

Welcome to the 2019 Andthen Retrospective — every year we're making a habit of looking back at our achievements, the questions we've been asking and the themes we've been exploring, and capturing them in an end of year publication.

This year, we've had the privilege of working with some great organisations in fields like finance, education, urban planning, and construction, on projects that have pushed our own practice, and our understanding of the role design and futures can play in ambitious innovation. We've also been around the world to share our work and learn about the role of futures in different contexts, from corporates to governments to school classrooms.

This year, we've been thinking a good deal about how to build collaboration into the futures process, and how we might create space for an approach that previously hasn't been very participatory to involve a more diverse range of voices.

In this publication, we unpack some of our these thoughts, while giving an overview of some of the work we've been doing, and some of the work of others which has been on our radar.

But before we get to that, I want to thank all our past and present colleagues, associates, collaborators and friends who have helped us this year — I deeply appreciate all of your energy and support, and look forward to what comes next.

Happy reading,
Santini Basra
Founder, Andthen



I once heard someone (I forget who) describe a business simply as 'a group of people working together to achieve something.' While I don't know if every business fits into that definition, I quite like the simplicity of it, and it started to make me think about what exactly our 'something' is that we are working to achieve here at Andthen.

Every year we have a retreat where the team and our associates hole up somewhere remote and think about the future of our company. One of the things we've been working on in the last couple of retreats is to define our mission and get a better sense of our organisation's point of view, or our 'beliefs.'

We respect that we're quite a young company and that as time goes on these might evolve or mature, but for the time being this is how we're thinking about our organisation's mission and beliefs:

OUR MISSION

We want to empower people, communities & organisations to think and act as if the long-term mattered as much as today.

There are plenty of reasons why we believe in this mission, but I've outlined four of the main ones below.

Empowerment

Thinking about the future, on a big or small scale, helps you realise that there are multiple possible futures — that there isn't just one inevitable destination, and that the direction of change is made up through the actions and behaviour of every entity in this system we're a part of. Through thinking about change in this way, you realise that everyone has some agency to change the future (even if it is just in a small way) — the future isn't something that just happens to you. Everyone can help to shape the future. We call this 'Futures Reflexivity' — whereby the simple act of imagining a future impacts that future's ability to come into being.

Sustainable Innovation

As argued by Doteveryone, "many of the social harms of digital technologies built with a move fast and break things ethos—from its impact on social interactions to the results of national elections and large scale hacks—are now becoming apparent." Short-termist attitudes to innovation can often lead to wide-reaching unintended consequences further down the line that can be hard to unpick post-facto. While we respect the need to test assumptions early and fail fast, we feel that this over-emphasis on short term results can lead to the equivalent of running forward with blinkers on, unaware of potential hazards ahead. Thinking about your impact in the long term not only provides scope to make more socially conscious choices but also to build sustainable relationships with your customers or communities over time.

Confronting the System

The act of meaningfully thinking about your, or your organisation's existence over a longer time period encourages you to confront the wider system you operate in. Often it can be easy to see yourself as an isolated entity, while in fact, everything is part of a complex and interrelated system. By considering this wider system it becomes easier to see the organisations, communities and entities that will be affected by the consequences of your innovation choices.

Balancing efficiency innovation

We keep coming back to this take on efficiency innovation in an RSA paper, "According to Clayton Christensen, there is a rising focus on 'efficiency innovations' — where innovation leads to process improvements that save costs — and there is insufficient investment in the 'empowering' market-creating innovations that lead to new technology or service breakthroughs that progress society." This is why we focus on the messy front end of innovation — as we want to fight for better breakthrough innovations that have positive impacts by creating clarity at this stage of the decision-making process.

OUR BELIEFS

Alongside building out our mission, we realised that as an organisation we have a collective way of understanding the world. This informs our mission and motivates every action we take as an organisation. We summarise this point of view as a set of 'beliefs' which are outlined below:

We believe that long term thinking benefits everyone

We think that long-term thinking is good for all of us — no matter the scale of the organisation or action. When talking about this, it's important to recognise how privilege plays a role in looking forward — some individuals and organisations will comfortably be able to think decades ahead, while others will struggle to justify thinking a week ahead. However all actions, regardless of circumstance, have long term impact in some way — therefore it's important to think about the long term, whatever 'long term' means to you.

We believe that anticipating the future helps us make better decisions now

We feel that the act of looking forward is primarily not about thinking about the actions you might take in the future, but is first and foremost about the decisions you are making and actions you are taking now. The idea here is that the future is something you can create — anticipating the future gives you a greater ability to create the change you want to see. Douglas Rushkoff has a great rant about his frustrations on this matter in his talk on '[Why Futurists Suck](#)'.

