

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

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*Welcome to the February edition of What's Emerging. While we strongly believe it is not possible to accurately predict the future in a complex and rapidly changing environment, it is still kind of nice when we see things in our scanning that align with possible shifts we have anticipated, like the potential rapid emergence of mobile internet search and its implications for business, and the potential for second generation biofuel technologies, which feature in some of our links in this edition.*

*This month we also welcome to the team Anitha Mendonca joining us from Brickworks as a part time research assistant.*

*We hope you enjoy this edition.*

*Cheers*

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



## Business Tips

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### Speed up your PC

Uniblue SpeedUpMyPC is a downloadable software program that you can use to speed up a slow PC by optimising your system, allocating CPU power to certain programs and recovering RAM. We have used it and it has made a significant difference to frustrating slowness in our computers.

### Open source publishing

[Scribus](#) is an open source desk top publishing program which is highly recommended by a number of independent technology websites. We have downloaded and installed it but have not had a chance to play with it yet.

### PCMobilizr: access your PC from a mobile phone

[Rove Mobile](#) introduced [PCMobilizr](#), which lets users have complete access to the files and applications on their home and office PCs. With the PC becoming a peripheral to smartphones (especially those with big bright screens), PCMobilizr makes a lot of sense. It provides access to the screen of your desktop and control of the mouse and keyboard over a secure SSL connection. Not sure when it will be available in Australia.



## What's Emerging

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### **Google; AT&T shocked by iPhone usage**

Google has been stunned by the level of internet search that is being carried out on the Apple iPhone with levels are 50 times what was expected. This could be an early signal that mobile search is about to take off in a big way. If so this means a fundamental change to the way that search and the search advertising is carried out, completely changing the competitive landscape in this area. Go to our article "Future in the Palm of the Consumer, which was published in The Age in December 2007 for more thoughts on what might happen with mobile computing: <http://www.emergentfutures.com/page.php?pid=10700&wpid=41>

### **Social networking - where will it lead?**

We have previously written on the developments in mobile computing and the effects of ubiquitous information on the relationship between consumer and producer. This Sloan Management article gives some interesting examples on the power of social networks in a digital age and the effects it may have on corporate strategy.

### **Supermarkets and the sustainability of the food supply chain**

The Sustainable Development Commission in the UK has released a report on the role that supermarkets can play in the sustainability of the food production and supply chain.

### **Biodiesel feedstock development**

Solazyme is a company growing algae in the dark to produce a range of products from sugar including the precursors to biodiesel. The difference in the Solazyme process is that it can be used to digest biomass material with the algae highly resistant to the toxic effects of lignin, reducing the need to remove lignin from the feedstock, a considerable cost saving.

### **Self-cleaning wool and silk developed using nanotechnology**

Wool socks, skirts and silk ties may soon clean themselves of smells and stains in the sunshine, researchers in Australia and China suggest. The secret is a nano particle coating, one already used to keep windows clear, that could lead to "self-cleaning" versions of wool and silk fabrics.

### **Will the vegetarians finally win?**

ZenBurger claims to have created vegetarian fast food that tastes just like meat based fast food.

### **The 10 emerging technologies of 2008**

Technology Review presents its annual list of the 10 most exciting technologies.

### **Low emission technologies and the Garnaut Review**

The Garnaut review on climate change in Australia has released the notes and presentation from their review of low emission technologies.

### **Zzzphone**

zzzphone is trying to revolutionise the business of mobile phones via mass customisation. You can order the features that you want in your mobile phone from a range available on the website and then they will manufacture it in 15 days.

### **Anti-pollen nanotechnology coats hit the stores in Japan**

Apparel manufacturer Sanyo Shokai has released the first in a series of men's coats which are pollen-resistant. They're made from a fabric developed by Toray that's produced in a nanotechnology process that repels water and pollen.

### **Disneyland revives 'House of Future'**

Disney is set to open a new abode in Tomorrowland, this time in partnership with 21st century technology giants. The 5,000-square-foot home scheduled to open in May will look like a normal suburban home outside, but inside it will feature hardware, software and touch-screen systems that could simplify everyday living.

