

# Social Media Sherlock:

Making a Case for the Future



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ARMA 03.11.2014

## Traditional Business Thinking

**Immediate**  
**Focused**  
**Single**  
**Incremental**  
**Future**  
**Solution**

## Futures Thinking

**Long-term**  
**Broad**  
**Multiple**  
**Discontinuous**  
**Future(s)**  
**Question**



Futurists take an outside-in approach to research.

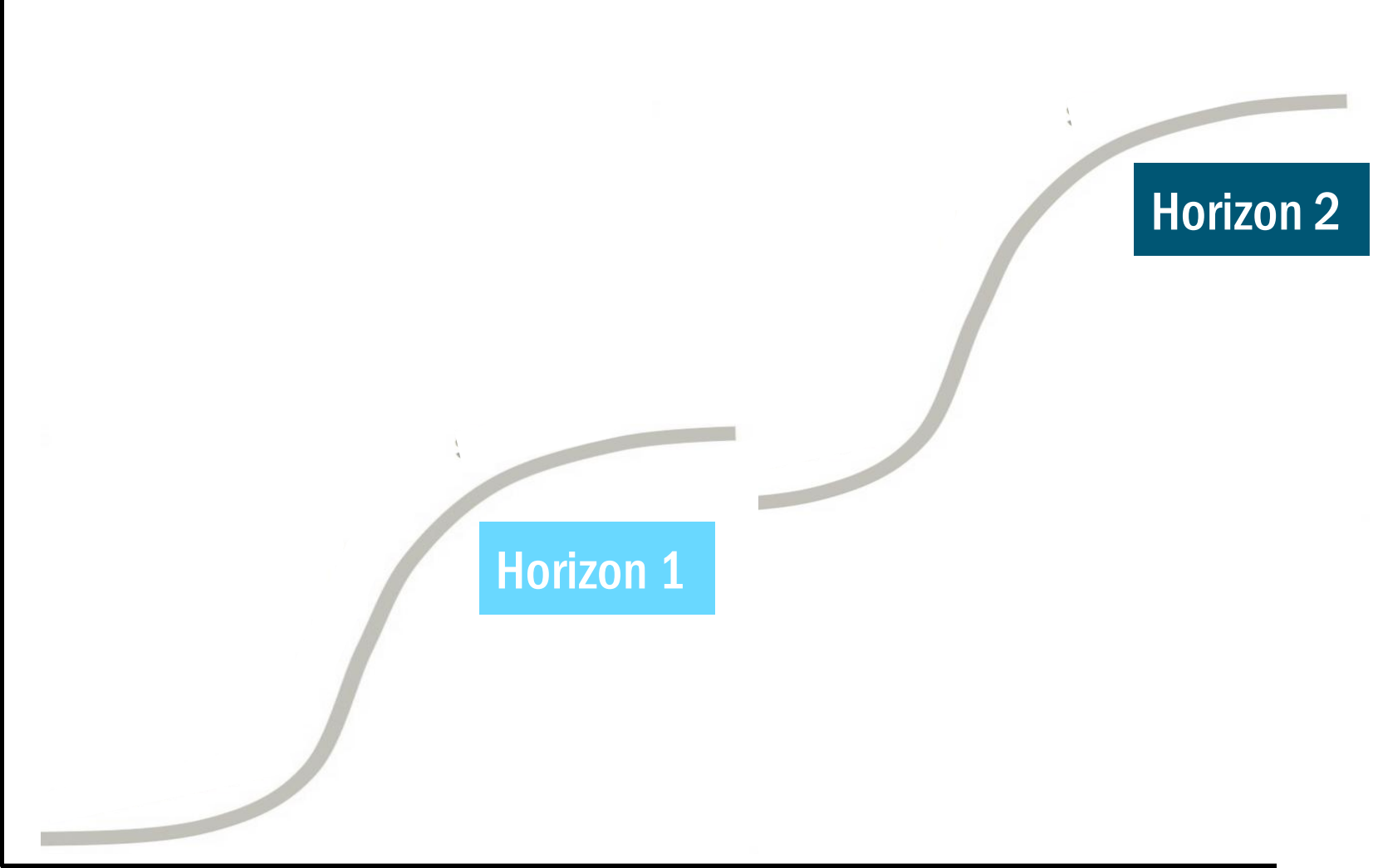
**Proactive**

**v.**

**Reactive**

# Get a sense of emergent change .

**Awareness**



**Horizon 1**

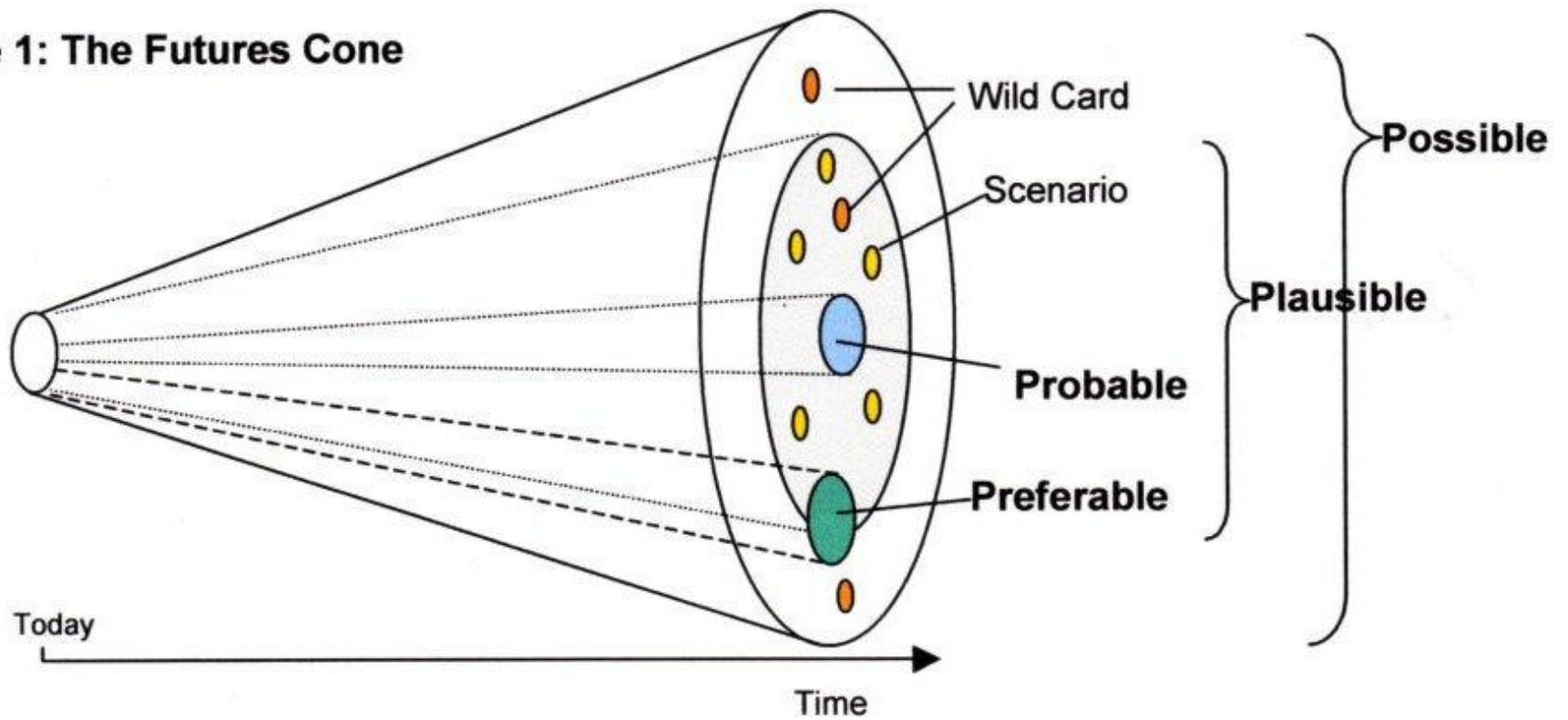
**Horizon 2**

**Time**

Source: Maree Conway, Thinking Futures (adapted from Graham Molitor)

Broaden your view of future possibilities.

