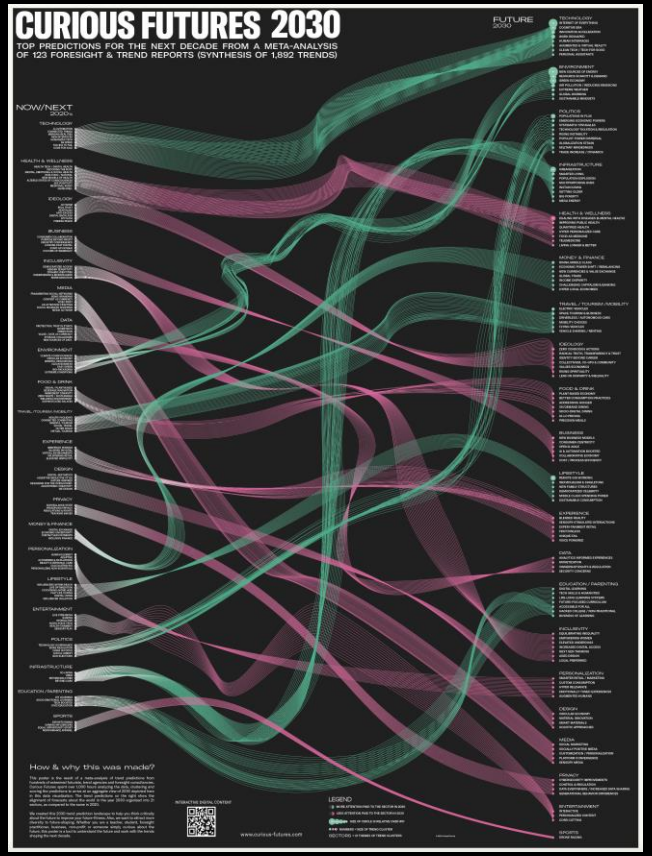


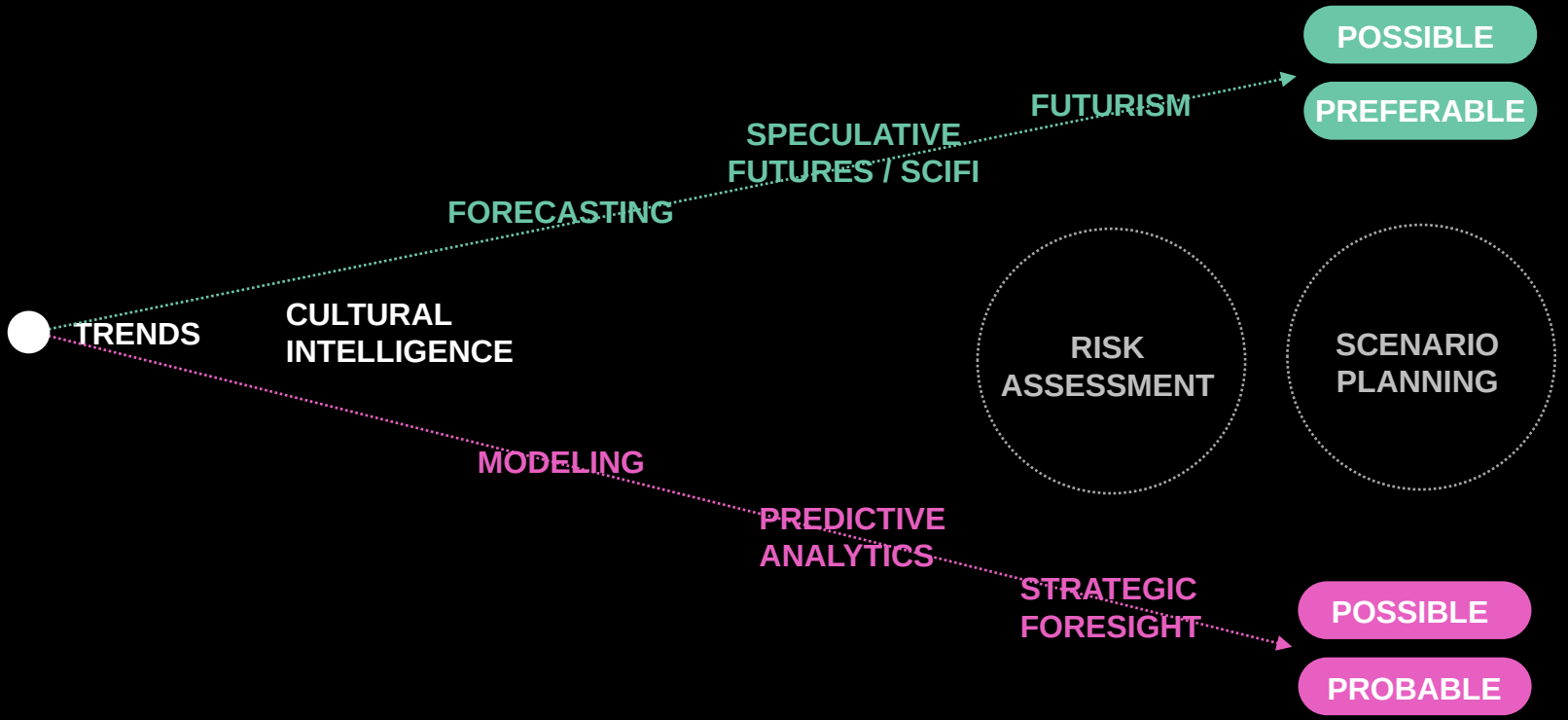
10 HABITS OF A QUANT FUTURIST

Sarah DaVanzo

VP Insight & Foresight

L'ORÉAL GROUPE

FUTURES FIELD



F**CKTURE

Harvard Business Review
Don't Let Power Corrupt You 94
AI Regulation Is Coming 102
Unconscious Bias Training That Works 112
HBR.ORG
September–October 2021
The Future-Proof Organization
Rebuild your workforce for the post-pandemic world. 41
PLUS:
Is the world better because your company is in it?
The Net Positive Manifesto by Paul Polman and Andrew Winston 124

