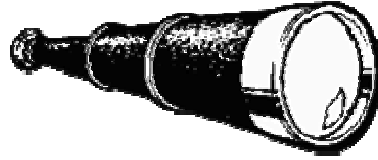


# FutureScoping:



emerging trends, new  
ideas and general thought  
stimulation

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Or contact me on...  
Jon@quietstorm.co.uk  
0207 907 1140

**From:** 

#### **CRACK CEOs**

Four years ago Catherine Rohr was a venture capitalist on Wall Street. Then she left her job with its six-figure salary and decided to create the Prison Entrepreneurship Program. Since then she has shared her professional experience with almost 400 inmates. It all started when Ms Rohr was invited into another Texas prison by a fellow executive. At first she was not very interested. "I didn't know any prisoners personally, but I thought 'just lock 'em up and throw away the key'," she says. "I saw them as a waste of tax dollars. I was very brutal in my approach." But Catherine then recognised that many were ordinary human beings who had made some serious mistakes in their lives. She also spotted something else, something missed by the majority of prison visitors, namely the men's 'ROI' or return on investment potential: they had proven abilities, understood basic leadership and management principles, and profitability. Ms Rohr realised that influential convicted felons could be America's most overlooked talent pool.

**Thought:** look for talent in unexpected places.

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**From:** 

#### **TAKE YOUR (SMART) MEDICINE**

When we have smart cars, smart toasters, who would want to take a dumb pill? Which is maybe why Philips have developed a smart iPill that monitors temperature and acidity as it travels down the digestive highway and drops its drug cargo right where it's needed. Its purpose? To reduce dosages and side effects with targeted treatment. Packed in the plastic pill are a microprocessor, battery, wireless radio and the drug. Doctors and iPill communicate via computer. Innovative design that works better with less drug and fewer side effects definitely makes the medicine taste sweeter.

**Thought:** where could you be smarter?

#### **DIGITAL LEARNING**

With textbooks being so very 20th century, the University of Derby is experimenting with a digital alternative by providing students with lessons via iPod. They provided 35 first-year radiography medical students iPods pre-loaded with video tutorials on how to properly position patients under an X-Ray machine. The gadgets are offered on a two-year loan and students are permitted to add their own digital content. A senior lecturer at the university explained, "Students want different ways of learning".

**Thought:** use digital to give people instant know how.

#### **BLACK MARKET HAIRCUTS**

2009 style and trim trend: Go stealth. As consumers try to stretch their cash, home hair-cutting makes top styles an accessible option. Private coif parties aren't new, but a struggling economy has caught stylists illegally accepting evening shifts, offering up lovely locks for fewer bucks. Some stylists report an uptick in consumers asking for these "under-the-table" deals, often a fraction of the price you would pay at the salon.

**Thought:** offer indulgence in a bargain hunting style.

#### **RECESSION FRIENDLY DATING**

What's *your* recessionary type? The makers of Match.com have launched Down to Earth, a dating site designed for today's financially strapped singles. Because unlike many other fee-based dating sites, the service is free. For singles who don't have the money or the time for dead ends, a 'RealRatings' system enables users to rank the accuracy of profiles against the real deal. So what you see should be what you actually get.

**Thought:** in a recession, free 'added value' is appealing.

**From:**



### **LISTEN TO GRANNY**

Grandmothers are known for many virtues, not the least of which is their ability make the most of limited resources. "Waste not, want not" is a maxim that works well both from an economic and an environmental perspective, and it's also one that comes naturally to older generations. And with just that talent in mind, Oxfam recently recruited a team of what it calls Green Grannies to offer advice to the UK public about everything from how to darn socks to how to make delicious food from leftovers. Part of Good Ideas Unltd, Oxfam's new lifestyles campaign, the service aims not only to help UK consumers save cash, but also to encourage recycling and help tackle climate change, which it notes has a particularly hard impact on the world's poorest populations. To disseminate the grannies' advice, Oxfam has launched a YouTube channel, and will soon debut its 'Ask a Granny' service on the Oxfam website.

