

Faculty of Design, sLAB (Strategic Innovation Lab)

2014

## Making strange: Risk, design & foresight

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# Making Strange: Risk, Design & Foresight

Intergovernmental Forum on Risk Management  
Ottawa, Canada 1–2 October 2014

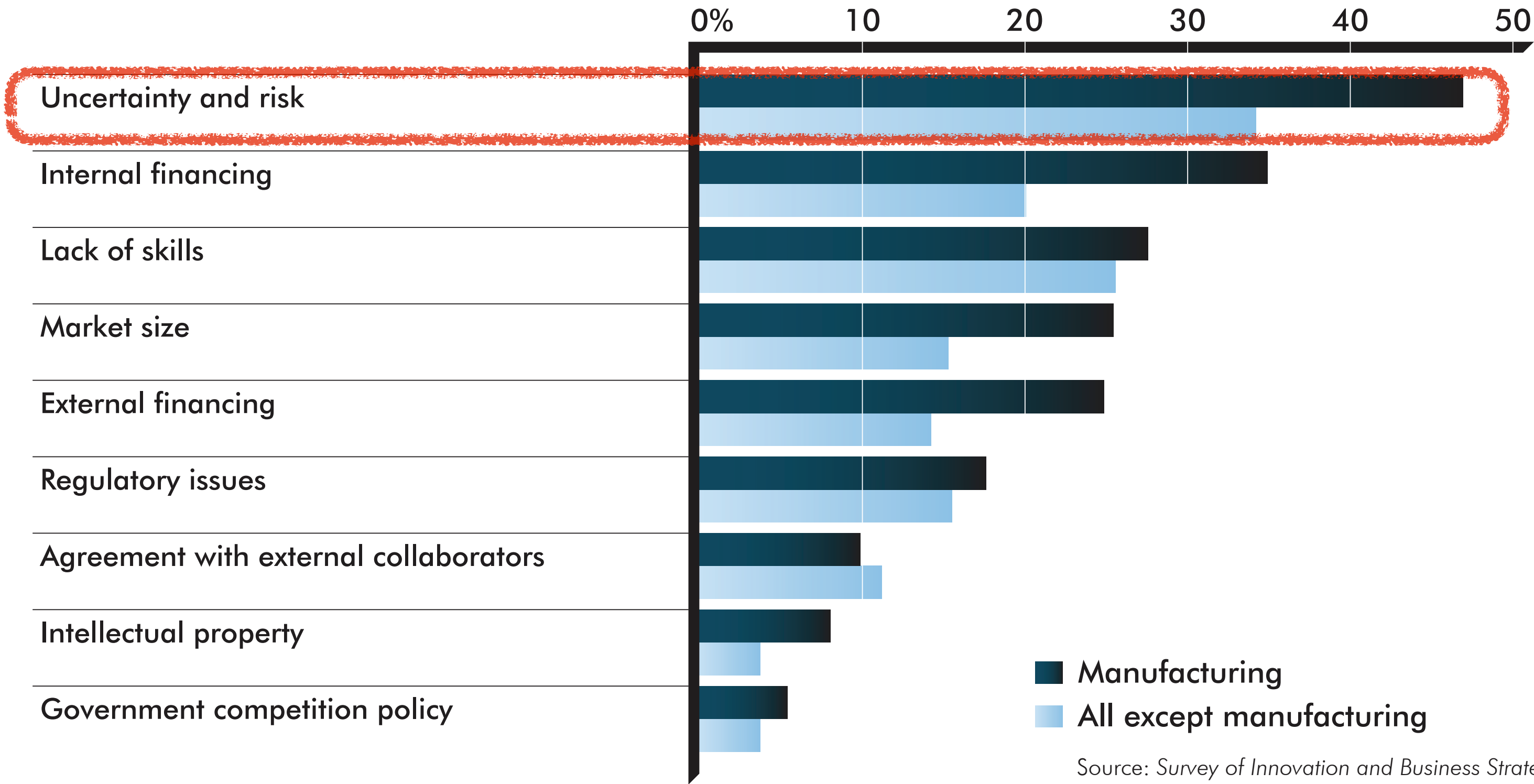
Greg Van Alstyne

Strategic Innovation Lab (sLab)  
OCAD University





# What are the biggest obstacles to innovation?



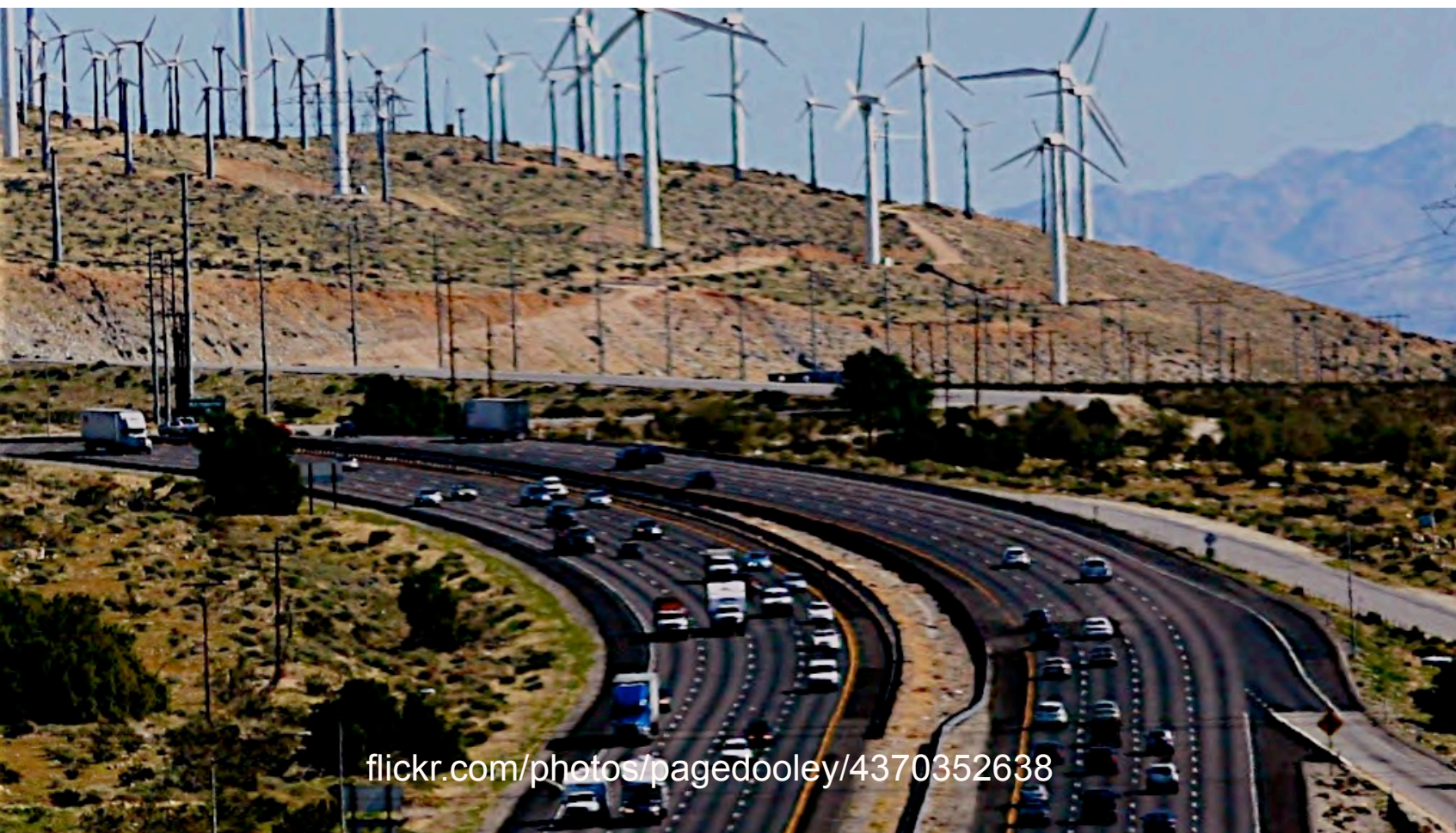


# What is innovation?

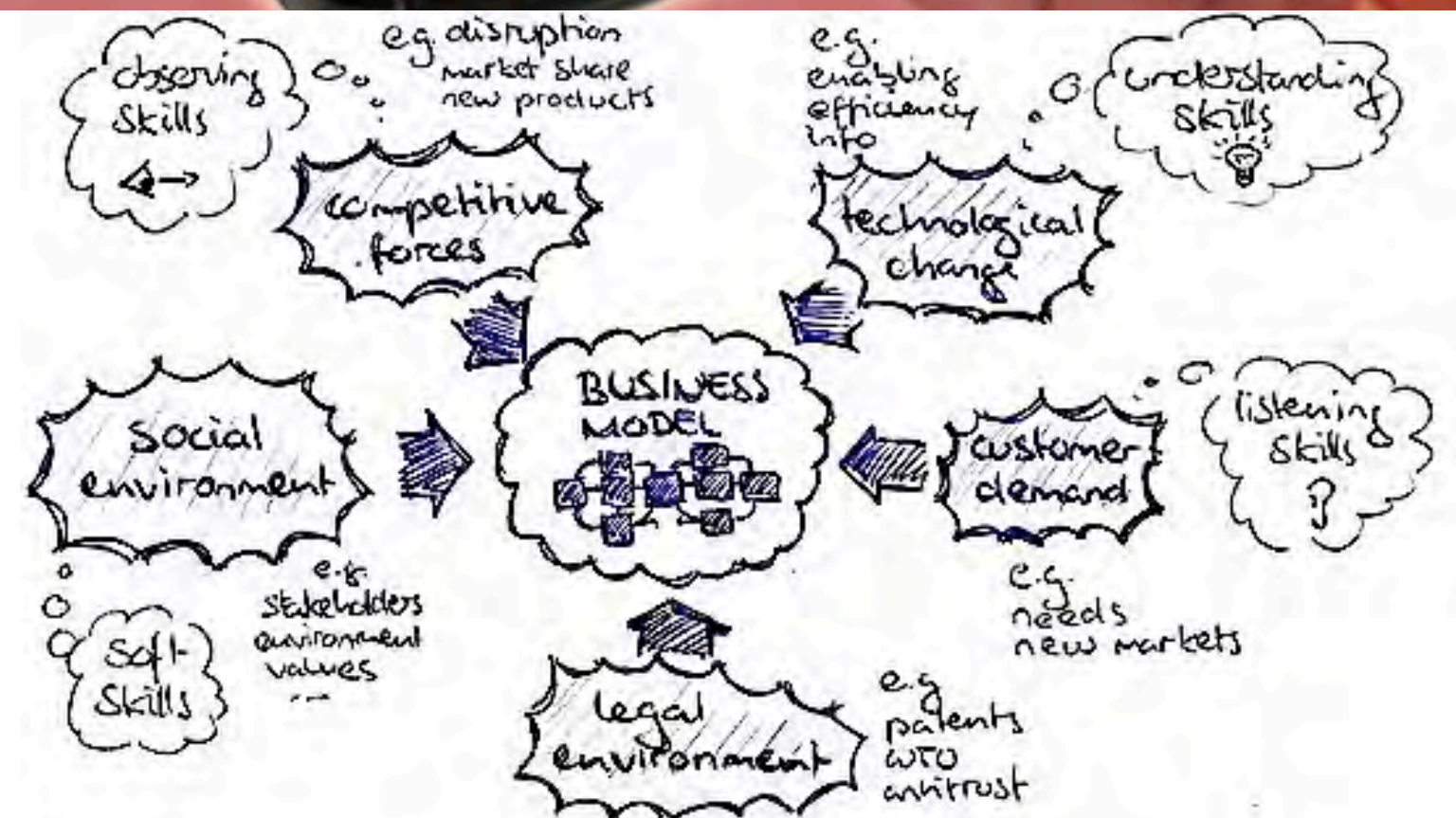
Is it a new technology?

Is it a process?

An outcome?