70%

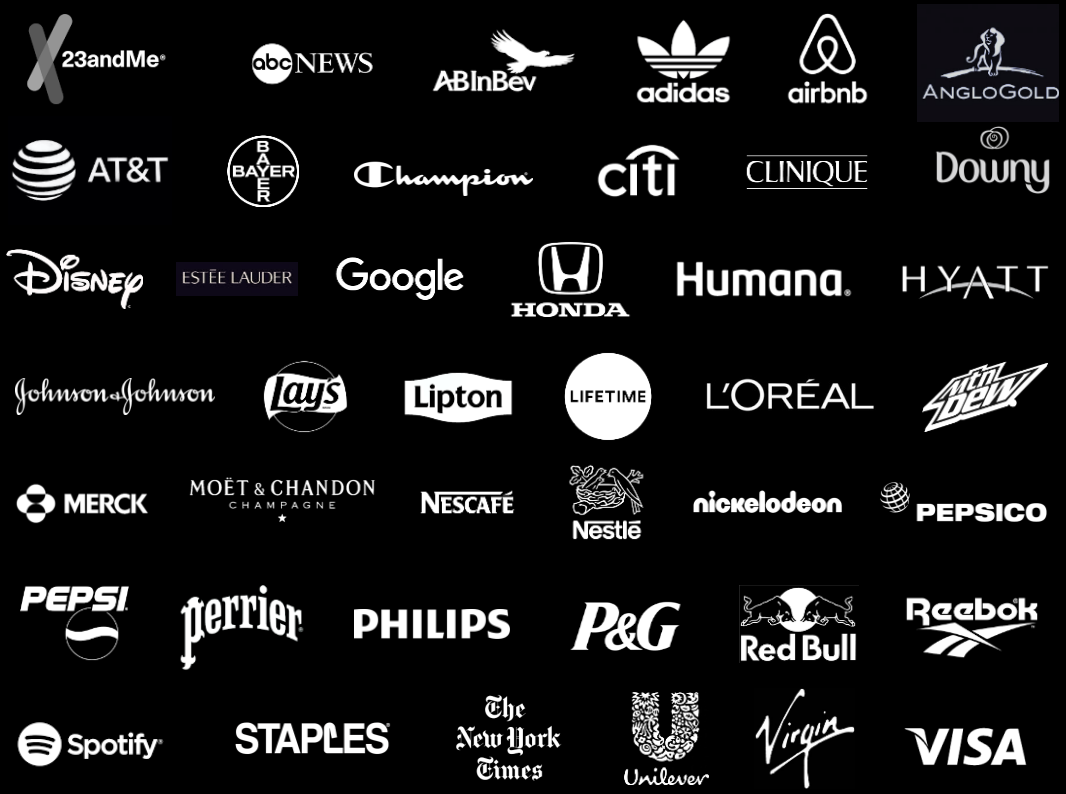
ACCURACY

70%

SUPERFORECASTER

FUTURES WITH…

FUTURES FOR…

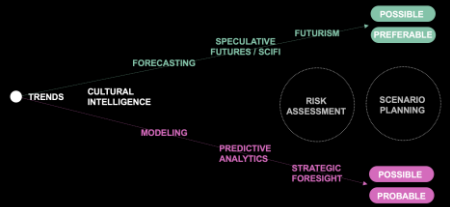

23andMe
abc NEWS
ABInBev
adidas
airbnb
ANGLOGOLD
AT&T
BAYER
Champion
citi
CLINIQUE
Downy
Disney
ESTĒE LAUDER
Google
HONDA
Humana.
HYATT
Johnson & Johnson
Lay's
Lipton
LIFETIME
L'ORÉAL
MERCK
MOËT & CHANDON
CHAMPAGNE
NESCAFÉ
Nestlé
nickelodeon
PEPSICO
PEPSI
Perrier
PHILIPS
P&G
Red Bull
Reebok
Spotify
STAPLES
The New York Times
Unilever
Virgin
VISA

U.S.
DEPT OF
DEFENSE
DARPA

FUTURES IN…

A-s
AdAge
adforum
ADWEEK
BAZAAR
BNN
BUSINESS NEWS NETWORK
campaign
The Drum
FAST COMPANY
Forbes
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Guardian
Inc.
International Business Times
MSNBC
BBC
Mashable
MediaPost
msnbc
The New York Times
THE OPRAH MAGAZINE
STYLUS
TED
TIME
WIRED
WWD

