Dream Society? Ubiquitous Society?
No Society?
Futures for Finland and the world as seen from a small Pacific Island.

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Jim Dator
Hawaii Research Center for Futures Studies
Department of Political Science
University of Hawaii at Manoa
I would like to start by paying my respects to Pentti Malaska and Mika Mannermaa.
They were both wonderful friends, inspiring colleagues, and frequent pranksters and poets who had an enormous influence on my life and thoughts.
I remember them well here in Finland, in Dubrovnik, at various venues around the world, and in Hawaii where they somehow usually managed to bring a "Finnish summer" with them.
It always seemed to be overcast, cool, and rainy when they visited Hawaii,

instead of our normal clear and warm weather. But they never complained.
Well, I am complaining--

they abandoned us too soon,
with too much work remaining to do,

and so the rest of us will just have to work harder
on their behalf.
I have been involved in futures studies for a very long time.
I became interested in futures studies while I was teaching for six years in the College of Law and Politics of Rikkyo University in Tokyo, Japan in the early 1960s.
I taught the first officially-recognized futures course while I was at Virginia Tech in the late 1960s.
I went to the University of Hawaii in 1970, just as something called "Hawaii 2000" was being formed by the governor, legislature, business community and university--
One of the many outcomes of that process was the creation, by the Hawaii State Legislature, of the Hawaii Research Center for Futures Studies, placed at the University of Hawaii, in 1972. I have been Director of that Center since then.
In the mid 1970s, the Department of Political Science, of which I am a member, created a two-year academic and internship MA program in Alternative Futures,
and since then has produced a stream of people who have earned very good livings as consulting futurists
Many also stayed on for a PhD in political science with a focus on alternative futures.
During the 1980s and 90s, I was first Secretary General and then President of the World Futures Studies Federation.
As such I got to see what "the future" looks like in over forty countries of the world.
During the 1970s and 80s, I also taught futures courses every spring in the InterUniversity Center for Postgraduate Studies in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia.
Most importantly, during the 1980s and early 90s I went to almost every Communist nation and talked with people who were interested in a different future from the one then ahead of them.
I can assure you that the future is very different when seen from different cultures and places.
So it is out of forty years of work around the world that I bring you this summary of what futures studies is and is not:
Futures Studies, Planning & Policy-Making, and Administration

Futures Studies is related to but different from Planning and Policy-Making

Just as Planning and Policy-making are related to but different from day-to-day Administration.
Just as day-to-day administration is to be guided by planning and policies, so also should planning and policies be guided by prior futures foresight activities.

Policy-making and planning without prior futures foresight is at best worthless and most likely harmful.
DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION

futures research

planning

administration

TIMELINE & DEGREE OF FLUX

MAGNITUDE OF INTENDED ACTIONS

hrcf
Futures Studies:

Some fundamental principles
Futurists can not

*predict*

THE Future

(No one can)
A prediction is intended to be a true statement an accurate statement about the futures. Once we lived in communities where prediction was possible. Not now!
But futurists can and do forecast Alternative Futures

(and so should you)
A forecast is intended to be a logical statement a useful statement about the futures.
Futures are plural, alternative, diverse, possible: futuribles

Not THE Future but Alternative Futures
Most importantly
futures studies helps you

invent

Preferred Futures
But to be effective
the process of forecasting and envisioning
must be done
continuously
and not be a
one-shot activity
Do not Predict “THE Future”

Forecast “Alternative Futures”

Invent “Preferred Futures”

Continuously
Futures studies as an *academic* and as a *consulting* activity is based on the identification and analysis of

*images* of the futures;
*theories* of social stability and change;
*methods* of social forecasting and design;
continuing *trends*; and
*emerging issues*.
Stages of social evolution and changes in communication technologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Technological Era</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>Pre-speech</td>
<td>Homo Sapiens</td>
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<tr>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Hunting &amp; Gathering</td>
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<td>5,000</td>
<td>Writing</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>?????</td>
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WHAT'S NEXT??
The answer to the question:

