Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future
with Matt Flannery, President and COO, United Rentals
for Innosight “Leading Transformation,” a CEO Summit
Innosight Design Lab, Lexington, MA
August 2, 2018
Signals are very specific events, products, books, or videos that bring the “unevenly distributed” future to life.

“The future is already here, it’s just unevenly distributed.”

William Gibson
Most organizations focus on TRENDS or MEGATRENDS: patterns of change from which you can extrapolate with confidence

Institute for the Future focuses on DISRUPTIONS: *b-r-e-a-k-s* in the patterns of change
Institute for the Future FORESIGHT: Stories from the future: plausible, internally consistent, provocative—with signals to bring them to life

FUTURES THINKING

YOUR HINDSIGHT: Your stories about the past, the present, and the future

YOUR ACTION: An agile way forward, expressed with clarity and ideally, as a story…

YOUR INSIGHT: An “aha” that creates a new story, a new pattern of connections in your brain.

“Future Back” STRATEGY

NOBODY CAN PREDICT THE FUTURE

CUSTOM FORECASTS

DESIGN THINKING

Once you’ve had an insight, you can’t go back to your old way of thinking
“The VUCA World”
a term coined at the Army War College in Carlisle, PA
Distributed—not just decentralized—and the Internet is an amplifier.
Beginning in 1964
The digitally-amplified
shift from centralized to decentralized to distributed computing

“Hot Potato Routing”
Packet Switching
SHAPE-SHIFTING ORGANIZATIONS
BY 2030, MOST SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE LIQUID AND SHAPE-SHIFTING

• NO CENTER—more distributed authority and governance, less centralized
• HIERARCHIES COME AND GO—liquid hierarchy, liquid data, liquid organizations
• GROW FROM THE EDGES—where diversity flourishes—unfiltered spectrum diversity
• CANNOT BE CONTROLLED—but can be guided directionally
Leadership of shape-shifting organizations will require great **clarity** about where you want to go…

but great **flexibility** about how you might get there…

“Commander’s Intent” “Mission Command” “Flexive command”
WORKS BEST IF YOU HAVE AN

After Action Review culture
that is separate from individual performance reviews
(not just a process or a database)
SIGNAL: “New Power”

WHAT: A new book that explores the changing structure of power through the use of connective media, global supply webs, and shape-shifting organizations.

SO WHAT: Centralized power and traditional supply chains will still work in slow-moving predictable markets, but there won’t be as many of those.

The next generation of the internet will allow distributed organizations without central authority—which will mean a re-structuring of power.
SIGNAL: Arcade City is a shape-shifting new power alternative to Uber without Uber

WHAT: Using blockchain to connect riders and drivers directly, Arcade City is trying to eliminate the need for ridesharing matchmakers like Uber.

Riders pay what they think the ride is worth. Drivers keep all the money. The Arcade City network is supported by insurance that the drivers pay.

SO WHAT: What can a human-led organization provide that distributed computing like blockchain cannot?
THE NEXT DECADE WILL BE CHARACTERIZED BY ONE WORD:

...SCRAMBLE...

Many things that have been stuck will get unstuck

But there will be an extreme number of unintended consequences

THIS WILL BE A RIPE TIME FOR INNOVATION, IF YOU ARE READY...

TO PLAY BEYOND THE CATEGORIES OF THE PRESENT
Categorical Thinking  

This ____ belongs in this box

Spectrum Thinking 

This ____ falls in this range
"I like distributions, not lines. I don’t like to normalize. Now, we can look at full distributions and see the patterns."

Just in time, because external future forces will require leaders to do spectrum thinking

With big data analytics, leaders can finally see the spectrum and do spectrum thinking

Zach Anderson
SVP, Global Analytics and Insights
Electronic Arts
June 7, 2018
Bob’s Positive VUCA

Vision     Understanding     CLARITY     Agility

Clarity = big data analytics + leadership
CLARITY is very different from CERTAINTY

“Despite how certainty feels, it is neither a conscious choice nor even a thought process. Certainty and similar states of ‘knowing we know’ arise out of involuntary brain mechanisms that, like love and anger, function independently of reason.”

