Tools for governance

The purpose of the game is not really to predict the future,
but to discover the issues you need to be thinking about.
War Game simulation POLITICO, Fort Meade, 4-5 march 2009.

A group of agents or planners who want to lead an action in a sector of political, economic or community activity needs to use an effective planning tool. This means a systematic process in which the action is integrated thanks to a network of connected participants, and in which the strategy aims to respond to a challenge with innovation. A strategy is a plan of action interrelated with logistics and chronological plans aimed at attaining specific objectives.

On the world scene, current turbulence and complexity is likely to amplify and intensify over the next decade because the actual decision makers are incapable of managing for the long term. It's not globalisation per se which is responsible for our problems but our incapacity to manage and civilize this new force. Actually, when a moment of accountability is publicly acknowledged by the mainstream media (*for example, the environmental issues following the highly publicised campaign carried out by Al Gore*), the authorities organise an international meeting which generates recommendations which these directors are generally incapable of holding up afterwards. One month later, another crisis in another area (*energy for example*), displaces media attention. From one crisis to the next, our society manages itself towards impasse because of a lack of effective tools capable of managing the complexity of our new world.

Currently it is as if our eyes were no longer able to see the rapid changes taking place : we *suddenly* realized that the ice floes melt faster than before or that the economic system *abruptly* ran into the ground hurling millions of people into unemployment. It was as if our brains were unable to comprehend the implications of the changes underway: physical change (*water, oil, forest,* etc.), systemic change (*health, economy*, etc), and others more societal (*shifting populations, generational intermingling*, etc). We have not yet mastered the speed at which the 21st century is unfolding, not so much this or that change but the more complex of multiple spontaneous changes. Everything that happens as if we were incapable of deciphering one element from another (North vs South, West vs East, good vs terrorists, etc). Is it a

legacy of binary thinking inherited from the previous industrial era ? We think OR when we ought to think AND, to consider the multi-cause. For example, the effects of wild capitalism AND global warming AND the danger approaching coastal inhabitants AND the enormous cost of their relocation.

We lack the tools necessary to manage the complexity of the emerging world, i.e. developing tools allowing for the thinking in terms of multiple, capable of putting things in perspective, offering, notable, a better knowledge and foresight of risk.

A meta-tool for multifactorial analysis

Meta means *above the actual situation,* or in other words attainment of a higher level which will allow for a more complete vision of the big picture through studying and taking account of various factors. And because a rupture is a period in which society is in search of meaning, a meta-tool for governance should be able to offer up a synthesis of millions of pieces of information gathered to support the process of making decisions.

Here is a comparison between the six stages used by existing methods (*on the left*) and those of the proposed meta-tool (*on the right*) :

Traditional tool :	**Meta-tool :**
1- Objective	**Objective**
Addresses continuity with the past	Addresses the rupture with the past with the past
2- Inventory	**Inventory**
Gathering local data	Offers a global vision
Identifying needs	Hierarchy of needs
	System of alerts and monitoring
	Contextual filters by keywords
3- Analysis	**Analysis**
Unidimensional	Tridimensional : tech. + economics + society
Formal sources	Use of formal sources and more often informal resources
4- Synthesis	**Schemas and synthesis**
Text-based synthesis	Balance sheet of knowledge in the area
	Development of schema that offer a dynamic vision of the process

5- Validation	**Validation**
Opinions from people	Exchanges
in a specific area	in networks
Major trends	Majors trends nd weak signals
	Intervention by champions and experts
	Development of consensus
6- Decision-making	**Decision-making**
One scenario	Scenarios (black, shades of grey, or rosy)
Choice of innovations	Governance strategies (short-term to long-term)

Tracking trends to see where we are, understand how we got there and foresee where we're going, Gerard Celente, The Trends Research Institute.

Because we can't resolve our current problems using the same approaches that created those problems, a meta-tool is needed that uses new ways to think and act :

- The beginning of a rupture

  the analysis of objectives should take account of the fact that we live in a society in the process of rupture. This offers new points of reference more or less well identified, and for which a group should consider during its reflection (see « The rupture »).

- A global vision

  We cannot become aware of situations which become global by studying local phenomena one by one. *In all complex systems, attacking an isolated element or symptom usually brings about a deterioration of the system as a whole* (Forrester's First Law) Therefore we should from the beginning adopt a global vision before acting on the local level. This is the *glocal* concept (*global+local*).

- The three dimensions

  Because of the new levels of complexity in which all of the elements seem interrelated, each dossier should be analysed according to all three major dimensions : *technology, economics* and *society* (see at the end).

- Using concept map

  If writing is good at bringing forth the details, a schematic rendering of an issue allows us to better observe the dynamics of trends or forces that are currently at work. The schema stimulates an intuition based on the sets of information the eye and brain perceive using pattern recognition.

• A constellation-like network

A system of bottom-up exchanges in which all participants express themselves.

• Consensus

We validate beginnings by establishing the consensus amongst participants. In fact, consensus is the value added to process.

• Scenarios

Consensus is based on multiple scenarios (*short-medium-long term* or *black-grey-rosy*). A scenario is created based on the hypotheses held by a group. It's a pulling together of factors which reveals and analyses uncertainties and risks. The chosen scenarios then become strategies, or in other words, the taking of decisions.

We define a meta-tool for governance as being an engineering for being together based on shared knowledge using on a common model. These tools are now accessible because Internet 2 enables the integration of *social networking, concept mapping, mashups, crowdsourcing, data and text mining*, and various *linguistic analysis tools* etc.

Be concrete, please !

