

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

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*Welcome to the End of October edition of What's Emerging.*

*Thanks to all of those that supported Paul and his team on the Round the Bay. They raised nearly \$2000 for the Smith Family.*

*Get More Value from our Scanning*

*Were you aware that all of the links that are put out in this newsletter, and all of the ones that we don't include and are uploaded on our website ([HERE](#)) as additional links, are all posted on our Tumblelog? Even those of you that did know this may not be aware that you can search all the posts for information on different topics. If you go to <http://emergentfutures.tumblr.com/> you can search all 138 pages (and more every day) using the search box. We have tagged all the information that we post but the search will look for words in the text as well. We use it all the time to make connections between stuff. Please feel free to use it – the service is Free.*

**Cheers**

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



## Business Tips

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### The Pomodoro Technique

Francesco Cirillo created the Pomodoro Technique in 1992 after a long search to improve his own study habits. You can use <http://www.focusboosterapp.com/> to adopt the technique on your computer. [Read more...](#)

### Tweetalarm

Tweetalarm is like Google alerts for Twitter. You can put in key words about your business or products and it will notify you when those words are tweeted. [Read more...](#)

### Run great meetings with TimeBridge

Send a single email to co-workers, clients, or friends and TimeBridge finds a meeting time everyone can make. No juggling act required. TimeBridge is a top 10 collaborative tool on Lifehacker. [Read more...](#)

### Lifehacker's complete guide to Windows 7

Whether you've played around with Windows 7 during its beta or release candidate versions, launch day is finally here, and Windows 7 is finally ready for widespread, public consumption. This guide will take you straight through from system requirements and upgrading your PC to highlighting Windows 7's best new features. [Read more...](#)



## What's Emerging

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### **Last time carbon dioxide levels were this high: 15 million years ago, scientists report**

"The last time carbon dioxide levels were apparently as high as they are today — and were sustained at those levels — global temperatures were 5 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit higher than they are today, the sea level was approximately 75 to 120 feet higher than today, there was no permanent sea ice cap in the Arctic and very little ice on Antarctica and Greenland." [Read more...](#)

### **Photos: Popular mechanics' 2009 breakthrough award winners**

Popular Mechanics magazine has scoured the planet for the best new products and innovators in search of the winners of its Breakthrough Awards. [Read more...](#)

### **'Significant Risk' of oil production peaking in ten years**

A new report, launched by the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC), argues that conventional oil production is likely to peak before 2030, with a significant risk of a peak before 2020. [Read more...](#)

### **New way to tap gas may expand global supplies**

A new technique that tapped previously inaccessible supplies of natural gas in the United States is spreading to the rest of the world, raising hopes of a huge expansion in global reserves of the cleanest fossil fuel. [Read more...](#)

### **Brain food: Can maths really let you see into the future?**

Meet the professor who can seemingly predict political events using a laptop.

***PH - We believe that this is simply not possible. You can perhaps marginally increase the chances of forecasting complex events but the very nature of complexity means consistent forecasting of complex events over any length of time is simply not possible. We will watch his long term results with interest.*** [Read more...](#)

### **Introducing: The Book of Odds**

What's more dangerous: a playground jungle gym or your office chair? As it happens, one in every 3,759 fatal accidental falls starts from a piece of playground equipment. You're 85 times more likely, meanwhile, to fall to your death from a chair. That's one of the many odd pairings waiting to be discovered in The Book of Odds. [Read more...](#)

### **GM to sell small electric car for less than \$6,000**

The all-electric Spark will go on sale next year in India. There GM partners with Reva Electric Car Co. The standard combustion engine Spark, sells for \$5200. The electric is expected to be slightly more costly. The electric Spark will be available in other Spark-markets as well: Europe, South Korea, China. [Read more...](#)

### **Roof tiles change colour to save energy**

A team of recent MIT graduates has developed roof tiles that change colour based on the temperature. The tiles become white on a hot day and turn black when it's cold outside. [Read more...](#)

### **Lightning-fast robo-hands**

This video, of high-speed actuation of robot fingers and tracking cameras (developed by researchers from the Ishikawa Komuro Lab at the University of Tokyo), gets the big Keanu Reeves "Whoa" Award. **Watch the video – it is quite something.** [Read more...](#)

### **'Double food output to stop world starving,' say scientists**

Global food production needs to be increased by between 50 and 100 per cent if widespread famine is to be avoided in the coming decades as the human population expands rapidly, leading scientists said. [Read more...](#)

### **Population growth 'our biggest challenge'**

The head of the Treasury, Ken Henry, says Australia's population growth is the biggest challenge to Commonwealth and state governments since Federation. [Read more...](#)

### **ISS could get its own electron-beam fabrication 3-D printer**

Every good futuristic sci-fi narrative has its version: *Star Trek* had the replicator that produced Picard's piping hot Earl Grey from what appeared to be thin air, and *Forbidden Planet* had Robbie the Robot, who generated

entire luncheons from the chemical lab in his nether regions. But NASA scientists have come many real-world steps closer to creating something from nothing, via a process called electron beam freeform fabrication. [Read more...](#)

### **To cut global warming, Swedes study their plates**

Shopping for oatmeal, Helena Bergstrom, 37, admitted that she was flummoxed by the label on the blue box reading, "Climate declared: .87 kg CO2 per kg of product." "Right now, I don't know what this means," said Ms. Bergstrom, a pharmaceutical company employee. But if a new experiment here succeeds, she and millions of other Swedes will soon find out. [Read more...](#)

### **Information technology, cybernetics, and artificial intelligence may render written language "functionally obsolete" by 2050.**

*PH: This is an interesting premise and even if you don't agree, it starts you thinking about the nature of language and communication.* [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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### **Book Review: Dance with Chance: Making Luck Work for You by Spyros Makridakis, Robin Hogarth and Anil Gaba**

As futurists we are deeply interested in uncertainty and how people make decisions in the face of uncertainty. This is because the future is inherently uncertain and yet we still have to act and make decisions in the real world. The truth is that many people choose irrationally when faced with making decisions. The book opens with a story that indicates that up to 5000 Americans may have died in three years after the September 11 terrorist attack because they make decisions to travel by car instead of flying. In addition to the deaths, statisticians have calculated that a further 45,000 serious injuries and 325,000 less serious injuries would have been avoided if people's travel patterns had remained the same... [Read More...](#)