### **Study shows growing biofuel crops costly to environment**

Converting land to grow biofuel crops as cleaner-burning alternatives to fossil fuels actually results in major new carbon emissions, according to a new study published in the online edition of the journal Science.

### **London to Sydney in five hours on new jet**

British engineers have unveiled plans for a hypersonic jet which could fly from Europe to Australia in less than five hours. The A2 plane, designed by engineering company Reaction Engines based in Oxfordshire, southern England, could carry 300 passengers at a top speed of almost 6,400 kilometres per hour - five times the speed of sound.

### **1000 genomes project**

An international research consortium has announced the 1000 Genomes Project, an ambitious effort that will involve sequencing the genomes of at least a thousand people from around the world to create the most detailed and medically useful picture to date of human genetic variation and further accelerate efforts to find more of the genetic factors involved in human health and disease.

### **Fuel consumption in California**

One of our subscribers who has frequent interactions with us is Lindsay Leveen. He writes this green energy explained blog which always has insightful and entertaining stuff on it such as this one: Californians consume 20 times their daily recommended dietary intake in petrol every day - puts the food for fuel debate in a different perspective.

### **Eco-mum meetings replace Tupperware parties**

Move over Tupperware. The EcoMom party has arrived, with its ever-expanding 'to-do' list that includes preparing waste-free school lunches; lobbying for green building codes; transforming oneself into a locovore, eating locally grown food; and remembering not to idle the car when picking up children from school.



## What We Are Writing About

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### **Presentation: How to Think About Emergence, Complexity and the Future**

A copy of Paul's recent powerpoint presentation to the Australian Power Institute's 2008 residential school for Electric Power Engineering, Hobart, 21 February, is available on our website downloads section.

## Book Review: Altered Carbon by Richard K Morgan

While a Sci-Fi novel may not be a business reference book, the ideas contained in this amazing novel help us shift our perspectives on ideas of humanity using a simple idea that human minds can be digitised and stored. This idea leads to a number of possible changes in how humans can live:

- The ultra rich can live forever - in the book they are called Meths (short for Methuselah) because they can afford to have remote back ups of their minds and can clone new bodies (or buy other bodies to live in). What sort of people want to live forever, what does it do to your mind if you live for 400 years and move from body to body, what does it mean for love and emotional relationships? Can you imagine being married to someone for 350 years? (Chris - you should be so lucky)
- How lives change if you can be revived using a digital storage of your mind. People can take risks they would not normally take.
- If we can live forever, will this change our attitude to having children and how will this impact on population levels?
- In a world where people mostly do not die, then what do you do to criminals who totally kill someone, the ultimate crime, by killing their body and destroying or erasing their cortical stack?
- If you suspend belief and assume that such a digitisation can occur then what is the relationship between the mind and the body? If someone you love has their body destroyed but their mind survives and is inserted into a different body can you still love that person? How much of our feelings are affected by the chemicals and pheromone reactions between our bodies?
- Is such a digitisation possible - is it possible to upload human consciousness. Some people today, such as Ray Kurzweil, believe that this will be possible in the not too distant future and that consciousness is an emergent property of our complex brains. Therefore they believe that it is possible make a 'thinking machine' that will have its own consciousness once we gain the ability to make machines that are complex enough - the great leap forward, Terminator, or just fantasy - take your pick.
- What does such a change have on our views about spirituality and religion? In the book the Catholics have caveats on being revived or inserted into another body.
- If this happened to us, how would it affect how we lived our lives?
- If we spent all our time and energy earning enough money so we could afford a 'new' body to move into what would it mean to our relationships? Would we ignore what is good about life in order to get more of it?

As futurists a major part of our role is to help people see different perspectives on how they see themselves, the world and their organisation. The ability to tell a story where these issues are raised in an easy and entertaining manner is much better than deep and dense philosophical books on the same subject. I loved this book and I would heartily recommend it to anyone interested in the genre and/or these issues. It is the first of a series of three novels with the same character.

**Paul Higgins**