[flickr.com/photos/pagedooley/4370352638](https://www.flickr.com/photos/pagedooley/4370352638)



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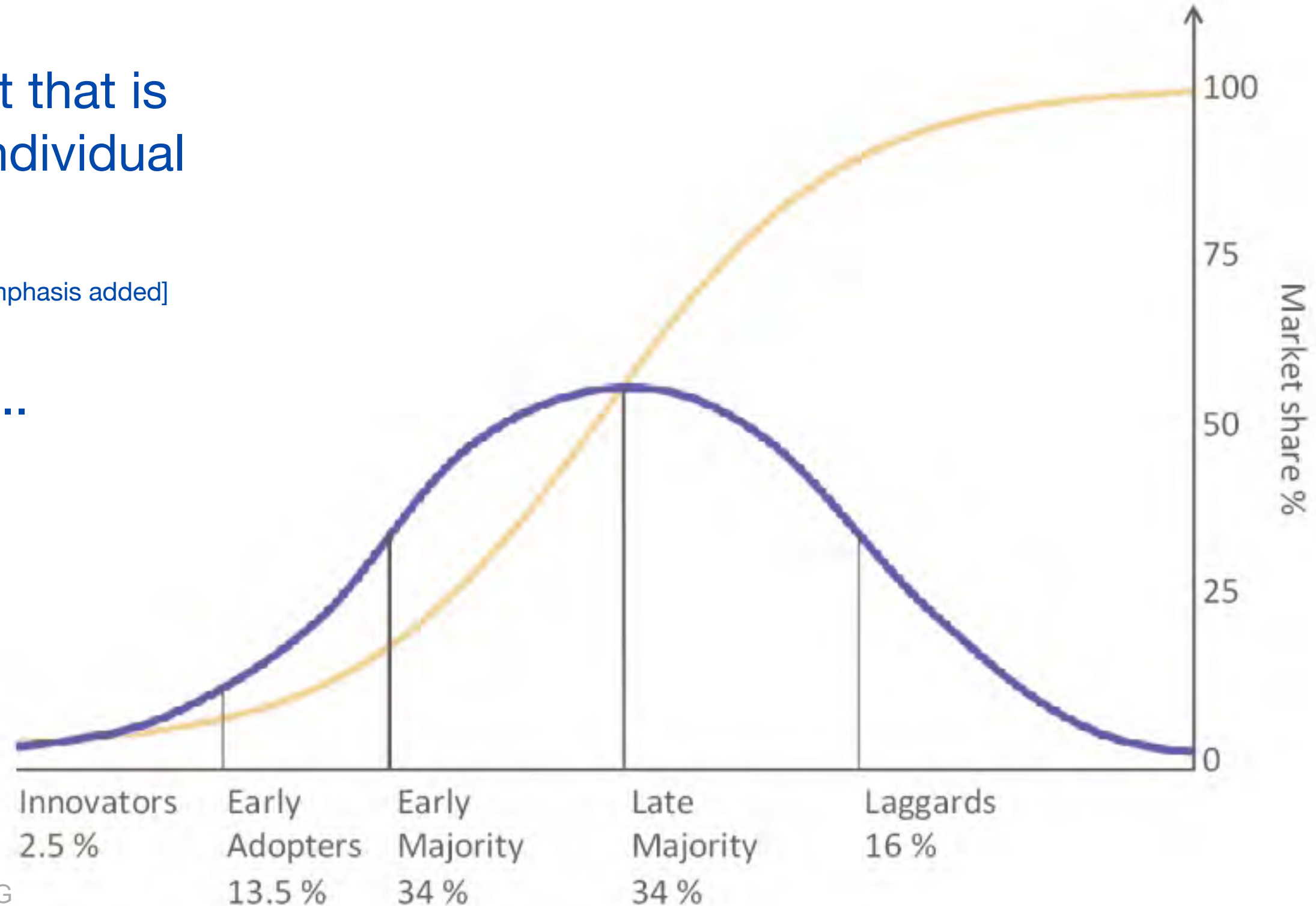
## What is innovation?

“An idea, practice or object that is **perceived as new** by an individual or other unit of adoption”

—Rogers, [1962] 2005, *Diffusion of Innovations* [emphasis added]

“Creating a new paradigm...  
changing the rules and  
**changing the game**”

—Dubberly et al. 2007. *A Model of Innovation*  
[dubberly.com/concept-maps/innovation.html](http://dubberly.com/concept-maps/innovation.html)

