

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

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Welcome to the mid-September edition of What's Emerging with plenty of links to keep you thinking about the future.

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Cheers

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Business Tips

InvisibleHand

InvisibleHand shows a discreet notification when the product you're browsing can be bought for a lower price elsewhere. It gives you a link directly to the product page at the competing retailer. Only for our UK and US subscribers at this stage but keep an eye open or use it to shop in those areas. [Read more...](#)

MP3 Skype recorder v.1.9.0

A free application for recording Skype calls. [Read more...](#)

Tiny twitter

Love twitter and love tweeting from your mobile device? But don't want to get dinged for updates and double dinged for friend updates continually arriving via SMS? Tiny Twitter is just what you are looking for and it will work on ANY Java enabled phone (that's a bunch & includes the Blackberry) and ANY Windows Mobile Pocket PC or Smartphone. [Read more...](#)

Evernote

Use Evernote to save your ideas, things you see, and things you like. Then find them all on any computer or device you use. For free. [Read more...](#)



What's Emerging

Banks 'too big to fail' have grown even bigger

When the credit crisis struck last year, federal regulators pumped tens of billions of dollars into the nation's leading financial institutions because the banks were so big that officials feared their failure would ruin the entire financial system. Today, the biggest of those banks are even bigger. [Read more...](#)

Media multi-taskers pay mental price, Stanford study shows

Think you can talk on the phone, send an instant message and read your e-mail all at once? Stanford

researchers say even trying may impair your cognitive control. [Read more...](#)

Turning algae into oil the NASA way

NASA scientist Jonathan Trent is developing a smarter way to turn algae into oil. He's created plastic osmotic containers that will float below the surface of the ocean, grow algae, and then help it bloom into oil. He says the new method is more beneficial because algae can grow in a larger area and doesn't compete with agricultural land. [Read more...](#)

Mining the web for feelings, not facts

An emerging field known as sentiment analysis is taking shape around one of the computer world's unexplored frontiers: translating the vagaries of human emotion into hard data. [Read more...](#)

As waistlines widen, brains shrink

The obese and overweight have less neurological tissue, study finds. [Read more...](#)

'Synthetic tree' claims to catch carbon in the air

Scientists in the United States are developing a "synthetic tree" capable of collecting carbon around 1,000 times faster than the real thing. [Read more...](#)

Is it ethical to engineer delicious cows that feel no pain?

Most people don't think too much about bovine hurt when they chow down on a Big Mac or Whopper. But for those with moral pangs, scientists say genetic engineering might provide a solution, by creating pain-free animals that can satiate the human appetite without suffering. [Read more...](#)

Lithium, the new oil

Given that many battery-powered vehicles will use lithium-ion batteries (your cordless drill and computer already do).....By some estimates, we would exhaust the world's supply of lithium building six million small cars a year (10 per cent of the world's total) with lithium-ion batteries. [Read more...](#)

BEAR robot roars to the rescue

Following on from our book review on Wired for War in the last newsletter, the humanoid BEAR (Battlefield Extraction-Assist Robot) can locate victims in a mine shaft, battlefield, toxic spill, or earthquake-damaged structure. And then it can lift them up and then carry them over long distances to safety. Article and Video. [Read more...](#)

All a cub reporter needs is a scoop and an iPhone

Fwix will release an iPhone application this week that enables its users to file news updates, photos and videos, live from the field. The items will appear on Fwix's year-old Web site, which also collects links to local news articles from newspapers and blogs in 85 cities. [Read more...](#)

India's water use 'unsustainable'

Parts of India are on track for severe water shortages, according to results from NASA's gravity satellites. [Read more...](#)

Averting a perfect storm of shortages

As the world's population grows, competition for food, water and energy will increase. Food prices will rise, more people will go hungry, and migrants will flee the worst-affected regions. That's the simple idea at the heart of the warning from John Beddington, the UK government's chief scientific adviser, of a possible crisis in 2030. [Read more...](#)

A cordless future for electricity?

Electronics such as phones and laptops may start shedding their power cords within a year. That's the prediction of Eric Giler, CEO of WiTricity, a company that's able to power light bulbs using wireless electricity that travels several feet from a power socket. [Read more...](#)

Researchers hope to mass-produce tiny robots

Tiny robots the size of a flea could one day be mass-produced, churned out in swarms and programmed for a

variety of applications, such as surveillance, micromanufacturing, medicine, cleaning, and more. In an effort to reach this goal, a recent study has demonstrated the initial tests for fabricating microrobots on a large scale.

[Read more...](#)

Augmented reality in a contact lens

A new generation of contact lenses built with very small circuits and LEDs promises bionic eyesight. [Read more...](#)

Welcome to the library. Say goodbye to the books

Cushing Academy has all the hallmarks of a New England prep school, with one exception. This year, after having amassed a collection of more than 20,000 books, officials at the pristine campus about 90 minutes west of Boston have decided the 144-year-old school no longer needs a traditional library.The future, they believe, is digital. [Read more...](#)

Wall Street pursues profit in bundles of life insurance

After the mortgage business imploded last year, Wall Street investment banks began searching for another big idea to make money. They think they may have found one. The bankers plan to buy "life settlements," life insurance policies that ill and elderly people sell for cash - \$400,000 for a \$1 million policy, say, depending on the life expectancy of the insured person. Then they plan to "securitize" these policies, in Wall Street jargon, by packaging hundreds or thousands together into bonds. **PH : Have there been no lessons learnt?** [Read more...](#)

Human brain could be replicated in 10 years, researcher predicts

A model that replicates the functions of the human brain is feasible in 10 years according to neuroscientist Professor Henry Markram of the Brain Mind Institute in Switzerland. "I absolutely believe it is technically and biologically possible". [Read more...](#)

Super-strong German steel Velcro: Not for sneakers

German-created steel fasteners can withstand loads of more than 38 tons per square meter, hook and unhook without tools. [Read more...](#)

'Optical computer' performs first ever calculation

An 'optical computer' which uses light particles rather than traditional circuitry has performed the first ever calculation, as scientists hope it could pave the way for a computer smaller and faster than anything seen before. [Read more...](#)

World faces hi-tech crunch as China eyes ban on rare metal exports

Beijing is drawing up plans to prohibit or restrict exports of rare earth metals that are produced only in China and play a vital role in cutting edge technology, from hybrid cars and catalytic converters, to superconductors, and precision-guided weapons. [Read more...](#)

Arty sunflowers look good and provide power, too

A boring and unattractive loading area at the rear of a retail development in Austin, Texas is now hidden from view by a collection of 15 huge blue sunflowers, the petals of which collect energy from the sun to power the artwork's LED lighting and generate funds to help towards costs. Whether driving past or walking through the Electric Garden, onlookers will be treated to an awe-inspiring panorama where art meets functionality. [Read more...](#)

50 things that are being killed by the internet

The internet has wrought huge changes on our lives - both positive and negative - in the fifteen years since its use became widespread. **PH : An interesting list that makes you think about how fast change is and how some things just slip away (some thankfully).** [Read more...](#)

Social media

Interesting video on social media stats and interestingly on a website for Religious Ministers. [Read more...](#)

Spotting trends, not fads or blips

The economic downturn has prompted renewed interest in trend-spotting among businesspeople and consumers. Almost everyone is searching for signs of an improved economy. Layoff stability, surely a negative factor in good times, is now cause for near-celebration. Spotting a real trend is more complicated than you might think. [Read more...](#)

