

Working Together to Create Better Futures: Emerging Models

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Week 6 Activities

FUTURE NETWORKS

6.1 Abundance is Enough

In working together towards better futures for all, the notion of abundance tends to come up a lot. But what, precisely, do we mean by abundance? Does better futures for all mean more for everyone? How do we square that with life on a planet with finite resources?

Watch [*Designing for Generosity*](#), a TED-x talk by Nipun Mehta (18:09 min)

Reflect on your personal approaches/strategies to creating abundance for yourself and those around you. Do the ways and principles of "Giftivism" appeal to you? How are the 4 mindset (mental-model/worldview) shifts that Nipun talks about -- Consumption to Contribution, Transaction to Trust, Isolation to Community, Scarcity to Abundance -- playing out in your life and work?

Response

"The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed."

Nipun's use of the Gandhi quote is right on. We do have enough for all.

Transitioning to my current job-career-thing I attend to daily, I took a substantial pay cut to move away from the pace and pressure of a production type environment. While touring, I saw a place of curiosity, play and a desire for abundance. They wanted to shift from expert making for students to students gaining the cyclical wisdom of making-failing-making. I saw the potential for abundance and decided that I would go with the flow. Show them what I know without expectation of something in return and see what happened. A lot has happened and our community is now flowing. Students have now taken this approach of helping teach skills to other students. Our pool of knowledge has become vastly more vibrant and abundant. None of us get or expect any monetary bonus. We gain insight into fun new ways of doing and being and that is worth so much more.

Nipun's 3 constraints are intriguing. We're looking at incorporating a student volunteer program into our space from Georgia Tech. Georgia Tech designates their student volunteers as Prototype Instructors (PI). The PI works three hours per week and receives

24 hour access. Georgia Tech tracks how many hours their PI's are in the space helping others and the average of 20 far exceeds the minimum of 3. They love being there, making, and helping their peers. Their community has found abundance through trust and we want to tap into that action.

We also run into fundraising interference. Multiple marketing videos and articles have been produced that feel false. They paint the space in the light that sells the university. Exaggerations and falsehoods. I don't see the value in it. Our momentum has come from honoring the process and celebrating within community our energy and creations. I feel like we can explore other modes of increasing availability. The pay it forward model is compelling and I think it can work for us. Can materials and supplies be available through a pay it forward model? I think so and I'm curious to see what alternative modes of material procurement arise. Will we use recycled or organic materials more? I don't know but I'm going to try and see what happens.

6.2 Creating a (Desirable Future) Scenario

Read [Alternative Futures at the Manoa School](#)

by Jim Dator (Journal of Future Studies) to get a general understanding of the scenario-creation process as well as the most common types (archetypal) of scenarios in foresight.

Your team will be creating what is called a Desirable/Preferred Future scenario related to your chosen GNH domain. In short, you are creating a detailed and compelling story that represents the response you most desire to your own Focal Question; this story will be shaped by the Forces of Change and Big Shifts you have identified, fleshed-out by the Signals you have collected, and inspired by the Patterns and Extrapolations you have made from them.

There is no specific format for creating your Desirable Future scenario; be as creative as you can to tell a compelling story about the future of working together in the GNH domain you have chosen.

Leverage all that you have learnt about storytelling in the rest of the program (so far) and outside. You may use the [Desirable Future scenario template](#)

to save what you create (although this is not a requirement). Browse p39-50 of the [IFTF Foresight Toolkit](#) to learn more about scenario-elements like the headline, persona and artifacts.

Group Response

Link to Assignment: [Mod. 6.2 Activity - Cybrarians of Vibrancy Desirable Future Scenario](#)

6.3 Living in Plenitude

Watch a short video illustrating the principles of a [Plenitude economy](#) (narrated by sociologist Juliet Schor). Reflect on how you relate to the central insights behind the Plenitude way of living: as individuals work and spend less, and create and connect more, societies emit and pollute less, and enjoy and thrive more.

Response

Last night, as I slept, dreaming my dreams, my wife texted me this live

[“You can have it all” by Yo la Tengo](#) recording. Waking up and fuzzy, I pushed a button on my message device phone thing and received a single from somewhere to here. I watch and ask myself. When did Adam Sandler join the band? Hold the phone, that's just Ira Cohen. Anyways, the song was released in 2000 and induced reflective flashbacks. What was I up to in 2000? Fuck all. That's what. I'd roll out of bed, and roll back into frolic at a leisurely pace. Later, If the bike called, I rode. The cold springs, I swam. The garden I tended. Or a show, I snuck in. I worked room service and had a casual encounter relationship with school. The job paid around \$1200 a month. Enough to cover rent, food, tuition, and a season of bike racing. Austin was cheap, fun and full of people doing their own thing at a casual pace. I also managed two winter seasons in Jackson Hole Wyoming. The epicenter of big pow skiing, where I expanded my lexicon to include shred, freshies, and Hella Gnar Gnar. Words to live by, if ever there was.