**Thought:** unlock the skills, talents and knowledge of older generations.

### **BRINGING BACK POLAROID**

Polaroid may have stopped production of its analogue instant film last summer, but such is the strength of the product's fan base that some have decided they won't take "no" for an answer. Specifically, a group of aficionados in the Netherlands has bought an old Polaroid factory and plan to bring the technology back into production later this year. As part of what it calls The Impossible Project, Impossible b.v. has signed a 10-year lease on Polaroid's Enschede-based film-production factory, which still includes everything needed to produce up to 100 million units of instant film per year—all fully connected and operational, and valued at about EUR 100 million. With support from Ilford Photo, the project has also engaged an experienced team of integral film experts from around the world. Among the team's challenges is retooling and modernizing Polaroid's integral film, in part to reflect the fact that some of its key components are no longer available. The project website explains: "The Impossible mission is NOT to re-build Polaroid Integral film but (with the help of strategic partners) to develop a new product with new characteristics, consisting of new optimised components, produced with a streamlined modern setup. An innovative and fresh analogue material, sold under a new brand name that perfectly will match the global re-positioning of Integral Films."

**Thought:** some old things remain very popular – they just need sympathetic modernisation.

### **COOKING WITH GREASE**

Who said fat was bad for you? Vegawatt focuses on the upside of grease, turning restaurants' waste oil into electricity and hot water. Vegawatt's refrigerator-sized units are incorporated into a building's existing system in the same way as a solar panel is retrofitted. After filtering a restaurant's used vegetable oil, the unit combusts the refined fuel in a diesel engine, feeding electricity and hot water straight into a restaurant's system. The units won't provide all the power and electricity that a business needs, but can significantly improve its carbon footprint and running costs, as a unit typically provides 10-25% of electricity requirements. Payback is within three years. And that's without taking governmental incentives and rebates into account. Businesses further benefit by not having to pay or arrange for used oil to be removed. Last but not least, there's the reputation boost gleaned from going green.

**Thought:** find profitable ways to use your leftovers.

### **MADE TO BE HANDED DOWN**

There are a few different recycling efforts to counter the forces of "fast fashion" and give used clothes another life. But Welsh clothing brand Howies is taking a different approach to the discarded-clothes problem by designing items to do a better job of withstanding the ravages of time in the first place. Howies' Hand-Me-Down line includes jackets and bags that have been designed specifically to last for 10 or more years. To achieve that durability, the company crafts its products painstakingly, and using very high-quality components. Its £400 jackets are made from organic tweed and organic ventile—an extremely tightly woven cotton fabric that's inherently water-resistant and uses 30 percent more yarn than conventional fabrics. With 24,000 strands of cotton, it takes 16 hours just to prepare the machine that will weave the fabric. Of course, whether consumers actually \*want\* to use the same jackets and bags for 10 years or more remains to be seen. Nevertheless, it's a compelling twist on sustainability, and Howies' emphasis on product stories and the unique features of its Hand-Me-Down products only add to their '(still) made here' appeal.

**Thought:** craft to last.

## CROWD WRITING

It was about a year ago that Pandora, the first community-sourced thriller from book collaboration site WEbook, Was officially released. Pandora featured the work of 17 different authors, and now a similar project from Random House and Borders Australia aims to combine the work of 29 authors in what it calls the world's first chain novel. Best-selling crime author James Patterson will write the first and last chapters of AirBorne, a 30-chapter thriller that will be released one chapter at a time beginning next month. For those in between, Borders and Random House held a contest to find 28 writers who could each create a fast-paced and thrilling chapter in less than 750 words. The contest closed recently, and now judges are in the process of selecting the winners, each of whom will receive a copy of the finished book; one lucky author will also get a one-on-one master class by phone with Patterson himself. Once completed, AirBorne will be released one chapter at a time. Readers will be able to download each chapter electronically, but the final book will be published in print only for participants in the competition.

**Thought:** what's your collective wisdom?

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**From:** 

## LOOKING GOOD BY DOING GOOD

With less than 1% of private gifts to charity anonymous, it seems most people want their good deeds to be talked about. And the distinction between private and public generosity is helpful in understanding what motivates people to give money or donate blood, acts which are costly to the doer and primarily benefit others. Such actions are widespread, and growing. Economists, who tend to think self-interest governs most actions of man, are intrigued, and have identified several reasons to explain good deeds of this kind. Tax breaks are, of course, one of the main ones, but donors are also sometimes paid directly for their pains, and the mere thought of a thank-you letter can be enough to persuade others to cough up. Some even act out of sheer altruism. But most interesting is another explanation, which is that people do good in part because it makes them look good to those whose opinions they care about. Economists call this "image motivation". Even more intriguingly, they find evidence that monetary incentives can actually reduce charitable giving when people are driven in part by a desire to look good in others' eyes. Because then an observer who sees someone getting paid for donating blood, for example, would find it hard to differentiate between the donor's intrinsic "goodness" and his greed.

