

Futures Thinking



Universiteit
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Leiden Learning
& Innovation Centre

Workshop by Judith Vels & Harriët Damen



Hello!

We're Leiden Learning & Innovation Centre (LLInC)

We support quality education at Leiden University.

Our creative and knowledgeable team of learning and innovation consultants, media and policy experts, provides the University with educational training, expertise and digital solutions.



Goal of today

Immerse yourself into the future, unlock
your creative brain and build an artifact





Programme

- 01) **Futures Thinking Intro**
16.00 - 16.15
- 02) **Scenarios and time to build**
16.15 - 16.45
- 03) **Plenary Reflection**
16:45 – 16.55
- 04) **Wrap up**
16.55 - 17.00

01 Introduction

Time to think about the future



**We can't predict the future, but we
can anticipate it and prepare for it.**



When you're thinking about the future



No crystal ball



No predictions

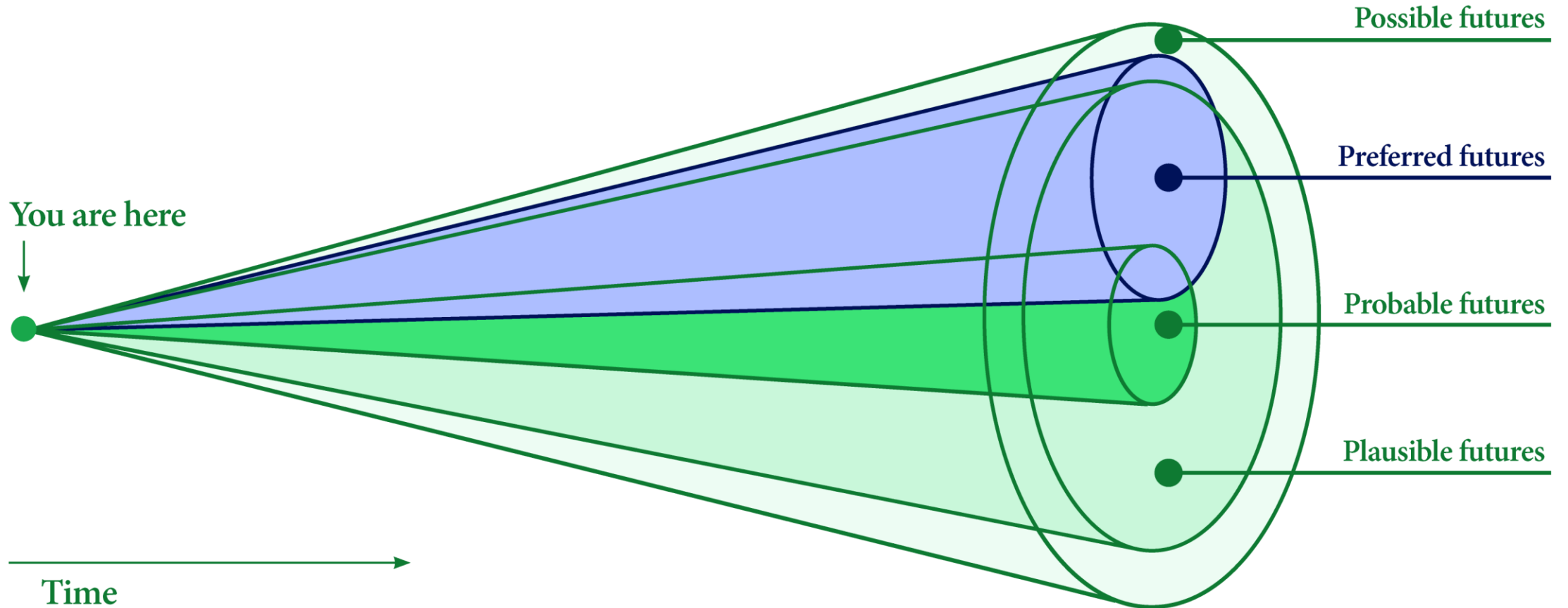


No winning lottery numbers

Source: CIFS 2026



THE CONE OF POSSIBILITIES



Voros, J. (2003). A generic Foresight Process Framework

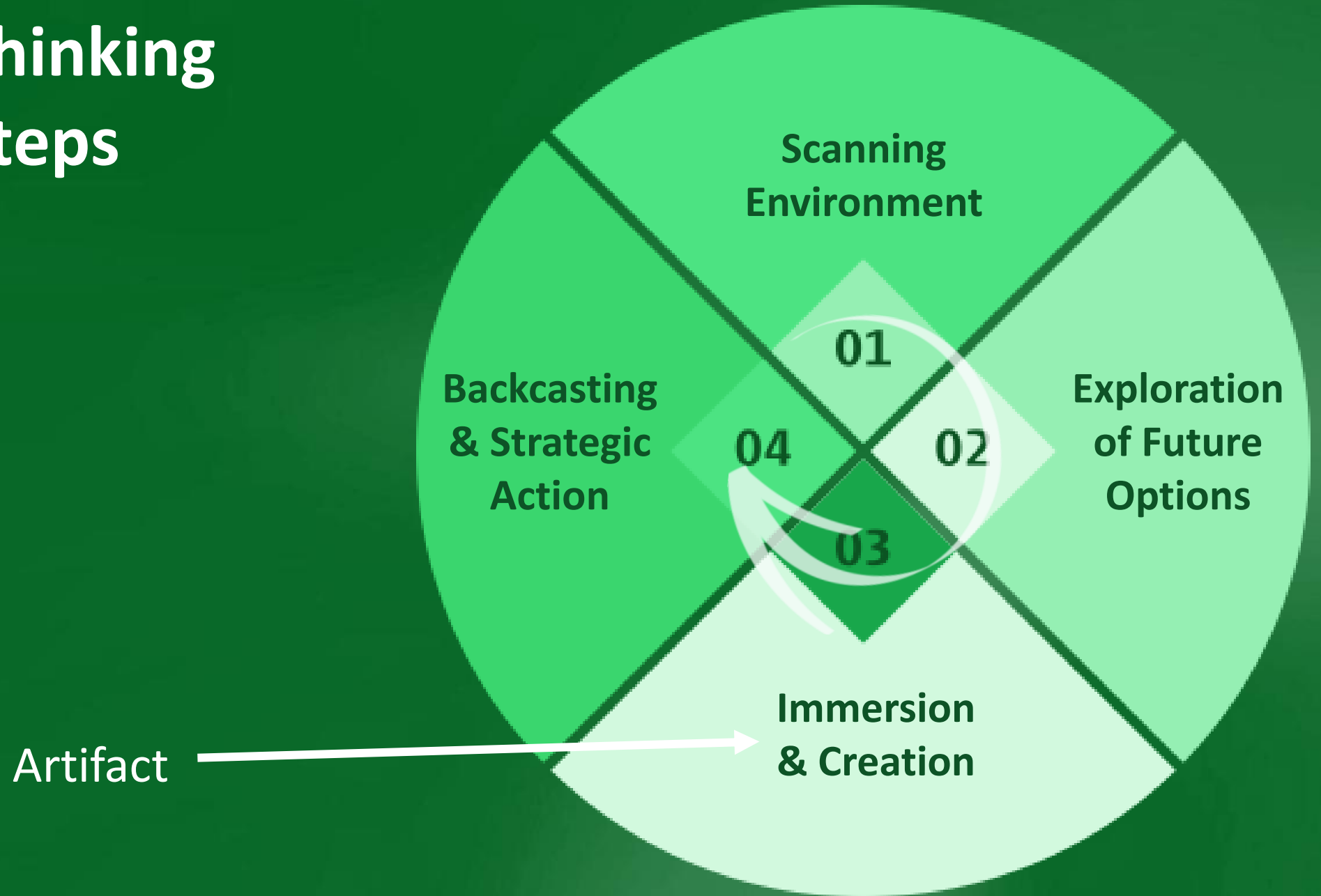
Why?