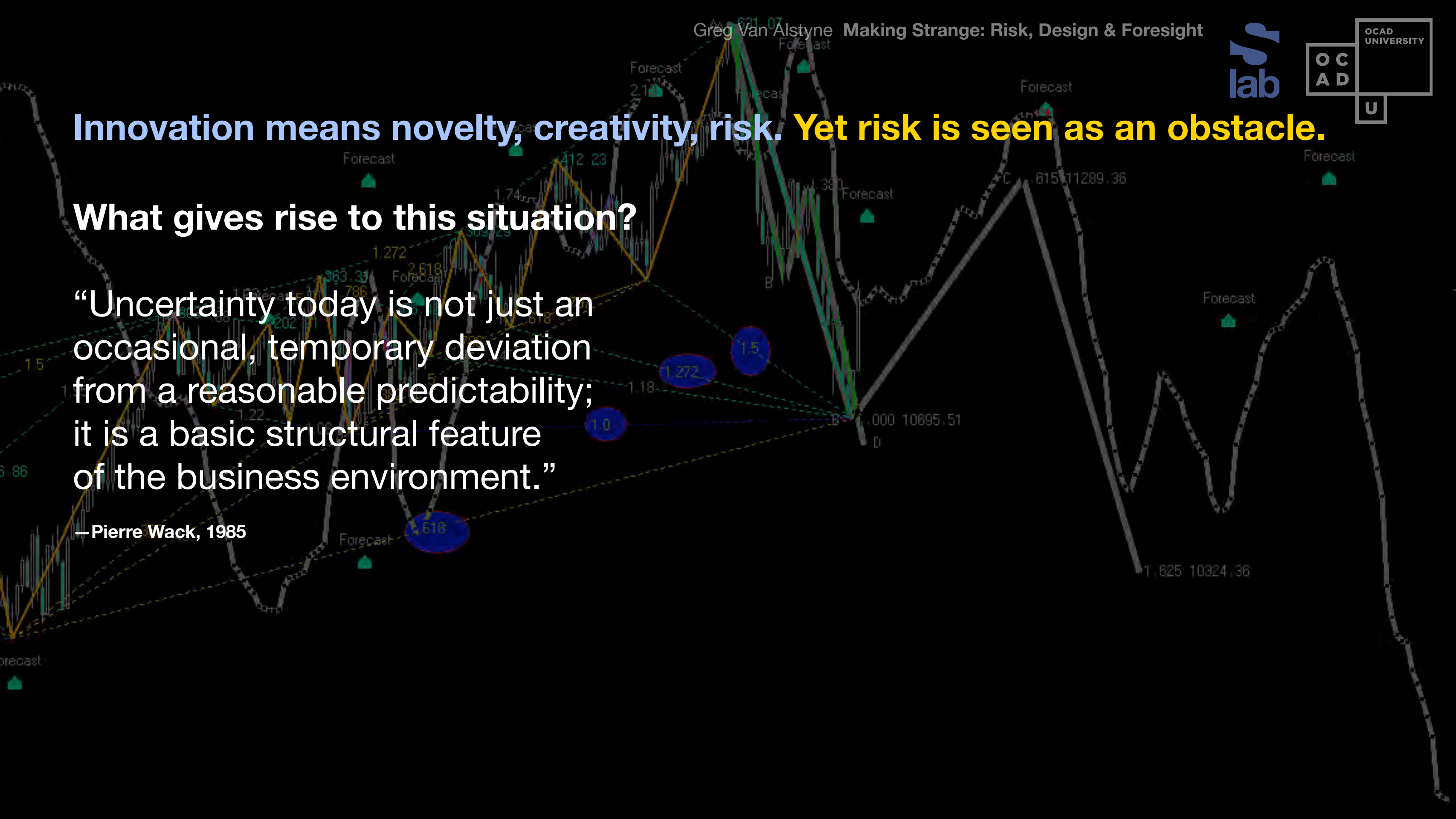


**Innovation means novelty, creativity, risk. Yet risk is seen as an obstacle.**

**What gives rise to this situation?**

“Uncertainty today is not just an occasional, temporary deviation from a reasonable predictability; it is a basic structural feature of the business environment.”

— Pierre Wack, 1985



**So how does your organization deal with risk & uncertainty?**

Federico Díaz, *Sembion* CC BY-SA 3.0



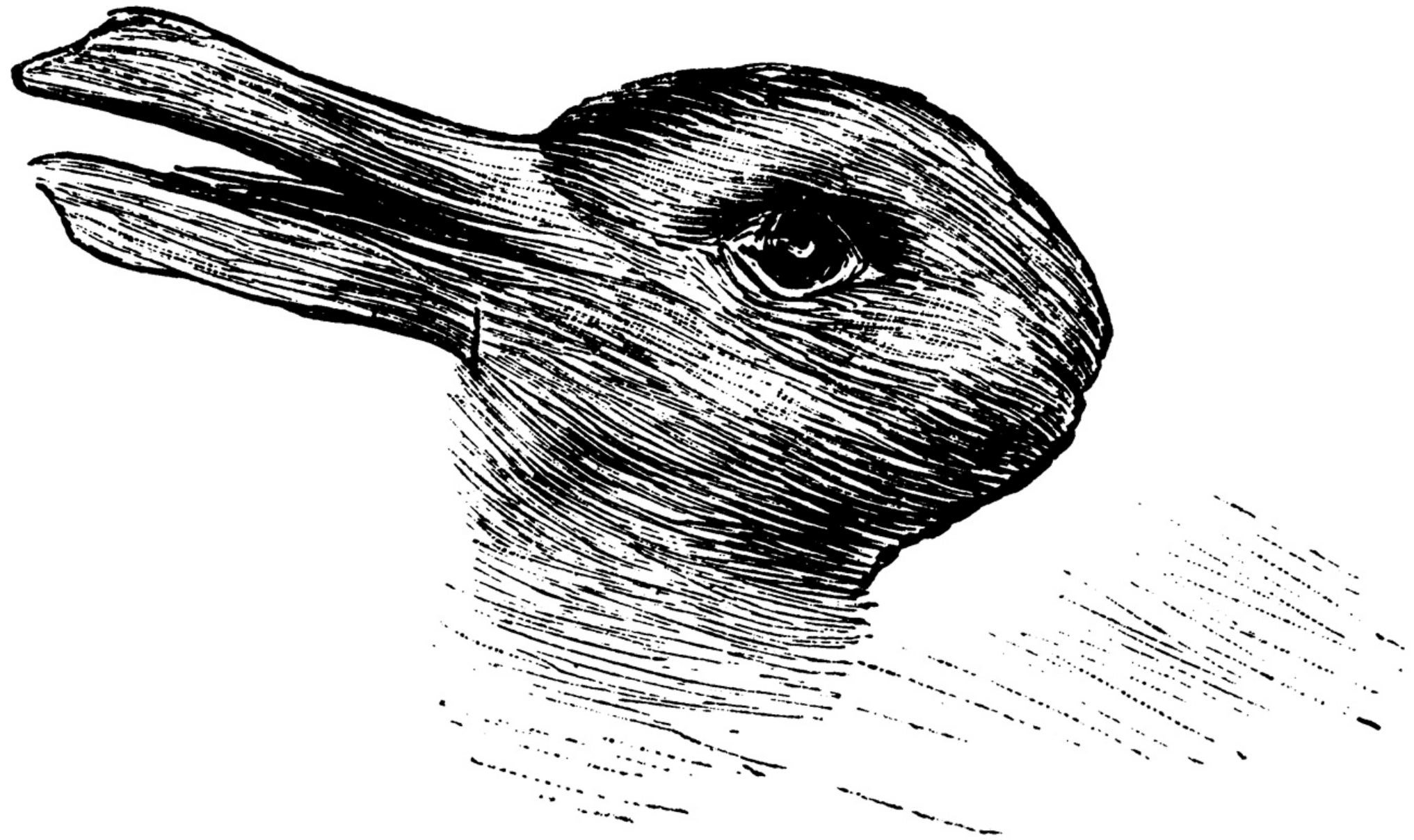


## Ambiguity and risk perception

There is no perception  
without interpretation

—Gadamer 1960; Kihlstrom 2002

“Ambiguity effect”:  
Cognitive bias describing  
our tendency to avoid  
options for which  
missing information  
makes the probability  
seem “unknown”





quick exercise

**The next slide is ambiguous.**  
**What is the *meaning* of this scene?**







# Ambiguity

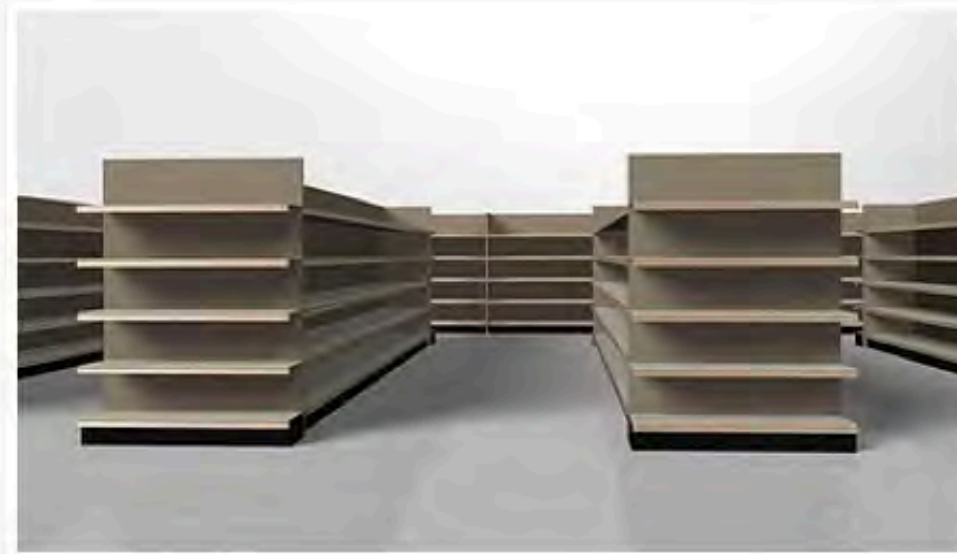


Food for your family,  
from our family.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2011

## A World Without Farmers

Have you ever thought about what your favorite grocery store would look like if farmers didn't exist?



Thankfully, Indiana is full of farm families that help make sure that our nation's shelves are filled with your family's favorite ingredients.

Celebrate National Ag Week with us and tell us what your favorite grocery store is and why here and on [Facebook](#) to be entered to win a \$50 gift card to the grocery store of your choice!

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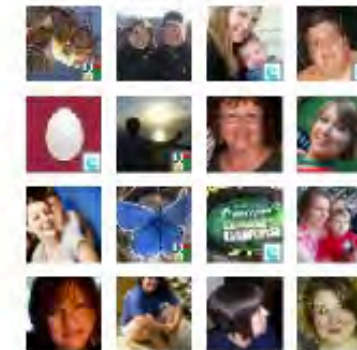
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**Q: Which practices deal creatively with ambiguity & risk? A: art & design**