We believe that everything is interconnected, and that change is non-linear

Due to the way innovation challenges are often approached, it's easy to forget about the broad and complex systems that they are a part of. Instead, we often focus on seemingly isolated elements (people, things, behaviours etc.) which are most apparent in the challenges we're working on. We also fail to realise that many of the thorny challenges we're addressing these days aren't fixed in a particular moment in time — they rarely only exist in the 'now.'

Similarly, it can be easy to oversimplify change and see it as linear. At first glance, history appears to take the shape of a straight line, and so we assume that the future, or change, will unfold in a linear fashion too.

As we hold a systems-centric mindset and believe in non-linear change, we advocate for a futures practice that focuses on anticipating change, rather than attempting to predict it.

We believe that innovation should be regenerative, not disruptive

We think that 'disruption' isn't the right metaphor for innovation, and we don't buy into the techno-utopianist, move fast and break things, unicorn philosophy that goes hand in hand with the idea that 'innovation = disruption.' We're not interested in breaking things, we're interested in regeneration, and collectively building towards preferred outcomes. The Zebras Unite movement have put it better than we ever could in their article '[Zebras Fix What Unicorns Break](#)'.

TO CONCLUDE

Defining this mission and these beliefs came through dedicating a significant amount of time and space for self-reflection, something we aim to continue to do. What has been laid out here is far from complete, and we expect it to evolve with Andthen.

We also recognise that defining and articulating our mission and beliefs is just the first step — we need to find ways to build them into our everyday and 'way of being' as a company. So far we've been trying to do this by making sure we're working on the right kind of projects and creating avenues for more kinds of organisations to access futures thinking, while also contributing to conversations about futures, although we're always looking for more ways to do more, and would be more than happy to hear what you think.

— By Santini Basra



De-Privileging the Future

Why thinking about the future
has been an act of privilege,
and what to do about it now.

— By Zoe Prosser

Futures thinking is the practice of thinking about the future in a structured way, and the methods and approaches that are used to do so. As a formal discipline, it is around a century old and has evolved during this time. Right now however, it is experiencing a transition: moving away from its traditional roots in academia, big business, consulting, and government foresight, towards a more participatory practice. But why is this important and what can we do to encourage this democratisation of thinking about the future?

Traditionally, Futures Studies (or Futurology) described the professional practice of studying past and present socio-economic patterns to anticipate the future. This activity was valuable to organisations and governments that were concerned with making their mark on the future by taking risks and making large investments — unfortunately however, these investments often sought to fulfil the ideologies of powerful organisations with little consideration for the affected societies.

Here are some historical examples, some of which not commonly referenced:

— In the 1930s, the Nazi Party used future visioning methods to sell their long-term fascist ideology as the short-term Volksgemeinschaft utopia (“the people’s community”), of unity across class divides. The German people’s support for a socialist transformation was then strategically manipulated to support the extreme racial vision of the Party leaders.

— Following the second world war, the RAND corporation used principles from Futures Studies to build long-term strategies for weapons development, initially to prevent catastrophic atomic war but also in support of smaller-scale, longer-term intercontinental warfare.

— And in post-Stalin Soviet Russia, Futures approaches were used by some leaders to propose plans to transform natural ecological systems, such as draining the Mediterranean sea and redirecting the Gulf stream to alter climates in the far East.

Looking back further, we can see futures thinking methods within transformative philosophy and fiction, with classic influencers from Plato to H.G. Wells using illustrations of alternative futures to propose social prophecies through visions of dystopia and utopia.

These examples of futures methods have a few things in common:

— They all exist within sectors of power and wealth: deployed by those that influence governance, national planning, and global relations. Future illustrations, or socio-economic ‘blueprints’ in these contexts, were both designed by and for those in positions of power.

— The people they consider to be futurists are male, extremely authoritative, and urban-centric (there are of course rare exceptions from this era, such as Ayn Rand).

— The futures they illustrate reflect only the views of the illustrators. As such, future visions rarely include the perspectives of the public, let alone marginalised groups, and rather reflect the interests of a few large organisations or influential individuals.

Admittedly, I have chosen instances from the extreme edge of the practice's history to make these points. Yet still, modern examples of organisations that can afford to invest in futures thinking are typically at the cutting edge of new technologies, or are incumbents intent on protecting themselves against disruption. While they use futures thinking to guide the development of new products and services that might ultimately shape the lives of their audiences, they remain tied to a capitalist system and therefore the perpetual success of their own business. As such, their objectives remain internal; the futures they create are designed by individuals who share the organisation's priority for commercial success, i.e. profit...