FUTURES INFLUENCE…



Future of Skin

Future of Hair

Future of Health

Future of Green Science

Future of Beauty

Future of Clean

Future of DIY

Future of Performance

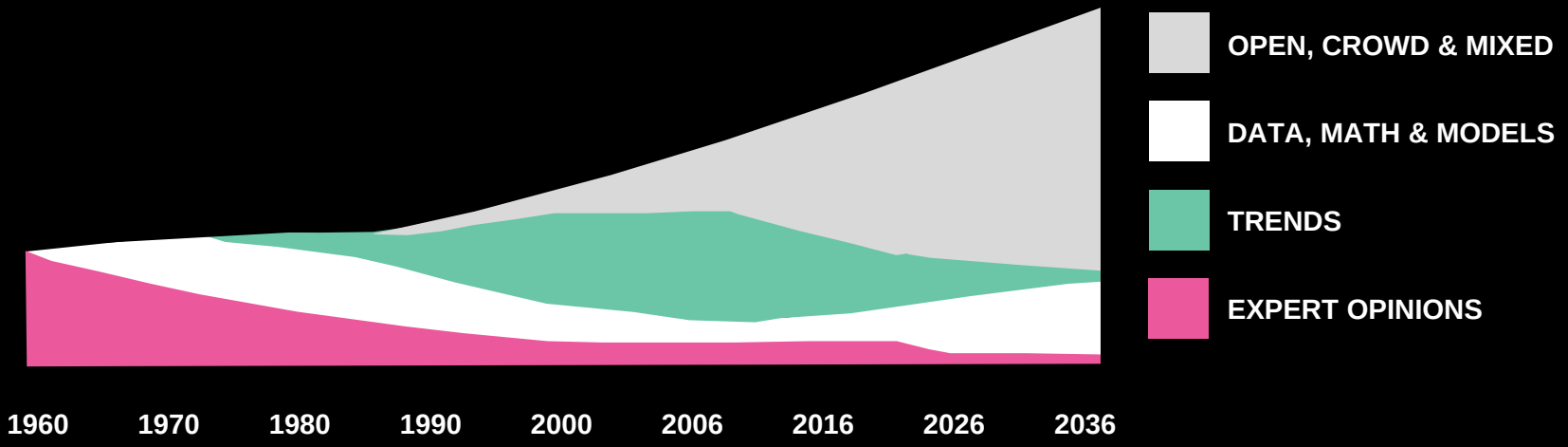
Future of America

Future of Diversity & Inclusivity

L'ORÉAL GROUPE

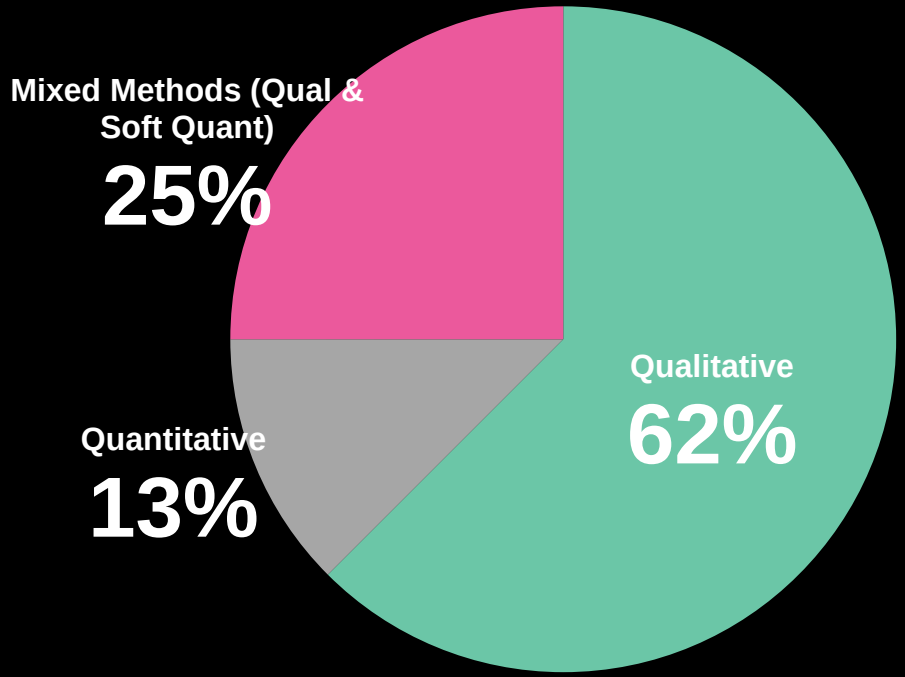
- STRATEGY
- R&D
- INNOVATION
- M&A
- OPERATIONS
- INVESTMENT

METHODS EVOLVING



Source: Cornelia Dalheim, German & European Foresight Methods

METHODS SKEW QUAL



- Expert Interviews
- Talking with Trendspotters
- Workshops & Brainstorms
- Desk Research
- Back-casting
- Reading SciFi

Source: The Knowledge Base of Futures Studies 2020 (APF)

QUANT DELIVERS ACCURACY

ACCURACY IS THE #1 KPI OF FUTURES WORK

MORE DATA FROM
MORE SOURCES

MORE DIVERSITY,
LESS BIAS

MORE DOTS TO
CONNECT

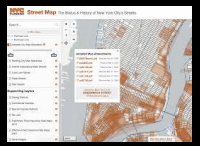
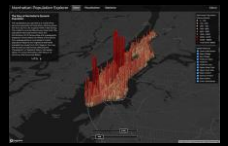
MORE PATTERNS
TO RECOGNIZE

1

CAST
(A WIDE NET)

SIGNAL MINING / SCANNING SIGNALS

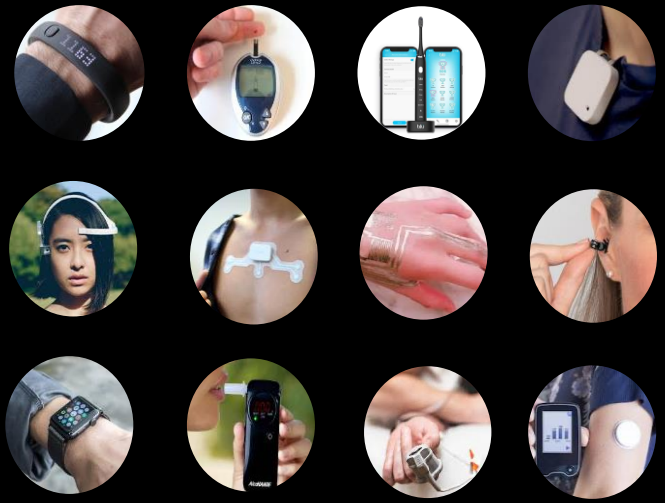
Local & Global
Past & Present
Quant & Qual
Primary & Secondary
Online & Offline