**we  
are  
here**



## sLab is “human centred”

We place human needs, desires, behaviour and culture at the heart of the process

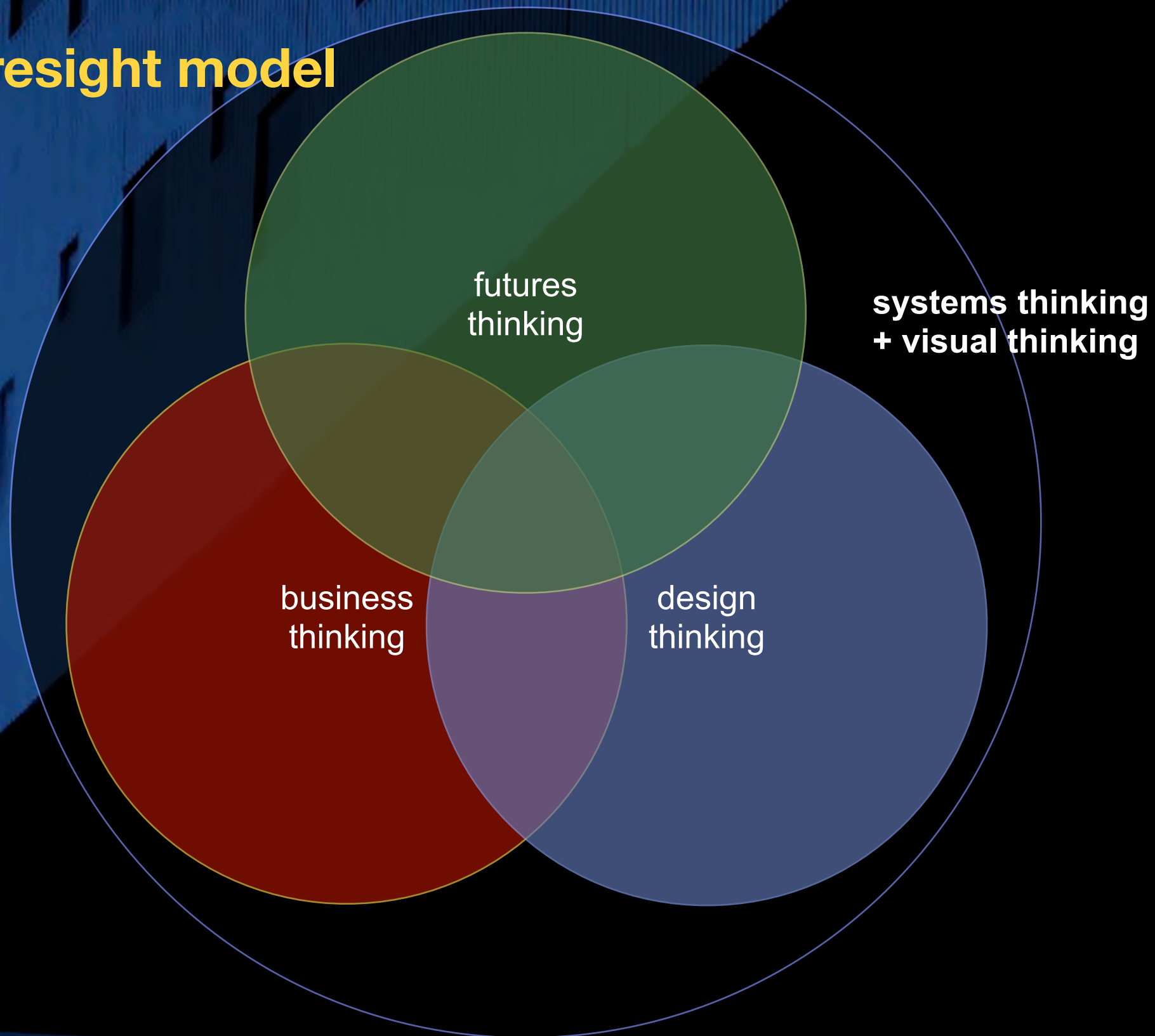
Our process may be seen as:

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| problem finding | foresight |
| problem framing | strategy  |
| problem solving | design    |





## sLab design & foresight model





## Master of Design in Strategic Foresight & Innovation (SFI)

A new kind of designer — a changemaker. Mapping and tackling complexity.  
Shaping positive futures, designing responsibly. Understanding change, Leading innovation





# Master of Design in Strategic Foresight & Innovation (SFI)

## OCAD U's largest grad program

120 students by Fall 2014

## Rapid growth

New courses and faculty  
Industry partnerships

## International enrollment

Brazil  
Canada  
Costa Rica  
Iceland  
India  
Mexico  
Nigeria  
Pakistan

## Leading employers

Bridgepoint Health  
BMO Private Client Group  
CAMH  
Green Living Enterprises  
Government of Alberta  
Monitor Deloitte  
Idea Couture  
Leo Burnett  
Mayo Clinic

## Startups / rebrandings

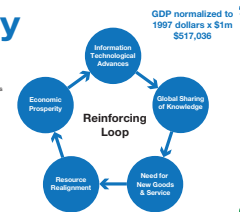
Art & Science  
The Mission Business  
Perceptual.com  
ZanCom Media

# We map ambiguity & complexity

## Protecting Canadians & Vulnerable Workers in a Global Economy

### Economy

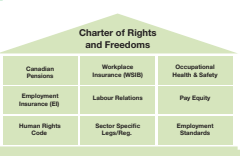
**Reinforcing Economic Responsible for Economic Growth**  
Technological advances and information technology allow for greater sharing and applying of knowledge and research globally. Exposure to global ideas creates demand for new goods and services, resulting resources to be realigned to various economic growth.



GDP normalized to 1997 dollars x \$1m  
\$517,036

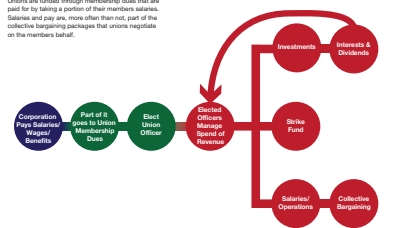
### Demographic

**Workers Protection Architecture**  
Canada has built up an impressive foundation of laws and regulations designed to protect workers. Stemming from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms the Federal Government and Provincial Governments have an array of laws designed to protect workers. These laws range from the Occupational Health and Safety Act that prescribes safe working conditions, Pay Equity laws to reduce gender and immigrant gaps in wages and conditions and Labour Relations laws outlining that, applicable and neutral process of labour arbitration.



### Unions

**Union Funding and Spending Cycle**  
Unions and similar through membership dues that are paid for by taking a portion of their members salaries. Salaries and pay are, more often than not, part of the collective bargaining package that unions negotiate on the members behalf.



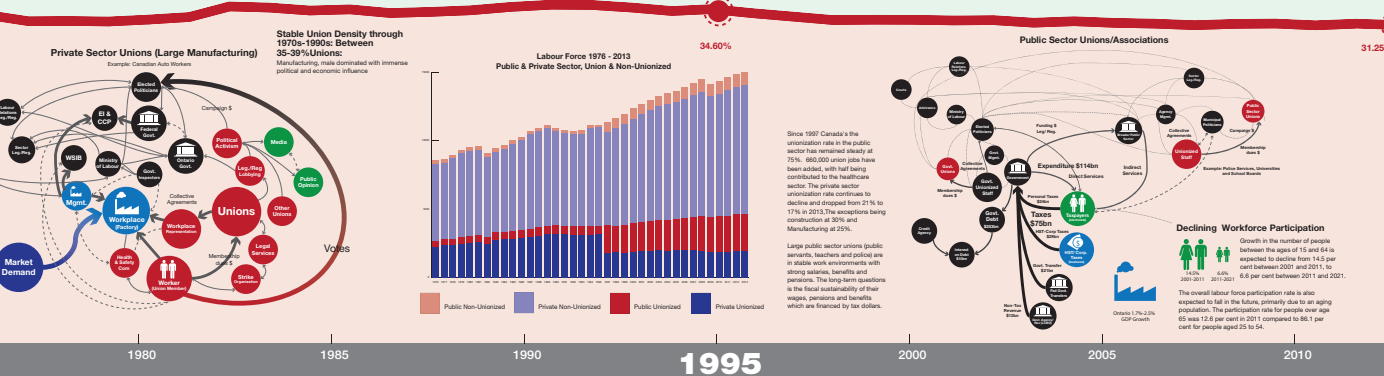
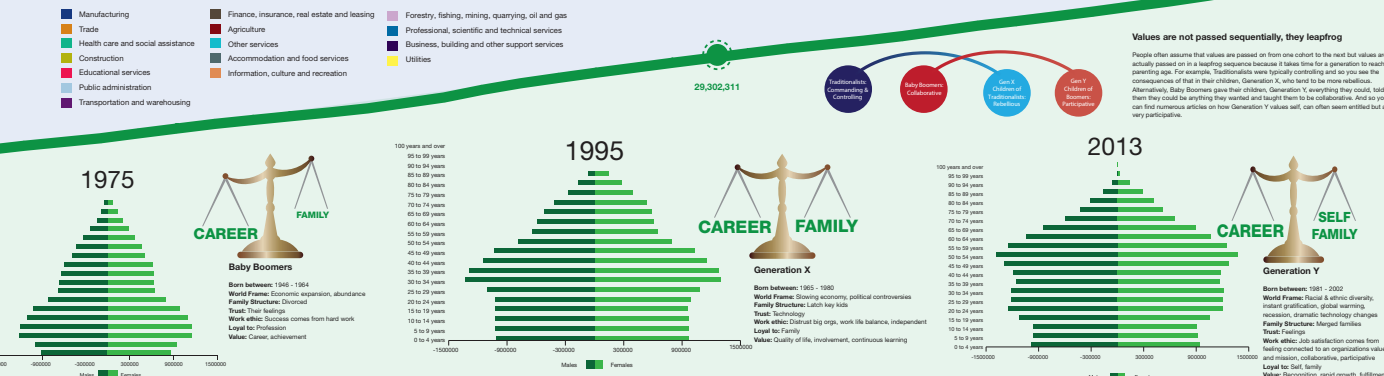
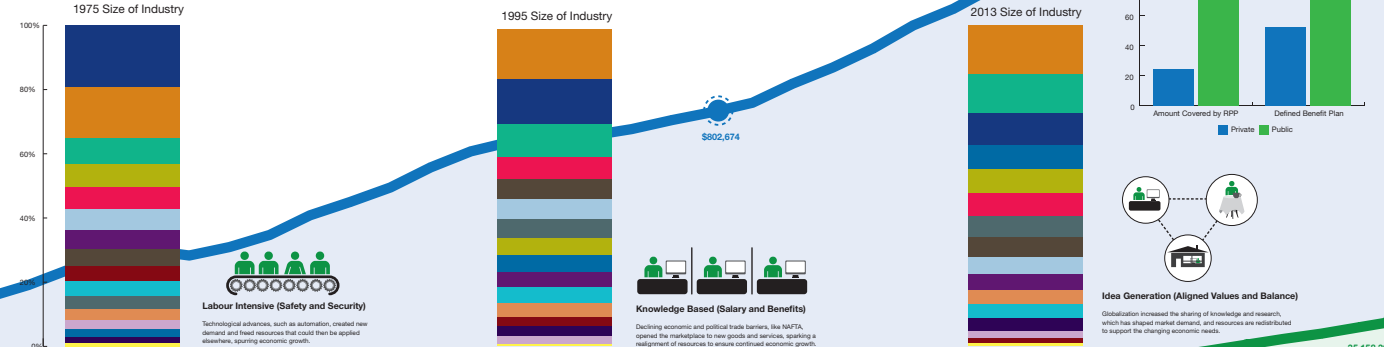
Since 1975, Canada's economy, workplaces and people have change immeasurably. Globalization has driven trade but has also led to the manufacturing sector's decline: the mainstay of the nation's post-war economy. Increasingly, the service based economy, Canada has seen a fundamental shift in the nature of work, types of employment and diversity of workplaces. Gone is the factory floor, replaced by more part time, casual and even precarious jobs.