“Confirmation Bias”

ON BEING CERTAIN:
BELIEVING YOU ARE RIGHT
EVEN WHEN YOU’RE NOT

Dr. Robert Burton, Neuroscientist

“Myside Bias”
The future will reward spectrum thinking, but punish categorical thinking.
LOOKING BACK FROM THE FUTURE, BUT ACTING NOW

VOLUNTARY FEAR ENGAGEMENT

CREATING and SUSTAINING POSITIVE ENERGY

IMMERSIVE LEARNING ABILITY

RAPID PROTOTYPING

BIO-EMPATHY

QUIET TRANSPARENCY

COMMONS CREATING

LEADERSHIP FOR SHAPE-SHIFTING ORGANIZATIONS

CONSTRUCTIVE DEPOLARIZATION

MAKER INSTINCT

BEING THERE WHEN YOU’RE NOT THERE

SMART MOB ORGANIZING
“New literacies
leaders need for VUCA World
Change by seeding hope”

“Lead in VUCA World
Look backward from the future
Clarity you will find”

“Disruption abounds
Leaders blind to VUCA world
Stupid Idiots”

Haiku’s from LTC Andy Ulmer and family, US Army War College student, March 2018
Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future
with Matt Flannery, President and COO, United Rentals
for Innosight “Leading Transformation,” a CEO Summit
Innosight Design Lab, Lexington, MA
August 2, 2018
The VUCA World

Volatile    Uncertain    Complex    Ambiguous

It will be increasingly inexpensive to spread a lie

It will be increasingly expensive to correct a lie
"By every common metric, falsehood consistently dominates the truth on Twitter. Fake news and false rumors reach more people, penetrate deeper into the social network, and spread much faster than accurate stories.

“It seems to be pretty clear that false information outperforms true information,” said Soroush Vosoughi, a data scientist at MIT. “And that is not just because of bots. It might have something to do with human nature.”"
WHAT: “Today, every group feels attacked, pitted against each other not just for jobs and spoils but for the right to define the nation’s identity. In these conditions, democracy devolves into pure political tribalism.”

SO WHAT: The over-arching identity of the USA is threatened by political tribes who have no interest in choosing to do things together.

“Worsening social divisions are much easier to exploit than to explain or redress.”
The filter bubbles that separate tribes will get more sophisticated.
NEWS for one tribe...

Can be FAKE NEWS for another tribe
“People believe they know way more than they do. What allows us to persist in our (mis)belief is other people”

This pattern is very dangerous in a VUCA World

Elizabeth Kolbert
“Why Facts Don’t Change our Minds”
WINNING IN THE SCRAMBLE WILL REQUIRE
SPECTRUM THINKING
For example, SPECTRUM THINKING to think about the future of gender

How many gender categories does Facebook offer when you create a new account?
SIGNAL: Signing up for Facebook
SIGNAL: The emerging gender spectrum on FB
SIGNAL: The emerging gender spectrum on FB
SIGNAL: The emerging gender spectrum on FB
SIGNAL: There is already a spectrum of 59 gender options to choose from on FB

| 1. Agender     | 21. Gender Questioning | 41. Trans Person |
| 2. Androgyne   | 22. Gender Variant     | 42. Trans* Person |
| 3. Androgynous | 23. Genderqueer        | 43. Trans Woman  |
| 4. Bigender    | 24. Intersex           | 44. Trans* Woman |
| 5. Cis         | 25. Male               | 45. Transfeminine|
| 6. Cisgender   | 26. Male to Female     | 46. Transgender  |
| 7. Cis Female  | 27. MTF                | 47. Transgender Female |
| 9. Cis Man     | 29. Neutrois           | 49. Transgender Man |
| 10. Cis Woman  | 30. Non-binary         | 50. Transgender Person |
| 11. Cisgender Female | 31. Other            | 51. Transgender Woman |
| 12. Cisgender Male | 32. Pangender       | 52. Transmasculine |
| 13. Cisgender Man  | 33. Trans             | 53. Transsexual |
| 14. Cisgender Woman | 34. Trans*         | 54. Transsexual Female |
| 15. Female     | 35. Trans Female       | 55. Transsexual Male |
| 16. Female to Male | 36. Trans* Female     | 56. Transsexual Man |
| 17. FTM        | 37. Trans Male         | 57. Transsexual Person |
| 18. Gender Fluid | 38. Trans* Male       | 58. Transsexual Woman |
| 20. Gender Nonconforming | 40. Trans* Man |             |