*what's next?*

is *always*:

*There are four generic alternative futures.*
Four Generic Alternative Futures

Continued Growth

Collapse

Disciplined Society

Transformational Society
WHAT’S NEXT?
CONTINUED GROWTH?
WHAT’S NEXT?
COLLAPSE?
WHAT’S NEXT?
A DISCIPLINED SOCIETY?
WHAT’S NEXT?
A TRANSFORMATIONAL SOCIETY?
Four Generic Alternative Futures

Continued Growth

Collapse

Disciplined Society

Transformational Society
Grow
(The official view of the future everywhere)
Collapse
(The future of our nightmares and growing concerns)
Discipline
(Sustaining fundamental values and avoiding collapse)
Transform
(Evolving towards posthumans, new life, and NotEarth)
Please note that we did not "make up" these four generic futures.

They are not products of our imagination.
They are products of years of empirical research on the huge number of images of the futures that exist in our minds, our stories, our movies, our strategic plans, our daily actions.
All of the billions of images of the futures that exist in the world are variations of one of the four generic alternative futures or some combination of the four.
It is clear that Continued Economic Growth is the official future for most of the world.
I am very eager to learn if it is different here,
there is only
One Future
being discussed in the United States

and in most of the part of the world
I am most familiar with--
Japan, Korea, China, Southeast Asia.
Obama and Romney both argue over who can get the economy growing again.
Neither expresses the slightest doubt that the economy can, should, and will grow again.
There is nothing in the words of any American politician, or business leader, or university president, or economist...
who is quoted in
*The New York Times*

or any other American newspaper
or on any television station
to make anyone doubt

that the recession will be over
and that growth will start again,

if we just follow
the right policies.
Absolutely nothing came out of *Rio+20* in June 2012 to indicate otherwise.
Few leaders from any of the major countries attended,

and there was nothing in the final report pointing to any serious concerns for the futures.
If we will just let the market place do its magic without hindrance from some monster called "government",
then all will be well.
What do you think?
I was asked by the people who invited me here to say something about the *Ubiquitous Society*, something you already know a lot about.
And of course there are
Four Futures for
a U-Society:
One U-Society will emerge from the continuation of the dominant economic trends from the past.
It will be a marvelous electronic world

--led by Nokia
it goes without saying--
with friendly, alert, helpful, benign chips

in the environment

in our clothing

in our bodies

all around us,
guiding us, helping us, keeping us well,
making us lawful,

and making lots of money,
while providing lots of jobs
for everyone
forever.
Well,
maybe so.
In fact, it must be so since it appears everyone believes that.

Or at least everyone says that.
Well, to be truthful

not everyone

says that.
There is a version of *Continued Growth of a U-Society* which looks at the dark side of the technology.
One can make a very, very strong case for the dark side.
Especially in the United States, where the inhabitants of

the land of the free
and the home of the brave

seem,
since September 2001,
to welcome eagerly
every possible technology
of surveillance,
control,
and
"protection."
Our new national anthem is the old song by Police:
Every breath you take
And every move you make
Every bond you break, every step you take
I'll be watching you

Every single day
And every word you say
Every game you play, every night you stay
I'll be watching you
But that's OK.

This version of the U-Society still makes money for electronic manufacturers, so what's the worry?
Privacy is a very new --and now obsolete-- notion anyway.
Almost everything that I have read or heard about the Ubiquitous Society is a variation of those two versions of Continued Growth.
But there are other futures for a U-Society.
Collapse.
The collapse of the kind of society with the kinds of resources and institutions that enable any kind of a Ubiquitous Society.
I have spent a lot of time thinking about collapse.
Trying to determine how to make collapse a good thing! a wonderful opportunity! something we should welcome and embrace!