As work has changed, so has women's participation in the workforce, cultural diversity driven by immigration and attitudes of different generations in the workplace. These generational attitudes are reshaping how workers connect and value jobs. The post-war Baby Boomer generation

driven by certainty, and now increasingly focused on retirement, is being replaced by a far younger Generation Y who expects to have multiple jobs and even careers. The stable job with defined benefits is increasingly the preserve of public sector workers. Increasingly, the private sector is fragmenting into a few large employers and small to medium businesses where most new immigrants, contractors, young people, semi-skilled and vulnerable workers earn a living. Traditionally, Unions rooted in a given industry gave workers the collective strength to negotiate: better wages, pensions and benefits; improved, safer conditions; and to organize their political muscle to advocate for greater workplace protections. Union membership is on the decline. Although, many laws have

been passed to support and protect workers, like unions they have challenges responding to a new economy with a fragmented, dispersed and isolated workforce.

These fears in the legal and collective architecture designed to protect workers means that there are serious gaps where young, immigrant and semi-skilled workers can be subject to exploitation, unsafe conditions and be "wage poor". Having rights is a start but being able to exercise those rights is the key, this gigamap is designed to provoke dialogue amongst labour activists to find creative and flexible solutions to enable all Canadians to work in decent, safe and protected workplaces.



## Wicked Problem

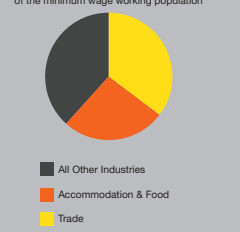
**2015 Onwards: Fragmented Work, New Sectors and a Service Economy**  
Wicked problem: With a globalized (service) economy, changing generations, how to create a strong yet flexible workers' protection where unions (and other social organizations) play a key role in ensuring the betterment of part-time, contract, low-pay and the most vulnerable workers.

**Workforce Making Minimum Wage**  
4.7% in 2000  
5.8% in 2009

**Eligible for EI**  
44% in 1997  
27% in 2013

**11% of minimum wage employees are unionized**  
**62% of minimum wage employees are in Accommodations & Food Services or Trade**  
**59% are part-time employees**

**Total Employees on Minimum Wage**  
Trade and Accommodations & Food represent 61% of the minimum wage working population

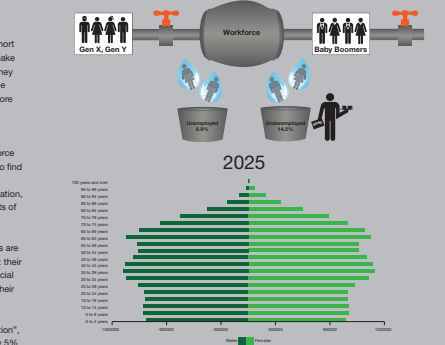


**Gen Y: Unemployed & Underemployed**  
Generation Y is the largest demographic cohort to come after the baby boomers and they make up more than 1/3 of Canada's population. They are also the most educated and most diverse generation in history, and the first to have more women than men obtain postsecondary education credentials.

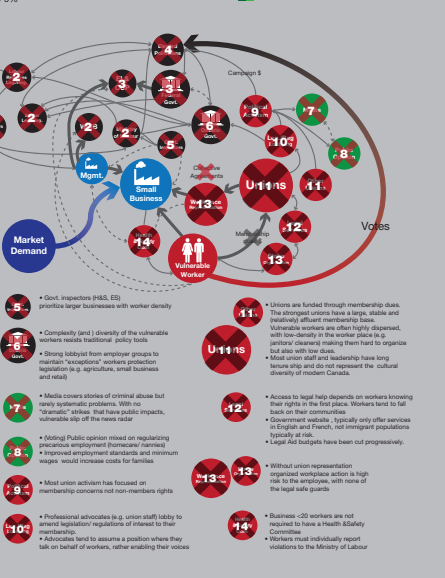
However, as they started to enter the workforce between 1996 and 2017 they found it hard to find jobs and many are currently unemployed or underemployed (an employee that has education, experience, or skills beyond the requirements of the job).

Part of the reason is because Baby Boomers are delaying retirement for a number of reasons: their work-hard mentality, but mainly due to financial concerns because the recession impacted their retirement funds.

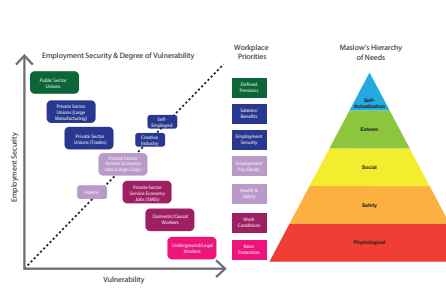
Sometimes referred to as the "Civic Generation", 62% of Gen Y approve of Unions, while only 5% are able to participate in union membership.



**Vulnerable Workers (Dispersed/ Homecare/ Small Business)**  
A binding arbitration ready for large employers with unionization. Single employer with no unionization through legislation (e.g. Human Rights Code). Most of the key Labor Relations, WSEB, and health and safety legislation is predicated on full time employment, in stable jobs. (Slow pace of legislative (regulatory) change creates to keep pace with small, fragmented workplaces and emerging work arrangements. Rates of EI coverage have plummeted: 62% of all workers in 1990, 44% in 1997, and 27% in 2013 (Ontario Statistics, 2013). Based on full time employment (50 hours per week) for 12 months. Seasonal, casual and precarious workers are not covered. Many federal benefits do not cover part-time and precarious work. Employment Insurance, Canadian Pension Plan and other benefits are based on full time employment. Seasonal, casual and precarious workers have low rates for no vote. Declining Workforce Participation: Growth in the number of people between the ages of 15 and 64 is expected to decline from 1.4 per cent between 2007 and 2011, to 1.6 per cent between 2011 and 2015. The overall labour force participation rate is also expected to fall in the future, primarily due to an aging population. The participation rate for people age 65 was 12.6 per cent in 2011 compared to 86.1 per cent for people aged 25 to 64.



## Moving Forward



### Creative and Generation Y Workers

- Levers of protection:**
- Build strong pathways out of menial jobs to meaningful work through the partnership of employers, post-secondary education and training institutions, and youth representation.
  - Incent employers to hire Generation Y employees through tax-breaks, funding and training programs.
  - Incent workplaces to experiment with alternative to full time employment, such as job-sharing that enable Baby Boomers to split their jobs with young workers.
  - Widened the bandwidth of legal and regulatory protection to include part-time, freelance, sub-contractors and creative industries.
  - Expand Generation Y funding to create their own start-up companies.
  - Strengthen public awareness of the dangers of the workplace for Generation Y on occupational health & safety, harassment and discrimination, pay equity and employment standards.

### Vulnerable Workers

- Levers of protection:**
- Update and expand existing legal "Workers Protection Architecture" to match the growing segmentation of "vulnerable workers"
  - Create greater flexibility in working arrangements and protection to reflect the part-time, casual and seasonal work trends
  - Regularize and skill low-paying work to improve pay and conditions, and to enable transitions beyond menial roles.
  - Explore how to organize dispersed and small workforces through technology (e.g. social media platforms)
  - Provide workers' protection information in easy to read formats in new immigrant groups' languages
  - Enable community engagement strategies to tackle precarious employment and unsafe working conditions.
  - Raise fines, penalties and punishments for employees exploiting "vulnerable workers" and conditions that lead to death or serious injuries.



## Design thinking is about *sensemaking*, isn't it?

Designers excel at coaching, practicing, and theorizing how to make sense of complex or ambiguous situations & information.

Yet sometimes what is needed is not sensemaking. Sometimes what is needed is ***strangemaking***.

That's where **foresight** comes in.