FORECAST: Identity will be determined by a spectrum of gender options that will be both more important and more difficult to categorize. Gradually, all these categories will become a spectrum.
BLENDED REALITY:
I have “continuous partial attention”

GAMERS:
gameful mindset

Accepting of diversity

We like raw diversity—not photo-shopped diversity

We think in terms of SPECTRUM DIVERSITY

I am my SOCIAL NETWORK for work and for life

We will be a global disruption

FORECAST: Young people will be very fluid in their thinking about gender.
**SIGNAL: China’s hottest boy band is five androgynous girls**

WHAT: The success of global Korean-pop stars has lead China’s entertainment industry to respond with their own pop groups. The band FFC-Acrush is now China’s hottest “boy” band. All five members were born female.

SO WHAT: The gender of FFC-Acrush is not secret, but they don’t talk about it. The “A” in Acrush stands for androgynous.

The next bands, already in development, will be Ncrush and Ecrush: “N” for nymph and “E” for elfin.
Signal: **FFC-Acrush**

**FORECAST:** Diversity will be more important in the future, but harder to categorize. Spectrum thinking will be necessary to understand and benefit from the inevitable diversity of the future.
EXAMPLES OF SPECTRUM DIVERSITY

• Diversity of Gender
• Diversity of Age
• Diversity of Race
• Diversity of Ethnic Roots
• Diversity of Thought
• Diversity of Experience
• Diversity of Expertise
• The Autism Spectrum
• The Immigration Spectrum
• From Binary to Biological Computing
WINNING IN THE SCRAMBLE WILL REQUIRE SPECTRUM THINKING
For example, DIVERSITY of AGE

The 2010 Threshold
If you started to become an adult* in 2010 or later, you are more ready for the future...

THE 2010 THRESHOLD
In 2010, separate technology tools started to become a media ecology

* Kids start to become adults between 13-15, depending on the kid and the culture
In 1968, the Internet began... **Wave 1:** Internet for EXCHANGING DATA

**Wave 2:** Internet for EXCHANGING SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATIONS

**Wave 3:** Internet for INFORMATION RETRIEVAL FROM CENTRAL SOURCE

**Wave 4:** Internet for BUYING, SELLING, AND ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT

**ABOUT 2010:** THE THRESHOLD SHIFT FROM SEPARATE TOOLS TO MEDIA ECOLOGY

**YOUNG PEOPLE WHO BECAME ADULTS IN 2010 OR LATER ARE DIFFERENT**—and the younger they are, the more different they are...these young people are true digital natives
WHY IS AGE DIVERSITY SO DIFFERENT

AFTER THE 2010 THRESHOLD?
2005, BEFORE the 2010 threshold
2013, AFTER the 2010 threshold
2005, BEFORE the 2010 threshold*
2013, AFTER the 2010 threshold
THE 2010 THRESHOLD
If you are 22 or less In 2018, what are you like?

SPECTRUM DIVERSITY

Many of us live with UNTREATED CHILDHOOD TRAUMA
SIGNAL: Untreated trauma among children has lasting impacts into adulthood
The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression
- Heart disease
- Liver disease
THE 2010 THRESHOLD
If you are 22 or less in 2018, what are you like?
In USA, we are growing up with mass shootings

BLEND REALITY:
I have “continuous partial attention”

GAMERS:
gameful mindset

LEARNERS:
but I’m not sure I need a degree—AND no student loan debt like young adults and parents in the USA

DIGITAL SAVVY:
super connected, but cautious about sharing my personal data

SPECTRUM DIVERSITY
Many of us live with UNTREATED CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

HARD WORKING, for the right gig

WE ARE SEEKERS
WE ARE MAKERS:
time compressed

WE ARE CURATORS:
...and don’t call us “consumers”

DO I REALLY WANT A “JOB?”