FREE

MORE DATA SOURCES

QUANTIFIED SELF

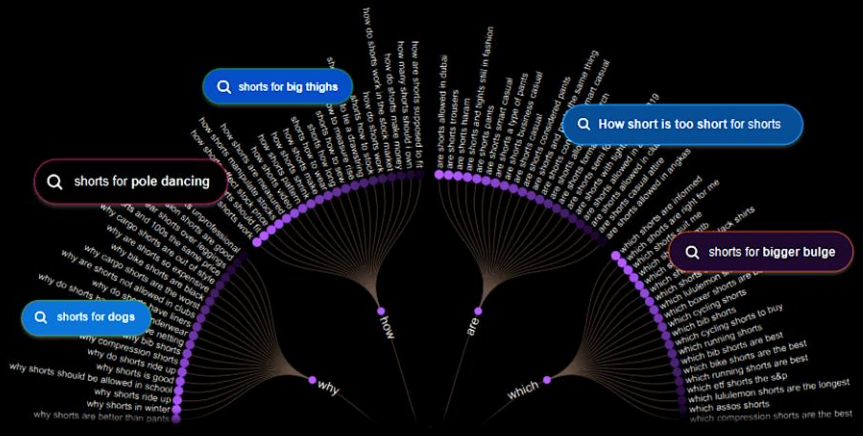


INTERNET OF THINGS

2

CROWD

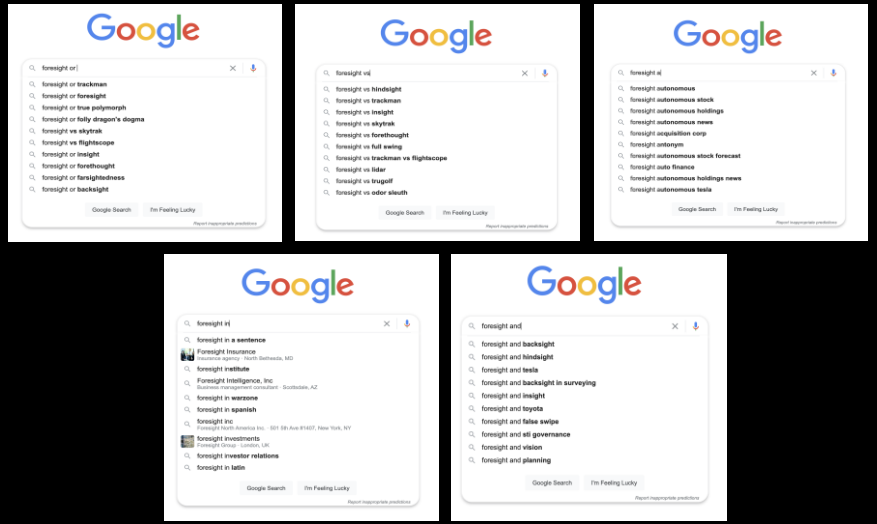
SEARCH QUESTIONS



The types of questions people ask about a topic reveal topic maturity and stickiness.

FREE

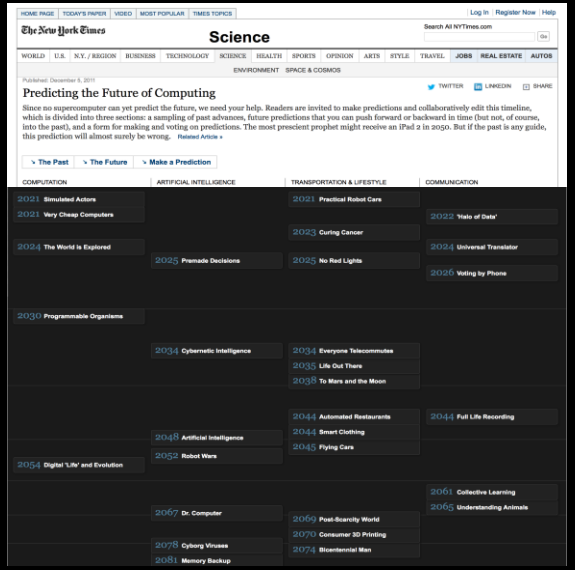
AUTO-COMPLETES



FREE

Autocompletes on web browsers (Google, Bing, AOL, Safari, etc.) show natural language and most popular searches.

FUTURE WIKIS

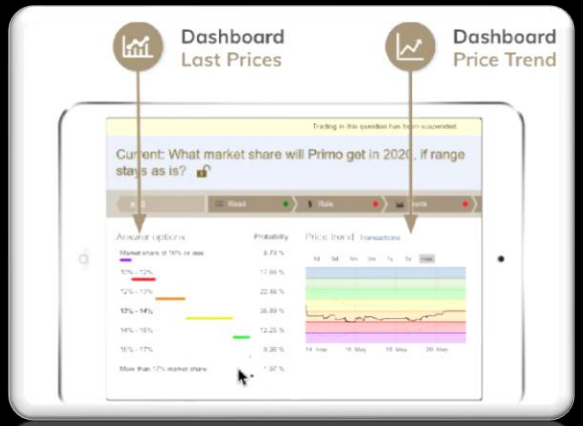


Source: New York Times

FREE

Open-sourced crowd-populated future timeline predictions.

DELPHI SURVEY TECHNIQUE

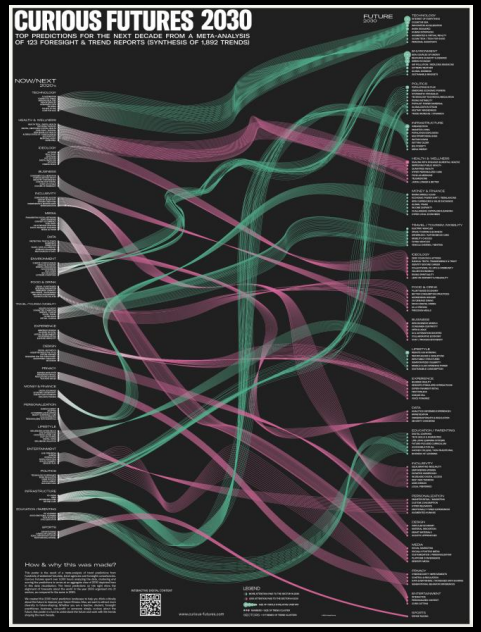


Sources: eDelphi.org, Prediki

FREE

Delphi platforms use Bayesian theory to survey experts with quant & qual questions aggregating predictions to arrive at a quantified consensus.