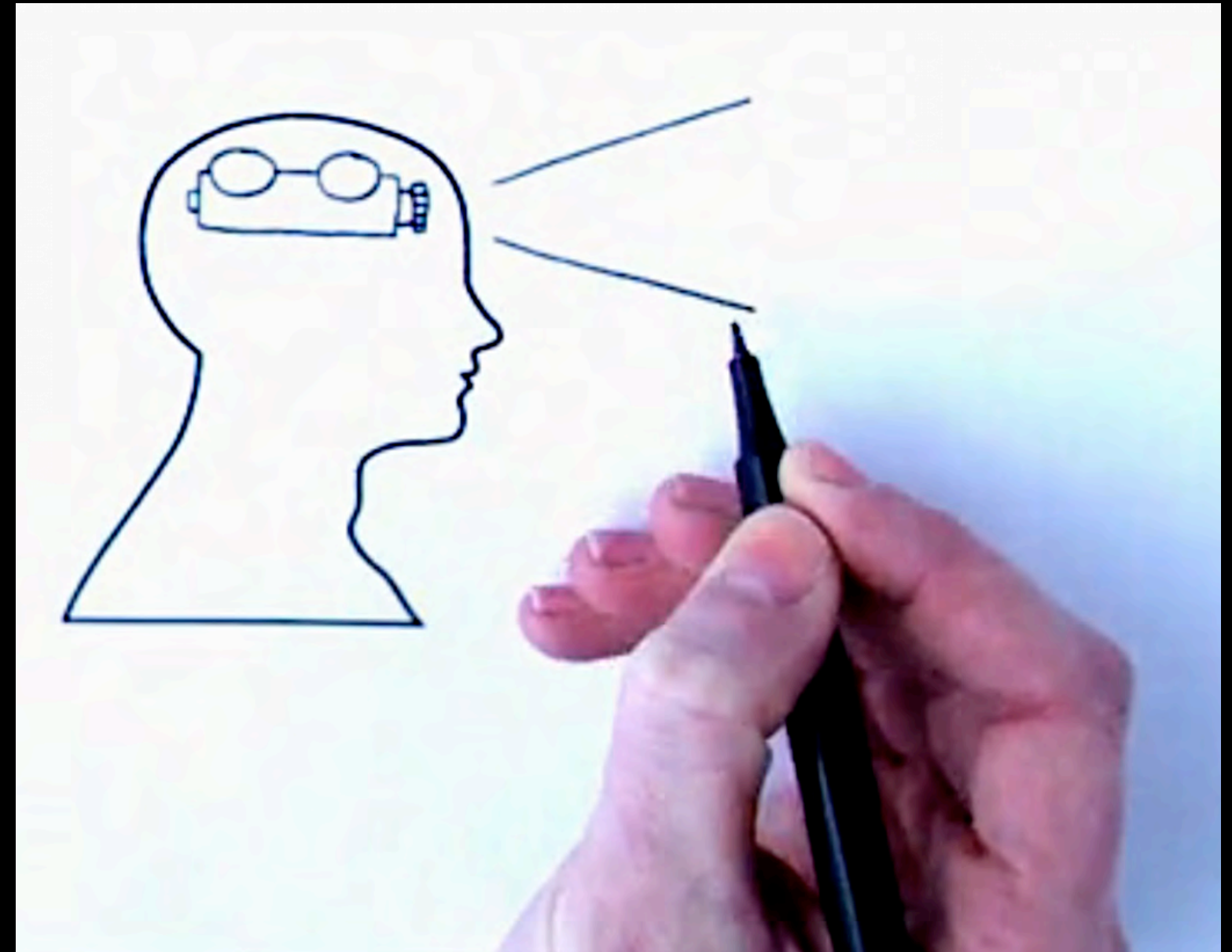
## What is foresight?

“the ability to create and sustain a variety of high quality forward views and to apply the emerging insights in organizationally useful ways... to detect adverse conditions, guide policy, shape strategy; to explore new markets, products & services.”

—Richard Slaughter, 1999

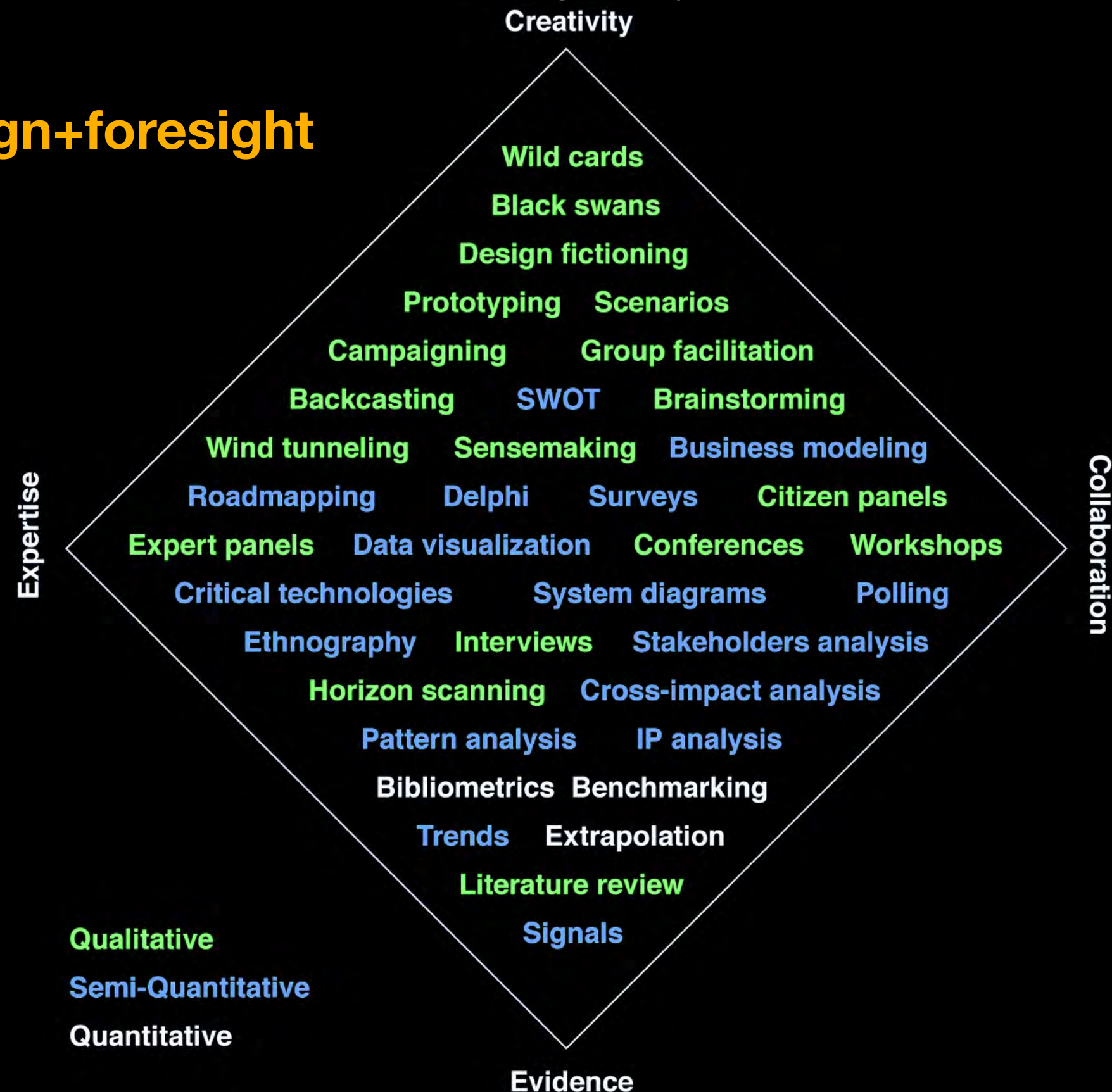
“A systematic, participatory, future intelligence gathering,...**vision-building** process aimed at present-day decisions & mobilising joint actions”

—EC FOREN project





# sLab & SFI design+foresight methodology





# Making strange





# Making strange

Making strange (приём остранения)

—Viktor Shklovsky, 1917

Alienation effect (Verfremdungseffekt)

—Bertold Brecht

“Making the strange familiar,  
and the familiar strange”

