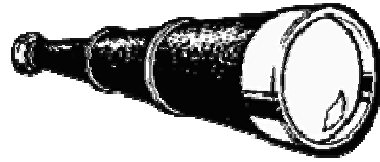


FutureScoping:



emerging trends, new
ideas and general thought
stimulation

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For more information and other new
ideas visit www.futurescoping.com

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From:  iconoculture
Get closer to the consumer than ever before.

DANGEROUS THINGS PARENTS SHOULD ALLOW

The "Free Range Kids" movement is gaining traction, as parents are encouraged to let go. The mindset is strongly nostalgic: Let kids play outside unsupervised, give them building blocks for birthdays instead of video games, basically let them be kids the way their grandparents were 50 years ago. But there is also a more scientific dimension, with many dangerous activities being interesting, eye-opening and enlightening or just plain fun. Kids will be always kids, and giving them directions on how to avoid catastrophic outcomes — play with fire *outside*, away from buildings and cars — may benefit them more than simply stifling all urges. So don't insulate kids from all risk. You may actually be robbing them of important and educational experiences. This countertrend to extreme, hands-on parenting is growing.

Thought: risk taking is healthy

DIVORCE LISTS

When a couple goes their separate ways, each has the daunting, or cathartic, task of replacing the items possessed by the other. Which is maybe why UK department store, Debenhams, has launched a divorce gift registry to help friends and family pitch in for those purchases. The retailer has a large audience for their service: 50% of first marriages and 67% of second marriages end in divorce. And Debenhams expects divorcées to be interested in items found in a typical wedding registry: cookware, bed linens, small appliances; plus a few that aren't: non-iron shirts and computer games.

Thought: Recognise that consumers' lifestages are often in flux.

SOCIAL MEDIA SUICIDE

While more than 400 million consumers are active online social network users, a growing subset are getting off the social media carousel. Many consumers are quitting online soc nets, like Facebook and Twitter, over concerns they worsen their offline lives, with some even going full cold turkey. Free services like Web 2.0 Suicide and Seppukoo (Japanese word for "suicide") have helped tens of thousands of social network users completely erase their online profiles. But Facebook isn't taking it all lying down, blocking the servers of both Web 2.0 Suicide and Seppukoo, with cease-and-desist letters in the post. So, as online social networks proliferate to the point of bewilderment, users are starting to push back, reclaiming some of their personal lives from the Web's entanglements. They may not be ditching digital friendship in droves, but they are getting back to good old fashioned face-to-face interaction.

Thought: help people rediscover their real world

From:



GROUP GIFTING

Wish lists are a familiar feature on many e-commerce sites, but usually require that a gift-giver purchase a whole item for the recipient. Now bringing more flexibility to the equation is Best Buy's new Pitch In Card, which lets consumers donate the amount of their choice towards the recipient's purchase plans. The card allows friends and family to contribute any amount to the recipients account, whenever the mood strikes them. Creating a card is free for the recipient, and there's no expiration date; it can be reloaded and used again on the next gift-giving occasion. Donors, meanwhile, can add funds to the account online or at an in-store kiosk; each time they do, the recipient receives an email to let them know. Once they have enough funds on their card, they can use it to shop.

Thought: what could your consumers do together?

MODIFY YOUR PRODUCTS

It's a rare product that leaves no room for improvement, but many are downright problematic due to annoyances such as sharp corners, rough edges or weak construction. Sugru is a new silicone material that lets consumers "hack" such products themselves to make them more comfortable and useful for a longer time. Sugru can be moulded by hand or with simple tools, sticks to most surfaces and cures at room temperature to a tough and durable yet soft-touch silicone. Available in a wide range of colours, Sugru is waterproof, flexible and dishwasher-safe once cured; it's also temperature resistant between -60 and 180 degrees C. Potential applications demonstrated on the Sugru site include covering up sharp corners, fixing broken ceramics, strengthening handles and straightforward beautification.

Thought: allow people to make their own product improvements

FOOTSTEP ENERGY

Pavegen slabs can be inserted among regular pavement sections to capture the kinetic energy of people just walking. Each rubber slab, from UK-based Pavegen Systems, gets depressed by about 5 mm when stepped on. Using just that small movement, it can convert kinetic energy into electricity, which is then stored in the slab. Specifically, 5 percent of the energy harvested is used to make the slab's LED glow, making it clear to users that their energy has been captured. The rest can power pedestrian lighting, information displays and many other applications.

