

Editors' Introduction

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In approaching this Special Issue on Foresight, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (FI&E) we considered that globalisation and rapid modernisation were increasingly creating the need for social reflexivity. We thought that in respect to the production and diffusion of innovations, both social and technical, that the landscape for new enterprise was characterised by widening change horizons and deeper ethical concerns. As a consequence of the greater demand for innovation to achieve economic prosperity, it was conceived that 'unforesightful' innovation may have irreparable affects on social and ecological systems and uncertain implications for our futures. Therefore, we considered a new intellectual alliance between FI&E was potentially a matter of human survival. New approaches to thinking about how and what we innovate, the choices we face for new enterprise creation and the influence of infrastructure for generating entrepreneurship, we considered, would need to emerge if we are to positively impact human and planetary sustainability in the 21st century. Hence this special issue was designed to bring together cross-disciplinary research aimed at exploring the synergies between foresight, innovation and entrepreneurship and the way in which these connections may be taking place in both the practical and theoretical sense.

The 'Call for Papers' sought both conceptual and applied works to represent both the academic and practitioner's viewpoints. Interestingly, in this Special Issue, Joseph Voros, in "Towards an 'integral' view of entrepreneurship", reports on a literature review scanning methodology that adopted key word searches of three major databases to explore the nexus between foresight and entrepreneurship. His conclusion, although acknowledging limitations, is that research that draws connections between foresight and entrepreneurship is still a "greenfield". However, while this may be the case from the perspective of academic works, the number of applied articles and essays responding to our "Call for Papers" indicates that the practice of FI&E is not a foreign concept. Indeed, in economics, Schumpeter (1961[1934]) was writing about the foresight of entrepreneurs as early as 1911, while van Praag (1999) claimed that Cantillon considered that alertness and foresight were two elements in successful entrepreneurship way back in the mid 1800's. It is interesting that it appears the academic world has not yet fully engaged with the what, why and how questions that are raised when one considers the intersections between FI&E; yet the applied world is grappling with these issues in the day to day, but receiving little support from the academic fraternity.

The applied articles also display a diversity of approaches that stretch between the micro through to the macro application of FI&E practices. For instance van der Duin and Hartman contributed a research article titled "Young dreamers: An explorative study on how techno-starters look at the future". Their article found that when a large amount of money is involved through external financing, young techno-starters seem to be more inclined to look at the future. This suggests that the need for disciplined foresight increases in accordance with the financial risk associated with technology start-up firms. This micro-level scenario contrasts with Kunstler and Tita Tita who submitted an interesting work entitled "State Foresight, Innovation and Entrepreneurship: The Case of Economic Development, E-Learning and Outsourcing Industry in Uganda", that addresses issues around state level foresight, innovation and entrepreneurship in Uganda. Their article explores the environments within which potential is unlocked between meta-systems and isolated emergent systems through the case study of economic development confronted by the Ugandan government. The case of developing education and e-learning systems that impact upon Uganda's economic development in the long term illustrates how foresight, innovation and entrepreneurship connect when directed toward achieving practical outcomes. Hence we find FI&E at work at multiple levels from isolated micro circumstances through to macro broad sweeping initiatives.

This special issue shows diversity in terms of foresight's application in enterprise whereby self aware and reflective actors bring about foresight in a socially networked environment that contrasts with deliberate intervention through tools and techniques to produce foresightful innovation and new enterprise. The unplanned and unsystematic approach to foresight within enterprise exposed is resonant with the arguments raised by Giovanni Braidotti who's article "Innovating responses to crisis: exploring the principle of non-action as a foresight tool", explores the nature and value of taking non-action for those individuals and organisations working to make-change in the name of alleviating social and environmental crises. Braidotti's article suggests that a post-conventional view of non-action in the face of crisis is indeed an innovative response in a world that tends to compound problems with ever increasing cycles of actions that may have motivations grounded in politics and self-preservation rather than providing sustainable solutions.

