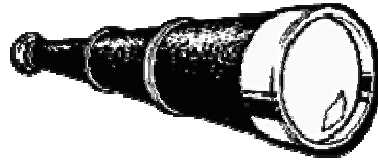


# FutureScoping:



emerging trends, new  
ideas and general thought  
stimulation

(issue no.84)

23.07.09



(© [http://www.flickr.com/photos/caveman\\_92223/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/caveman_92223/))

For more information and other new  
ideas visit [www.futurescoping.com](http://www.futurescoping.com)

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

**From:** 

### **BUSINESS STUDENTS**

While many students are using every penny they can scrape together to pay for tuition fees, accommodation and perhaps the occasional pint in the union bar, others have different ideas, saving part of their student loans so they have money to start a business. Those at university and not living at home can apply to the Student Loans Company for a maintenance loan - now worth up to £4,950, or more if they study in London. The big attraction is that it is probably the cheapest finance they are ever likely to get - with interest rates currently at 1.5%. Meanwhile repayments are not needed until income hits £15,000. While student loans are a vital ingredient in getting many students through university, there are no rules on what the money is actually used for. For those in the privileged position of not needing all the funds, the loan can prove a vital resource. Where 10 years ago enterprising students used their loans to make money on the stock market, today's young entrepreneurs are more likely to start up their own businesses, inspired by TV programmes such as the BBC's Dragons' Den.

**Thought:** help people be entrepreneurial.

### **ONLINE LEARNING**

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has unveiled a plan to save money by phasing out school textbooks in favour of internet aids. The Terminator wants to cut hundreds of millions of dollars in state spending each year, and says converting to online study will also help keep pupils more up-to-date. He believes digital activities such as Facebook, Twitter and downloading to iPods show that young people are the first to adopt new online technologies, making the internet the best way to learn in classrooms. From the beginning of the next school year, maths and science students will have access to online texts that have passed an academic standards review. Digital textbooks can be updated easily - so learning keeps pace with progress. But the real reason is money: last year California spent \$350m on textbooks and can no longer afford it.

**Thought:** digitise to cut costs.

### **AFRICAN BANKING**

With more than one billion people having access to a mobile phone but no bank account, growth in mobile coverage is helping to fuel growth of mobile financial services in the developing world. In February 2009, Bill Gates pledged \$12.5m (£8.6m) to help the world's poor access banking services. The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) said it thought the number of people with access to a mobile phone, but no bank account, would rise to 1.7 billion in 2012. It also expected more than one in five to use their mobile to access banking services, creating a market worth up to \$5bn.

**Thought:** developing markets are going straight to digital..

---

**From:** 

### **FREE VENDING**

People love free stuff, but brands need to explore creative ways to make their samples stand out. Enhancing the experience of receiving those goods can go a long way toward achieving that goal. Hence the Boobox, a vending machine that doesn't want your money. Instead, to score its free samples, customers get an activation code by sending a special SMS from their mobiles. Fosfor, the Belgian marketing and design agency behind the savvy sample machine, designed the Boobox to be easily modified to dispense different trial-sized goods. It even has a cooling system for dairy products and beverages. All of which shows how vending machines are breaking out of the box, and giving consumers new and improved access to a variety of products, from the high-end to the no-cost.

**Thought:** how could you innovate in vending?

### **DOOMER DINNER PARTIES**

For most dinner party hosts, the evening requires a trip (or three) to the grocery store. But for Doomer Dinner Parties there's no shopping required — actually, it's forbidden. The entire meal must be prepared from what's on hand in the host's fridge, pantry or garden. Doomers (a.k.a. peakniks) say society is entering the last days of oil (and, of course, other things). Doomer dinner parties evolved from "Prep Practice," where families live as if no fuel is available. One part

peak oil awareness, one part eat local challenge, a dash of whimsy: One green blogger, Crunchy Chicken, took the Doomer challenge on without telling guests what they were in for, and she was surprised by the relatively easy and delicious outcome.

