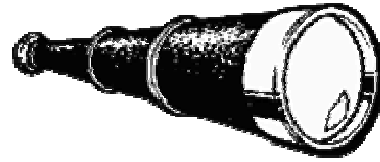




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# FutureScoping:



emerging trends, new  
ideas and general thought  
stimulation

(issue no.86)

10.02.10

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

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**From:** 

#### **ANTI-WIFI PAINT**

Researchers say they have created a special kind of paint which can block out wireless signals. It means security-conscious wireless users could stop their neighbours from accessing their home network - without having to set up encryption. The paint contains an aluminium-iron oxide which resonates at the same frequency as wi-fi - or other radio waves - meaning the airborne data is absorbed and blocked. By coating an entire room, signals can't get in and, crucially, can't get out. The makers say that for businesses it's a quick and cheap way of preventing access to sensitive data from unauthorised users. The paint could also provide some much-needed relief during nights out at the cinema.

**Thought:** What secrets do you need to keep safe?

#### **BUYING VIRTUAL REAL ESTATE**

The virtual goods industry, already a \$5 billion market in Asia, is predicted to grow further in the next five years, given the rise of social networking and a new type of casual online gamer. It perhaps comes as no surprise therefore that a player in the outer space themed MMORPG Planet Calypso has purchased the Crystal Palace Space Station, a popular destination within the game's universe, for the sum of \$330,000. Of course, the obvious question, is why? As in the real world, owners of real estate can charge other players for hanging out within the virtual space, as well as set tax rates on any transactions taking place. Though there's no mention of an anticipated return on investment, at a time when the buying and selling of physical property is a gamble at best, there's certainly riskier propositions out there than a virtual land grab.



**Thought:** what virtual equities could you sell?

**From:** 

#### **SURPRISE YOURSELF**

While self-gifting is all fine and good, it usually lacks one key element of gift giving: surprise. Bringing a sense of indulgence in these recessionary times, a new service, Surprise Gift For Me, is offering to be a personal 'wish list shopper' so self-gifters can be pleasantly taken aback by their own presents. Here's how it works: The giver/receiver lists three to five items that he'd like to get from himself, and authorizes Surprise Gift For Me to charge his credit card for the price of the product, plus shipping and handling. The service picks one of those items and sends it to him on his selected delivery date.

**Thought:** introduce an element of surprise.

#### **HEALTHCARE PRESENTS**

These days even those who have insurance could use more help in the health department, and there are signs that affordability and healthcare can co-exist, providing peace of mind when times are tough. BlueCross BlueShield shows one way of doing this, blurring the line between healthcare and retail with its gift cards. 2 different types are available. The Blue Health Care card covers up to 10 weeks of health insurance and can be used towards the purchase of plans for routine and preventive medical care (including doctor, dentist, pharmacy or lab work). The Family Blue Discount card gives users significant discounts on dental, prescription and vision services for up to 3 months.

**Thought:** provide solutions to people's big life concerns.

**From:** 

#### **GARLIC CUTS EMISSIONS**

Mention greenhouse gases, and most people think of cars. The reality, however, is that more than 20% of such gases come not from machines but from cows, more than produced by all the cars, planes, ships and trucks on the planet. But a small UK startup, may just have found a solution. Mootral (a pun based on "moo" and carbon neu-"tral") has developed a unique feed additive that reduces cows' methane emissions by at least 25%. Methane is some 22x more

potent than carbon dioxide, but Mootral's garlic-based extract is a natural antibiotic that fights bacteria in the stomachs of cows and sheep to dramatically reduce its production.

**Thought:** how are you cutting down on unwanted waste?

### **NAME THAT AUTHOR**

There's nothing like a surprise and mystery to spark fresh interest in a company or product. Which is maybe why Fourth Estate, a UK imprint of HarperCollins, has challenged its readers to guess which authors wrote the anonymous stories in a new collection. An anthology is a collection of nine short stories written by a variety of Fourth Estate authors. But the spin is that while the authors' names are on the cover, they're not associated with the stories themselves; rather, it's up to readers to guess who wrote what. The company's website explains: "*The Ananthology is an experimental project to assess the importance placed on name and reputation over quality of writing*". Amongst the writers are Orange and Genius Prize winners, Booker and Pulitzer Prize nominees. One author has sold over half a million copies, another written over fifty books. But can you tell which is which? And how does it change the reading experience, not knowing if the author is young or old, male or female?