Jim Falk's article "Transitioning to new technologies: challenges and choices in a changing world", reminds us of the challenges and choices encountered in the transitioning toward new technologies. His paper asks such questions as: how will new technologies affect the way we work, do business, and understand our place in the region and world? How can technologies be used to assist in addressing national and global challenges? What can we do to harness them? And what are the social, political and business implications of doing so? In effect, Falk's questioning style alerts us to the challenges we face as local, national, regional and global communities and urges us to act in positive ways to face these challenges and choices that emerging new technologies present.

The multiple practices of FI&E are equally matched by a broad range of conceptual thinking in the subject area. Bengt-Arne Vedin, in his essay "What future conceptual and social innovations?", typifies this perception. Vedin's arguments follow

the line of non-action and self-organisation by agreeing with a breadth of engagement with the issues of FI&E by making knowledge more widely available to help overcome false intuitions, reduce privilege, and create a more level playing field. Vedin's concept of the relationship between foresight and innovation is grounded in the actors who are responsible for action rather than a discipline based narrative and trained practitioners. This suggests that the actors, exposed to open knowledge frameworks through advances in communication technologies, will create futures laden with innovation at the cultural and social levels affecting our economic lives and the very fabric of our work places and means of social interaction.

Erzesebet Novaky in "Responsibility for the future" extends these notions in her paper by suggesting that the responsibility for the future is distributed rather than being the domain of the disciplined based futurist. She suggests that the futurist is a collective rather than an individual and as such the collective carries the responsibility for mapping, communicating and implementing futures and having changes accepted in the broader community. With collective responsibility come concerns about reflexively dealing with innovations in a complex world and Barbara Bok, in her article "Experiential Foresight: Participative Simulation enables Social Reflexivity in a Complex World", proposes a review and re-conception of the notion of simulation and suggests that this modeling device might be recast in the notions of realism rather than positivism. This, she suggests, will enable a greater perspective on the potential synergy effects of social innovation – offering a clearer view about how an innovation will transform the society we live in. But what if a collective, be it from government, business or civil society, is too caught in the day to day to consciously accept or incorporate explicit foresight practices or futures as a discipline? This problems is explored by Tom Graves, where in his essay "Stealth Foresight For Innovation" he argues that in situations where an organisation is resistant to long term thinking, foresight practices need to be subtly drawn into the corporate and organisational world via 'stealth techniques' in an attempt to support innovation and intrapreneurship (or entrepreneurship inside the corporate walls).

Perhaps somewhat missing in this Special Issue is any particular focus on the specific challenges of enterprise and entrepreneurship with respect to the link with foresight and innovation. Interestingly, the 'Call for Papers' was originally aligned with the Entrepreneurship Research Exchange conducted by the Australian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship; yet the papers we received for consideration, while being good works in their own right, were not centred upon the issues germane to this area of research. It seems that the entrepreneurship research agenda may not as yet embraced the importance or challenges within these linkages or clearly been able to pin-point a focus area of study within this context. The papers enclosed in this issue tend to focus more on the foresight and innovation end of the spectrum with only some exceptions concerned with new venture and entrepreneurship.

The opportunities that extend from this body of work seem to point to research that is appreciative of multiple paradigmatic views and able to transcend disciplinary boundaries, and practices that accept emergence. A constant struggle we encountered as guest editors was gaining perspectives that were able to tap into the issues that fall across the divergent perspectives encountered between FI&E. We ask ourselves now

whether it was worth it and undeniably our response is yes. The thinking presented in this special issue is consistent with the challenges and the complexity posed by our world. We note the strength and agility by which these authors are able to break down barriers and disciplinary silos and we feel that it is only in this way a more responsible and wiser future will be created and enacted. We wish to thank our contributors and the Journal of Futures Studies for indulging us in our passion and allowing us to explore a new generation of integrative and inspirational research.

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