**Thought:** it's not just the extreme-green quotient who are changing their behaviour.

### **AUTOMATED FOOT SUPPORT**

Customized insoles creator ESoles plans to get consumers' feet talking — to their cell phones. The tech wirelessly transfers info via multi-purpose electronic pressure sensors, and an application on the phone relays the pressure being applied in 11 different zones of each foot. ESoles' founder envisions applications for both athletics (analyzing a golf swing) and medicine (warning diabetes patients about overdoing time on their feet). And given how today's athlete is always seeking gear to help her gain a competitive edge, ESoles brings informatics to a receptive audience.

**Thought:** give people the tools to analyse their lives.

---



### **VENDING LUXURY**

U\*tique bills itself as the world's first interactive, automated luxury store for "life's little emergencies and indulgences." Currently debuting in LA, U\*tique lets consumers learn about select luxury and personal-care products and have them conveniently dispensed to them with a swipe of the credit card. Only 50 products are available at any given time, and all have been handpicked by product specialists. Customers wanting to learn more about any of them can use U\*tique to access ingredient lists, try samples or watch short videos for product explanations and demonstrations.

**Thought:** even buyers of premium and luxury want instant gratification.

### **TWITTER BREAD**

Everyone knows that baked goods tend to be best when fresh from the oven; the challenge for bakery customers is predicting when that might be. New technology now removes the guesswork by enabling bakeries to alert their customers via Twitter any time a new batch is done. BakerTweet allows bakers to keep their customers informed. But because bakery kitchens don't tend to be hospitable to electronic devices—replete as they are with flour, eggs and other messy stuff—BakerTweet uses a specially designed box that can withstand the messiest kitchen conditions. Bakers begin by creating an account online with BakerTweet using their regular computer, inputting all the baked items they want to Twitter about along with the body of the Tweet that will be sent out for each. Back in the kitchens, the wall-mountable BakerTweet box captures that information, allowing bakers to simply turn a dial to select which item they want to Tweet about at that moment ("Fresh Buns," for example) and then push a button to send the full Tweet wirelessly to Twitter. Customers following the bakery then get updated immediately when it's time to go get those buns.

**Thought:** use social media platforms to give real time information.

### **OPEN SOURCE ECO-CAR**

Proponents of free and open source software are already familiar with the benefits of a collaborative, sharing approach to design. And now the automotive world is getting a taste of its own, thanks to a Netherlands-based effort known as c,mm,n. Sustainable mobility is at the heart of the motivation behind c,mm,n (pronounced "common"), an initiative from the Dutch Society for Nature and Environment and various universities. Aiming to provide a model for cars in the year 2020, the first collaboratively designed prototype car was debuted recently at Amsterdam's AutoRAI 2009 car show. Boasting zero emissions, the hydrogen-powered vehicle features a lightweight (and therefore fuel-saving) thermoplastic exterior and an interior including soy-based memory foam and other recyclable materials. What its developers call a "river display," meanwhile, is said to function like an iPhone with access to a variety of information including route-planning, carpooling and efficiency-maximizing systems. The vehicle is also optimised to minimize depreciation and repairs. Materials in the body, for example, last only three years; after that, the car is designed to be taken back to the factory and rebuilt. Most paradigm-busting of all, however, is that the car's blueprints are publicly available under an open source license, so its design can be used and modified by others as long as any derived works are shared with the public as well. More than 800 people are currently involved in c,mm,n through the site's "c, mm, nity" and developer's wiki.

**Thought:** collaborate to innovate.

## **GREENER DELIVERIES**

British supermarket chain Waitrose dates back to the early 1900s, when bicycle and horse & cart were its chosen methods of delivery. Now—proving once again the old adage that everything that goes around comes around—much the same methods have returned as part of the company's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint. Earlier this year it launched a series of new green initiatives that include eco-minded handcarts and bicycles for use delivering groceries to local consumers. At the store in Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, for example, eco-handcarts have been added as a way to help boost the number of delivery slots available to customers without increasing the number of vans on the road. The specially designed carts are intended for use delivering to customers who live within a mile of the store, and can keep products frozen and chilled for up to two hours. Other stores have also introduced eco-bicycles following a successful trial last year. The eco-bicycles are electric bikes with a maximum distance charge of 30 miles, and are intended for delivery to customers who live within 15 miles of the store. Finally, in a bid to help consumers adopt greener habits themselves, Waitrose has also introduced cycle trailers for free loan at 36 of its stores.