Thought: what could be 'given back' when your product is used?

DREAM YOUR OWN CAR

Open source is now a proven model for software design; could car design go the same way? Massachusetts enterprise Local Motors has set the wheels in motion. By crowdsourcing designs from a unique global community of designers, and manufacturing to order in regional micro-factories, Local Motors represents a paradigm shift from industry-standard mass production. The Local Motors online community has a membership of 4,000 car designers, engineers and enthusiasts. When Local Motors announces a design competition (for either a car body, or a particular feature), designers submit their work to the community, which then discusses and votes on the designs. Each competition specifies where the winning design will potentially be built, and submissions should be inspired by the target location. Local Motors picks a winner for the competition, whose design is then further developed by the community before being finalised for production by the Local Motors team. The first crowd-designed car (the Rally Fighter) is already available, with production limited to 2,000 units (41 already sold). But customers are not just buying a car: realising the high value today's consumers place on unique experience and status stories, Local Motors invites every buyer to help build their own vehicle over two weekends. Owners can even host their own competition on the website for a custom "skin" design for their vehicle.



Thought: let people design it themselves

CARBON SAVING WINE

The key to wine may lie in the soil, but it's the container that carries a heavy carbon footprint. That's why Yealands, a sustainable winemaker from New Zealand, is producing wine in plastic bottles. Shattering the shining, purist image of glass, the recyclable PET plastic used in Yealands' newly launched Full Circle range generates 54% less greenhouse gas emissions and uses 19% less energy. The plastic bottles boast a weight saving of 89% over glass, earning them kudos as carbon-saving cargo. To ensure that the wine quality is unaffected, Full Circle bottles use new DiamondClear technology, which keeps oxygen out of the wine, and feature best-before labels advising customers to drink the wine within 18 months. Yealands' owner, Peter Yealands, believes that plastic-bottled wine is here to stay: "Tim Atkin, one of the UK's leading wine critics from the Observer, has declared war on overweight packaging by vowing to boycott wines sold in heavyweight wine bottles," he says.

Thought: how green is your packaging

BUY ONE, GIVE ONE

Corporate generosity is increasingly the way to the hearts, minds and, yes, wallets of consumers. There have been several "buy one, give one" programs, but a new Singapore-based site enables and supports myriad such efforts at once through what it calls a transaction-based giving engine. Businesses interested in setting up a donation program begin by looking through B1G1's list of almost 700 available projects. A typical donation contributes a small, set amount toward a particular cause, such as clean water for the needy, each time a particular product is purchased. At the end of the month, participating companies report to B1G1 how many units they sold of that chosen product, and B1G1 calculates the amount of donation due. Once approved by the business, that donation then gets made in a single click.

Thought: give something back

From:  Guardian Unlimited

TESCO MOVIES

There is an unlikely new player in the British film industry with ambitions to change the world of entertainment. Tesco has moved into movie mogul territory recently, with the launch of a multi-million-pound production arm poised to make films of books by a slew of bestselling authors. The first release from the Tesco studio will be *Paris Connections*, a tweaked Jackie Collins tale, being shot on location in Paris early next month. Directed by Harley Cokliss and starring

Anthony Delon, it will go straight to DVD after a number of cinema preview screenings. The film will then be sold exclusively in Tesco stores, after being specially adapted by Collins for the chain from her 1999 bestselling murder mystery *LA Connections*. Next in line for production are titles by Dick Francis, Jacqueline Wilson, Philip Pullman and Judy Blume. And why would these authors want to sell their rights? Because to have a DVD on the shelf alongside your book, and to sell them simultaneously, sounds like a very good thing.

Thought: generate content to sell your brand

From: 

EYE TRACKING READING REVOLUTION

Using new eye tracking technology, the words on tablet PCs and e-readers can react based on how a reader views the text. This technology monitors the eyes of the reader to define words if they stare at them, eliminates non-essential information when skimming through pages, swaps images based on what's being read, and brings up relevant reference materials to particular words. With Apple reportedly purchasing this technology from a Swedish firm, we may see eye tracking in future versions of the iPad. Experts believe that this smart text, also called Text 2.0, may revive the act of book reading in a whole new form.

Thought: what is the 2.0 in your market?