Figure 1: The Futures Cone



**Using a futures based research approach gets you a seat at the table. It helps you:**

- **Shift dialogue into a new space, more strategic space**
- **Anticipate change instead of reacting to it**
- **Identify emerging issues before the competition**
- **Influence strategic vision and plan**

# Research “Tips”

## Tip 1



Investigate the weird.

## Tip 2



Employ the “Futurists Method”.

## Tip 3



Collect clues.

## Tip 4



Build a trend case.



**Investigate the weird.**

**1**

**Dator's Law 2: any useful idea about the future should appear to be ridiculous.**

# Sources:

**Newspapers, new sites, websites, blogs, wikis, podcasts, videos, newsletters, books, magazines, book reviews, presentations, reports, surveys, interviews, seminars, forums, trend observers, advertisers, philosophers, sociologists, management gurus, consultants, experts, researchers, learning institutions, databases.**

Source: Maree Conway, Thinking Futures

# Twitter

Curate a network of key thought leaders.

# RSS Feeds

Set up a digital source.

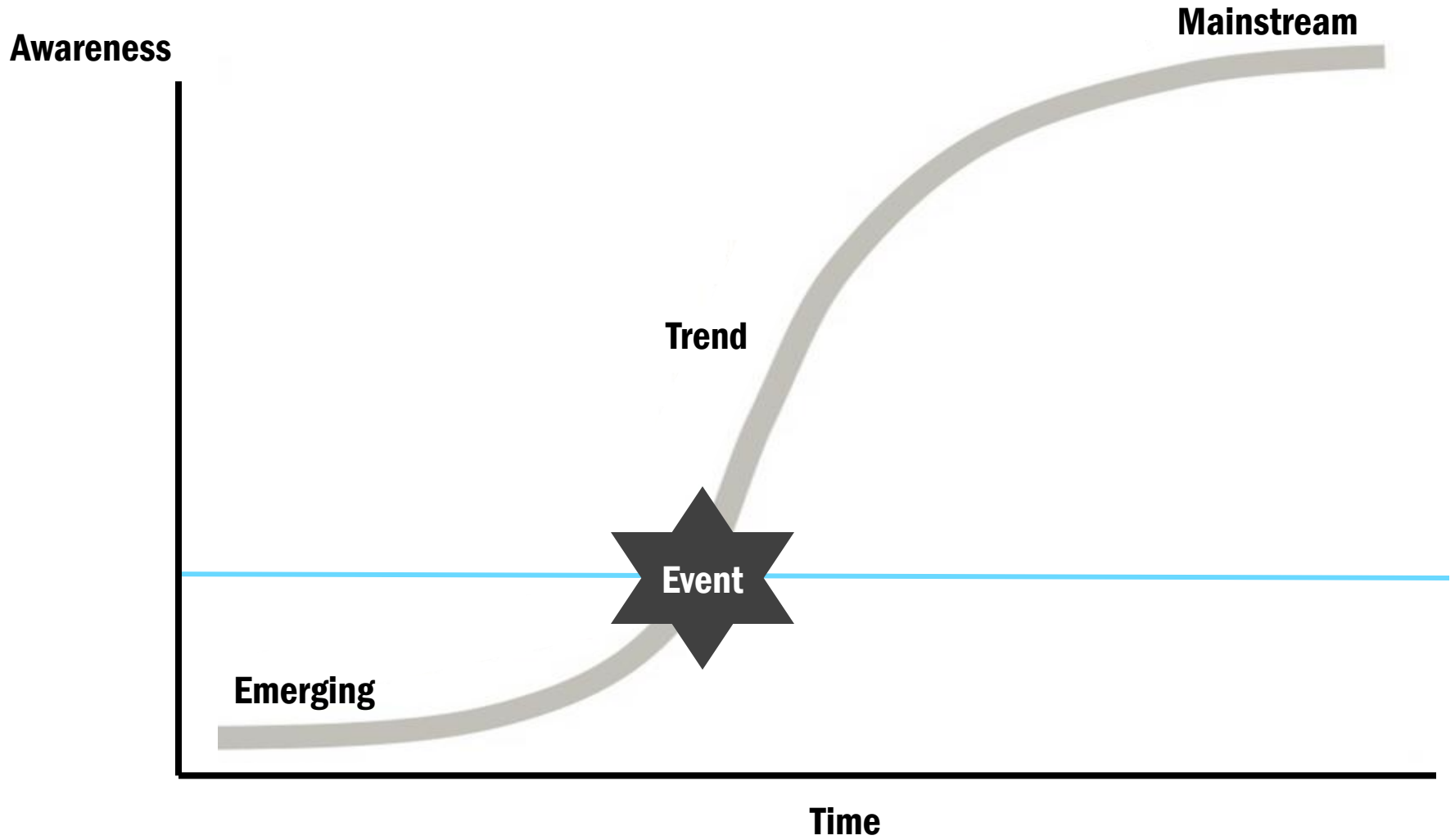


**Employ the “Futurists  
Method”.**

# A futures clue:

- Identifies an emerging issue that is objectively new even to experts
- Confirms or is confirmed by additional [clues]
- Is identified in time for social dialogue, impact assessment, and policy formation

-Wendy Schultz, Infinite Futures 2004



**Is the clue part of  
an old case?**

**Is the clue  
describing a  
current trend or  
driver?**

**Is the clue describing  
an emerging issue?**

**2**



**Collect clues.**

# **Create a Diigo/ Delicious\* account to capture clues.**

\*Social bookmarking platforms

# Cover your STEEP bases.

**Social. Technological. Economic. Environmental. Political.**

**Build a trend case.**



**You need a minimum of three clues to  
build a case.**