**Thought:** people power = green energy.

## **YOUTUBE MAKEOVER**

The internet regularly spawns flash-in-the-pan celebrities, but few have managed to build a profitable business out of their exposure. Lauren Luke is a rare exception—the British self-taught make-up guru built such a loyal following with her chatty tips on how to imitate celebrity looks, that she just launched her own line of cosmetics: By Lauren Luke. In contrast to high-profile make-up artists like Bobbi Brown, Luke has true girl-next-door appeal. The former taxi dispatcher started experimenting with brightly coloured make-up in high school. While selling cosmetics on eBay, the 26-year-old single mum started making simple, unedited YouTube tutorials for her customers, which have been viewed over 40 million times since she started posting them 18 months ago. The By Lauren Luke line, sold exclusively through Luke's website to customers in the US, Canada and Europe, features kits of hand-picked shades. Naturally, each kit comes with a video tutorial on how best to apply 'Fierce Violets', 'Vintage Glams', 'Sultry Blues' and 'Luscious Greens'.

**Thought:** use web content to enhance brand experience.

## **FUNKY FIRST AID**

Canister UK's new OW! brand brings some fun to first aid with all-in-one kits cutely packaged for various purposes. Four OW! kits are available through Boots stores across the UK as well as online. The Home Sweet Home kit, for example, includes forehead thermometer, washproof plasters, wound pad and bandage, antiseptic wipes, safety pins, burns dressing and finger bandage, all in a cheerful silver and orange container, whilst the silver and purple Cheeky Monkeys kit adds children's plasters, cooling gel sheet and star stickers "for being brave!". All four are robust, recyclable and reusable, and a far cry from one of those big old dusty kits you never use, which lurks at the back of your kitchen cupboard.

**Thought:** give a funky makeover to something practical and sensible.

## **LOCAL FAST FOOD**

Fast food restaurants have long been domains of guilty indulgence, but Burgerville is committed to supplying its patrons with local, seasonal and organic food options. Beef and cheese are purchased from hormone-free farms in Oregon, and all of Burgerville's produce is locally sourced—meaning customers won't find a strawberry shake in December. They will, however, find sweet potato fries and pumpkin shakes in autumn and Walla Walla onion rings in the summer. In addition to its focus on sustainable ingredients, Burgerville runs its 39 restaurants as greenly as possible. Its canola oil is recycled into biodiesel fuel after its cooking life has ended, it has a wind-generated electricity investment programme, and there is a staff-initiated composting and recycling scheme. Food is priced marginally above other chains, but can be justified by the extra effort involved.

**Thought:** create justifiable indulgences.

## **TRACKING FASHION**

Vendors of T-shirts, jewelry and wool clothing have been using product life stories for some time now to demonstrate their efforts at sustainability. But whereas most such efforts have been individual ones, Made-By now offers a more central approach to transparency by tracking and documenting the efforts of all participating fashion brands. Dutch nonprofit Made-By aims to expand the market for environmentally and socially conscious fashion by facilitating sustainable production processes and then giving brands a way to share their product stories with consumers. Made-By begins by advising participating brands on how to clean up their manufacturing process where necessary and helps develop production chains in which a garment can be manufactured in a sustainable manner from start to finish. Perhaps even more interesting, however, is Made-By's Track & Trace database system, which allows consumers to

see the product story of their clothing online. The database gets populated when each link in the production chain enters information about its production processes—how many bales of cotton were received, for example, and whether an organic certificate was included. Made-By verifies that every party enters the relevant information and also keeps all supplier pages up-to-date with photos and comments. Participating manufacturers then include a unique code on the label of each item of clothing they produce. Consumers can enter that code into the Track & Trace system to see who was involved at each step in the production of their garment.

