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We are encouraged to see that an increasing number of organisations are starting to think about the future, commissioning projects on the impacts of new technology, climate change and changing social attitudes. With the New Year approaching now would be good time to review whether your organisation is positioned to weather the unpredictable and unprecedented events we are almost certainly going to encounter in 2022. Our recent Working Papers on COP26, resilience, geo-politics and the effect of the pandemic on drivers of change provide a starting point. Contact us on info@samiconsulting.co.uk to see how we can help.

This week's blog post captures the results of an online workshop session of SAMI Principals, brainstorming potential radical events in 2022. We worked through a basic PESTLE format to generate a range of disturbingly likely shocks to the global system. Make sure you catch up through our website.

Our second session of the current *SAMI Cohort* addressed the issue of managing your horizon scanning effectively. The Cohort is a small group of professionals working with foresight and scenario planning, who gather every couple of months to learn from each other and SAMI staffers in a mutually supportive online environment. Further members are welcome. Contact Jane.Dowsett@samiconsulting.co.uk for further information.

Have a good holiday season.

Executive Education

Our online course "Understanding the Future" will be run again on 24th – 28th January 2022. The course fee is £490 + VAT, and discounts may be available for self-funded individuals. For more information, please email us at training@samiconsulting.co.uk.

A range of information on various futures techniques – the basis of the GOS Futures Toolkit – is available on our website.

Futures Issues

Nuclear fusion has long been seen as forever 30 years away, but now there are more than 30 private fusion firms globally, with funding in excess of US$2.4 billion. Key to these efforts are advances in materials research and computing that are enabling new technologies and designs.

The Covid-19 pandemic led to the broader adoption of digital health technology to support telehealth visits, to better meet both patient and provider needs. A positive side effect of this delivery of care was the ability to minimize the burden on staff due to limited in-patient visits.

Swiss scientists have developed a pilot, proof of concept system to create fuel from air and sunlight. This could be a possible source of carbon-neutral fuel for industries such as aviation and shipping. But currently it is only producing 32 millilitres of methanol in a seven-hour-day run, so will require investment to compete with fossil fuels.

A UNICEF study has revealed that young people are more positive, thinking that each generation is improving upon itself. Comparisons between those aged 15/21 and and those 40 plus, across 21 countries, the younger people are more positive and globally-minded than their elders and are more likely to be invested in the possibility of global cooperation and international institutions.

The 193 members of UNESCO agreed on common values and principles needed to ensure the healthy development of AI. The agreement aims to guide the construction of the necessary legal infrastructure to ensure the ethical development of this technology. It also explicitly bans the use of AI systems for social scoring and mass surveillance. And in the Reith Lectures, Professor Stuart Russell Professor, founder of the Center for Human-Compatible Artificial Intelligence at the University of California, Berkeley, describes the progress in restricting "Lethal Automated Weapons Systems".

Our Blogs

In the last month we have continued the series on our recent report to the European Commission where we worked, together with various partners, on the development of a system for using foresight to develop EU R&I policy.

The second blog in the series looked in more detail at one of the scenarios – Oak – that was developed and explored what life might be like in such a world. The third blog in the series looked at the development of a process that we used to explore how trends might develop in the various scenarios – this used a board game format and helped the teams get to grips with a range of different possibilities.

Later blogs will look at how the scenarios could develop in different regions around the world. A more recent blog reviewed this year's ESPAS meeting and discussed various lessons that could be taken from the meeting.