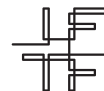




IFTF FORESIGHT TOOLKIT

Practical tools
for foresight, insight,
and action



INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE



FORESIGHT TOOLKIT

FORESIGHT

Foresight is the process of turning facts about the present into plausible, provocative, and logical views of the future. Foresight is a practice that encompasses creative thinking about future possibilities and systematic analysis of patterns that affect change. Foresight tools help us sense change and communicate vision.



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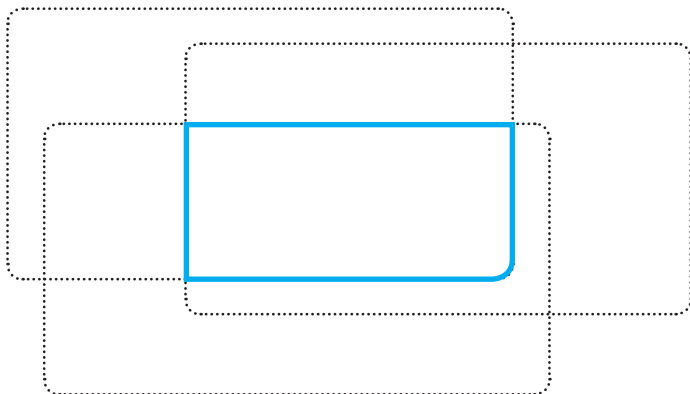
FORESIGHT

REVEAL UNEXPECTED POSSIBILITIES

The unexpected is often hidden in plain sight—if only we can look past our assumptions and biases. Juxtaposition and combination help us to create new lenses for identifying possibilities outside those assumptions.



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WHY THIS TOOL?

- ▶ **Discover** non-obvious connections across multiple domains of change.
- ▶ **Explore** the power of combinatorial innovation, distilling the essential shifts embedded in signals and mashing them together.
- ▶ **Prime** a group for lively, creative thinking.

HOW IT WORKS



FORESIGHT

- ▶ In small groups, **randomly select three signals**. For maximum impact, chose signals that at first seem unrelated.
- ▶ **Drill deep into the “so what” of each signal**. Is there a core technology interaction a signal suggests, such as *just-in-time learning*? Is there a novel audience a signal illustrates, such as *people in a shared virtual reality space*? How do these essential glimpses of the future combine with each other?
- ▶ **Imagine encountering all three elements** in a single, surprising experience in the future. Write a short description of this in the “new possibility” section in the center of the template.
- ▶ Repeat this process with a new set of signals. After a few more rounds, **share your possibilities**.