**Thought:** help people look good to others.

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**From:** 

## ELECTRICITY WITHOUT WIRES

More than 100 years since Nikola Tesla first tried it, several companies are now coming to market with technologies that can safely transmit power through the air. The principle that Tesla first explored is based on a concept known as electromagnetic induction, which was discovered by Michael Faraday in 1831 and holds that electric current flowing through one wire can induce current to flow in another wire, nearby. And it is a breakthrough that portends the literal and figurative untethering of our electronic age. Until this development, after all, the phrase "mobile electronics" has been a lie: How portable is your laptop if it has to feed every four hours, like an embryo, through a cord? How mobile is your phone if it shuts down after too long away from a plug? And how flexible is your business if your production area can't shift because you can't move the ceiling lights? The world is about to be cured of its attachment disorder.

**Thought:** what would you make portable.

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**From:** 

## FOOTWEAR OF THE MASSES

TianLangs, the sneaker-footwear of choice for many Chinese miners, farmers, and factory workers, have been produced by the same rural factory in China for more than 50 years. Instead of simply ripping the iconic design, Hong Kong based Ospop worked closely with the factory to produce a remastered version that maintains the same silhouette but employs better materials to create a more durable and comfortable product. The result is a shoe that looks like the

lovechild of a Vans Chukka and a Converse Chuck Taylor. And the name "Skywolf" - a direct translation of TianLang - couldn't be any cooler.

**Thought:** repurpose functional 'work' products.

### **GARBAGE IS GROWING**

Garbage is a hot commodity. Whether reclaiming recyclable materials for profit or more altruistic reasons, re-using stuff practically or as an artistic medium, more people are seeing alternate uses for what we've previously considered junk. Even edible food can be sourced from the trash according to the Freegans. Darren Atkinson, a full time dumpster diver, makes a living selling what others throw out. He has built an empire collecting high-tech junk out of corporate trash bins, repairing it and selling the second-hand goods worldwide on sites like eBay and Craigslist. From humble beginnings, Atkinson was soon recovering piles of junk and selling it at garage sales. This connected him with a network of smart, broke, geeky students and early new-media types who helped him learn what was worth keeping and was just junk, and before long, Atkinson was making money hand over fist.

**Thought:** we throw away too many things that still have value.

### **PAY-WHAT-YOU-LIKE DINING**

It's crazy or genius depending on how you look at it, but Little Bay, a high end London restaurant, is letting customers pay what they like for their dinners. This generous scheme is being employed in hopes of attracting patrons who may be thinking about phasing out fine dining during this recession. Little Bay owner Peter Ilic feels that the gesture will lift people's spirits a bit, and believes that payments will average out in the end. He said: "even if people don't pay anything I have told my staff to treat them the same as if they pay £50 or £60-a-head. It's entirely up to each customer whether they give £100 or a penny. All I'm asking is they pay me what they think the food and service is worth. We have seen so many more City boys coming into the restaurant lately, looking for a better value lunch. It just seemed the right thing to do with everyone under the cosh and feeling pretty miserable. This is the ultimate value-for-money meal." The special recession offer will be available for the whole of February. Wine is not included and tap water will be served.

**Thought:** do you know what people would pay for your offer given the choice?

### **FLAVOUR TRIPPING**

Over the past few months, there have been rumours about a berry (*Synsepalum dulcificum*) that changes the way things taste, rewiring how the palate perceives sour flavours, making lemon wedges seem like gourmet appetizers and cheap tequila taste like Patrón. At a recent foodies event, attendees found everything from gin to goat cheese laid out ready for tasting. After a quick spiel about how to ingest the berry, people purchased them for \$5 a pop and were instructed to start with the citrus. The berry is native to West Africa and was poised to become a sugar substitute in the 70s, but after being squashed by the FDA, it went underground. Lately, a number of bartenders and experimental chefs in London and New York have been re-exploring its culinary potential. And the berry undoubtedly changes the way things taste, but the experience revolves more around the mystique of the fruit than its actual effect. Calling it 'flavour tripping' likens the experience to something a little more illicit than it really is. While there may be legitimate potential for incorporating it into recipes, as far as 'flavor tripping' parties go, the magic of the berry lies perhaps less in the actual fruit than in the anticipation, the collective effervescence, and the ritualistic experience of the communal 'trip'.

