We face a decade of the impossible. We stand eye-to-eye with challenges that seem unimaginable even as we face them. Global warming. Human population collapse. Widespread economic failure. We respond with untested solutions on scales we have never before attempted: molecular-scale manufacturing, massive data tracking and analysis, reengineering of the human mind and body.

Each of these responses is a hypothesis about the future, and in this era of impossible challenges and unprecedented experiments, the 2014 Ten-Year Forecast embarks on an “inventive search for new hypotheses.”

For nearly four decades, the Ten-Year Forecast has been a leading source of foresight for a vanguard of business, government, and nonprofit organizations. It is a platform for sensing today’s latent signals, tracking their intersections to understand the ecosystem of choices, and then designing platforms for future resilience.

› SIGNAL SPOTTING: Tap the wisdom of many to recognize coming big shifts from small signals. The Ten-Year Forecast systematically scans the horizon for outlier events and ideas that portend something greater. It uses cutting-edge tools and strategies to decipher these signals, plot them on a map, and make sense out of them.

› ECOSYSTEMS THINKING: The world is too complex to base survival strategies on one or two or even a dozen key indicators. The Ten-Year Forecast tunes the mind to see systems, discern patterns, and envision the whole. From complex scenarios to immersive experiences, it produces the kind of multi-dimensional vision you must have to make the future you want.

› SUPERSTRUCTING: The makers of the future are ecosystem designers. They understand the webs that direct the flows of energy, wealth, resources, and ideas. They are masters of interdependence. They are designers of nodes and links and all the tools that connect them. In a word, they are superstructers—and the Ten-Year Forecast is all about superstructing.
2014 RESEARCH AGENDA

The 2014 Ten-Year Forecast finds the world in an era of rapid evolution at the scale of entire ecosystems. We now know that species can evolve in a matter of a few generations, often “pretesting” apparently dysfunctional adaptations—only to discover that future conditions demand just this adaptation. This is what complexity theorist Stuart Kaufman calls the “inventive search for new hypotheses.” Every project we undertake is a hypothesis about the future.

Our 2014 program will target such landmark hypotheses. Specifically, we will seek to describe ten possible projects that, if they succeed, could change paradigms in the next decade.

*For example*, what if microbial pioneers were to undertake a project today to create the equivalent of a Google map for bacterial flows around the world? With such a map, we might be able to zoom in on the tiniest microbe and zoom out to see individual human organs, and then zoom out further still to see actual flows across human populations that host these microbes and even the flows of bacterial exchanges—the economies of microbes—in water, air, and biofilms worldwide.

How would these maps change the way we design, manage, and monitor our households? How would they shape our food strategies and our health care? Would they tell us when and where it’s safe for us to drive or fly? Would they guide us in forecasting weather or even economic peaks and valleys? Would they connect us as human individuals in new patterns of microbial diasporas?

This year, the Ten-Year Forecast team is on a quest to anticipate these kinds of landscape-changing projects—these hypotheses—and then to look for signals that they are already underway. We’ll track down the visionaries, the experts at the very edges of the territory, to discover what they believe is possible in the next ten years. We’ll apply our own timelines of change, recognizing that in an era of rapid transformation, time sometimes folds back on itself to create seemingly impossible realities.

Our goal will be to visualize—indeed to experience—a world completely transformed within a decade.

---

The Ten-Year Forecast is about rewiring your mind, your organization, and your world for the long term, giving you the tools you need to make the future you want, today.
TEN PROJECTS, TEN HYPOTHESES
The 10YF team will formulate 10 landscape-changing hypotheses about the evolution of diverse human ecosystems over the next decade. For each of these hypotheses, we will:

› MAP the defining projects that could serve as paradigm-shifting pre-adaptations
› GATHER the signals that suggest these projects are already underway in some form
› IDENTIFY the practical visionaries who are already at work in each ecosystem
› CAPTURE the essence of the paradigm shift that will occur within the decade
› DESCRIBE the specific impacts of that paradigm shift on today’s individuals, households, communities, industries, and global diasporas

The result will be 10 print portfolios of change, accompanied by digital visualizations for each.

2014 MAP OF THE DECADE
Each year, the 10YF program produces a map of the decade: a framework for visualizing the interplay of trends, signals, and emerging transformations. This year, the map will be reinvented as an innovative design tool to visualize systems and design them to amplify and interconnect strategies, stories, and signals that will help us, as humans, make sense of the next decade and, indeed, the coming century. This design tool will be offered in both print and web formats.

10YF ANNUAL RETREAT
The annual retreat will be held May 1–2, 2014 in the San Francisco Bay area. It will bring the ten transformational hypotheses to life with videos, practical visionaries who are already at work on pieces of the world-changing projects, and personal narratives of impacts of those projects. It will tune up our capacity to lead an inventive search for new hypotheses, with practical tools for integrating those hypotheses into the present.

WHAT IF WE COULD...?
› SIMULATE everything
› CREATE a universal description language for object design
› REINVENT the internet for secure communication
› MIMIC multisensory co-presence
› SET global autonomous vehicle standards
› BUILD an entire city from the molecule up
› END THE NEED for prisons
› LAUNCH a “pay-it-forward” economy
› DESIGN a posthuman mind

THESE ARE THE KINDS OF PROJECTS WE’LL SCOUR THE DECADE FOR.

2014 DELIVERABLES OVERVIEW
ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE

The Institute for the Future is an independent, nonprofit strategic research group celebrating more than 45 years of forecasting experience. The core of our work is identifying emerging trends and discontinuities that will transform global society and the global marketplace. We engage our members with insights into business strategy, design process, innovation, and social dilemmas. Our research generates the foresight needed to create insights that lead to action. Our research spans a broad territory of deeply transformative trends, from health and health care to technology, the workplace, and human identity. The Institute for the Future is based in Palo Alto, CA.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS (PARTIAL LIST)

| AB InBev | Cox Enterprises | KnowledgeWorks Foundation | RTI International |
| AT&T | Deere & Company | Lowe's Companies | Scripps Networks Interactive |
| AXA Group | Del Monte Foods | Microsoft | SRG SSR |
| BBVA | Fairmont Hotels | Mitsubishi Corporation (Americas) | Tesco Stores Limited |
| Beam Global | Fidelity Investments | NBTY | The Hershey Company |
| Beijing Hualian Hypermarket Limited | General Motors | PepsiCo | Toyota |
| Belcorp | Hallmark Cards Inc. | Qualcomm Incorporated | UPS |
| Chrysler | IDA Singapore | Renault | Zumiez |

Cover images: Flickr users: kakhun wart, Ars Electronica, Engineering at Cambridge (photo by Philip Hands)