—Stuart Brand, founder of GBN and Long Now Foundation



## Failing better

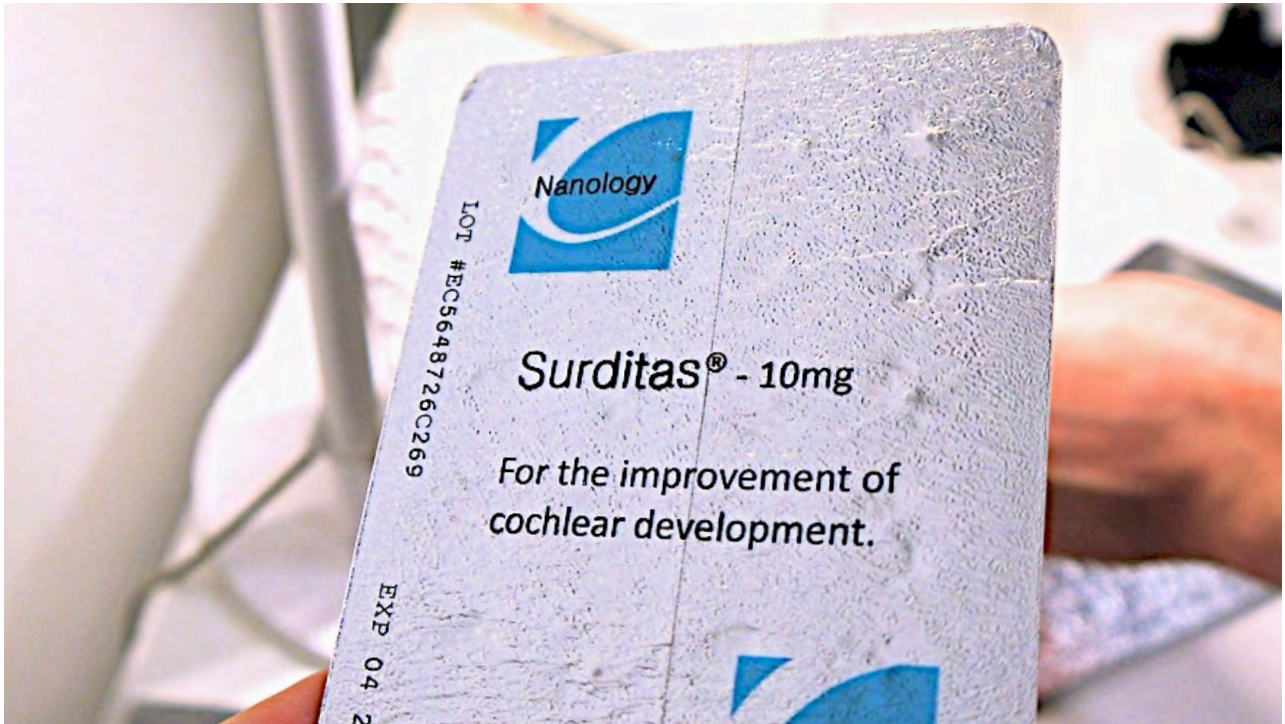
“All of old. Nothing else ever.  
Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter.  
Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”

—Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho*





Design+Foresight at OCAD U  
Tangible Futures, Design Fictions  
in Helen Kerr's Leading Innovation, 2012



Robert Mitchell & Laura Fyles





Design+Foresight at OCAD U  
Tangible Futures, Design Fictions  
in Helen Kerr's Leading Innovation, 2012



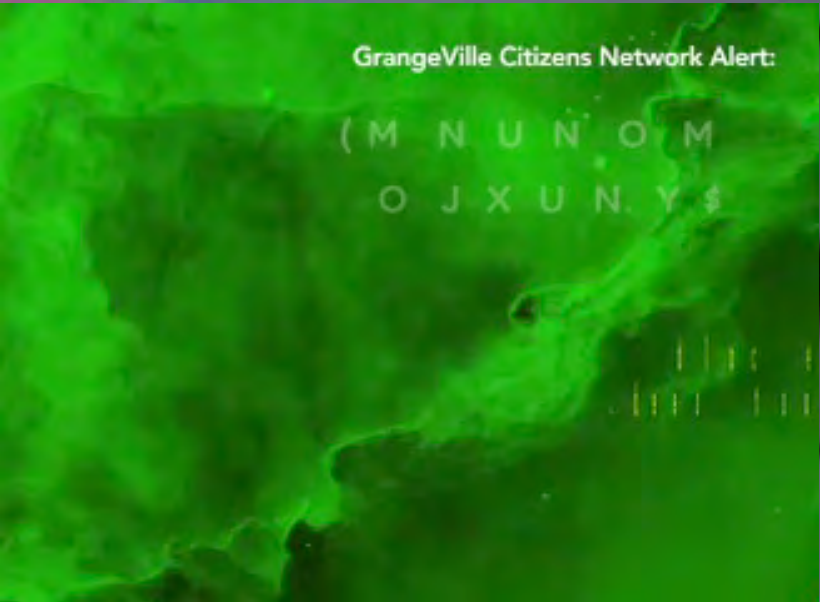
Ben McCammon, Rich Norman, Kelvin Kwong



Design+Foresight at OCAD U  
Tangible Futures, Design Fictions  
in Helen Kerr's Leading Innovation, 2012



Ben McCammon, Rich Norman, Kelvin Kwong





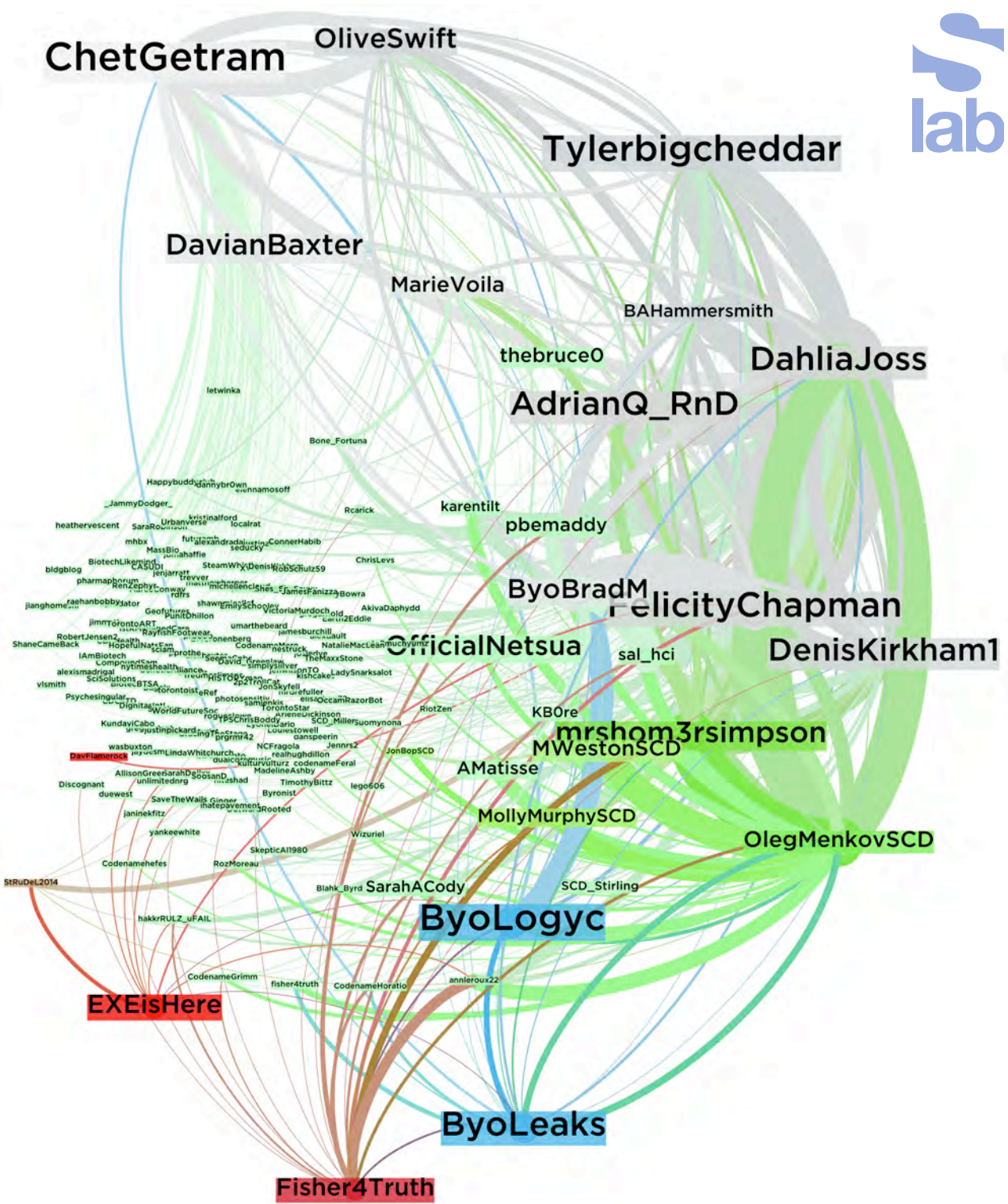
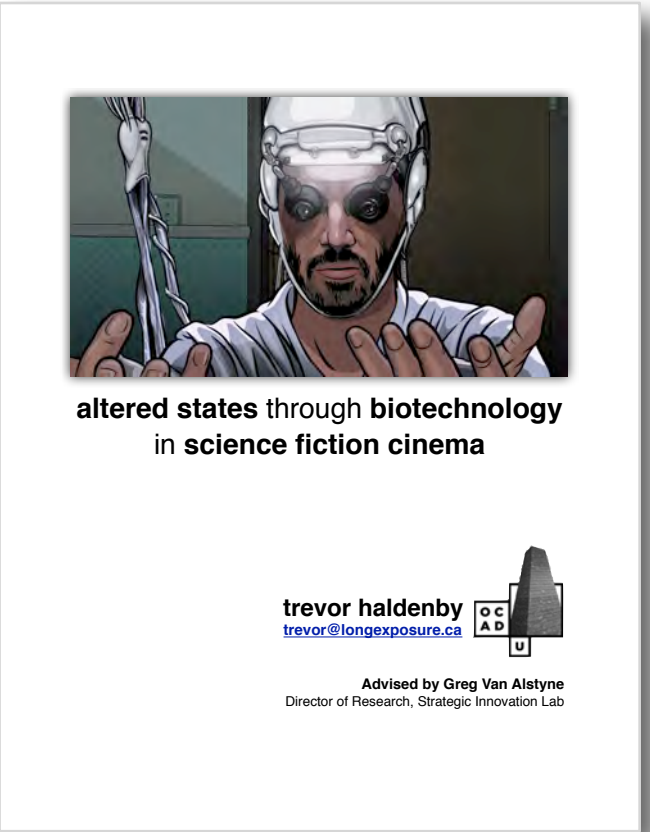


Figure 13: A Gephi visualization depicting the network of interactions on Twitter between ByoLogyc staff (grey), ByoLogyc websites (blue), EXE (red), and ZED.TO participants (green). (2012)<sup>32</sup>

## Critical Design

“Use of speculative design proposals to challenge narrow assumptions, preconceptions and givens about the role products play in everyday life...”