AGGREGATE TREND REPORTS



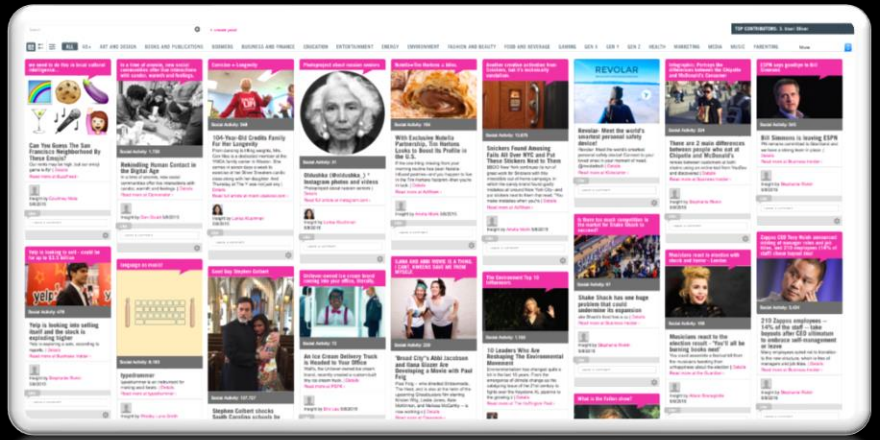
Sources: Curious-Futures.com

Collect free trends reports from reputable futures experts and synthesize them into a meta-analysis.

3

CLASSIFY

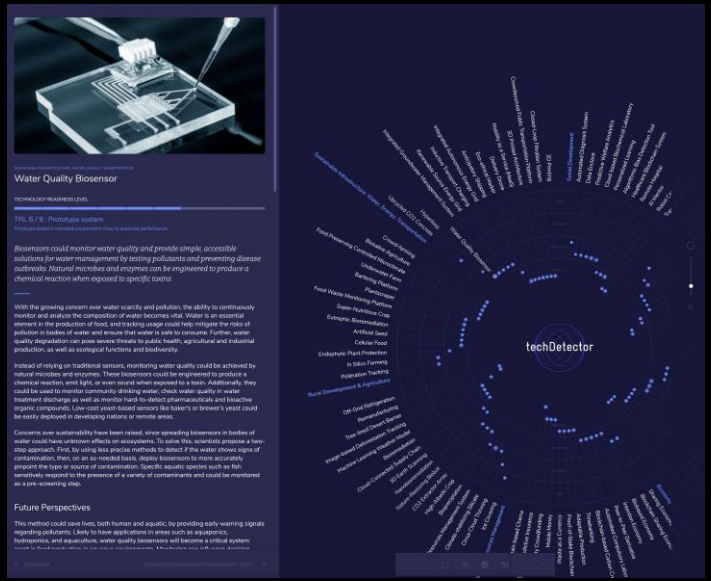
SIGNAL DATABASE



Source: Sharpr.com

Pieces of data (signals) need to be organized & tagged in a digital Knowledge Management platform, to bring structure to all the unstructured data.

TECH DATABASE



Source: envisioning.io, https://techdetector.de

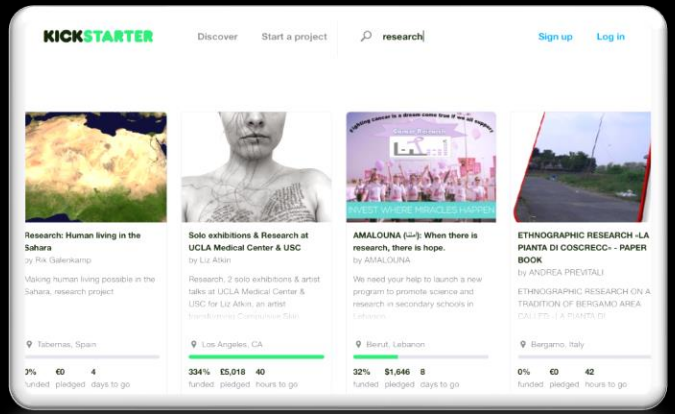
FREE

Database of tech based on TRL (Technological Readiness Level) originally created by NASA to evaluate space technologies.

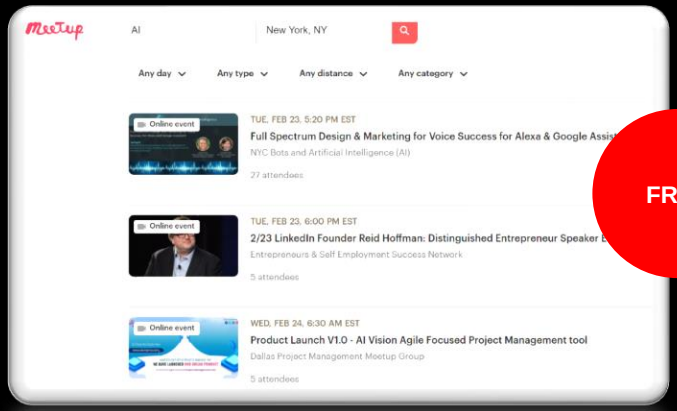
4
COUNT

START-UPS / MEET-UPS

KICKSTARTER



Meetup

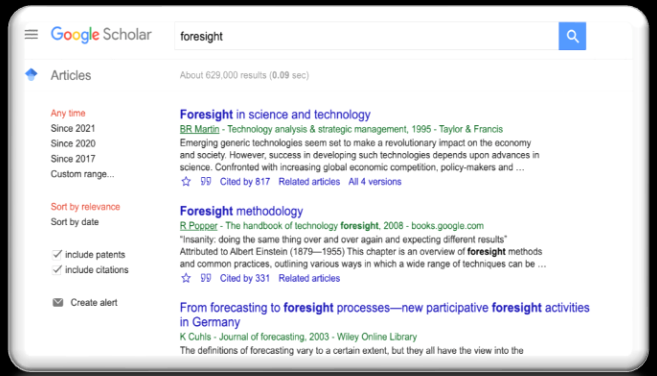


FREE

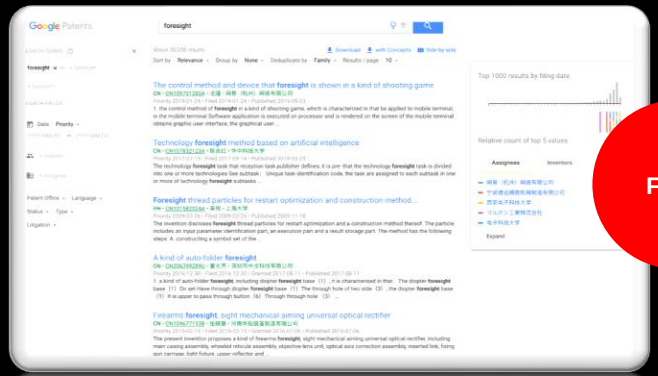
Counting the number of themes and comparing the sizes of themes in start-up and meet-up groups.

