



Imagining Better Futures

Or, How Not to Ruin the Future
MY ORIGINAL TITLE!

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The future will be struggle... but we can face that in a forward way.

TECHNOLOGICAL SPACES bring into them all the things we struggle with in the real world



OUR KEY RESPONSIBILITY; OUR MISSION: FUTURES THAT ARE

"In the metaverse, you can be whatever race, gender, or species or even inanimate object you want to be."

- HOLMAN JENKINS
The Wall Street Journal
19 JANUARY 2022

POLITICAL AGENDA not my focus.



THIS HAPPENED

WE ARE at **PEAK METAVERSE** **ICONIC** Idealized future
It's seductive

No more "Pollyanna-ish thinking" TECH WON'T SOLVE PROBLEMS

IDEALISM LEADS, BUT MISLEADS

OPTIMISM motivates BUT CAN DISTORT OUR THINKING

PESSIMISM IS RIGOROUS BUT depressing



EX: SELF-DRIVING CARS
promised to be ubiquitous by 2020 YET THEY STILL STRUGGLE WITH PROBLEMS



BALANCE OF BOTH

DOOMSCROLLING The GOTCHA response
TOO MUCH NEGATIVITY IS NOT GOOD EITHER

Hopeful
Bravely move forward
Realistic
GLOBALITY is hard
Responsible
Embrace challenges
Democratic

ON TREND: THE BUSINESS OF FORECASTING 2019 The FUTURE



Multi-million dollar business EXPLAINING TRENDS imagining the future
70+ interview subjects 10 countries
Dominated by wealthy WHITE cosmopolitan MEN

TREND FORECASTING IS A CULTURAL INDUSTRY
impacts the future both by PREDICTING and SHAPING the NARRATIVE

TRENDS CAN TAKE OVER and BE the Zeitgeist

The IDEA of the FUTURE has become part of this.

HOW TO FIND TRENDS

- Using trends is one way of forecasting the future (there are others)
- Trends are broad cultural dynamics that move across a population [INDUSTRY, SOCIETY]
- Basic trend forecasting involves looking for signals, identifying patterns, and coming to insights
- Related to foresight, the general discipline of thinking critically about the future

Example: **VIBE SHIFT** TERM COINED BY SEAN MONAHAN
Cultural signals of change

Trend forecasters don't always take their influence seriously... Many are very smart, very gifted... and WANT TO MAKE the FUTURE BETTER

ACCOUNTABILITY MATTERS especially DIVERSITY
VISIONS THAT WANT TO ERASE or ALLY the DIFFERENCE

SOME People think the PROBLEM is difference and not the way we APPROACH DIFFERENCE

MAKING DIVERSITY A PRIORITY that actually changes the fundamentals of what we do? VERY DIFFICULT
DIFFERENCE IS NOT GOING TO MELT AWAY magically
"Futures without EVENTS"

Example: **AFROFUTURISM** OCTAVIA BUTLER
PARADIGM SHIFT: Future that prioritizes BLACK OBJECTIVES
RECKONING WITH PROBLEMS... FINDING NEW STRATEGIES

Sometimes the most important changes we can make are mundane.

- SOLUTIONS** **REALISTIC** **RESPONSIBLE**
HOPEFUL embrace sober optimism
• TERRY EAGLETON
• VICTOR FRANKL
• CONFRONT CHALLENGES
• EMBRACE CONSEQUENCES
- Learn from **AFROFUTURISM** be accountable
EX: McKinsey
- DEMOCRATIC**
• SHARE OUR PRACTICE
• TRANSPARENCY IN METHODS
• EQUITY IN VALUES