ANY SURFACE TOUCHSCREEN

It may become possible to transform a variety of surfaces into a touch sensitive screen. Displax has created a incredibly thin, interactive film that can be applied onto surfaces both curved and flat. A grid of nanowires are embedded in the thin polymer film that is just about 100 microns thick. A microcontroller processes the multiple input signals it receives from the grid. A finger or two placed on the screen causes an electrical disturbance. This is analyzed by the microcontroller to decode the location of each input on that grid. Currently, it can detect up to 16 fingers on a 50-inch screen. And the projective capacitance technology that Displax uses is similar to that seen on the iPhone, so the responsiveness of the touch surface is great. And if feeling around the screen isn't enough, Displax allows users to interact with the screen by blowing on it.

Thought: increase product interactivity.

From: 

CONTROLLED BY THOUGHT

InteraXon is a Toronto-based company that makes thought-controlled products, such as the custom installation for the Vancouver Olympics which allowed participants to control the lights at major Landmarks in Ontario using thought alone. Covering a distance of over 3000 km, InteraXon's Bright Ideas project let people in Vancouver use the power of their minds to shift light displays on Toronto's CN Tower, Ottawa's Parliament Buildings, and at Niagara Falls. The headset used in the installation measures the brain's electrical output and reacts to alpha waves, associated with relaxation, and beta waves, associated with concentration. As the users relax or focus their thoughts, the computer will send a message over the internet to the site they are viewing.

Thought: how do you respond to people's different moods?

SCENT OF NOSTALGIA

Recently, several fragrance lines have played on the idea of nostalgia, real or imagined. For instance, a fragrance range called Histories de Parfums has produced scents like 1969 to conjure an era of flower powered revolution. Their site reads: in 1969 the world was forever changed it was a year evolution, and revolution. We witnessed the first man walk on the moon; John and Yoko's inspirational "Bed In" and a society that began to question the establishment. The Stonewall Riots pushed for further acceptance, and the Beatles last public performance marked the end of an era. So what better way to celebrate this historic year than with Histoires de Parfums provocative fragrance appropriately named 1969?

Thought: give a 'modern retro' twist.

FLAT PACK SHIPPING

Here's an innovative new kind of shipping container that could help cut down CO2 emissions. The Cargoshell containers fold and open in only 30 seconds, and shrink down to a quarter of their size. Made of a composite material that weighs 25% less than traditional shipping container material, the containers (if put into use replacing steel containers) could cut down on 10,000 return trips with empty containers a year.

Thought: lighter, smaller – how could you reduce waste?

DEPARTMENT STORES ON A BUDGET

With the dismal retail sales of the last few years, many high-end department stores have become desperate to clear out their unsold merchandise. This clearance-mania first manifested itself as a flood of sample sales, then as a glut of pop-up shops, but has now taken on a newer form: the outlet off-shoot. Bloomingdale's, for example, has decided to open their own series of outlets, with more expected in over the coming year. According to Michael Gould, Bloomingdale's chief executive: "Bloomingdale's Outlet stores are an opportunity to expand our presence in new and existing markets, as well as to remove clearance from full-line Bloomingdale's stores in a timely manner...". And if Bloomingdale's does well, it seems they can expect more of their compatriots to jump on the bandwagon.

Thought: don't cut price...launch a budget line instead.

From: *The New York Times*

TRANSFORMING HOMEMAKERS

There is a new trend for stay-at-home mums who provide wholesome, frugal and sustainable homes for their families, even going so far as to maintain their own chicken coops. In a society equating success with large paychecks, these highly educated women are going against the grain, embodying a new vision of empowerment, homemaking, self-sufficiency, and sustainability. It's a subtle revolution for women, shifting the focus of feminism. In the traditional definition of "housewife," a woman primarily defined herself through her relationship to her house and her husband. The "femivore" aims to change all that. Femivorism is grounded in the very principles of self-sufficiency, autonomy and personal fulfillment that drove women into the work force in the first place. Given how conscious (not to say obsessive) everyone has become about the source of their food — who these days can't wax poetic about compost? — it also confers instant legitimacy. Rather than embodying the limits of one movement, femivores expand those of another: feeding their families clean, flavorful food; reducing their carbon footprints; producing sustainably instead of consuming rampantly. What could be more vital, more gratifying, more morally defensible?

Thought: make sure you keep up with how family roles are being redefined.