Since it may be coming, whether we like it or not.
How about you?
Are you concerned about what I call

*The Unholy Trinity, Plus One*

that may be leading to social and environmental collapse?
I call it the Unholy Trinity because, like the Christian Holy Trinity, it is three entities that are actually one.
People may focus on one, and ignore the other two---

or they may expect the other two to solve the problems of the one they worry about.
But they are all related.

One can not be understood without understanding the others.
The Unholy Trinity metaphor illustrates our tragedy:

three looming, interrelated, but ignored (as a unity) issues.
1) the end of abundant and cheap oil with no replacement in sight,

in spite of current declarations to the contrary;
2) the necessity of dealing with neglected environmental issues, such as global climate change, sea-level rise, water scarcity, soil depletion, and much more; and
3) the collapse in 2007 of the global economic system based on advertising and complex debt instruments that enabled a few people to amass enormous fictitious "wealth" unrelated to market factors of actual demand and supply.
"Plus One"

refers to the fundamental inability of most governments to deal effectively with these issues,

because of decades of insults, tax-starving, indebtedness, and down-sizing.
In light of the Unholy Trinty
Plus One,

It is very hard to see how
a U-Society
based on
Continued Economic Growth
is possible.
We all need to learn how to fish, farm and shoot.
No!
others say.
There is still time.
We need to abandon
Continued Economic Growth
and build instead
a Sustainable Society

a Conserver Society

a Disciplined Society
We need Green Growth!
or no growth at all of the conventional kind.
These words are often heard.
But, it may be too late.
Many people argued for a Conserver Society 40 years ago,
when we had time
to move from oil to renewable energy,
to stop population growth,
to prevent climate change,
to invent a real, fair economy.
But it seems too late now.

We are in now living in the future we were warned about then,
even though there will be many more changes ahead.
Some of you may remember when I was here before many years ago.

I was speaking then of a Transformational Society
a High Tech Transformation
driven by

robots, artificial intelligence, autonomous beings, posthumans, transhumans
I have not abandoned the Transformational Society

That is my preferred future.
Consider my name:

Dator.
Yes!

I AM

a computer.

I am not a human being
I am a human becoming a post human.
I yearn for a Dream Society

a world of dreams, icons, and aesthetic experience.
That is the kind of Ubiquitous Society I want:

A Dream Society!
as the American poet Richard Brautigan wrote years ago
I like to think (and the sooner the better!) of a cybernetic meadow where mammals and computers live together in mutually programming harmony like pure water touching clear sky.
I like to think
(right now, please!)
of a cybernetic forest
filled with pines and electronics
where deer stroll peacefully
past computers
as if they were flowers
with spinning blossoms.
I like to think
(it has to be!)
of a cybernetic ecology
where we are free of our labors
and joined back to nature,
returned to our mammal
brothers and sisters,
and all watched over
by machines of loving grace.
I am still hopeful that such a Transformational Future is possible.
That we will have the energy, imagination, and will to create a Ubiquitous Society that merges life with nonlife and transcends both in peaceful harmony.
Pentti Malaska wrote:
Time flows to the present from two directions
from the past--as accomplished deeds and material manifestations, as can be perceived, and
from the future--as our aims, intentions and ideas as conceived.
At the present they mold together and form our reality.
Mika Mannermaa wrote:
In the not-so-distant future
I can sit on the shore
of a remote mountain river
in Lapland
with the whole world in my pocket.
I don't have to wait for anything, because I live in a world of Instantism.
Maybe I'll spend this day reading through Dostojevski's whole production, or maybe, all of Harry Potter instead.
I can visit the Louvre
or watch all the episodes of the TV series
*Friends*,

or at least the earlier better ones.
I will spend some time with my alter egos in various virtual versums.
In the evening
I want to meet my children
in our virtual cottage.
But today?
I will catch the big one!
Mika was correct:
Surf's up!
It is time for all of us to prepare to surf some very big tsunami.
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