**Thought:** in a transparent age, retain some intrigue.

### **GYROSCOPIC RIDING**

It may be true that once you learn how to ride a bicycle, you'll never forget; the thing, of course, is learning that first time. Training wheels have long been a staple of the childhood learning process, but now a San Francisco company has designed an alternative it says will get kids riding in a single afternoon. Gyrobike's patented Gyrowheel replaces a bicycle's standard front wheel and uses gyroscopic technology to keep kids from falling over. Specifically, it can sense unbalanced riding and re-center the bike underneath the rider's weight when the bike starts to wobble. Not only does it help kids stay on their bikes, but—unlike training wheels—it also fosters and reinforces correct riding technique, resulting in a natural and smooth transition to conventional two-wheeled riding.

**Thought:** how can you fast track newbies and novies?

### **INSTANT PURIFICATION**

The list of reasons to avoid bottled water seems to grow longer every day. Now there's the fact that it takes at least 3 litres to make just 1 litre of bottled water. That's the motivation behind 321 Water, a reusable water bottle with a built-in filtration system. The 321 system uses a French press-style plunger mechanism with a built-in carbon block filter. Made from recyclable materials, the wide-mouthed bottle can be filled from any tap. Then, users simply push the plunger down to the bottom of the bottle, and the filter removes any chlorine, unpleasant tastes and odours in an instant, leaving the water ready to drink.



**Thought:** think simple and elegant when solving problems.

### **MIX YOUR LIPS**

At the Lip Balm Labz store in Toronto, customers can pick and choose from more than 20 tantalizing flavors to be mixed in their lip balm, which is crafted from all-natural ingredients including beeswax, coconut oil, shea butter and cocoa butter. "Mixologists" at the ice cream stand-styled lab are clad in tie-dyed lab coats and dance to thumping music as they mix and pour the hot lip balm into the container of the customer's choosing. Once it cools, customers walk away with a customized tube of lip balm, made exactly how they like it.

**Thought:** what about user created flavours?

### **HEALTH TRACKING**

Does exercise have to mean jogging, sweat and tears? Not according to Philips, whose DirectLife personal fitness programme aims to help people adopt a more active lifestyle by monitoring and motivating them in their daily activities. DirectLife is based around a wearable device that uses a 3D digital accelerometer to track a person's movements. The data is uploaded to a personal web-page, where it's matched against daily targets, long-term goals, and other users. DirectLife also provides a personal coach, via an online portal. Philips is mainly targeting employers, claiming the system reduces absenteeism and health costs, while improving employee morale and productivity.

**Thought:** help people plan their lives.

**From:** PSFK

### **ANTI-DRUG LIPGLOSS**

When most young women begin college they are given a lecture about how to protect themselves from date rape. While most of these tips include environmental awareness and not leaving drinks unattended, a new British company has come up with a way to guarantee you won't become a victim of tampered cocktails. 2 Love My Lips has created a line of lip glosses which include a card within the packaging that detects GHB and ketamine (two of the most commonly used drink sedatives), "so women can test their drinks for date rape drugs".

**Thought:** think tangential innovation.

### **SOLAR POWERED ROADWAYS**

There's a shift in the thinking around our energy infrastructure, as developers seek solutions to the ways that we harness power and utilize our resources. If we look at existing connected environments, few networks rival our nation's roadways in terms of pervasiveness and scale. Building on the highway model, Idaho-based Solar Roadways proposed just that, a series of structurally-engineered solar panels that can be driven on, replacing all current roads, including driveways and parking lots. The project is ambitious and expensive, but could revolutionize the way we create energy. The implications of a grid that can be powered by the sun are huge. It would mean an end to fossil fuel dependency, a reduction in greenhouse gases, an intelligent road system with easy access to energy for electric cars. In addition, the grid will have an embedded heating element preventing the accumulation of snow or ice.