FINGER PULSE RECOGNITION

A new Coca Cola vending machine was demonstrated recently which uses Hitachi's finger vein authentication technology to dispense Coke bottles. This biometric system employs finger pulse recognition to authenticate a user after which his credit card or account is automatically debited. The technology may be safer and more convenient than conventional e-money systems since it does not need any passwords or IDs. The users can also register their postal and email addresses to claim free samples directly through the digital signage built into the vending machine.

Thought: personalise your product delivery.

From: **POPSCI**

NON-CARBON PLASTICS

The invention of plastics in the mid-1800s changed human civilization as profoundly as our earlier mastery of fire, bronze, and steel. Unfortunately, the environmental and health effects of plastic offer a significant downside to such a useful and affordable material. Now scientists at the University of Tokyo have developed a clay-based hydrogel that they hope will perform the same functions as plastic, but do so without endangering people or the planet. Scientists have been using hydrogels in medical technology since the 1980s, but their lack of rigidity and durability limited their use. But by adding a small amount of clay to the mixture, the researchers succeeded in imbuing the hydrogels with the stiffness needed to make the material more versatile. The clay enhances the hydrogel because the polymer used to bind the water into a gel simultaneously adheres to the clay, the water, and other polymer chains. By grabbing all the

elements, the polymer forms a rigid scaffolding that supports the other molecules, and creates solid material. Plus, because the material is mostly water and clay, with only a little bit of polymer, the material has none of the toxic qualities of plastic.

Thought: how will you respond to the impact of peak oil?

From: *The Washington Post*

DINNER IS SERVED...SOMEWHERE

Back in February, a select group of Washingtonians received an intriguing e-mail: "The orange arrow is pointing at you," the subject line read. It was an invitation to "an exclusive underground anti-restaurant," the e-mail explained. "Because the DNA of the magical dinner is unmapped, these events will evolve, month to month, season to season, place to place & plate to plate." The invitation alone wasn't enough for diners to make the cut, however. For the privilege of attending Orange Arrow's inaugural, \$125-a-head dinner, guests had to agree to abide by certain rules. "If you can't/won't eat certain things, this is not for you." "No crybabies, whiners or buzz kills can come to our party. This isn't reality television." "Don't try to sell your ticket on Craigslist. Failure to show basic decency gets you on the blacklist." In a city best known for its see-and-be-seen culinary destinations, Orange Arrow is one of a new breed of underground restaurants emerging. These supper clubs shun pomp, circumstance and plebian steak dinners in favor of more-offbeat dining experiences. Some operate as for-profit businesses. Orange Arrow itself plans to obtain location and alcohol permits for its ambitious suppers, which will host as many as 150 select "hungry, hedonistic gypsies" at venues that range from a museum to an alleyway. Others lurk in a legal gray area, accepting "suggested donations" for the food and wine to get around requirements for business and liquor licenses. Unlicensed restaurants have long prospered overseas. In Hong Kong, si fang cai, or speak-easies, in private homes are considered by many to have the best food in the city. But clandestine kitchens are a more recent phenomenon in the West.

Thought: bring some theatre to your brand experience.

Worth a look:

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

The Madness of Crowds and an Internet Delusion

- <http://nyti.ms/4K7Ayh>

From being great to doing good

- <http://bit.ly/9uurC3>

The new business wisdom

- <http://bit.ly/915cuE>

If Microsoft designed the iPod

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

The product passion of Montblanc

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

How to Kill Innovation: Keep Asking Questions

- <http://bit.ly/bm21xH>

The craft society

- <http://bit.ly/4UI06I>

Breaking out of consumer hell

- <http://bit.ly/4Khwt1>

Chart Wars: The Political Power of Data Visualization

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

The COI on communications and behavior change

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

From data analysis to story telling

- <http://bit.ly/53ZM2Y>

The potency of pointless activities

- <http://bit.ly/9M5Ek9>

Context is king: how videos are found on line

- <http://tcrn.ch/cGkrxQ>

Why easy = true

- <http://bit.ly/cH2jbs>

Focus 100% of your effort on the 10% who really matter

- <http://bit.ly/auFZ0V>

How to get youth marketing wrong

- <http://bit.ly/bT5lrc>

Understanding Chat Roulette

- <http://bit.ly/d3nJ94>

Product design and lifecycle thinking

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

We feel your pain: Extreme empaths

- <http://bit.ly/9VaOTd>