

Strategic Foresight Kristel Van Der Elst, Head of Strategic Foresight

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The Forum is a not-for-profit organisation, committed to improving the state of the world



Our Mission and Background



COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE STATE OF THE WORLD

- Committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.
- Impartial: tied to no political, partisan or national interests
- Global: based in Geneva, with offices in New York, Beijing and Tokyo

Delivering unique value to the participants



Multi-stakeholder

Brings together leaders in business with government, NGOs, international organisations, academics and civil society on a neutral platform



Long-term issues

Creates dialogues, insights and actions on critical global issues posing a risk to business and society



Global Reach

High-level events in all the key regions throughout the year, based on the long-standing, strong networks with the governments



Cross-industry

Convenes CEOs and senior executives from over 1,000 global companies from 20 industries

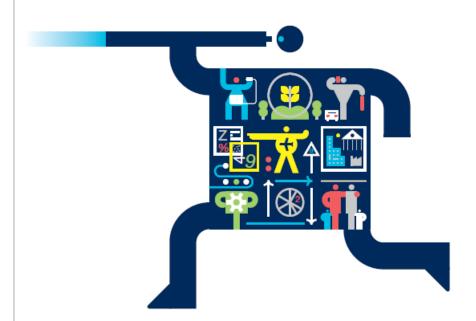
The Strategic Foresight team harnesses the Forum's unique collaborative platform to address long-term challenges



The Strategic
Foresight team at the
World Economic
Forum

Engages policy- makers and leaders from business and civil society in strategic dialogues

To better understand and address **complex and long-term challenges**



All reports can be found at: http://www.weforum.org/community/strategic-foresight

Foresight methods are successful when addressing long-term challenges that require a collaborative response



Five characteristics of today's global challenges

1 Hard to define

 Before thinking about solutions, we need to reach consensus about what the problem is

2 Require new ways of thinking

 Current ways of thinking and acting are often not delivering the desired outcomes, but there is no clarity on how to stimulate fresh approaches

3 No-one is in charge

 Governance of complex issues is increasingly diffused, with no current entity obviously responsible for taking the lead

4 Transcend traditional boundaries

 As the world becomes more interconnected, issues tend to cross national borders and affect multiple industries

5 Need a long-term approach

 Incentive structures in both the private and public sector typically favour short-term thinking, meaning insufficient attention is paid to the potential long-term implications of actions or inaction.

The Foresight team uses different methodologies, including scenarios, for three main purposes



Our approach is multi-method and multi-stakeholder, and has three main uses



The team has been involved in a number of high-impact projects that have progressed strategic dialogue



Three examples of international foresight projects

1. Future of Mongolia



2. Future of Ukraine



3. Future availability of Natural Resources



Objective

To chart a course for Mongolia's long-term sustainable and diversified growth to 2040.

To foster a forward looking dialogue that leads to more effective cooperation among stakeholders within Ukraine and in the EU, Russia and beyond.

To develop a more integrated, future-oriented view to shift the debate beyond a simplistic and polarized scarcity-abundance debate.

The Forum is taking a future orientated approach to emerging technology



The Emerging Technology project

Emerging Technologies hold the potential to significantly disrupt existing geopolitical, societal, and economic systems.

In this context, the Forum aims to:

- Uncover emerging technology spaces
- Identify and explore the most critical debates around the interplay between emerging technologies and society, geopolitics and economics
- Define and shape desired futures based on the outcomes of those debates

We will highlight three areas of focus that we are currently exploring.

Our blogs on emerging technology have been published on the Scientific American website. http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/2014/11/12/

Four geopolitical questions we can't avoid when we think about emerging technologies



Technology and Geopolitics

Not so far in the future...

- Resources might no longer be linked to territories
- Thoughts might be visualized
- Leaders might be so closely monitored that their actions and decisions become near predictable

What would this really mean for our geopolitical landscape?

Key Questions

- Will technology be the future gold?
- Will we transcend cultures?
- 1984, representation, what else?
- Will we stop talking?

Five societal questions we can't avoid when we think about emerging technologies



Technology andSociety

Not so far in the future...

- We might live healthily well beyond 100 years
- Technology might enhance our intellectual and physical abilities, and completely control our emotions
- People might become producers of their own products

What would these changes really mean for the real 'us'?

Key Questions

- Will perfection "on demand" turn us off?
- Will we all be the same?
- Will we give up our bodies as our last private space?
- Will computers replace our brains, hearts and souls?
- Who will write the code?

Five economic questions we can't avoid when we think about emerging technologies



3. Technology and **Economics**

Not so far into the future...

- manufacturing and resource exploitation might be highly localized with automated services
- employee productivity and consumer sentiment highly transparent and predictable

What would this really mean for 'us' as individuals and for our economy?

Key Questions

- Will robots be our peers?
- Will schools become implanted?
- Will technology determine social class?
- Will prosumers oust companies?
- Will there be anything left to transport?



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