Dunne & Raby. <http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk/content/bydandr/13/0>

## Design Fiction

“The deliberate use of diegetic prototypes to suspend disbelief about change”

Bruce Sterling. [@bruces](#) quoted in [@futryst](#) Stuart Candy [29 Jan](#), 2012

## Science Fiction Prototyping

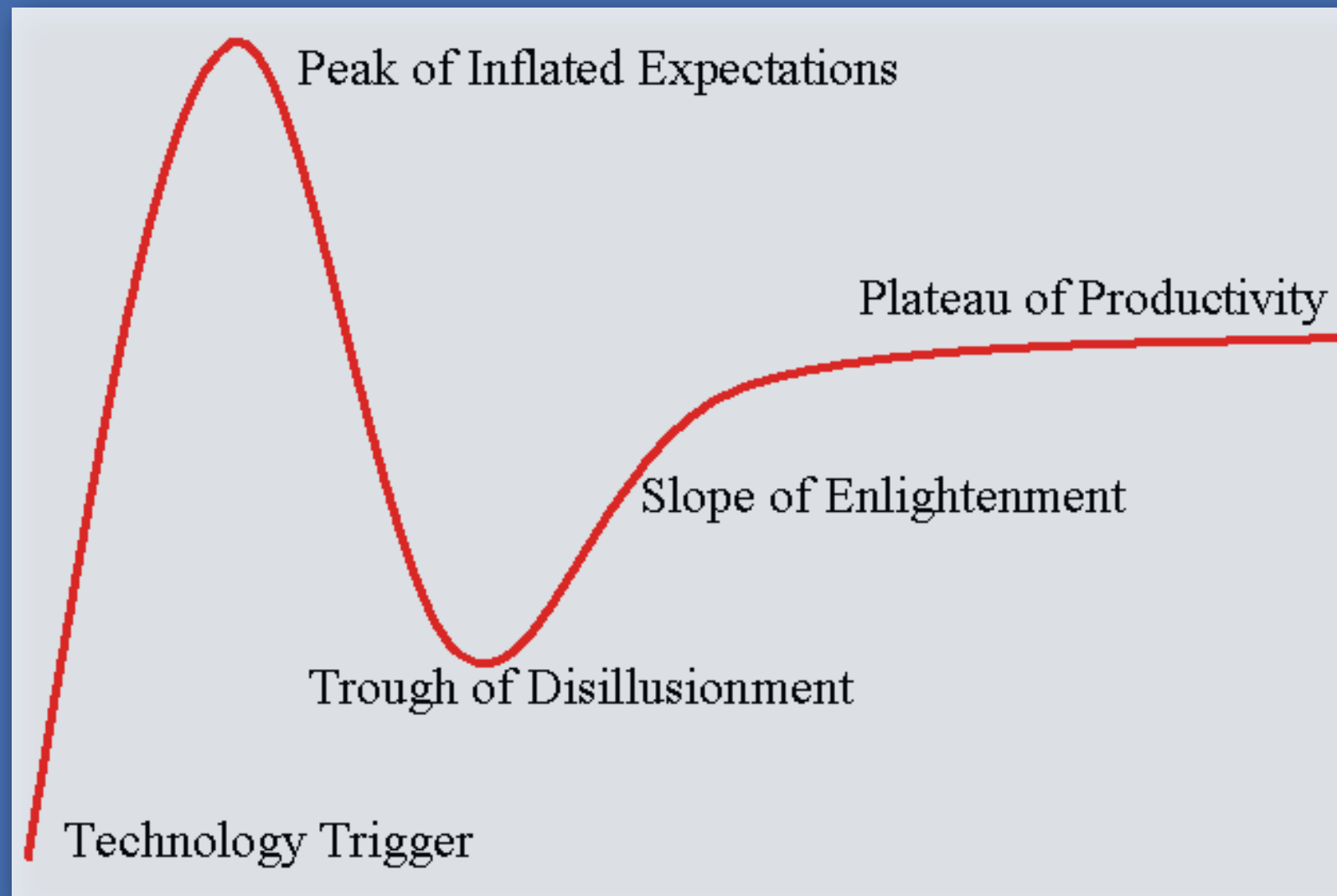
“What if we could use stories, movies and comics as a kind of tool to explore the real world implications and uses of future technologies today?”

Brian David Johnson (2011). *Science fiction prototyping: designing the future with science fiction*. Morgan & Claypool.

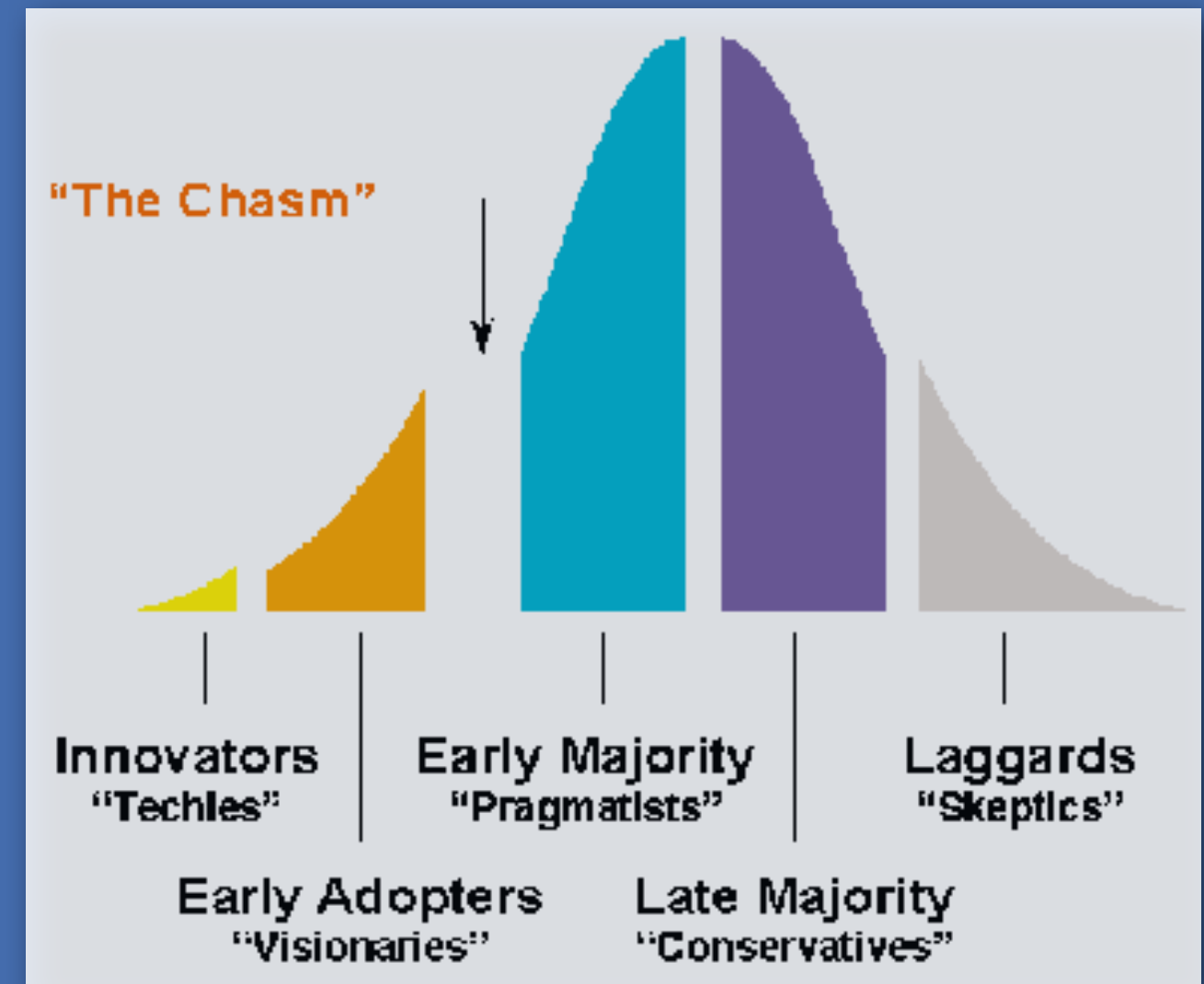


**Q: What comes from risk+design+foresight?**

**A: Overcoming hype; crossing the chasm**



Gartner Hype Cycle



Geoffrey Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*

**Q: What comes from risk+design+foresight?**

**A: Social innovation**

“Optimism is a moral choice, it’s a business choice... which is a healthy progression for change”

@chelseaclinton @clintonfdn #cgi2014



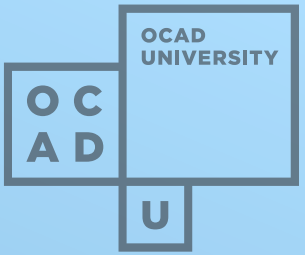


**Q: What comes from risk+design+foresight?**

**A: “Risk design” as strategy**

“By soliciting risks and handling them ostentatiously yet seemingly effortlessly, [Norman Foster’s “Gherkin” building] accrued capital for the clients and the City of London, for the architects and their consultants—and also for **design as a risk management practice**. With each solicitation, gain, & management of risk, the design acquired agency by becoming a stronger branding instrument.”





## Many thanks

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