**Thought:** we want to know where things come from.

### **RANDOM ACTS OF GENEROSITY**

Members of Hyatt's Gold Passport loyalty program already enjoy numerous benefits when they visit one of the company's hotels. Soon, however, they'll also benefit from a new initiative that delivers 'random acts of generosity'. Hyatt's mission is to provide what it calls "authentic hospitality," defined—in the words of CEO Mark Hoptamagian—as "making a difference in the lives of the people we touch, including guests, employees and others." As part of a new effort to take better care of its Gold Passport members, the company will soon begin targeting those guests with pleasant surprises designed to delight them during their stay. "We will be empowering hotel employees to perform what we're calling random acts of generosity." So, don't be surprised if Gold Passport picks up your bar tab, comps your massage or treats your family to breakfast. It's part of bringing authentic hospitality to life and making you feel more than welcome. Not only does the effort stand a good chance of boosting the quality of Hyatt's service delivery, it's also a shining example of the kind of corporate generosity that's increasingly being sought by disillusioned consumers and offered by clued-in brands.

**Thought:** add value rather than cut costs.

---

---

**From:** 

### **COMPOSTABLE SNACK BAGS**

SunChips, Frito-Lay's popular line of multigrain snacks, has announced that in 2010 it will introduce the first fully compostable snack chip bag made from plant-based materials. The change is designed to significantly improve the environmental impact of its packaging. Soon, the outer layer of packaging on SunChips snack bags will be made with a compostable, plant-based renewable material, polylactic acid (PLA). By Earth Day 2010, PepsiCo's Frito-Lay North America division plans to rollout a package for its SunChips snacks where all layers are made from PLA material so the package is 100% compostable. Current snack food packaging has three layers: a printed outer layer with packaging visuals/graphics, an inner layer, which serves as a barrier to maintain the quality and integrity of the product, and a middle layer that joins the other two layers. When the packaging is 100% compostable, it will fully decompose in about 14 weeks when placed in a hot, active compost pile or bin. Once the 100% compostable bag is introduced, the company anticipates the switch will lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the production of the packaging and the elimination of petroleum-based packaging material. Over the past few years, Frito-Lay's packaging initiatives have made some significant strides. This includes reducing the amount of plastic in packaging by 10% over the last five years, and thereby eliminating 12 million pounds of materials annually used to make the snack bags.

**Thought:** What happens to your packaging?

---

---

**From:** 

### **FISCAL SACRIFICE FOR ETHICAL GAIN**

UK sandwich store giant, Pret a Manager has made a decision to stop selling tuna sandwiches. The company's founder, Julian Metcalfe, was inspired by documentary film End of the Line, and its look at how current fishing practices are unsustainable. It's a great example of a company adapting its policy to meet changing circumstances and responding to a background of pressure against tuna fishing. Pret is careful not to let ethics and sustainability drive its positioning, instead they are all about good food and acknowledge that sustainability is an important, but continuously evolving component of this. But whatever the motivations, it's unusual to see a company that's willing to cut into its revenues for a new found belief.

**Thought:** convictions only have value if they cost when you act on them.

**From:**  COOLBUSINESSIDEAS

### **CARROTS AS CAVIAR**

In recent years, some forward-thinking chefs, who believe that personal expression and creativity are more important than slavish devotion to symbolic luxury goods, have abandoned the antiquated approach of haute cuisine, a style of cooking traditionally based on a few select ingredients. These chefs are seeking out the highest-quality ingredients, usually from their area, without regard to their place in the traditional fine dining canon. Combined with a deeply held belief in the transformative power of the cooking process, they are setting an example that, if it catches on, could change what we grow and eat, both in restaurants and at home. Revaluing ingredients – starting with the assumption that a potato or a carrot can taste as exciting as foie gras – is difficult in a high end kitchen. It requires more labour, more imagination, and more carefully sourced ingredients – mediocre foie gras will always seem more “worth it” than a mediocre carrot. It’s riskier as well, going against diners’ deeply ingrained expectations. But as many modern restaurants have shown, the rewards can be considerable, providing more vibrant, compelling food and a closer emotional connection with their customers.