PATENTS & PAPERS

Google Scholar



Google Patents



Counting the number of themes and comparing the sizes of themes in patents and monographs.

PATENTS & PAPERS

Google Scholar

	2008-2009	2018-2019	%
Antioxidant	4,440	9,610	+116%
Psychodermatology	282	446	+58%
Immunity	790,000	285,000	-64%
Yoga	37,600	70,400	+87%
Supplements	1,030,000	247,000	-76%
Mindfulness	16,400	77,200	+371%

Google Patents

	2008-2009	2018-2019	%
Antioxidant	27,530	136,725	+397%
Psychodermatology	26	22	-18%
Immunity	100,438	145,262	+45%
Yoga	737	26,361	+3477%
Supplements	148,619	135,828	-9%
Mindfulness	148,619	25,523	-83%

The Numbers of Patents and Papers Over Time Shows Relative Size of Trends and Anticipated Future Trend Prediction (i.e., Stickiness of a Trend)

SOCIAL VOLUME

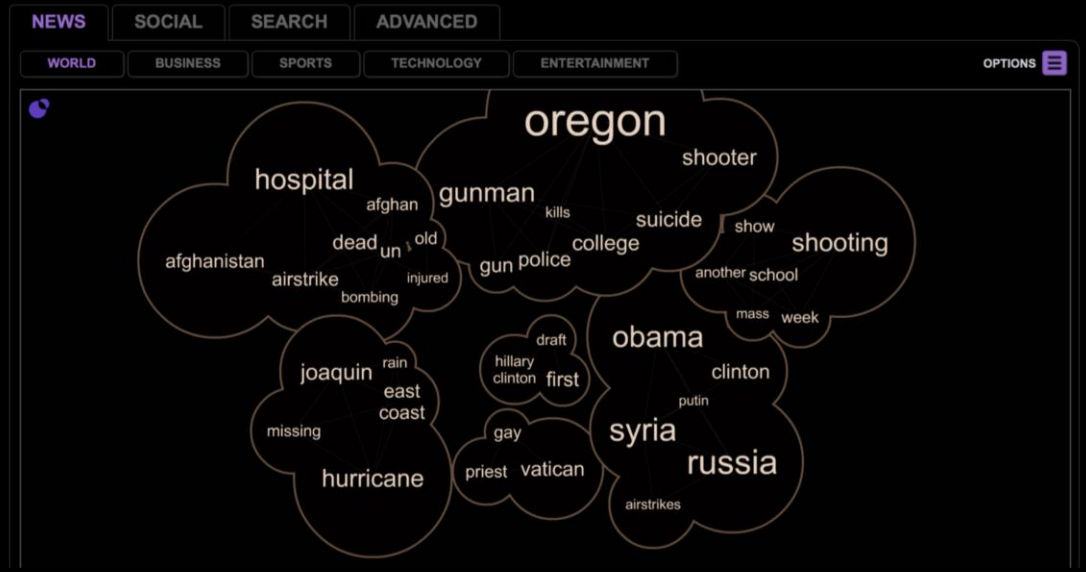
Source: Sizing of topics across social, blogs & news (ENFLUX)

Box sizes reflects relative social volume (interest) amongst early adopters of 12 consumer segments.

5

CLUSTER

SOCIAL CHATTER CLUSTERS

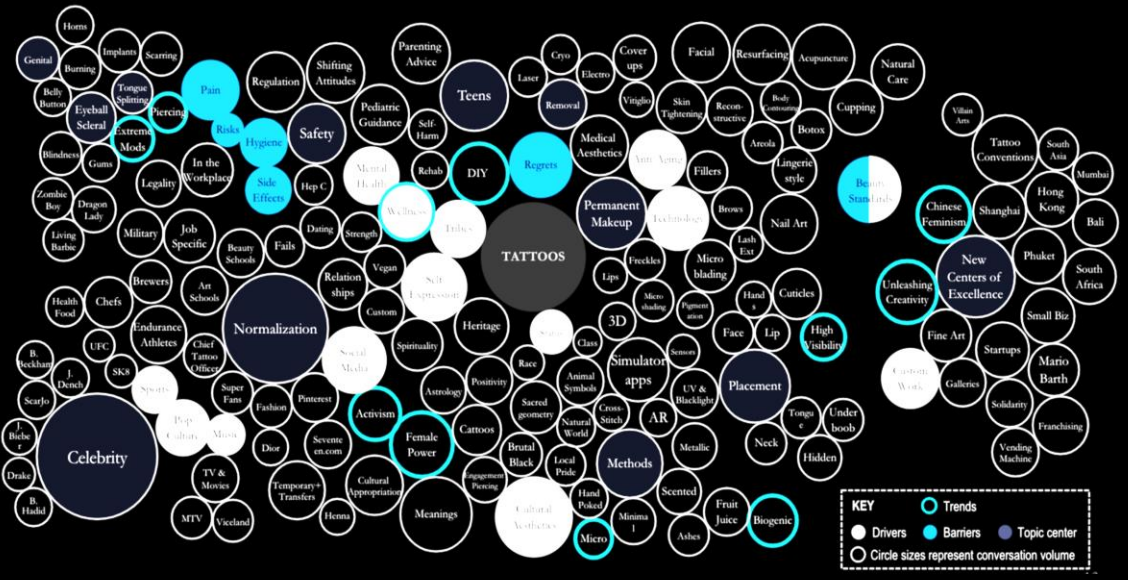


Source: Infomous

Social chatter visualized in bubble clusters, show proximity and relative size of topics.