The problem with this situation, is that when conversations about the future are driven predominantly by those people and organisations that already hold the majority of power, then proposed future visions continue to consist of only their perspectives, values, and ambitions. As Rose Eveleth explains in her article 'Why aren't there more Women Futurists?', the lack of representation from marginalised groups within futures thinking leads to the creation of futures that don't suit their needs. Regrettably, for some large organisations this results in 'cutting-edge' technologies that fall short, such as Apple's 'empowering' health app that forgot to consider menstrual tracking. Of course this is not just a problem for women... all marginalised and diverse voices must have a place in our thinking about the future, that is if we want to create futures that de-marginalise.

Thankfully, human-centredness in design has become more commercially viable; increasingly popularised by large design companies who seek to educate their clients on the importance of corporate responsibility, social impact, and customer needs. And in recent years, designers have started to assimilate futures thinking into these emerging human-centred and participatory approaches. They do not concern themselves with predictions of the future, but rather seek to collaboratively explore various future possibilities. There is a methodology that questions the ways we should live in society and how we might shape the future to better suit diverse human needs, in order to inform the decisions that we make now.

The needs of people are brought into these future explorations not only through consideration, but by inviting real participants into the process. Commonly, this takes the form of workshops, research events, and interactive exhibitions. So, no longer does futures thinking need to take place in isolation, driven by the "experts"; public audiences are beginning to participate in the creation of future possibilities.

Examples of these approaches however, remain few and far between; quietly pioneered by boutique design and strategy consultancies and in-house innovation teams. This new move towards de-privileging the future isn't taking off as fast as it could be. Its scope is narrow. Public sector innovation foundation, Nesta, confirms that this kind of meaningful participation is expensive and time-consuming. Participation is not always valued as it should be and practitioners often lack the know-how to facilitate participatory engagements. So how do we overcome these challenges?

One step towards de-privileging the exploration and creation of new futures might be to diversify the scales and shapes of organisations that have access to futures thinking. This may seem like a momentous task, and surely it is, but there are some small acts that we can do now to ensure we are stepping in the right direction. Here are some thoughts on how this might be done (by designers, futures thinkers, and hopefully organisations).

Futures Thinking as a Mindset, not a Method

Build a futures thinking mindset into our psyche. Instead of using futures thinking as a method to be deployed during design and innovation processes, embed it as a mindset into the ways that we work. At all stages of our creative processes, consider alternative possibilities and their consequences. If you are interested in delving deeper into the details and principles of how to implement this, see supporting articles on our journal by myself and Santini Basra, and Will Brown.

Open and Flexible Processes

Don't just focus on the delivery of projects and outputs — invite collaborators and non-futures thinkers/designers into your process. Build in some time for knowledge exchange and try to leave behind new skills by sharing your methods. This not only encourages a futures-oriented mindset within your client organisations, but it opens the door to more experimental and collaborative projects with them. Present 'futures' as a verb, an activity that we can all take part in; rather than a noun, a classification of practice that only experts can claim.

Participatory Futures Thinking

Beyond our collaborators, let's bring in the "user" — I don't particularly like this word, but it has become a universal term to describe the people who we design for and with (and let's not forget our future/potential "users": those who haven't yet come into contact with the systems, services, and products that might be of benefit to them in the future).

When we do explore various future possibilities, remember to consider marginalised groups and the individuals that we don't regularly interact with. Or better still, host diverse research activities (workshops, interviews, and discussion groups) during the process to invite as many voices as possible into future-making. Let them meet each other too, and support the sharing of perspectives. Participatory futures thinking has already entered public sector debates, with some investigating its potential role within national models of democracy and planning — can it be used as a new tool for Government innovation?

Translate Futures into Common Language

Remove exclusivity from the future possibilities we discuss by avoiding consultancy-speak and academic language. Work towards accessible tools and concepts too. For example, the popular futures method 'causal layered analysis' uses terms such as 'litany', 'structure', and 'discourse'. But we can transform this method into a participatory activity by replacing such terms with direct questions, like 'what's happening in the news right now?' and 'where has this value come from?' Essentially, we can make it easier for our collaborators and participants to get involved in the futures thinking process by considering how we present the discipline and how we build our tools and methods.

Thinking about the future should be a free, liberating, and open activity that organisations can use to create offerings that are more resilient and considerate of their audiences. If you are an individual or organisation that would like to learn more about how to achieve this, please get in touch.