EXPERIENCES
more than things

WE ARE ASSET POOR

WE ARE SOCIAL NETWORK
for work and for life

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for work and for life
Young people who are hopeful will be inspiring!

WE’RE ALL IN THE GAME OF HOPE

Young people who are hopeless will be depressed or dangerous
We have passed through the 2010 Threshold,
but we are only just beginning
to understand the long-term impacts
THEY BECAME ADULTS AFTER THE 2010 THRESHOLD

They are 22 or less in 2018

To categorize them and call them “Generation Z” is just too simplistic
The New Leadership Literacies

LOOKING BACK FROM THE FUTURE, BUT ACTING NOW
The new literacy of looking backward from the future, to act now with clarity—but not certainty
DILEMMA FLIPPING

Ability to turn dilemmas—which unlike problems cannot be solved—into advantages and opportunities.
In a world of dilemmas, leaders will need to thrive in the space between judging too soon and deciding too late.
CLARITY

Ability to see through messes and contradictions to a future that others cannot yet see.

Especially in a VUCA World, leaders will need to be very clear about where they are going, but very flexible about how they get there.
CLARITY

is very different

FROM CERTAINTY
CLARITY

IS SIMILAR TO THE MILITARY CONCEPT OF

COMMANDER’S INTENT

“The commander did not say how, but he unequivocally conveyed what.”

Michael Useem, Wharton
CLARITY

IS SIMILAR TO THE MILITARY CONCEPT OF

MISSION COMMAND

“Successful mission command demands that subordinate leaders at all echelons exercise disciplined initiative and act aggressively and independently to accomplish the mission.”

Martin Dempsey, U.S. Army
CLARITY

IS SIMILAR TO THE MILITARY CONCEPT OF

FLEXIVE COMMAND

“Given the tactical, operational, and strategic context, how should I command?”

By Andrew Hill and Heath Niemi
US Army War College
FLEXIVE COMMAND

“Given the tactical, operational, and strategic context, how should I command?”

By Andrew Hill and Heath Niemi
US Army War College
FLEXIVE COMMAND focuses on four questions

• What is the nature of the decision cycle?

• How complex are the problems (dilemmas)?
  • How costly are communications?
  • What are the strategic and political implications of failure?

By Andrew Hill and Heath Niemi
US Army War College
CLARITY is expressed in stories

CERTAINTY is expressed in rules

Be careful of people who use expressions like this:

“ABSOLUTELY”

“Often wrong, never in doubt”

“LOOK...”
CLARITY INCLUDES CURIOSITY
ABOUT OTHER POINTS OF VIEW

CERTAINTY DOES NOT
CLARITY INCLUDES KNOWING WHAT YOU DON’T KNOW

CERTAINTY DOES NOT
Beware of myside bias in your own history

EXTERNAL FORESIGHT

YOUR CLARITY

Very clear direction, BUT

very flexible about execution

YOUR INSIGHT

LIMIT “Knowing you know”
The new literacy of looking backward from the future, to act now with clarity—but not certainty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT LITERACY</th>
<th>FUTURE LITERACY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Leaders focus on the present first, then think gradually as far as they can toward the future</td>
<td>• The best leaders will jump 10 or more years ahead and then work backwards from the future</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How can I look ten years ahead when I can’t even make sense of the present?</td>
<td>• Long-term forecasting is easier than short term—leaders will have to look long to make sense of the VUCA World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leaders who act with and express certainty are viewed as the strongest leaders</td>
<td>• Certainty will be punished, but clarity will be rewarded</td>
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VOLUNTARY FEAR ENGAGEMENT
WHAT: Universal Parks & Resorts has been running a “grow bolder” campaign where kids confront their parents about being given the freedom to face their fears.

SO WHAT: Engaging with voluntary fear, Universal has created an environment for kids to push the limits of their comforts and learn how to grow fearless and bolder in the imaginary worlds of Harry Potter, Jurassic World, King Kong and the Minions.
Moving from traditional academic degrees toward reputation metrics
WHAT: HeartFlow is a personalized medical technology company that uses data from a standard CT scan to create a non-invasive personalized 3D model of the coronary arteries, and analyses the impact that blockages have on blood flow.