- **Episodic Future Thinking**
- Foster resilience
- Stretch the imagination (out-of-the-box thinking)
- Create flexibility in thinking, being proactive vs reactive
- Opportunity detecting, risk mitigation and challenge assumptions
- Use your skills and expertise
- Act to steer towards a *preferred* future



Based on McGonigal, J. (2023), Conway, M. (2016), Flowers (2025)

Futures Thinking Process Steps



Take a minute to think about these questions

What did we consider perfectly normal 15–20 years ago, but no longer do so today?

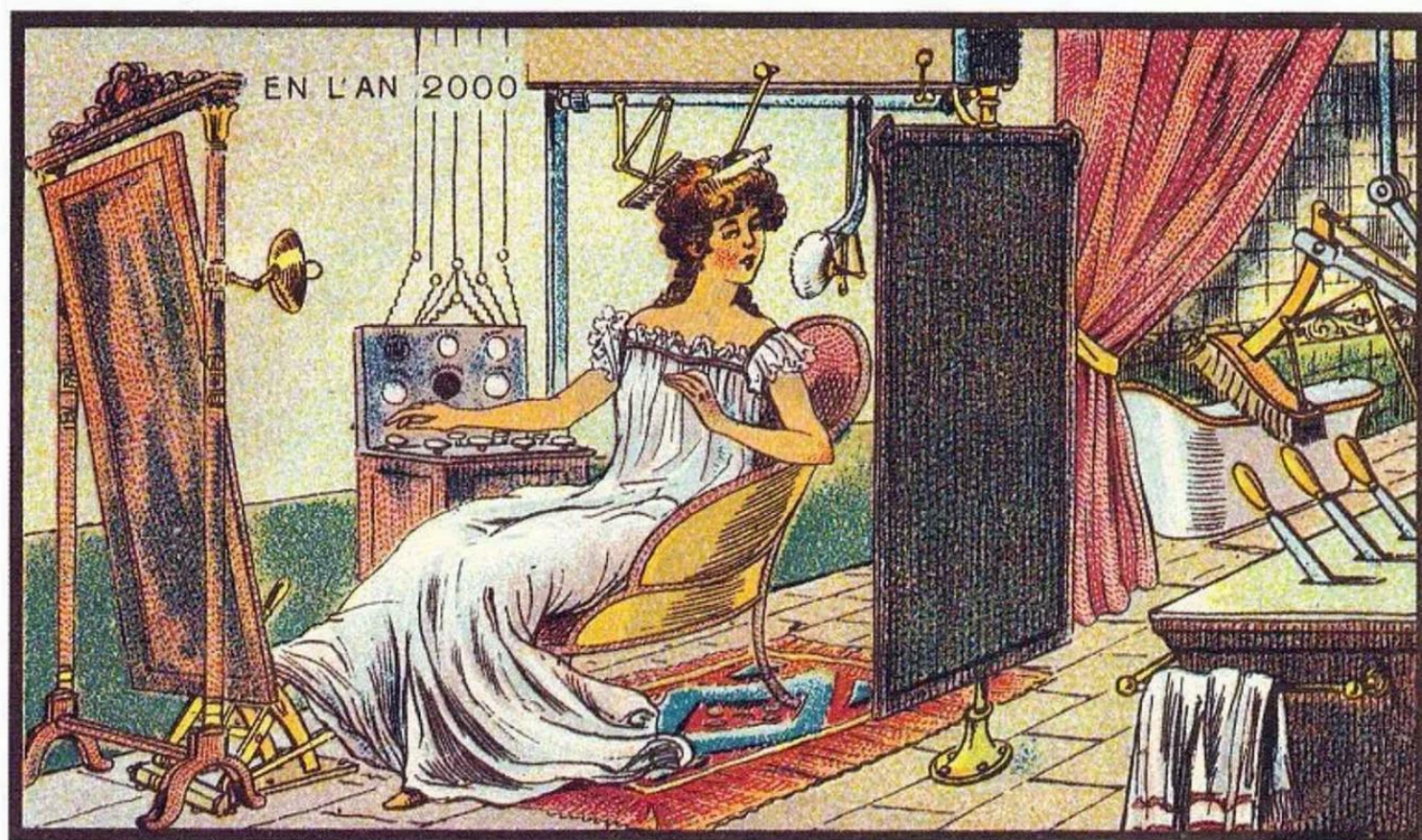
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What is considered normal today that we will probably find absurd in 2040?