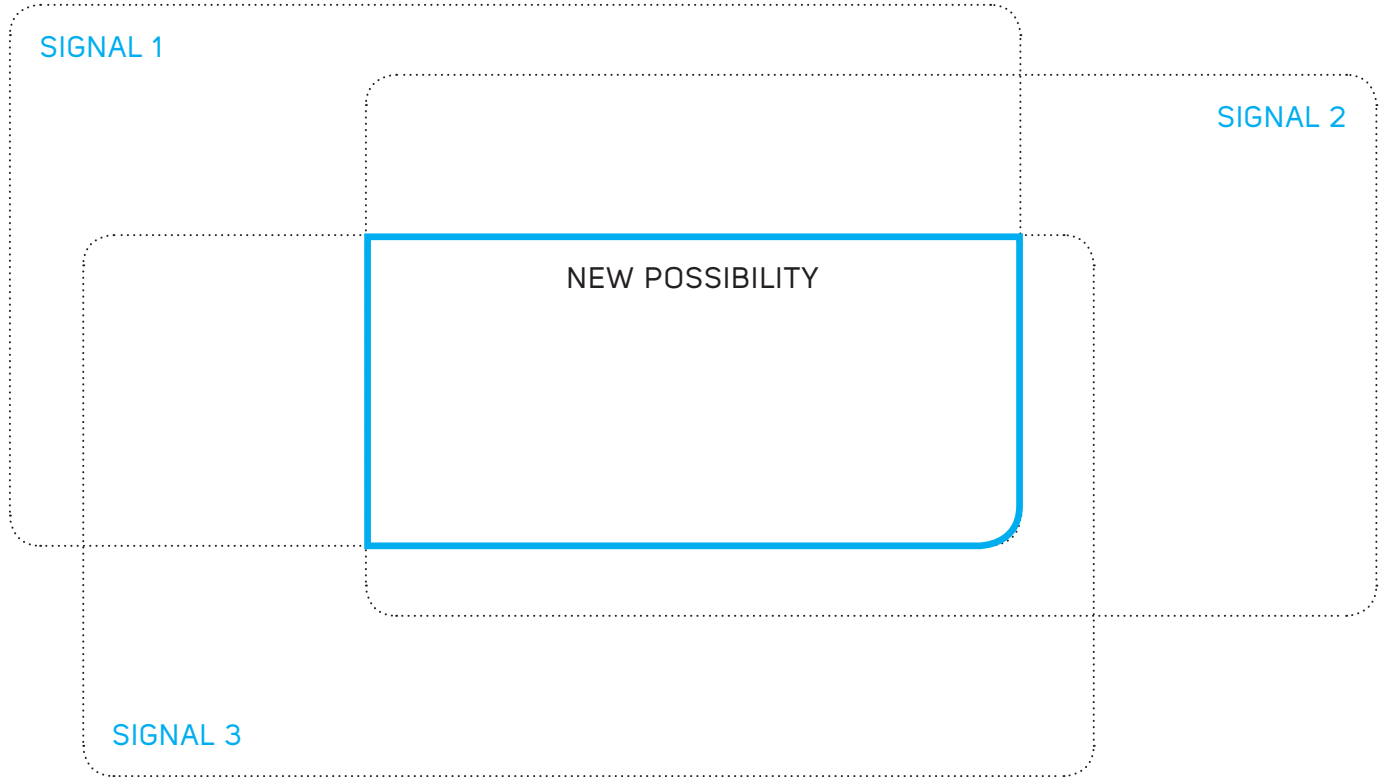
TIME: 30 minutes

PEOPLE: group or individual

MATERIALS: several templates per group, pens

WHAT TO PREPARE:
Catalogue Signals of Change

REVEAL UNEXPECTED POSSIBILITIES





- ▶ Use this tool as a rapid fire creativity burst before engaging in a design thinking or product development process.
- ▶ Repeat this activity with different signals. The more times you go through the exercise with different inputs, the more robust your vision of the future will be.
- ▶ Be as specific as you can when developing your new possibility. More specificity helps the future come alive and feel distinct.

THE FUTURE'S BUILDING BLOCKS

Forecasting the future is often about stacking up seemingly unrelated signals to create something entirely new. Think of each signal as a building block for the future and each innovation as one set of possible future experiences. Signals, like building blocks, can be reconfigured in any number of ways to create different objects and storylines.

Congratulations!

You've just mastered one of the **Institute for the Future's** Foresight tools. Here's a sneak preview of six 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:

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FORESIGHT

SEVEN TOOLS FOR FORECASTING THE FUTURE

This section will help you
sense change and envision
future possibilities.

"The past cannot be changed,
the future is yet in
your power."

MARY PICKFORD

TOOL	USE	OUTPUT
 Draft a Forecast	Develop proto-forecasts using signals and drivers	A proto-forecast with a clear title and description
 Reveal Unexpected Possibilities	Unstick yourself from familiar stories and assumptions	New possibilities found within patterns of unrelated signals
 Draw Out Consequences	Develop a clear sense of implications of particular scenarios	Wheels of cause-and-effect that reveal patterns and long-term futures
 Envision Alternative Futures	Ensure your foresight accounts for the wild variation that history demonstrates is feasible	Alternative futures scenarios describing a range of possibilities
 Headline the Future	Bring foresight to life with pithy and shareable statements	A collection of snappy blurbs about what the future may look like
 Personalize the Future	Align foresight with new audiences, existing consumer profiles, or everyday people	Personas of future stakeholders and stories about how the future affects them
 Create Artifacts from the Future	Move toward designing new products and experiences, or simply create a striking visual representation of a future	Images or prototypes of scenes, objects, and situations that may arise in the future

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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