SO WHAT: HeartFlow recruits gamers to interpret results—not medical doctors.

“...we’re competing with Google and Dreamworks to get good talent” – John Stevens, President at HeartFlow
A gameful mindset is associated with...

Less depression and anxiety

Better able to cope with stress

Recovering faster and more fully from illness or injury

Closer relationships

Higher goal achievement
The new literacy of voluntary fear engagement

CURRENT LITERACY

• Serious companies and successful leaders don’t play games
• Gaming is what we tell our kids not to do
• The Millennials are the big disruption
• Don’t even use the word “games”

FUTURE LITERACY

• Leaders will need safe spaces to practice, in low-risk ways
• The best leaders will be gritty gamers and prototypers
• Those people 21 or younger in 2017 will be the big disruption.
• Gaming will be the most powerful learning medium in history
LEADERSHIP FOR SHAPE-SHIFTING ORGANIZATIONS
The new literacy of leading shape-shifting organizations with no center, growing from the edges, and that can’t be controlled—while hierarchies come and go.

**CURRENT LITERACY**

- Leading through matrix management and hierarchical reporting chains
- Economies of scale—bigger is almost always better
- Leading from the center
- People always lead organizations

**FUTURE LITERACY**

- Hierarchies come and go only when they add value
- Economies of organizational structure—reciprocity will be the currency
- Leading from the edge
- Distributed Autonomous Organizations will grow
WHAT’S NEXT?

1968...Wave 1: Internet for EXCHANGING DATA

Wave 2: Internet for EXCHANGING SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATIONS

Wave 3: Internet for INFORMATION RETRIEVAL FROM CENTRAL SOURCE

Wave 4: Internet for BUYING, SELLING, AND ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT

2010 THRESHOLD

Wave 5: Internet for SCALABLE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNITIES

NOW...Wave 6: Internet for DECENTRALIZED BUSINESS MATCH-MAKING FOR VALUE EXCHANGE

NEXT...Wave 7: Internet for VALUE EXCHANGE WITHOUT CENTRAL AUTHORITY
Distributed authority

will be amplified
by new forms of distributed computing

such as BLOCKCHAIN
Blockchain is distributed computing that can track the status of autonomous virtual objects and provide security without central authority.

Think of blockchain as...

- a way to provide high trust interaction in low trust environments
- a distributed unchangeable ledger or log of information.
“Whereas most technologies tend to automate workers on the periphery doing menial tasks, blockchains automate away at the center.

Instead of putting the taxi driver out of a job, blockchain puts Uber out of a job and lets the driver work with the customer directly.”

Vitalik Buterin, the founder of the Ethereum Blockchain
SIGNAL: Arcade.City

Is it real?

Could it be real?
What will a human organization offer that an algorithm could not?
BEING THERE
WHEN YOU’RE NOT THERE
SAME TIME
SAME PLACE
Best for orientation, trust building, and renewal

SAME TIME
DIFFERENT PLACE
Best when quick feedback is needed but meeting in person is difficult

DIFFERENT TIME
SAME PLACE
Best when a central physical space is required

DIFFERENT TIME
DIFFERENT PLACE
Best for implementation and coordination

ANY TIME
ANY PLACE
Best when great flexibility and speed is required
SIGNAL: Personal AI avatars

WHAT: ObEN makes humanoid avatars, intelligent 3D “digital twins” that look, sound, and behave like you.

First up: AI celebrities who can understand and respond to dialogue with fans. Avatars can be viewed via mobile or VR headsets. On Wechat, ObEN can build an AI with a single uploaded selfie from a 3D camera.

SO WHAT: This is a big step toward being there without being there.
signal: Ready Player One

What: A vivid story of daily life in a shape-shifting world circa 2045

So What: The implications of shape-shifting organizations are only beginning to be understood.

Scenarios like this will be necessary to map out both the threats and opportunities.