What did people in the **past** think about
the **future**?



A French futuristic illustration collection from 1899–1910 that imagined life in the year 2000.

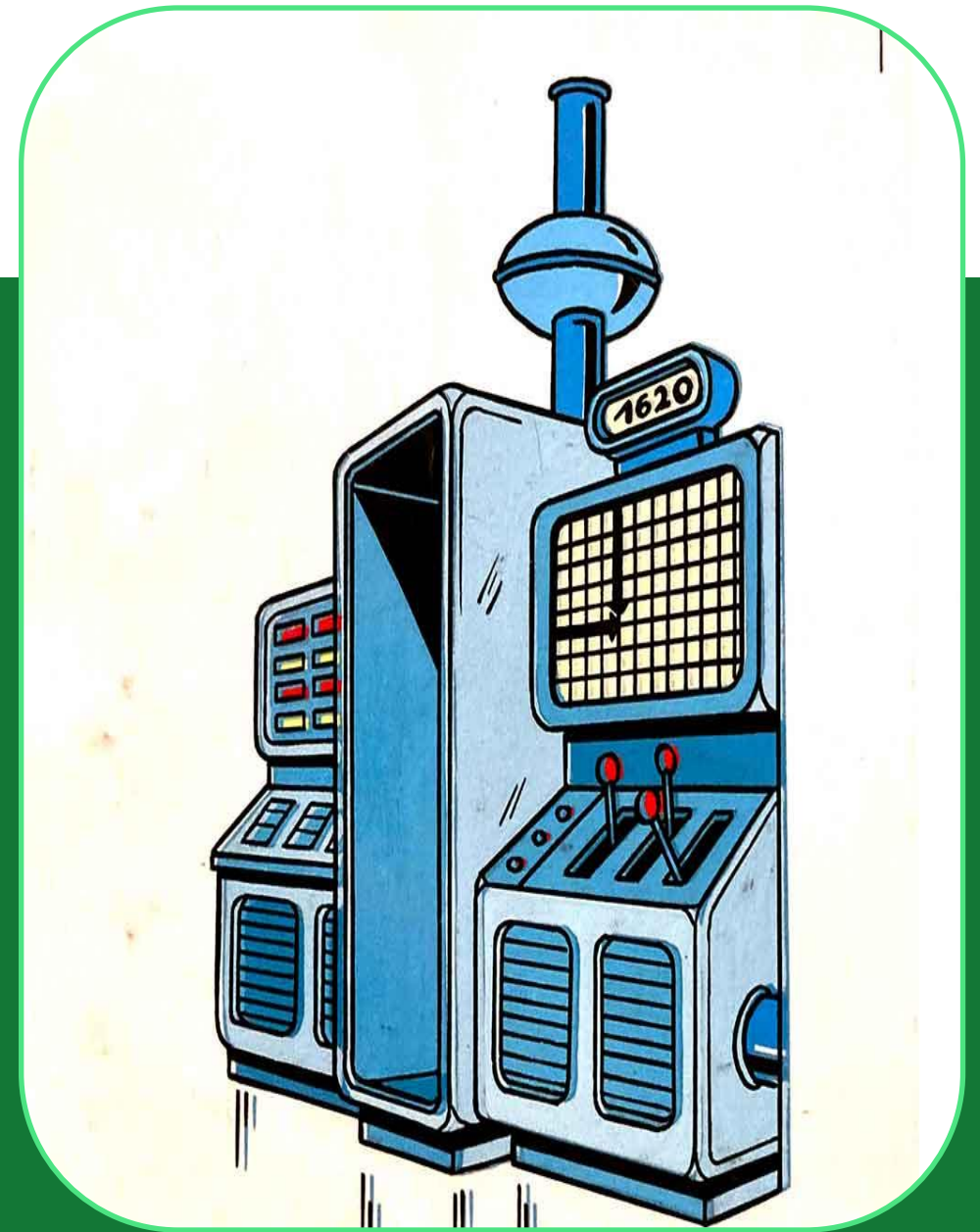


Madame at Her Toilette



Futures scenarios

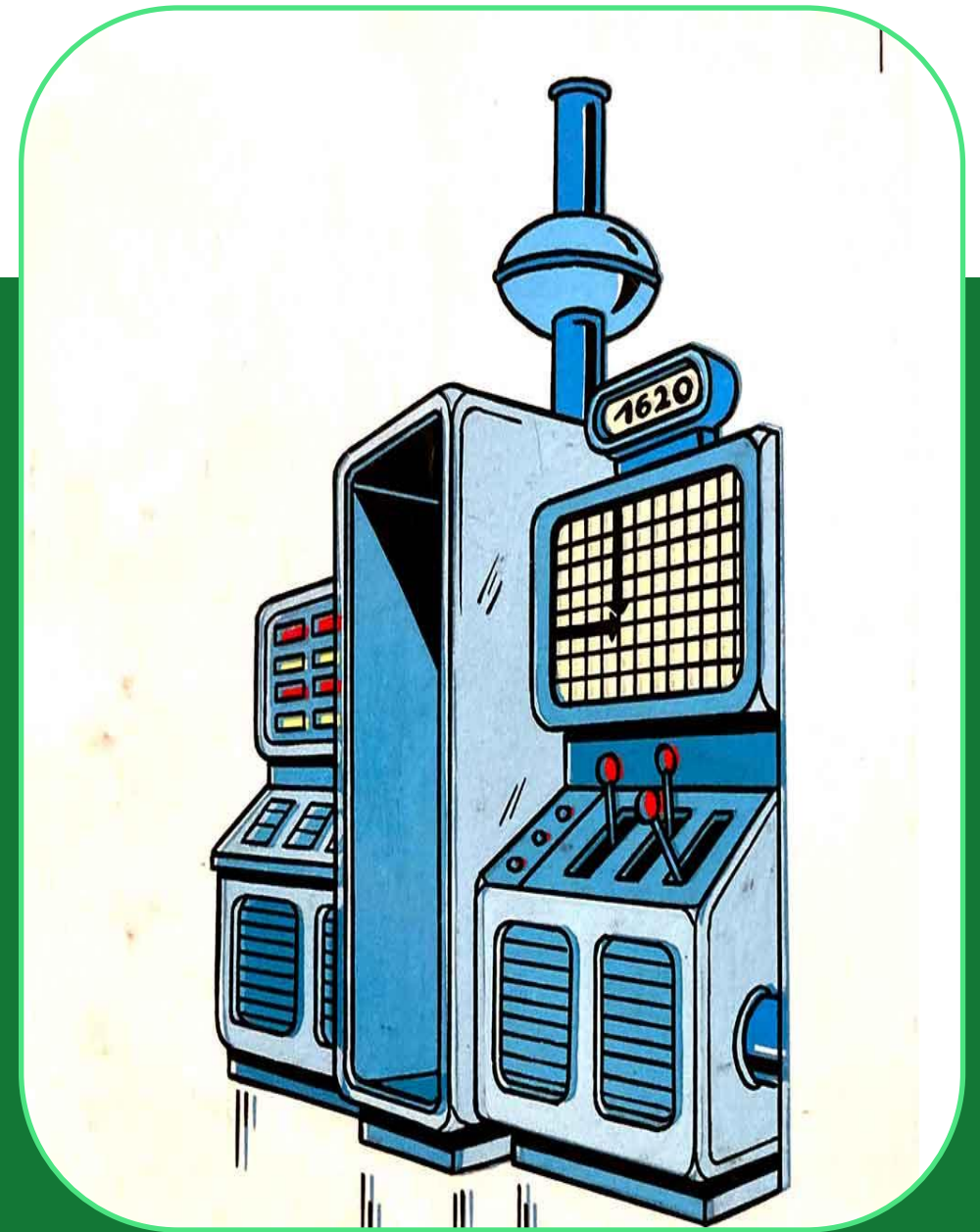
1910



©Teletijdmachine Professor Barabas Suske en Wiske

Futures scenarios

2036



Future artifact

Create an artifact

Examples of artifacts from the past



Photo taken in 2019

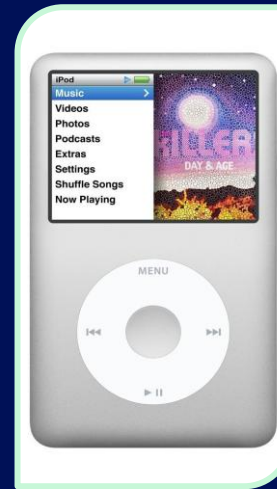


Photo taken in 2026; Germany



Photo taken in 2025

Examples of artifacts from the past



The 80's
Walkman

The 90's
Discman

The zero's
iPod

The 10's
Streaming in app

?

Examples of artifacts from the past

Future?



Archetypes of Futures

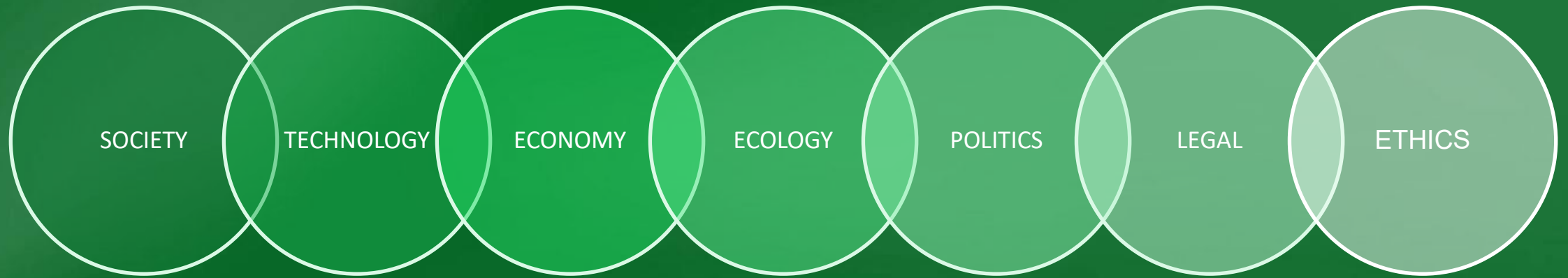
Continued
Growth

Collapse

Discipline

Transformation





Inspiration by co-pilot Media & learning



Intelligent media
ecosystems



Controlled
Media environments



AI driven media



Fragmented media
landscape



Experiential learning
worlds



Dynamic responsive