**Thought:** make the ordinary special.

### **COURTESY BIKES**

After noticing that many customers dropping off cars for service chose to use their own bicycle rather than their courtesy loaner car, one Volvo dealership came up with the idea of offering bicycles instead of cars. The initiative has advantages for both parties. Bicycles are cheaper for the dealership to buy, service and insure, and customers get that little nudge that might convince them to travel by bicycle more often. And within its community, there are green points to be gained by the dealership.

**Thought:** steal ideas from your customers.

### **MARKETPLACE FOR ERRANDS**

RunMyErrand is a web and mobile marketplace that gives individuals and businesses an easy way to get everyday tasks done. Members in need of help with errands begin by prepaying ‘credits’ into an account that will be used to pay the people who run them. They then post an errand they need to get done along with the number of credits they’re willing to pay. RunMyErrand’s network of pre-qualified “runners” is then alerted immediately via email and text message. Generally within 10 minutes a runner accepts the errand, proceeding from there to coordinate with the “sender” and complete the errand within the specified timeframe. When the errand is complete, the sender confirms online; RunMyErrand then transfers payment into the runner’s account.

**Thought:** crowdsource your business solutions.

---

**From:** 

### **WHOPPER HOLIDAYS**

Burger King, the fast food giant, is expanding into holidays with the launch of a £3,400 Burger Pilgrimage. The 35-day trip takes in 16 cities in eight countries, spread over three continents and offers hamburger lovers the chance to trace the origins of the junk food staple. There are also shorter ‘bite size’ holidays from £149. The holidays are aimed at a growing number of ‘food tourists’ and are available through STA Travel. Burger King cites the meatball, created during Roman times, as the first incarnation of the burger, with something closer to the modern version emerging during the Medieval period.

**Thought:** sell the bigger story of your brand.

# Worth a look:

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

Your brain on Facebook: <http://bit.ly/kiQgT>

The Economist on the how the recession will change the way we shop: <http://bit.ly/o0JPi>

The Art & Science of Seductive Interactions: <http://bit.ly/17f2ds>

Why it's good to keep a journal: <http://bit.ly/Pz2Xb>

Spreadability, and why Sarah Boyle had it: <http://bit.ly/zpF8W>

60 minute brand strategist: <http://bit.ly/4PkZp>

EC report on Europe's aging population...and what it mean: <http://bit.ly/6wknL>

The links between mental illness and creativity: <http://bit.ly/HZZ1T>

Why can't we concentrate?: <http://bit.ly/rYJSU>

The value in ludicrous ideas: <http://bit.ly/P6NCf>

Survival of the fittest in the digital space: <http://bit.ly/CZQbU>

FT's global brands report: <http://bit.ly/mYvxA>

The importance of tangible 'stuff' in a digital world: <http://bit.ly/Cnw1B>

Malcolm Gladwell on how underdogs succeed when they really break the rules: <http://bit.ly/Fn5qM>

What time is primetime on line?: <http://bit.ly/TrIP1>

Tips from a savant: <http://bit.ly/NXign>

Orange research on understanding the mobile consumer: <http://bit.ly/SLDIh>

What makes us happy?: <http://bit.ly/lo71v>

Millward Brown on whether TV advertising is becoming less effective or more: <http://bit.ly/zl11s>

...or is advertising dead?: <http://bit.ly/oyQL2>

JJ Abrams on the magic of mystery: <http://bit.ly/80CRz>

Is the tipping point theory of how ideas spread actually right?: <http://bit.ly/iwNe>

Top 12 trends of the video games industry: <http://bit.ly/c4l06>

Pop culture nihilism – is advertising eating itself: <http://bit.ly/10aAMy>

Creative thinking is your edge: <http://bit.ly/17mAkV>

How Twitter will change the way we live: <http://bit.ly/R5PMx>

10 lessons for radical innovation we can learn from the success of Twitter: <http://bit.ly/HqOxY>

How society might have responded if books came after games: <http://bit.ly/287NR>