**Thought:** find a way to repurpose redundant aspects of you brand/business.

### **DESIGN FOR CHARITY**

Rather than have staff pass their workday surfing the web, or worse lay them off, automaker Bentley called upon their talented design staff to create works of art for a charity auction. The collection includes a vast array of sculptures, painting, digital art and photography, created in many different media, all of which showcase the imagination of the men and women who design Bentley cars. Dirk van Braeckel, head designer, says the work embodies the best aesthetics possible, with advanced technology in the forefront, demonstrating a combination of the work Bentley do technically with a passion for the brand that is very strong.

**Thought:** empower staff to use their skills to socially beneficial ends.

### **QUICK TOXIN TEST**

Scientists have developed a cheap, fast and easy-to-read paper dipstick test which tells users the level of pesticides in their foods and beverages in only 5 minutes. This new testing method is an advancement over current toxin tests, which are expensive and require a couple of hours to produce results. The dipstick process is especially practical in developing countries without the finances or electricity to perform more complicated testing. The dipstick will allow for the collection of useful data around food and beverage consumption that provides insights into how toxins affect local environments and communities that depend on them.

**Thought:** soon, people will know everything about you.

### **1 EURO SHOES**

In an effort to bolster its social enterprise credentials, adidas is planning to make "1 Euro Shoes" for people who can't afford footwear otherwise. The project was suggested to adidas by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus and will begin pilot production in his home country of Bangladesh next year, also creating jobs for local Bangladeshis. Adidas has agreed to make the shoes on a non-profit basis, selling them at no more than the cost of manufacturing.

**Thought:** CSR = brand marketing.

### **ANTI-ENERGY DRINKS**

Apparently all those energy-boosting soft drinks have encouraged us to take on more than we can handle. This has led some to claim that Red Bull is "so 2009": 'anti-energy' drinks are the new thing. Mary Jane's Relaxing Soda is an all-natural soft drink that help you 'better deal' with stressful situations. The soda's active herbal ingredients (Kava Extract and Passionflower) work together to produce relaxation and calming effects, similar to that of alcohol, only without the drowsiness, "beer goggles", tough-guy syndrome, or hangovers. Others have also compared the soda's mood-altering effects to that of marijuana – hence the name. Perfect for a first date, public speaking, a long day, road rage or a job

interview; Mary Jane's Relaxing Soda manufacturers recommend drinking the all-natural soda on an empty stomach for optimum results.

**Thought:** it's a crazy world; help people chill out.

### LIQUID LUNCHING

The future of food is here and it's on a liquid drip, thanks to designers at MIT's Fluid Interfaces group, who have developed a cooking concept, called Cornucopia, that merges the worlds of molecular gastronomy and digital 3D printing to create a countertop food fabricator. The project proposes a mix-and-match series of fluid ingredient canisters that are piped through the device into a chamber where the desired combination is either heated or cooled into its edible form. The system allows for an infinite array of customizable options – that include variations in flavor, texture and nutrition – to achieve the ultimate personalized eating experience. While not every would-be cook will be clamoring for the next generation of the liquid lunch, Cornucopia does present an intriguing future of food that approaches the challenges of sustainability – limited resources and food miles – in an innovative way.

**Thought:** what does complete consumer control look like for you?

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## From: *The New York Times*

### VINYL COMEBACK

Sales of vinyl albums have been climbing steadily for several years, stomping on the notion that the rebound was just a fad. Through late November, more than 2.1 million vinyl records had been sold in the US during 2009, an increase of more than 35%. That total, though it represents less than 1% of all album sales, including CDs and digital downloads, is the highest for vinyl records in any year since Nielsen began tracking them in 1991. Vinyl's increased popularity is attributed to factors like sound quality, and the eternal allure of its tangible, collectible form, liner notes, and of course – album art. Ironically, it's suggested that video games like Guitar Hero – which have introduced younger music fans to classic rock bands and their nostalgic allure – could be contributing to the curiosity for vinyl – the original format on which many of these classic albums were released. The lack of portability or immediacy of music on vinyl has little in common with the instant gratification of music on a highly mobile iPod – but for music fans that pride themselves in a music collection, or enjoy a rainy afternoon browsing through records – it may not be a replacement, but a complement to a digital music library.