media



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Scenarios

Intelligent Media Ecosystems - Growth

“In the year 2036, learning is powered by intelligent media ecosystems.”

In 2036, students no longer depend on lectures to access knowledge. Every learning moment is captured, enriched, and transformed by AI-powered media systems. Class sessions are automatically recorded through advanced AV environments, transcribed in real time, and instantly converted into summaries, visual explainers, and interactive learning modules.

Students move fluidly between formats—watching a short video explanation, stepping into an augmented reality overlay, or exploring a full VR simulation of a complex system. Learning is no longer linear; it is adaptive, personalized, and continuous.

Controlled Media Environments -Discipline

“In the year 2036, education is built on controlled and verified media environments.”

After years of uncertainty about AI-generated content, trust became the central issue in education. By 2036, institutions have responded by creating tightly regulated media ecosystems, ethic policies are an integral part of that.

Every piece of media used in education—whether a video, transcript, or AI-generated visualization—is traceable. Students no longer freely use generative tools; instead, they work within authenticated platforms that track how knowledge is created.

Scenarios

Experiential Learning Worlds - Transformation

“In the year 2036, we no longer ‘use’ media in education—we learn inside it.”

Education has undergone a profound transformation. The traditional lecture has disappeared, not because it failed, but because it became unnecessary.

Students now learn inside immersive environments powered by advanced XR technologies. They don’t study climate systems from a textbook—they step into them. They don’t read about ethical dilemmas—they experience them, interact with them, and defend their decisions in real time.

Media is no longer static. It is dynamic, responsive, and co-created. AI continuously adapts learning environments, introducing new variables, perspectives, and levels of complexity.