This book is now required reading for new members of the Oculus team at Facebook.
The new literacy of being there when you are not there, to bridge the uncanny valley and be BEYOND being there

CURRENT LITERACY

• In-person presence is the most important aspect of leadership

• Face-to-face meetings are the best form of business communication—even with all of their limitations

• The best leaders are hands-on, in-person leaders—without micro-managing

FUTURE LITERACY

• Leadership presence at a distance will become more important than in-person

• Other media will be better than in-person for some tasks. The best leaders will be great at choosing which medium—including face-to-face as just one option—is good for what

• The best leaders will skirt the uncanny valley of eerie over-connection
CREATING and SUSTAINING POSITIVE ENERGY
Leaders will need to be physically, mentally, and spiritually fit in ways that were never required before.
SIGNAL: VC Firm Invests in Founder’s Health & Well-Being
“Healthy founders equal healthy returns”

WHAT: Alpha Bridge Ventures out of SF, requires CEOs of invested start-ups in their portfolio to partake in professional concierge services to track healthy eating, sleeping, and exercise habits. All services are paid by Alpha Bridge.

SO WHAT: Focusing on the health & well being of start-up founders, this VC firm is taking the first steps towards the realization that unhealthy founders (and workers) make for unhealthy (and risky) companies.
Leaders will be wearing their computing resources—and so will workers
Evaluate yourself by these criteria

• When I walk into a room, I radiate positive energy

• I have a disciplined approach to my own physical, mental, and spiritual (not necessarily religious) fitness in the face of my daily work and life pressures

• I balance my personal energy through my working day (I moderate my peaks and droops), and I am resilient under pressure

• I create space for people I lead to balance their own physical, mental, and spiritual energy
Well-being for leaders: four strategies

- The East Coast (think New York) Strategy
- The West Coast (think California) Strategy
- The Global Strategy
- The Integrative Strategy
EAST COAST STRATEGY FOR LEADERSHIP WELL-BEING
The Corporate Athlete Emphasis on Energy Management

The High-Performance Pyramid

Spiritual Capacity
Provides a powerful source of motivation, determination, and endurance

Mental Capacity
Focuses physical and emotional energy on the task at hand

Emotional Capacity
Creates the internal climate that drives the ideal performance state

Physical Capacity
Builds endurance and promotes mental and emotional recovery

Rituals
A WEST COAST STRATEGY FOR LEADERSHIP WELL-BEING: Healthiest You
Emphasis on neuroscience and personal motivators, Kelly Traver, MD

- Competition
- Self-Mastery
- Structure
- Helping Others
- Purpose
- Social Connection
- Curiosity
- Playfulness
- Recognition
- Tangible Rewards
GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR LEADERSHIP WELL-BEING

Blue Zones: Emphasis on areas of the world where people live the longest and healthiest, but die the quickest
AN INTEGRATIVE STRATEGY FOR LEADERSHIP WELL-BEING
BlueWave Medicine

Healthy Living

Finding Passion & Work-Life Integration
Connect with Self & Others
Mental Focus & Resilience
Restorative Sleep
Healthy Eating
Fitness & Active Living
What: Larry Smarr has used a supercomputer to monitor his health and peer at his organs for years. He knows more about his own inner workings than anyone else ever has. His goal is for each of us to become “the CEO of our own body.” Recently he used his knowledge to help direct his own surgery.

So What: As technology advances and the possibility to become extremely fit, informed and hackers of our own bodies we will all have the opportunity to become CEO’s of our own health and wellbeing.

“You’re the doctor, not me, but I would start cutting here.”
CURRENT LITERACY

• Health = not sick; leaders don’t think much about well-being

• Neuroscience is not a topic leaders think much about or benefit from

• Leaders perform best at center of their competence

• Workers often struggle to find hope

FUTURE LITERACY

• Leaders will body hack for super well-being

• Neuroscience will be practical for savvy leaders

• Leaders will perform best at the edge of their competence

• Leaders will be very good at seeding hope for others
INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE (IFTF)

• 2018 is IFTF’s 50th year

• Downtown Palo Alto, adjacent to Stanford University, with improved futures gallery and new blended-reality underground caverns

• Ongoing foundational forecasts on future of food, well-being, technology, digital intelligence and propaganda

• Many custom forecasts for a wide range of organizations.