**Thought:** provide old school tangibility.

### EMPLOYEES GOT TALENT

With a global network of potential superstars, McDonald's has integrated the American Idol concept into its internal marketing model. Through Voice of McDonald's, employees of all ranks and all locations are given the opportunity to compete for a \$25,000 top prize, and the chance to sing at an industry trade show. Music industry professionals choose 30 semifinalists from audition videos submitted by McDonald's employees, and the final 12 singers are chosen by McDonald's fans voting online.

**Thought:** what hidden skills and talents could you unlock?

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## From: COOLBUSINESSIDEAS

### DISPOSABLE LAPTOP

Disposable cameras and cell phones have gained acceptance, so why don't we take the next step and bring out a disposable computer? Which is just what designer Je Sung Park has done. His Recyclable Paper Laptop uses recycled paper or pulp material all packed in layers. This is so that you can easily replace the damaged portions (even corrugated paper will tear easy). The vibe of a Paper Laptop is intriguing, though quite raw and in need of some refinement. But you can bet someone will soon figure out how to make it viable.



**Thought:** build your brand reusably.

## **INSTANT CREDIT**

An entrepreneur may have the best product in the world, but if he or she doesn't accept credit cards, it can be a problem. That's something St. Louis glass artist Jim McKelvey learned the hard way, and it's also why he was inspired to create Square. Cofounded with Twitter founder Jack Dorsey, Square lets small business owners accept payment cards immediately, without the contracts, expensive hardware, monthly fees or hidden costs that are typically required. Using Square's intuitive app and a small plastic device that plugs into a mobile phone's audio input jack, payment cards can be swiped and read anywhere. Customers can have receipts sent to them via email or mobile phone and then access them securely online; they can also use text messaging to authorize every payment in real-time.

**Thought:** cut out the red tape and bureaucracy.

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**From:**



## **MOBILE HEALTH CARE**

Following the growing influence of a number of leading non-profits, mobile phone giant Vodafone is launching a Mobile Health Care Unit which will work with pharmaceutical companies and government organizations to develop health care services that use mobile phone technology. The new Unit will partner with health care professionals to generate insights into the needs of health care professionals and their patients. It is expected to be especially effective in emerging economies, with a significant role to play in the provision of health care, primarily in the simplification of work flows, statistical analysis and record keeping for people in under-resourced, geographically dispersed communities.

**Thought:** in the future a great business may be the one that does good.

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**From:** **core77**

## **LIGHT SLEEPER**

Many people are making innovative uses of light to create soothing environments. The LightSleeper does this by projecting a path onto the ceiling that draws the user's mind into relaxing patterns. The idea of using light to fall asleep may sound counter-intuitive, particularly in our 24/7, always-on society, where we are constantly bombarded by information and other stimuli. And though some people read, or watch television to help them go to sleep, those activities actually stimulate the mind, rather than relaxing it: precisely the wrong effect! LightSleeper instead relaxes the mind and prepares you to get to sleep easily and to enjoy a more restful, refreshing night of sleep.

**Thought:** people need to switch off.

# Worth a look:

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

Spread the word about the benefits of advertising

- <http://bit.ly/15UhUM>

Behavioural Economics: Red Hot or Red Herring

- <http://bit.ly/4pAmy1>

The Guardian's Word of Mouth Database

- <http://bit.ly/2uqTPg>

10 things a brand must be to go social

- <http://bit.ly/4fIVg5>

Why you customers are your brand

- <http://bit.ly/3sb9BA>

The speed of trust

- <http://bit.ly/VY7Ou>

Creativity and choreographed thinking

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

Understanding Britain's unmet needs

- <http://bit.ly/8yRJ8F>

Five secrets of innovation

- <http://bit.ly/5lxqzV>

Why increased choice has helped the blockbuster

- <http://bit.ly/7mVSF2>

The impact of the commercial world on children's wellbeing

- <http://bit.ly/cM8SvM>

Aural mnemonics and product sonification

- <http://bit.ly/5gVO5W>

The Wire's David Simon interviewed by Vice Magazine

<http://bit.ly/8JiO3Q>

The neuroscience behind failed resolutions

- <http://bit.ly/867CO1>

Brain, behavior and politics

- <http://bit.ly/11T6PC>

The problems of being too professional

- <http://bit.ly/8TxjdS>

The recession generation

- <http://bit.ly/8iFdUo>