

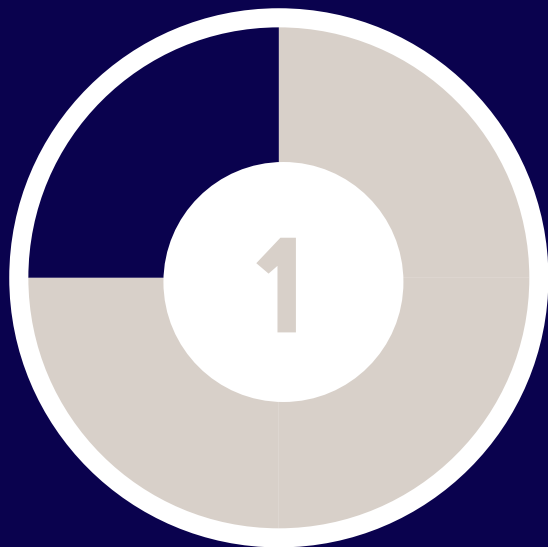


IFTF FORESIGHT TOOLKIT

Practical tools
for foresight, insight,
and action



INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE



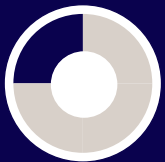
FORESIGHT TOOLKIT

PREPARE

Get ready for foresight, insight, and action by preparing your mind and defining the future you care about. Develop cognitive flexibility and lay the groundwork for creative, interpretive forecasts. Return to these habits again and again to start a new cycle of engaging the future.



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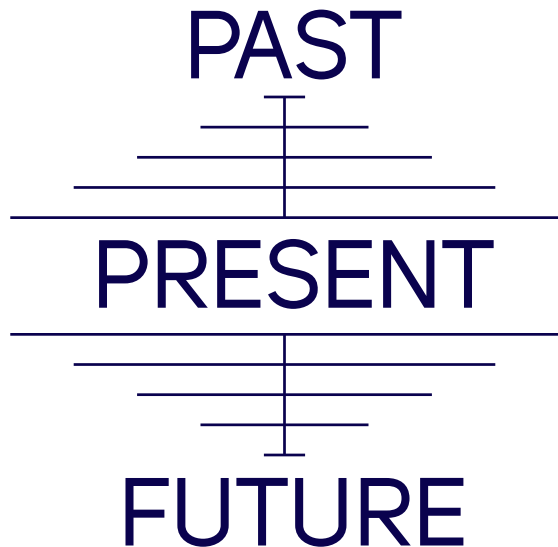
PREPARE

LOOK BACK TO LOOK FORWARD

Imagining a future that is very different from today can often be a struggle, especially when faced with today's constraints. But still, change happens—and it can happen faster than we expect. Looking into the past, we can see how large drivers of change came together to create unexpected futures. And many of the drivers are still active today.



IFTF FORESIGHT TOOLKIT



- **Get** the historical context you need to think about the future.
- **Build** a common perspective on important past events and moments when change happened.
- **Find** potential patterns of change, and explore how they may continue to shape the future.
- **Create** group awareness that major change has happened in the past, and will happen in the future.

HOW IT WORKS



PREPARE

- ▶ **Determine a topic** to consider for historical context. You may want to pull directly from Frame Future Conversations (1.6). You may choose a geography like Scotland, or a topic like the internet, higher education, or the contingent workforce. You might choose your own company or team.
- ▶ Determine an **appropriate timescale** and write it on a large paper chart posted on a wall. Your time scale should be long enough to reveal large historical changes. This can be anywhere from 20 to (rarely!) 4,000 years. Go back at least twice as far as you want to look forward.
- ▶ Give participants 5–10 minutes to **write down at least one specific moment when change happened—an event, a new law, a new discovery or innovation**—on sticky notes; have them place notes on the timeline chart. Come prepared with a few moments of change in case the group needs some examples.
- ▶ As a group, discuss the most significant disruptions and implications that arise from individual moments of change. You can also review things that have persisted over time, like values or needs.
- ▶ Discuss the future you see emerging as you extrapolate past changes forward. What large takeaways can be synthesized as you try to build momentum toward future change and innovation?