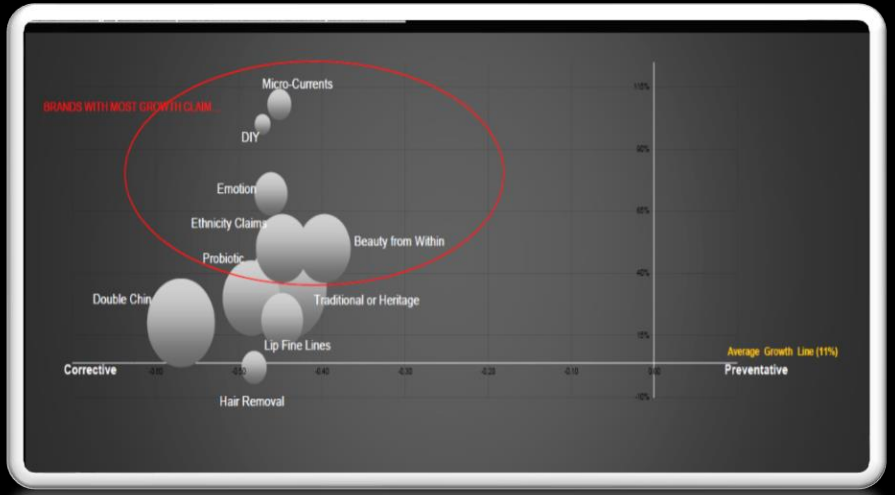
FREE

TOPIC CLUSTERS



Circle size reflects relative size of opportunities based on VC investment, patents, monographs, start-ups and social media of trend-setters

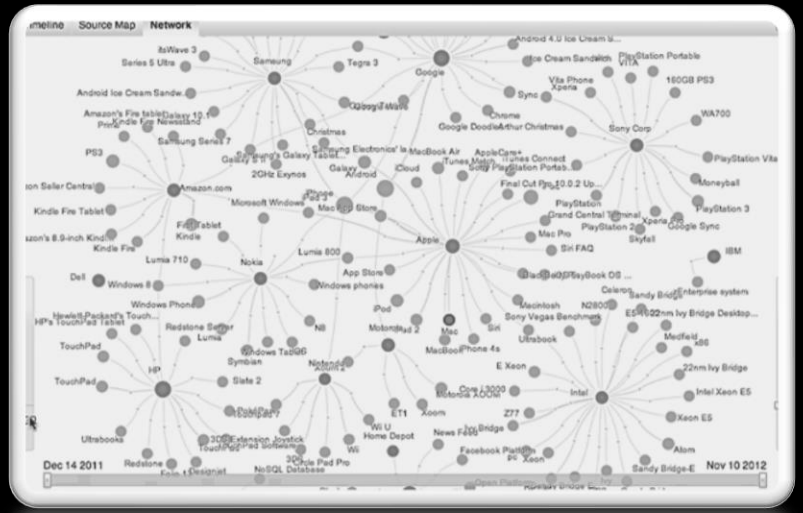
LAUNCH CLUSTERS



Source: MINTEL / GNPD

Clusters of new product launches with similar claims, size and proximity of bubbles matter.

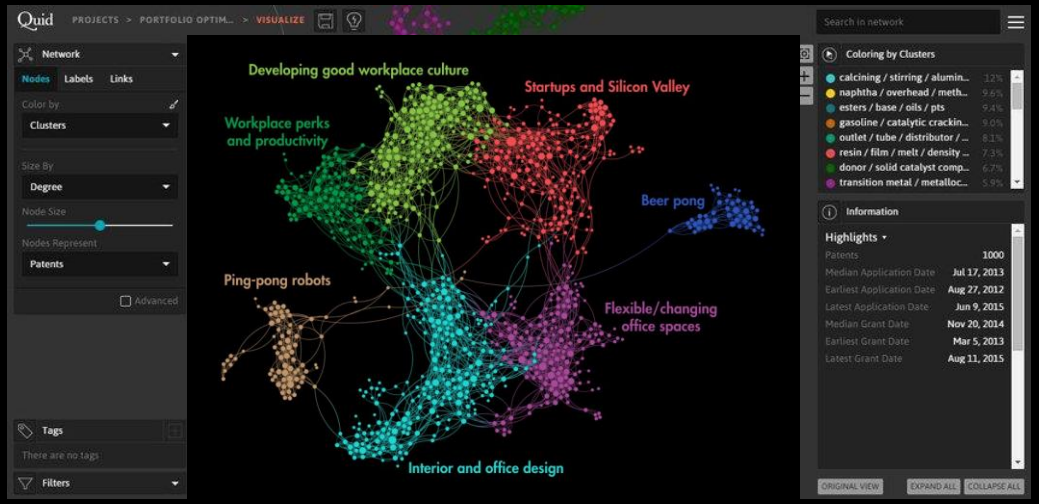
M&A CLUSTERS



Source: Recorded Future

Nodes reflect the M&A activity of competitors over the past year show where businesses are investing (making future bets).

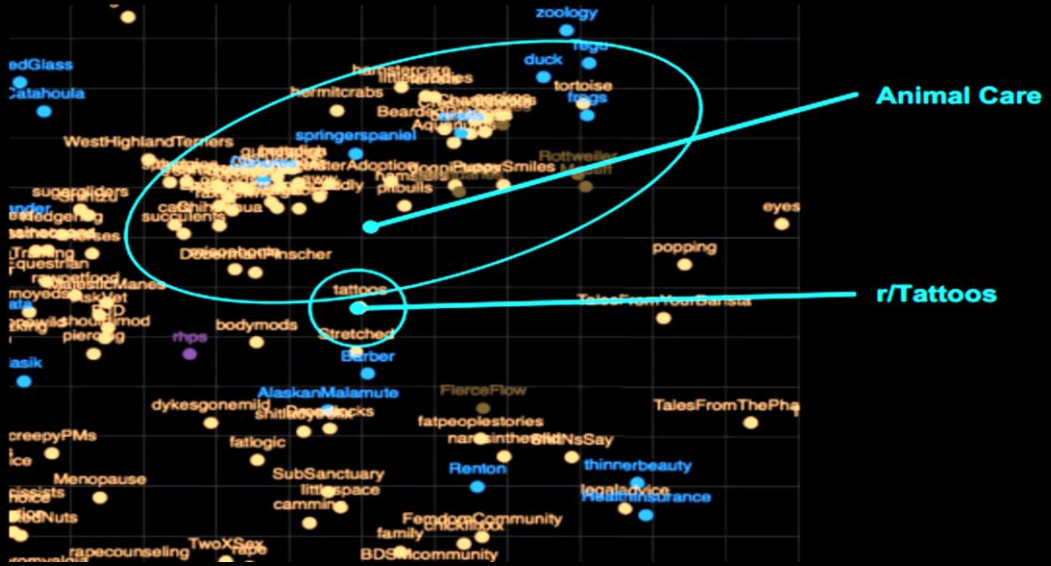
PATENT CLUSTERS



Source: Quid

The AI clusters like-with-like showing similarity of patent themes filed on a topic over 3 years.

