



Working Papers – 2007

March 2007 **Non-Carbon Life Forms: The New Demographic**

We are entering into a future in which decisions in the home, in the marketplace, in the workplace, and perhaps even in the voting booth, will increasingly be made by non-carbon life forms – networks, robots, structures, electronic devices and virtual entities. As non-carbon life forms instruct us about healthy choices, appropriate style, necessary and luxury products in virtual worlds, aspects of behavior, security, risk, education and work, we will increasingly be giving software designers – and ultimately self-learning and autonomous entities – our proxies in all forms of decision-making. Since all of our market and social studies are based on humans, we will have to become far more prepared for a world in which the real gatekeepers are not.

March 2007 **Online Dating vs. Dating Online**

Online dating sites were once considered an innovative and exciting way to meet and connect with new people. Dating online grew so much in popularity that it began to be a significant point of origin for new marriages. But as it matures, and problems arise with real world connections that are abused or not productive, virtual communities are rising in importance. The relationships forged in virtual space are just as real to increasing numbers of people as those formed in the real world, and are safer, can remain more anonymous, and can become more adventuresome. Advancements in brain research, software that learns and multi-sensory perception will continue to enhance virtual reality, and the experiences will more closely approach expectations, allowing human emotions to follow. Dating interactions between avatars frequenting virtual clubs, restaurants, movies, hotels and even exotic places will become more common.

June 2007 **The Vast Wasteland**

In this conveyer-belt world of never-ending products and services, consumers are accumulating more and more stuff, creating an ever-expanding pile of waste. Each year, consumers discard about 70 million tons of packaging waste alone. The self storage industry in the U.S. is growing exponentially, with no end in sight. Designers are increasingly turning their attention to recyclability, technologies are being explored that can turn inorganic trash and food waste into energy, and innovations in construction include materials like bitublocks, made from 100 percent waste material. However, not all waste is considered junk. A growing group of techno-enthusiasts are gathering up “retro” computers and other outdated electronic parts for historical value.

June 2007 **The State of the the World's Food Stock**

Many alarms are being sounded by those who monitor the state of the world's food. Among them are climate change, water issues, energy and pollution problems, the effect of the substitution of biomass and biofuels for fossil fuels (diverting arable land and driving up food prices, exacerbating instability in poorer regions), the mushrooming demand in China, the disappearance of bees at an alarming rate, the use of arable land for the production of illicit drugs, the spread of the deadly wheat fungus called black stem rust, the destruction of marine life through pollution and over-fishing, and the rampant wasting of food. Bright spots include the planting of millions of newly tree covered acres in areas like Niger, Norway's "doomsday vault" built to house seeds from all known varieties of food crops, genetically modified foods, and exploration of the oceans for new proteins.

June 2007 **Continuing to Defrock the Doc**

Gutenberg's invention of movable type allowed for the wider dissemination of information, which accelerated the challenges to priesthoods, from those serving the church to those serving institutions to those serving people. We have called this the "defrocking of the professional priesthoods." Over the past several hundred years, doctors have seen tremendous evolution in their profession, and that evolution continues. New developments include hundreds of high tech introductions that can affect health, medicine or care at lower cost, ability to manipulate wellness via brain research, genetic advances, distance medicine and alternative and spiritual healing. E.O. Wilson, the famed biogeneticist, has put forth the theory of "consilience" – the Unity of Knowledge – in which all knowledge is intrinsically linked, not only within science but between science and the humanities. As technologies and bodies of understanding merge and intermingle their results, we will see a very different future for healthcare.

June 2007 **Children of the ADHD Century**

At the earliest stages of development, children's brains are being more highly stimulated, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has become the most commonly diagnosed childhood disorder in the U.S. Rather than addressing the problem head-on (excuse the pun), schools have resorted to using drugs to help treat youngsters who exhibit this "socially unacceptable" behavior. But these children have grown up in a world of constant stimulation, and when they do not receive it, they tune out. The majority of students say they are bored in class, and outside of school they are having their self-esteem boosted so much they are turning into "praise junkies." They will

increasingly become the young adults that we now see who constantly seek immediate gratification, constant feedback and a host of entitlements.

September 2007 **The Design Imperative**

As goods and services become more competitive and commoditized, design will gain in importance and sophistication. The ingredients of the emerging design imperative include: simple and easy, green, ethnically and culturally derived, malleable, affordable, protectable, interactive, safe, urban, multipurposed, brain directed, fast, female, aesthetically pleasing, ergonomic and spiritually aligned. Design encompasses a wide range of skills and applications, from software development to furnishing to packaging. It relates to conceptual alteration of products and services, as well as construction and delivery processes. Because of the limitless applications of design, it will become one of the fastest growing job areas. Diversity will increasingly become not only a social good for companies but a competitive necessity as the various elements of design require moving away from standardized perception and thinking.

September 2007 **The New Silk Road**

The ancient Silk Road is one of the oldest and most historically important trade routes in history. A new silk road is emerging today between the Orient and the Southern Hemisphere. The economies of the energy-rich Persian Gulf and energy-hungry South and East Asia are becoming intertwined. This new version is characterized by authoritarian capitalist players, and their version of capitalism is not dependent upon a liberal democracy or transparency. As a result, the world's strategic map has been redrawn, and the Northern Hemispheric powers, including the U.S. and Europe, are becoming less relevant to the destinies of southern nations. The new consortium will likely participate in the global economy on its own terms, establishing an influential authoritarian capitalist order that connects manufacturers, political elites and the military.

December 2007 **Risky Business**

Companies and organizations are transforming the way they think about and manage risk, broadening it to include the *concept* of risk. Integrated, or enterprise-wide, risk management is becoming essential. The imperative is driven by technologies (from virtual offices to interlinked networks) that create vulnerabilities, to environmental and energy challenges, to disaffected populations, to supply chain problems, to epidemic diseases, to operating in a totally transparent environment.

December 2007 **The New Paradigm: From Mechanical to Biological**

There is an increasingly perceptible shift from the *mechanical* paradigm, with its emphasis on getting bigger, faster, strong and more efficient. The new paradigm is *biological*. Its focus is not on perfectibility but on functionality – being adaptable. In a rapidly changing world, the organizations most likely to survive are those that are agile, flexible and quick to respond.