WORKSHOP THOUGHTS

— By Santini Basra

In my job (particularly in the first couple of years of Andthen) I seem to facilitate a lot of workshops. I struggle to count them, but I think I've facilitated or co-facilitated around 100 workshops, from small 4 person client workshops to large scale 50+ person stakeholder engagement workshops. I've also attended my fair share of workshops, observing and learning from others' approaches.

Recently someone suggested I write a guide to running workshops — after plenty of 'umming and ahing,' I decided that instead of writing a 'guide' (as I don't think there is a right way to run workshops), I would try and collect a series of reflections, learnings, and suggestions, and do my best to make them as practical as possible. I've organised these here in four sections — on workshop design, on workshop setup, on getting good results, and on working in sensitive environments.

ON WORKSHOP SETUP

Make a cheat sheet

Before every workshop, create a document for yourself and any other facilitators which gives a rundown of what's going to happen, and what you need to do at every stage of the workshop. This might include things like what materials and stationary you need to pack, how long everything is meant to take, and tips for helping people if they are stuck.

Set the ground rules

At the beginning of the workshop, set some ground rules to get your participants in the right frame of mind. For instance, 'done is better than perfect,' 'no idea is a bad idea,' or 'suspend your disbelief.' These should give them a good sense of your expectations and priorities.

Use guiding slides

Having a set of slides which backs up what you're saying goes a long way to helping get the most out of participants. When introducing a new task, put up a slide which reiterates what you've just said for participants to refer back to.

ON WORKSHOP DESIGN

The physicality of the workshop

Consider the physicality of the workshop you are designing — is it useful for it to be meticulously designed, or much more informal and stripped back? Stripped back workshops with little visible design give participants more room to be creative and take more ownership of the tasks you're assigning.

Visibly designed workshops tend to suit situations where what you need to achieve is very focussed and you need to reassure participants in an approach they aren't familiar with.

The shape of the workshop

Before kicking off, it's important for participants to understand the 'shape' of the workshop, and how it fits into a wider project. For instance, a workshop could be about making decisions and narrowing down, about pushing thinking further and further, or else it could be split into several distinct separate phases. Create some kind of visual metaphor or diagram which helps them understand what the workshop is about, how it is structured, and how far through it they are.

Don't 'drag and drop'

We've attended plenty of workshops where participants have been forced through 'dragged and dropped' activities that don't completely make sense to their specific challenge — usually this is because the facilitation team are tight on time, and have recycled a previous workshop or cobbled it together out of some ill-fitting tools and activities. Tailoring each workshop goes a long way to making participants feel that their time is valued, and to creating rich and relevant outputs and outcomes.

ON WORKING IN SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS

It's all in the framing

One of the biggest factors to success in a workshop is to frame it properly. If participants know exactly why they are attending, what they are expected to do, and what their input will contribute towards before they even enter the room, it will go a very long way towards running a successful workshop.

Make good use of sub-facilitators

When working with large groups, and particularly in sensitive environments or with diverse communities, it can be really helpful to work with sub-facilitators. They should be equally distributed around the room, and their goal should be to manage conversations, making sure no one individual is dominating a conversation.

Make sure facilitators are impartial

Where possible, try and make sure facilitators aren't too personally involved in the subject matter being addressed. This helps them remain impartial and helps them listen to all parties without judgement, but makes it easier to keep the conversation moving.

Create room for individual issues

Often when working with sensitive issues, participants may arrive at a workshop with an agenda to share their individual point of view at the expense of failing to meaningfully engage with any planned group activities or discussions. It's extremely important to create space for individuals to voice these issues, but it needs to be done in a way that doesn't invade others' workshop experience. Consider including an activity at the beginning which creates space to flush out these individual 'burning issues.'