TIME: 60 minutes

PEOPLE: two or more

MATERIALS: six feet or more of paper with timeline drawn on, sticky notes, pens, wall tape

WHAT TO PREPARE:

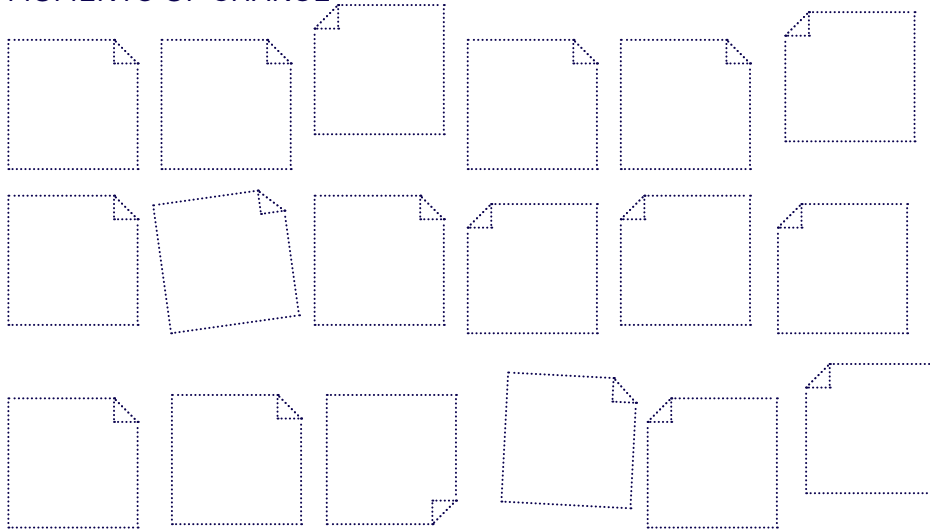
Some historical background reading on the topic you've chosen. If you are looking inward, start with an interview with someone who's been with the group a long time.



LOOK BACK TO LOOK FORWARD

TOPIC _____

MOMENTS OF CHANGE



PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE



INSIGHTS TO EXPLORE:

- ▶ How quickly did things change after each moment?
- ▶ What additional domains did the moment of change affect, other than where it started?
- ▶ How do we still experience the effect of each moment today?

TIPS AND VARIATIONS



PREPARE

- ▶ If you are focusing on a team, community, or organization, give veterans a chance to pass on the history.
- ▶ Color-code the moments of change based on level of impact (low, medium, high) or domain (technological, environmental, political, economic, social, religious, etc.).
- ▶ Streamline the process by starting with the present and working backwards. What disruptions created today's status quo?
- ▶ Run as a workshop exercise to prepare participants to think about the future.
- ▶ Run as an extensive research process mapping out past and present changes within a domain, company, or community.

AMARA'S LAW

Amara's Law is well-known in the futures world, and comes from Roy Amara, past president of the Institute for the Future. Amara's Law states: "We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run." Paying attention to historical rhythms helps us grasp the long-term consequences of moments of change.

Congratulations!

You've just mastered one of the **Institute for the Future's** tools to Prepare. Here's a sneak preview of five more!

You can get advanced training in all of our tools, and be certified as a foresight practitioner, in IFTF's 3-day intensive foresight training.

For more information, visit iftf.org/foresight-training or contact: **Lyn Jeffery** | ljeffery@iftf.org









PREPARE

SIX TOOLS TO PREPARE

This section will help you prepare yourself and your team to think systematically about possible futures.

"The future cannot help you unless you are willing to listen through the confusion. You cannot learn from the future if you are overwhelmed by the present or stuck in the past."

BOB JOHANSEN,
IFTF DISTINGUISHED FELLOW

TOOL	USE	OUTPUT
 Orient to the Future	Get a group of people into a futures mindset by physically orienting your bodies to future possibilities	A clear sense of different participants' attitudes and assumptions about the future
 Find Future Me	Build empathy for the future	A first-person view of the future.
 Look Back to Look Forward	Bring historical context to your foresight	A timeline looking at least twice as far back as you are looking forward, with a sense of how change cycles and builds
 Identify Drivers of Change	Frame foresight research in the context of many kinds of change—social and technological, economic and environmental, political and cultural	A set of drivers you can use to guide signal gathering and analysis
 Catalogue Signals of Change	Collect evidence of possible futures, today	Collection of signals that can be used to draft forecasts and add specificity to scenarios
 Frame Futures Conversations	Develop a framework for defining your futures topic	A clear and compelling futures topic

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE

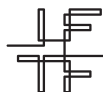
Institute for the Future is the world's leading futures thinking organization. For over 50 years, businesses, governments, and social impact organizations have depended upon IFTF global forecasts, custom research, and foresight training to navigate complex change and develop world-ready strategies. IFTF methodologies and toolsets yield coherent views of transformative possibilities across all sectors that together support a more sustainable future. Institute for the Future is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Palo Alto, California. For more, visit www.iftf.org.

OWNERSHIP & USAGE GUIDELINES

As a research and educational organization, IFTF's mission is to build more foresight capacity in the world by providing tools and resources to help people better anticipate the future to make decisions in the present. To this end the IFTF Foresight Studio Toolkit and Templates are held under an IFTF copyright and licensed under the Creative Commons 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). If you are a certified IFTF Foresight Practitioner, we encourage the reproduction and use of these tools within your organization(s) and in your own practice of foresight education for any non-commercial, attribution-only, non-derivative use.

For more information about using these tools or how to bring a Foresight Workshop to your organization with customized content, please contact:

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