Fragmented Media Landscapes – Collapse

“In the year 2036, media is everywhere—but learning struggles to keep up.”

The promise of AI and advanced media tools was immense. But a combination of geopolitical tensions, limited funding, and institutional strain has led to a fragmented landscape.

Access to high-quality media technologies—advanced AI, XR platforms, integrated AV systems—is uneven. Some institutions thrive, but many rely on outdated tools, disconnected systems, and lower-quality alternatives. This difference also drives inequality between lower and higher income students, where students from wealthier backgrounds can choose to study at the best schools with the best tools.

Create an artifact



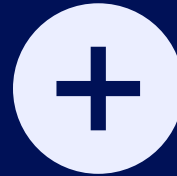
Step 1

Form a group of 3 people

Read the scenarios

Choose 1 scenario with
your group

Think about the
scenario: what emotions
and thoughts does it
evoke?



Step 2

Create a drawing:

What kind of tool, idea
or thing could exist in
the future scenario that
you chose?

What does it look like?
What use does it have?
How does it contribute to
this future?



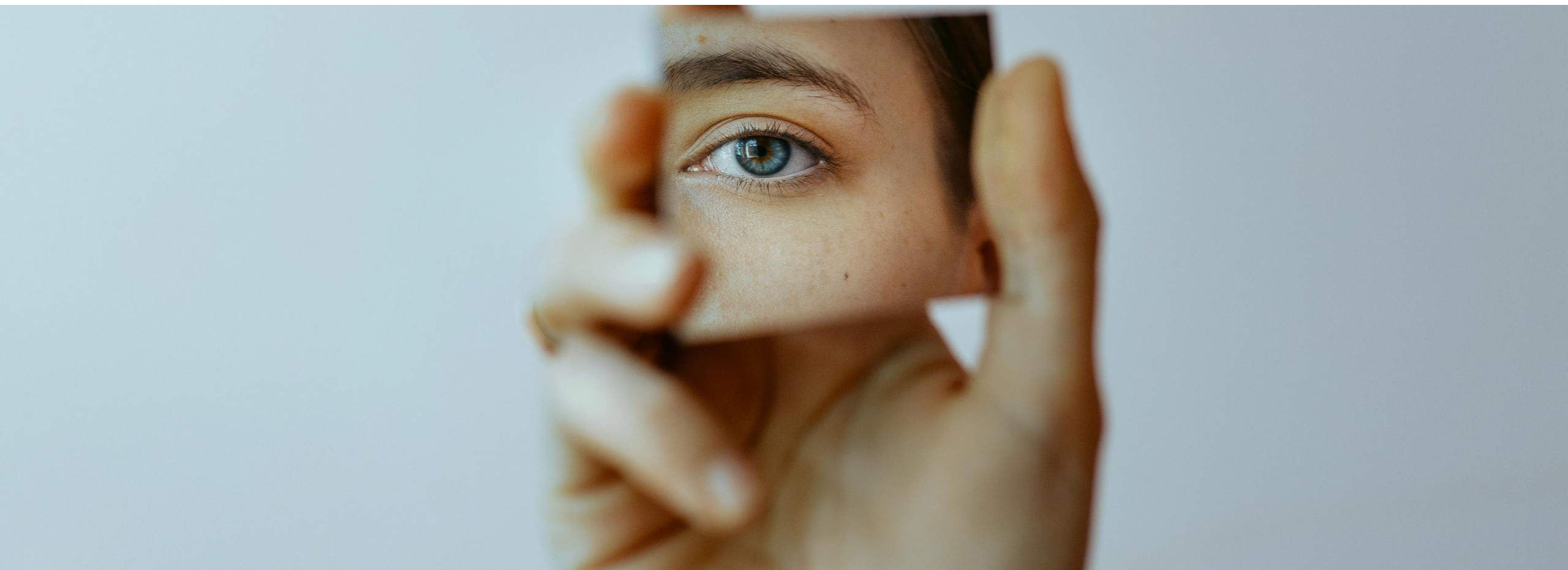
Step 3

Think about a short
explanation to give back
to the group

Write it down on the card

The artifact will be
exhibited during the
conference

Reflection



Wrap up



Be aware of the blind spots!