So, I did, had, was everything I wanted and was still seduced by the sweet siren song of the dollar. It whispered promises of adventure and glory. Plus the grown ups insisted. Transitioning to a more traditional American work life provided way more money and status and almost no time for experiences that felt true to me. Everything became work and expansion of financial opportunity. I saw this transformation happening to my friends and the Austin community. We became the fetish of commodity. Oogled, coveted, and traded at market value. I escaped that scene some time ago and am back to

mostly grazing life at my pace. I find hope in reflections of my old times. I lived in and experienced communities in equilibrium that cared more for each other than the optimization of the dollar. We've been there before. We know how, we just have to remember.

6.4 My Future Network (Priorities & Strategies)

With reference to your desired/preferable future scenario, compile a list of people, organizations, other entities that you would like to be networked with in the near future.

This is your Future Networking Directory, with Name, Website and Contact Details, and your notes on each entity.

Now, use the Networking exercise detailed in p79-82 of the [IFTF Foresight Toolkit](#) to map out your networking approach as it relates to one specific future objective you have. This exercise will help you clarify what you would like from each person/entity that you want to network with, and what you have to offer them.

Response

Hi Manoj, I felt like developing a network for a future that I am currently working towards feels more relevant. The headline future below is something my community at Trinity is playing with and the Partners listed are currently involved or maybe down the road.

The future I see and want to be

Headline approach: Local University architecture and design department partners with [ICON 3d technology](#) to provide design build consultation to low income san antonio residences.

Participating residents will receive free 3d CAD and logistical training by Trinity university students to vision a 3D printed home of their design. ICON 3d home builders will then print the unique design using an energy efficient and recyclable stucco composite capped with a solar panel roof. Additionally, students work with residences to use cutting edge AI stress simulation software to validate structural integrity. The resulting build will be carbon negative, designed by community, develop true community relations and offer empathetic experiential learning opportunities to Trinity University

undergrads. The cherry on top is that the homes are funded by a community land trust agreement setup by the city of San Antonio and multi generational inhabitants.

Side Bar:

- Merging of technology, facilitation, design, engineering analysis and sustainability
- Democratization of roles:
 - client designs what they truly want
 - Students learn to facilitate rather than dictate design and have the framework to carry forward into later careers.
 - Community driven
- What if it's ugly or weird looking? Could be...Maybe requires community final approval?

Partners/ Collaborators/ Networkable Opportunities In pursuit of a Community Creative Space

Intra University:

- Kate Ritson, Faculty chair of Art
 - Makerspace supporter and Co-champion of starting a new Architecture program
 - **Pitch:** Lets try empathetic community building architecture that strives for carbon neutrality. We might need a new creative space to house all of this
- Dr. Lauren Turek, Museum studies faculty and Mellon grant administrator
 - Co-champion of starting a new Architecture program
 - **Pitch:** Lets try empathetic community building architecture that strives for carbon neutrality. We might need a new creative space to house all of this
- Dr. Wilson Terrel Jr., Engineering Faculty & Associate VP of academic affairs, Inclusive Excellence
 - Faculty makerspace champion
 - **Pitch:** How do we broaden our scope to the local community?

Local Affiliates:

- Geekdom: Local entrepreneurship incubator
 - Lacks a creative makerspace
 - **Pitch:** partner with us to help seed funding and energy for creative change in our community
- University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA)
 - Local tier one research university
 - **Pitch:** Partner with in a creative space to expand research and outreach opportunities for your students
- Art Pace, McNay museum, Guadalupe Cultural Art Center, The Doseum, The Witte Museum, etc
 - Local arts and cultural arts centers
 - **Pitch:** Lets rethink how art and community engage and intersect

Regional Affiliates

- Rice University maker space: Aka The Kitchen, run by Dr. Matthew Wettergreen
 - Sister school with Trinity and national leaders in academic makerspace funding and community engagement projects
 - **Pitch:** Let's work together to expand our offerings to local communities
- University of Texas Austin
 - Tier 1 research university with completely student run makerspaces, and a national leader in makerspace autonomy and research
 - **Pitch:** Let's work together to expand our offerings to local communities
- ICON 3d technology in Austin Tx
 - 3D printed home startup
 - **Pitch:** We can provide training for future designers and architects using your process
- [Jumano Nation](#): original nation of the land we are on (Central Texas)
 - **Pitch:** How can a creative community center serve you?

National and International Affiliates

- Precious Plastics, Materium: Communities that are researching ways to repurpose plastic and alternatives to plastics
 - **Pitch:** Let's work together to expand our offerings to local communities

- Case Western Reserve: have a working 50,000 sqft makerspace run by students and available to the public
 - **Pitch:** Let's work together to expand our offerings to local communities