shows how "deceptive" behaviour can emerge from simple rules. [Read more...](#)

IBM scientists create DNA computer chip

IBM scientists and a collaborator from the California Institute of Technology have created a computer chip utilizing synthesized DNA molecules. The approach could pave the way to create tiny circuits that could form the basis of smaller, more powerful computer chips. [Read more...](#)

Internet giants could slash energy costs 40 percent with smart rerouting algorithm

A routing algorithm can channel Internet data to locations where electricity prices are cheapest. [Read more...](#)

NASA steps closer to nuclear power for moon base

Three recent tests at different NASA centres and a national lab have successfully demonstrated key technologies required for compact fission-based nuclear power plants for human settlements on other worlds. [Read more...](#)

2 million more Australians go social in 2009

Social networking audience in Australia jumps 29 percent in past year as use of Facebook and Twitter soars. [Read more...](#)

Cemeteries track pollution

The Geological Society of Australia is calling on individuals, schools and community groups across Australia, to visit their local graveyards and measure the weathering rates of old marble headstones as part of an international project to track shifts in world pollution levels and climate change. [Read more...](#)

Good food gone bad

Fish, cereal, yogurt and other basic food can be very healthy, until it is corrupted in the hands of food manufacturers. The more food is processed, the healthier it becomes. The healthiest foods have no list of ingredients. They are what they are. Here we present 10 healthy foods gone bad. [Read more...](#)

TapIt

TapIt water bottle refilling network was founded in 2008 to give New Yorkers free access to clean sustainable water on the go. Cafe owners sign up as 'partners' to provide water to those who carry a reusable bottle. A simple and clean solution to the issues of bottled water and all its inherent environmental problems. [Read more...](#)

Disturbing new chemical weapons

World governments may be militarizing biology and other life sciences to make strange and disturbing weapons. A 2007 report by the British Medical Association warned of a "slippery slope" in using drugs as weapons that could lead to "intentional manipulation of peoples' emotions, memories, immune responses or even fertility." [Read more...](#)

Finding happiness by cultivating positive emotions

Most scientists who study emotions focus on negative states: depression, anxiety, fear. Psychologist Barbara Fredrickson has spent more than 20 years investigating the relatively uncharted terrain of positive emotions, which she says can make us healthier and happier if we take time to cultivate them. [Read more...](#)

Linking land clearing to drought and climate change

A recent Australian study suggests that land clearing over the past 200 years may have been as significant a factor in this country's droughts and changing climate as increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. [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

Book review - Wired for War – The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century by P W Singer

I believe that developments in robotics will be one of the major drivers of change in our world over the next 20-30 years. As such it is always beneficial to look at developments in the military field as defence forces are generally willing to take significant financial risks on the development of new technologies.

The title of this book would seem to suggest that it is "Boys Own" look at the use of robots in military conflicts but it is a much more thoughtful and deep analysis than that. The book explores many of the developments of military robots, where that development has come from, and where it might go to given the accelerating pace of change. Bill Gates for instance believes that the robotic industry is poised on the cusp of a change in a similar way that the computer industry was in the early 1980s. A large part of the book is devoted to what these changes might mean rather than dwelling on "cool technology". [Read More...](#)