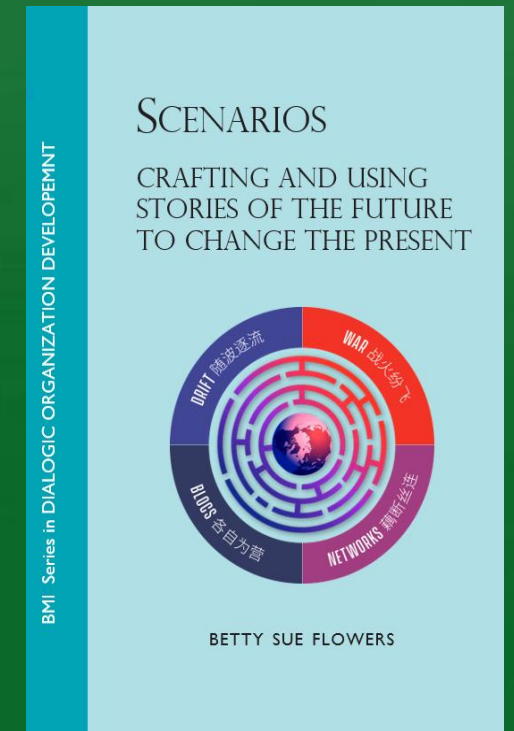
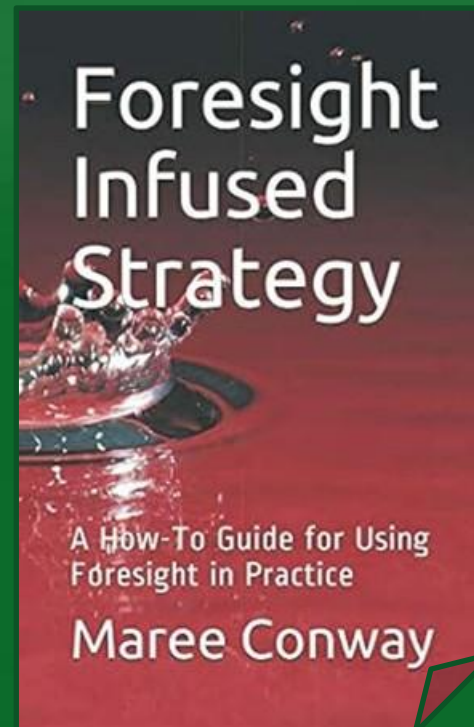
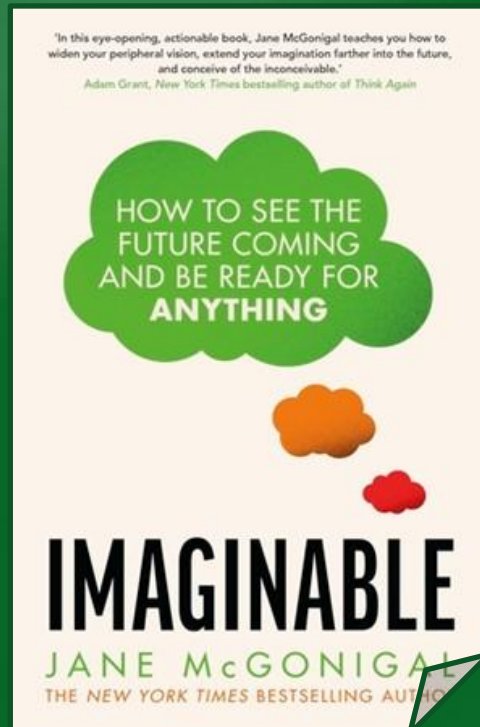
Future Shock – Alvin Toffler

Generative AI – Academic world



This workshop is based on:

- Imaginable - Jane McGonigal (2022)
- Coursera's Futures Thinking specialization - Institute for the Future (2019)
- Foresight Infused Strategy – Maree Conway (2016)
- Scenarios: Crafting and using stories of the future to change the present – Betty Sue Flowers (2025)





Thank you!

Futures@llinc.leidenuniv.nl



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