**“Chunking allows us to turn the dull sludge of independent episodes in our lives into a shimmering, dense web, interlinked by all the myriad patterns we spot.”**

**--Daniel Bor**

**Application**



# Clue?

## Jared Lanier Wants To Build A Middle Class on Micropayments



**In his book, *You are Not a Gadget*, Jared Lanier proposes a freelance economy built on microtasks. He writes, “There should be micropayments for anyone doing anything free online because someone benefits somewhere. Middle class people could own something- the information they produce- that would give them sustenance as they have children and age.”**

# Clue?

## Micro work, Macro Gains: Samasource



**Samasource outsources simple but time-consuming tasks to people living in some of the poorest areas on the planet. These tasks—things like data capture and verification—are straightforward enough that any literate person can perform them.**

# Clue?

## Post A Survey On Mechanical Turk And Watch The Results Pour In



**Mechanical Turk, or MTurk as it's called, has been criticized as a digital sweatshop. It all started about a decade ago. Amazon had millions of Web pages, but some were identical. The company wanted to weed out duplicates, which is hard for computers but easy for people to do. So Amazon offered to pay people a few cents to do it and soon, other companies were posting tasks too and Mechanical Turk was born.**

# Breakout Groups

**Step One:** Join a group. Read an article and provide a brief clue summary.

**Step Two:** As a group discuss:

- What new concepts/ideas/paradigms are emerging?
- How are we living differently?
- What processes are changing how we connect to people, places and things?
- What new issues or innovations might emerge as a result of these clues?

**Step Three:** On your flipchart, sell your case:

- Name/define the change (emerging issue or trend)
- Extrapolate possible world impacts for two time horizons: near term and far term
- What are challenges and opportunities for RIM practitioners? Why should we care?



**You are a mashup of what  
you let into your life.**

**-Austin Kleon**