ON GETTING GOOD RESULTS

Think about inputs

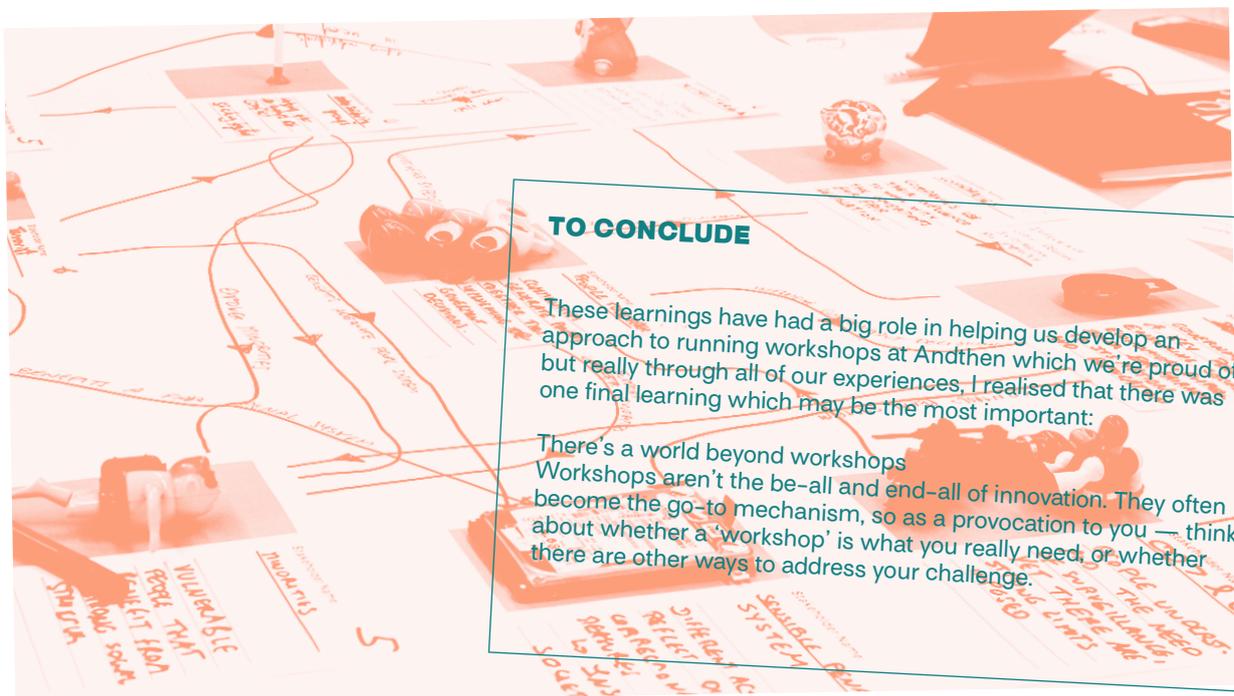
What information do participants need in order to help them through your workshop, and what is the most friendly way to deliver those inputs. For instance, if you need participants to review a large body of research, can you break that research up into small chunks and present it to them through a deck of cards rather than a dense research presentation?

Design the experience for your clients

You may find yourself in situations where your client doesn't have a clear role in a workshop — in these moments, it's extremely important to design their experience. Do you want them to hear what's said, do you want to upskill them in workshop facilitation, or do you simply want them to stay away? Your client is an important stakeholder in the workshop — think about their experience in a way that's different from your participants and your own.

Design a better way to collect notes

Particularly in workshops that have a research component, you may find yourself needing to collect a large amount of data to synthesise. Treat this data collection as a design challenge — how might you collect what you need without needing to take notes on the conversations of every participant in the room?



CASE STUDY

A Participatory Vision for Digital Education



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THE CHALLENGE

Anticipating the social and technological changes likely to affect the future of digital education, the University of Edinburgh wanted to build a realistic and preferable future vision and corresponding long term strategy for digital education at the University. They advocated for the idea that the University community should be actively involved in shaping this preferable future and strategy based on their shared values at a time when technological change is accelerated and is often assumed to be driving the future of learning.

Joining the 'Near Future Teaching' project in its early stages, our responsibility was to help embed co-design and futures thinking methods into the project, and to lead on key research and engagement activities.

OUR APPROACH

On joining the project, we supported the University team by synthesising a large body of raw data collected from a community scoping exercise (300+ students and staff members were asked about key issues and concerns for the future of digital education) into four values, which went on to guide critical decisions later in the project.