Not used to fundamental and deep reflection about the long-term, our current decision makers, whether they are administrators or politicians, generally find that the meta-tools to which we refer are not pragmatic enough. Often seized with urgency, most of them want recipes that they can use immediately, even if long-term the solution will not be viable.

Here are twelve points of reference extracted from the preceding sections which can serve as an evaluation matrix for a plan or a project to be realised in a post-industrial society.

The technological dimensions

1- Digital

It will permit the integration of all the elements of a system, thus the development of an hybrid approach essential for new networks.

2- Conviviality

It will principally permit the use of timesaving, or the development of pervasive computing offering a greater conviviality.

3- Visualisation

It is directly related to the development of an attention economy.

4- High-speed broadband

It permits the distribution of music files and videos which, in the future, will be more and more numerous.

The economic dimensions

5- Added value

In reaction to the major trend of personalisation it will permit the emergence of new markets.

6- Volume

The key to the establishment of profit margins.

7- Participation

The encouragement of the creation of content by amateur will enrich the system.

8- Intellectual property rights

A fair remuneration of professional content creators will enrich the system.

The societal dimensions

9- Multiculturalism

Thanks to multiculturalism and plurilinguism, it will permit horizontal communications amongst various groups.

10- Georeferencing

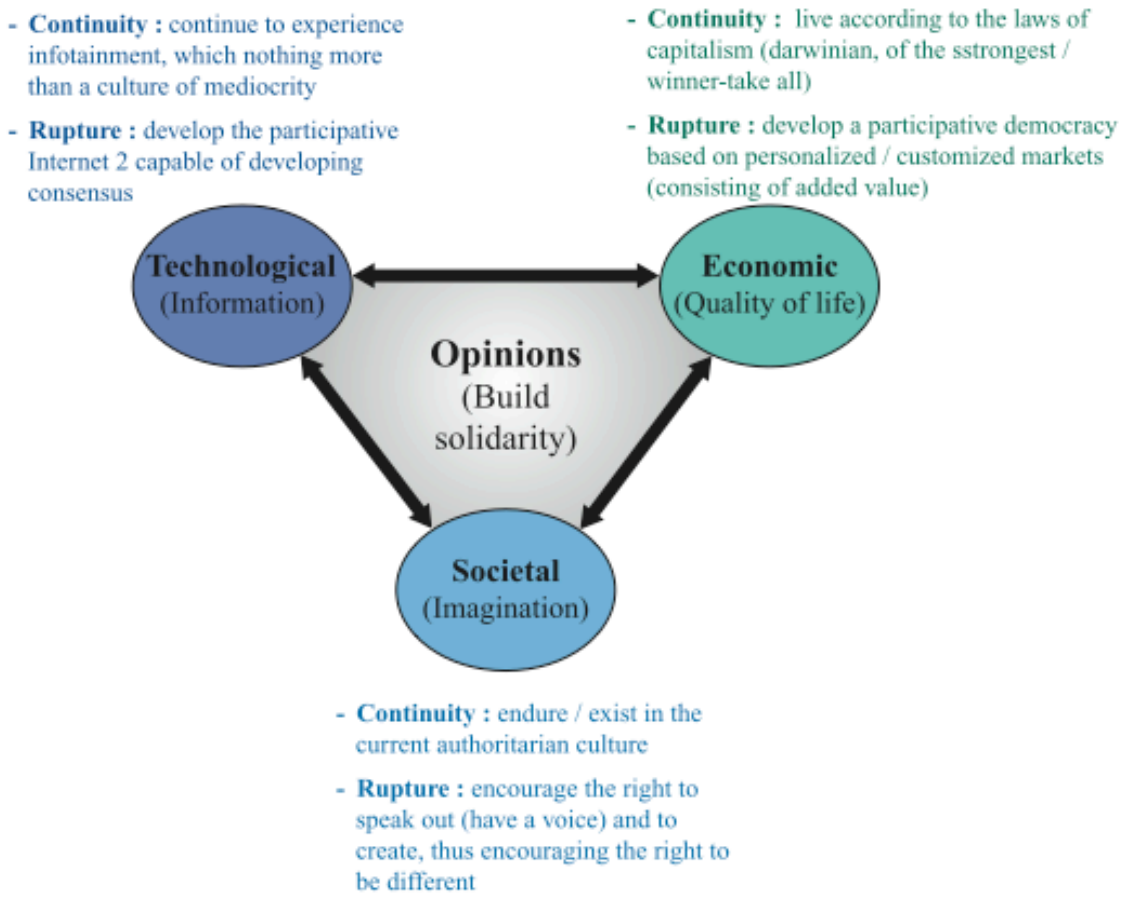
It will permit a customer-centric approach which is at the heart of the new economy.

11- Customisation

It will permit the reorganisation of the notion of inventories, the zero-inventory approach.

12- Interest groups

They will enable the development of robust social networks, by a bottom-up approach.



Postindustrial 11 : for a multi-dimensional reading of the new society …

The schema above allows us to visualise the embryo of a model for a post-industrial society. This should develop based on the opinion of the actors in that society; opinions which create the necessary foundations for real change. These opinions will emerge from collectively-developed consensus in groups where information is processed; hence the model's name ***– the knowledge-based society.***

The activities in this society should no longer be studied in isolation but rather via an analysis using three pillars, each reacting in function of the other two. This will be a way to understand the existing linkages between the battles which are now starting :

- *Technology : battles of content and services*
- *Economics : battles of territories etand markets*
- *Society : battles of culture and language*

In this new society, the actors will have the choice between strategies that maintain ***continuity*** *with the past or that address the* ***rupture*** *with the past (see above).*