**Thought:** remix your product.

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**From: **

### **Wii ARE INJURED**

News that Nintendo will be launching a channel in Japan to complement the Wii Fit will be bittersweet for those who have experienced a number of reported ailments due to the console. Doctors in the US and other countries have been dealing with cases that include 'Wii-itis', 'Wii-elbow', 'Wii-knee' and other associated conditions involving the shoulders, wrists and back. The UK is certainly not immune either, with physicians tending to up to 10 injuries per week caused by repeated movements and stress being put on joints by various games. Dr. Steve Howell, of the North Alabama Bone and Joint Clinic in Florence, says "We've seen people who have developed tendonitis and flare up pre-existing back problems from games like boxing and tennis. One of the problems is, because it's such a fun activity, when they get into the game, they play it for hours instead of building up to it like they would in a workout. You should stretch and warm up, but people get so excited when they get one that they just start playing." This news is quite concerning, particularly as many of these sorts of conditions don't become serious until a few years of continued stress. So, in a few

years time, the demise of the Wii may come from the fact that all of the addicts are too crippled with pain to play. In the meantime, best think up some rudimentary warm-up exercises to delay the inevitable.

**Thought:** are there hidden negative side effects you need to address.

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**From:**  CONTAGIOUS

**iFOOD ASSISTANT**

Kraft, the world's third-largest food and beverage company, has entered the iPhone branded application fray with the iFood Assistant. The app got off to an impressive early start, hitting #2 in the Lifestyle category of the iPhone app store...impressive considering there is a one-off charge for downloading it. What's more, it also features advertising which users need to sit through in exchange for the service which it provides. So what does iFood Assistant actually do? Developed in-house by Kraft New Service, Inc., the app provides consumers with tips, recipes and consequent shopping lists (obviously including Kraft products). It aims to make cooking quicker for those with less time on their hands, be it busy mums or professionals with hectic lifestyles. The 7000 recipes are broken down into various categories including meal time, ingredients and preparation time complete with step-by-step instructional videos covering techniques from chopping to seasoning. To access the recipes users must log in, meaning that at any given time Kraft can see how many people are going after what content - a useful tool for gathering targeted information. Kraft are proving, in true branded utility style, that if you make something useful enough, consumers will be happy to not only be marketed to, but even pay for the privilege AND exchange personal information along the way. The app is comprehensive in its coverage of every detail from shopping lists to store locators, even specifying which isle to buy ingredients from, meaning not buying Kraft products becomes an exercise in wilful avoidance. This is moving beyond branded utility into branded necessity territory.

**Thought:** what would your branded app be?

# Worth a look:

(A COMPENDIUM OF INTERESTING MISCELLANY TO WATCH AND LISTEN TO)

Gigonomics: how to make money in the music industry

- <http://bit.ly/gnAWB>

Lessons we can learn from video gaming

- <http://bit.ly/E3DnJ>

Where do you go once everything is free?

- <http://bit.ly/WJKH7>

10 triggers to more brain power

- <http://bit.ly/VIBNj>

How to motivate creative people

- <http://bit.ly/1a2jVU>

The collective is the focus group

- <http://bit.ly/qNFsJ>

Human responses to change

- <http://bit.ly/SP6cT>

Understanding mobile youth culture

- <http://bit.ly/16n7q2>

Twitter vs. Facebook – the pros and cons

- <http://bit.ly/3eue1>

The future of advertising agencies in a networked society

- <http://bit.ly/36n93T>

The psychology of sharing

- <http://bit.ly/N3My>

Empathy and the art of living

- <http://bit.ly/1HfB9f>

You Are Therefore I Am: How Empathy Education Can Create Social Change

- <http://bit.ly/P4vK>

How multitasking is driving us crazy

- <http://bit.ly/ZU21B>

The cultural cycles of revival and neglect

- <http://bit.ly/1gNHiT>

Doing Good or Doing Well? Image Motivation and Monetary Incentives in Behaving Prosocially

- <http://bit.ly/Ae8rn>

The next ten years: the key youth trends

- <http://bit.ly/Zm1XE>

Trust in strangers

- <http://bit.ly/mlgD>