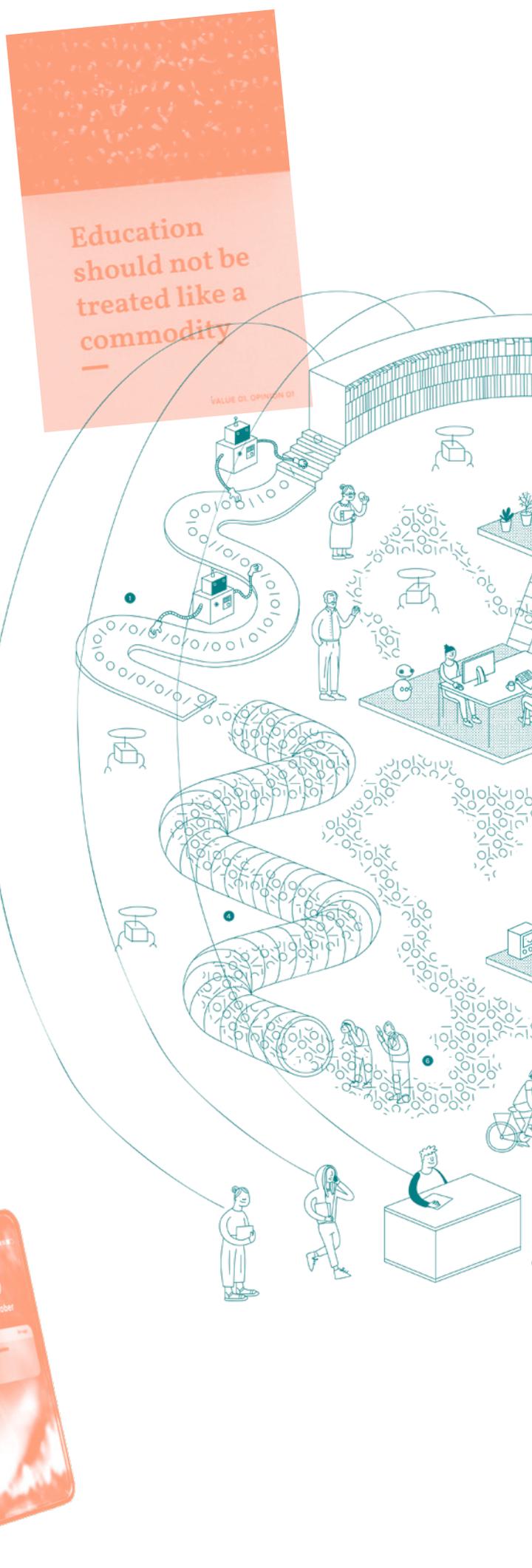
In tandem, we used two short reviews published by the University which identified global trends affecting the higher education space, to develop four possible scenarios for the future of digital education.

Bringing these two work streams together, we ran sessions with 20 staff and students in which they were asked to think about what the University might look like if it not only existed in these future education scenarios, but also prioritised the four aforementioned values. This created a series of rough visions for the University's future, which we developed into refined illustrations.

Through the creation and analysis of these visions, we helped define a 'draft preferable future' and strategy for digital education at the University, which we then sense-checked with over 50 members of staff and students, using 'provotypes' (provocative prototypes) as a tool to help generate discussion around the abstract issues that the vision and strategy was addressing.

In addition, we ran workshops with schoolchildren (the next generation of University students) to explore their ideals for the future of digital education, in order to ensure that their values are aligned with the current University community.

Ultimately we supported the University team in building the final vision and strategy, which was launched in March 2019.





RESULTS

A values led approach to strategy

At a point in time where higher education and teaching are being told that they are about to be disrupted by technological developments and private competitors, we helped the University develop an approach to strategy and strategic visioning which is underpinned by the values of its community, and not just the external forces affecting the sector.

Pioneering a new methodology

Since completing the project, the University have expressed significant interest in our approach, tools and methodology, asking us to run masterclasses with their staff members, and inviting us to contribute to other strategic initiatives.

A clear pathway

The vision, strategic recommendations, and values emerging from the project have been positively received, and are feeding into innovation efforts across the University. The University's project lead, Sian Bayne, stated that, "This project has been formative for the way we think about the future of teaching at Edinburgh, and in mapping a way forward for digital education."

"And then brought passion, energy and dedication to the Near Future Teaching project, and were a pleasure to work with. They were extremely knowledgeable about their specialism, confidently helping us introduce design-led methods and futures thinking to strategic visioning and planning in a way that was new to us. The quality of their work, the breadth of their skillset, and their attentiveness to our particular challenges was of a level that you would not expect from such a small team."

— Professor Sian Bayne

Director of Education at the Edinburgh Futures Institute and Assistant Principal for Digital Education

Selected Case Studies



Exploring a Role for Futures in Corporate Innovation



A recently published case study, from a project conducted with RBS in 2017.

The Open Experience (OX) department at the time of engagement was a relatively new entity within the bank. They were still working to define and develop their own culture, to differentiate from other design and innovation capabilities in RBS, and to build distinct processes and approaches.

Building on one of OX's projects, we were asked to run a pilot project which explored ways of building a futures process into their existing innovation process. We designed a futures approach which blended techniques like Causal Layered Analysis, Deductive Scenario Planning, Systems Mapping, and Backcasting in order to convert research into future scenarios, which could subsequently be used to drive product and service conceptualisation.

We trialled this process with the OX team on one of the projects, and concluded with a reflection on how similar futures approaches may be integrated into OX's innovation methodology.

Futuring a Futures Initiative



As part of our Pro Bono service, we worked on a sprint project with The Design Futures Initiative (DFI), a San-Francisco based non-profit championing the use of futures in design through managing the global meet up community 'Speculative Futures' and producing the annual PRIMER conference.

