

I was often greeted with a few gasps of wonder and a cacophony of derision and dismissal. I think I've been tagged with every label from “*idiot*” to “*rubbish*” to “*gibberish*” to “*unrealistic*”. The most vociferous insults came from the world of established vendors, enterprises, analysts and strategy consultants who had oodles of inertia to such changes. Fortunately, the gasps of wonder were enough to pick up some advisory work and keep booking a few gigs.

I need to be clear. I don't have mystical powers of anticipation, a time machine, some great intellect or a crystal ball. In fact, I'm a lousy prognosticator and a very normal sort of person. My “predictions” were all sleight of hand. What I'm good at is taking pre-existing patterns that are in the wild and repeating them back to everyone. It's more of the “*I predict that the ball you've thrown in the air will fall to the ground*” or the “*I predict the general currently ordering troops to ‘walk off the cliff’ will lose the battle*” kind. A basic understanding of the landscape and climatic patterns can be used to remarkable effect with an audience of executives that lacks this. To begin our journey into anticipation we're going to have to start with areas of predictability.

Not all parts of the map are equally predictable

When we talk about the uncharted space, we're discussing things which we really don't understand. I'm often tempted to write “*Ere be Dragons*”. This area is inherently uncertain and risky but at the same time it contains sources of future value and difference. As any component evolves over an *unspecified* amount of time (evolution can't be measured over time directly) then it becomes more defined,