The DFI is experiencing rapid growth, and with no full-time staff, were struggling to steer this growth, build a shared vision, and ensure the organisation is on the right trajectory.

Through interviewing a range of stakeholders from across the DFI (executive team, local organisers, meetup attendees) we built a set of draft values for the organisation. In parallel, we conducted desk research into innovative growth pathways and business models for professional networks, and used this to generate a series of possible futures for the DFI.

We then cross referenced the values with the possible futures to generate a series of insights and recommendations for the DFI going into the future.

Collaboratively building a vision for public service provision in Gracemount

EDINBURGH
YOUR COUNCIL - YOUR FUTURE



EDINBURGH
LIVING
LAB

This project was a collaboration between Edinburgh Living Lab and the City of Edinburgh Council that aimed to use data and human centered design methods to improve decision-making around the future of Council property. A key part of this project was to pilot a new approach to community consultation, as well as get feedback from citizens about how services could be delivered more effectively.

As part of the pilot, we delivered two community engagement workshops to build a more complete picture of how and where local services were being used – and collectively thought about how they could be improved through building a vision for the future.

Through understanding the relationship between services, people and place, we summarised the key issues that were most important to community members and also made recommendations to the councils consultation strategy.

Collaboratively building a vision for a set of Undergraduate Programmes



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Working with the University of Edinburgh's Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), a progressive education institution set to launch in 2021, we helped to build a vision for the Undergraduate programme they were developing.

The directorate at the EFI had a series of principles and values which they planned to build the programme around, and had a sense of structurally how this might work. We enhanced their thinking, by working with current Undergraduate students at the University to think about what the lived experience might, and should, feel like on the ground.

Through a series of collaborative workshops, we worked with students to unpack these principles and values, eventually building a low fidelity vision, which we then worked up into an illustration.

This vision went on to support the recruitment of academic staff further down the line, and helped build excitement and alignment about the EFI's ambition.

Exploring New Narratives and Forms of Engagement for a New Institute



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Working with the University of Edinburgh's Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), we helped them think about new ways to communicate their vision and build a strategy for engaging various communities (such as students, university staff, local residents, and partner organisations) in the run up to their launch.

Initially working with students and local community members, we ran a series of scenario building workshops, which helped us understand what the aspirations of these groups were for the EFI, thus informing recommendations for the institute's brand and communications.

Additionally, we conducted desk research into comparable institutions and other sectors, and identified examples of best practice in both brand and engagement strategy.

Our final output was a report with recommendations for the EFI's brand and engagement strategy in the run up to the launch of their first courses in 2021.

On Our Radar

The Andthen team's picks of the year.



An Interview with Cambridge Analytica's Whistleblower Chris Wylie

Since Channel4 and the Guardian released their investigation into Cambridge Analytica over their role in Brexit's Leave campaign and President Trump's candidacy, Christopher Wylie has been an inspiring figure standing up for data regulation and democracy. Here he's interviewed on NPR giving a succinct and engaging explanation of exactly how Facebook data taken from a personality quiz was used to influence fringe and mainstream culture and politics.

— Freyja Harris
Designer & Researcher



Outrage & Optimism podcast

This year I have been keenly following the Outrage and Optimism podcast that has been interviewing all sorts of figureheads in the climate spectrum: from David Attenborough, to Theresa May, to Extinction Rebellion's Gail Bradbrook, to Beyond Meat's Ethan Brown. Their central theme is the importance of having both outrage and optimism when looking to the future – having the optimism in the imagining of something better and the outrage to act now.

— Will Brown
Senior Strategist



A Message From the Future With Alexandria Ocasio- Cortez

This short film, narrated by AOC, and illustrated by Molly Crabapple, presents an alternate trajectory/future vision which speculates on what could be if the Green New Deal was passed. It's a great example of a future vision, and speaks to the idea of reflexivity in futures whereby the act of defining and communicating a future vision makes it more likely to happen.

— Lizzie Abernethy
Designer & Researcher



GREEN NEW DEAL

The world's first 'Future Generations Commissioner.'

Wales has appointed the world's first (and only) 'Future Generations Commissioner.' Sophie Howe's job is to represent the unborn citizens of Wales, and ensure that political decisions today don't compromise Welsh citizens tomorrow. While she was appointed in 2016 as a result of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, her role seems ever more relevant this year with the rise of youth activism seen in movements like the Global Climate Strike and March For Our Lives.

— Santini Basra
Founder



The Mind, Explained

Human behaviour is one of the most important, yet also one of the most difficult factors to take into consideration when we attempt to analyse or plan for the future. Vox has partnered with Netflix to produce a five part mini series exploring how our brains are wired and what effects this has on our behaviour. The series covers five topics: dreams, anxiety, mindfulness, psychedelics and memory. The memory episode is especially interesting as it unpacks the idea of the brain's ability to "time travel", relying on its ability to recall past events in order to envision future scenarios.

— Lewis Just
Associate



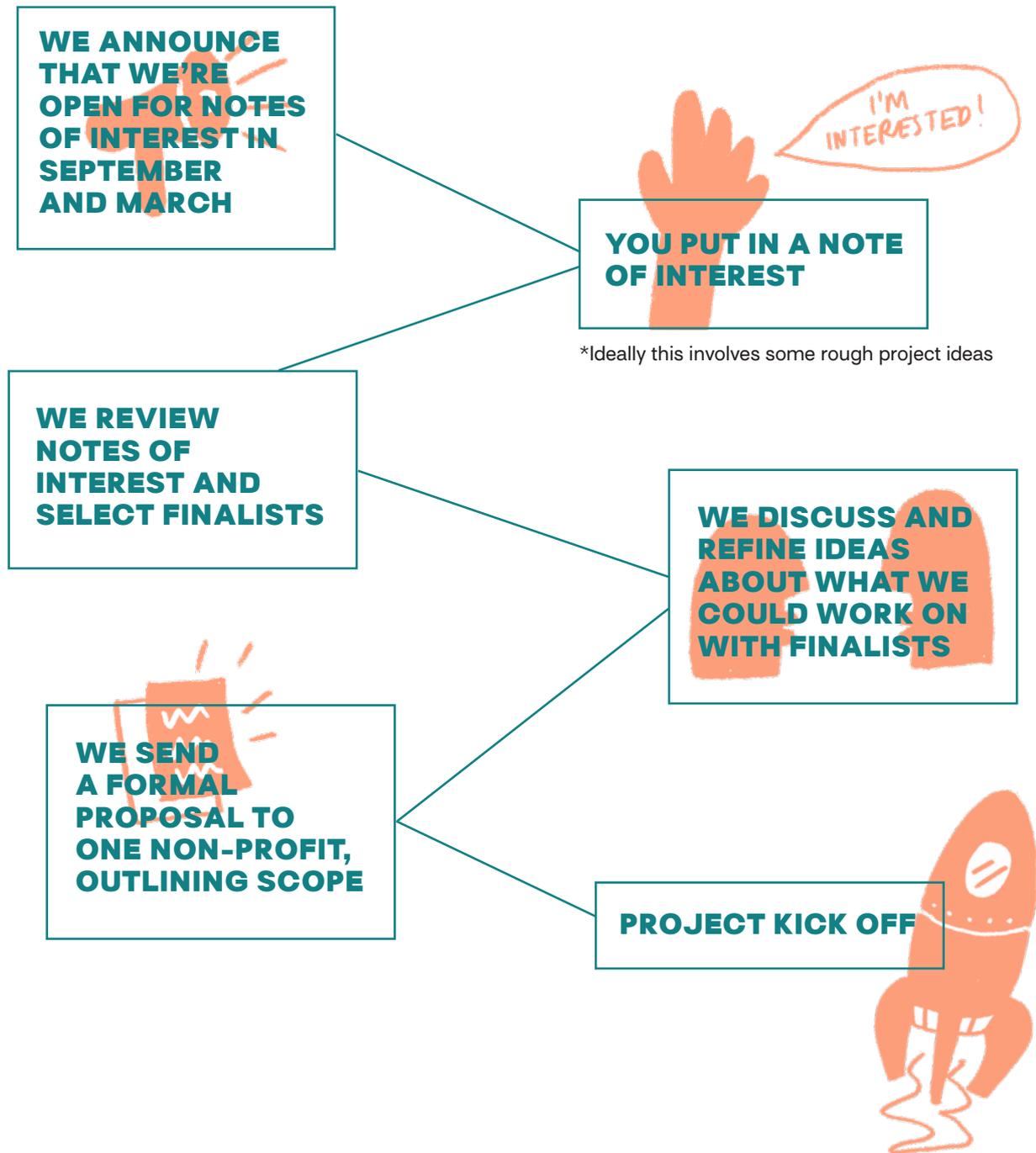
Our Pro Bono Service

Twice a year we give a portion of our previous 6 months' turnover away as a pro bono service to non profit organisations.

Currently we're giving away the equivalent of 7% of turnover

We'll work with any type of non-profit entity, provided they aren't owned by a for-profit, are incorporated, and can legally purchase services.

Interested? How it works...



studioandthen.com/probono





If you're interested in working with us, get in touch —
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