REDDIT CLUSTERS



Source: shorttails.io (interactive map of reddit & subreddit similarity calculator

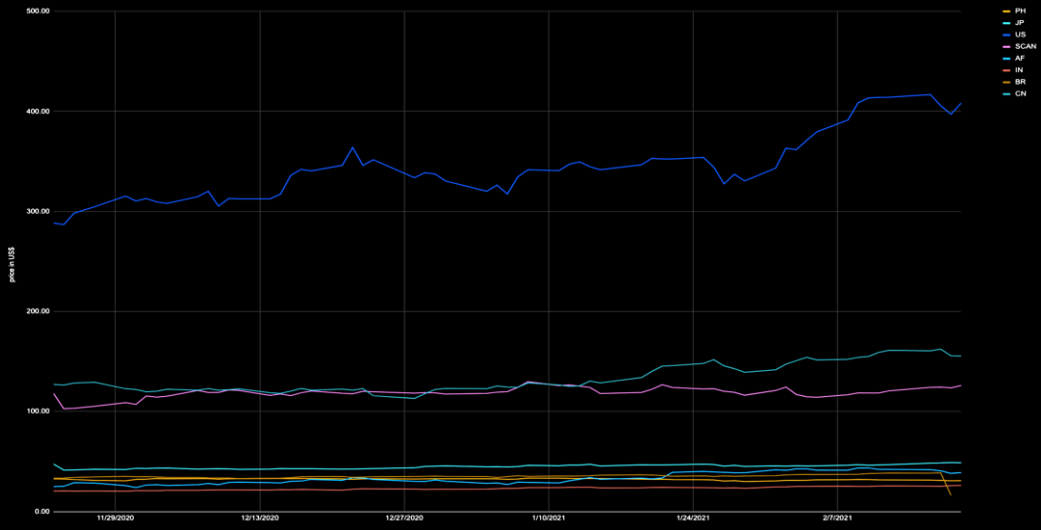
Clusters show similarity of conversations and users in subreddits.

FREE

6

CORRELATE

STOCK PRICES

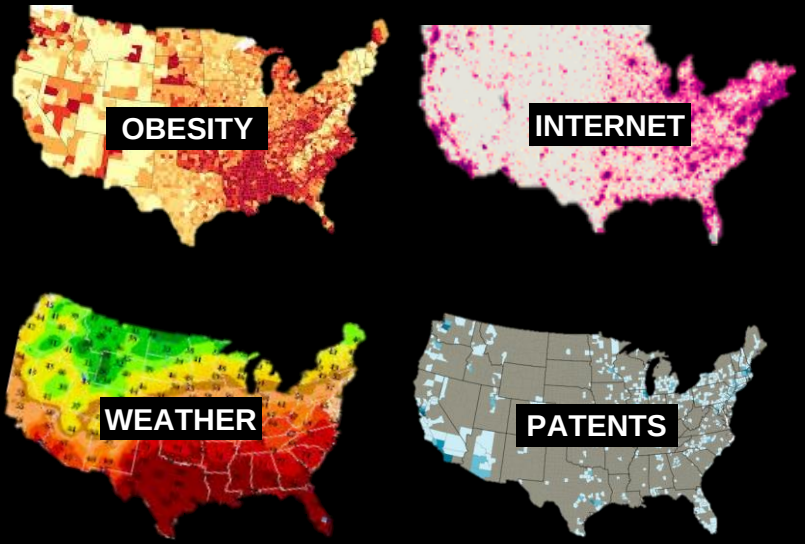


Source: Stock Feed in Google Sheets

FREE

Leveraging the collective intelligence and vast research of the investment sector to compare sectors that connect to trends: the market foreshadows the future.

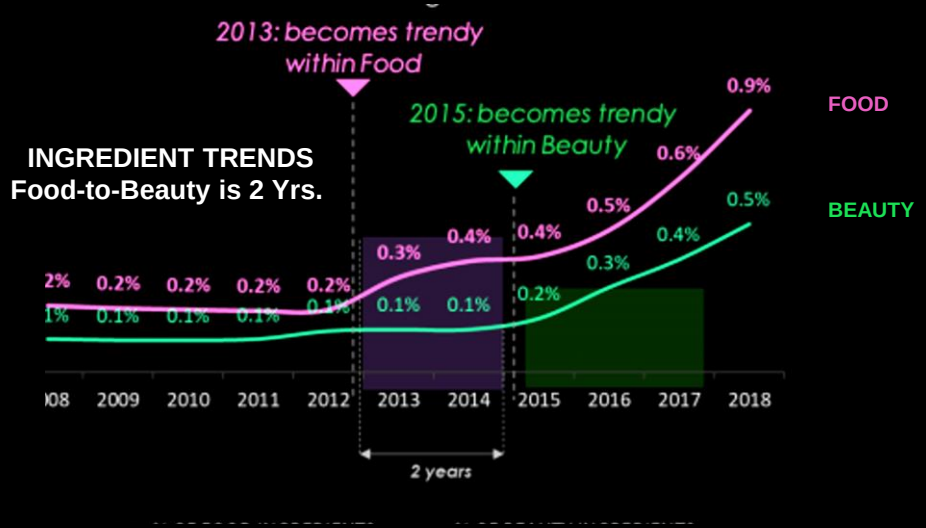
MAP LAYERING



FREE

Leveraging public, open data (e.g., CDC, US Gov., Google Patents, etc.) and comparing-contrasting.

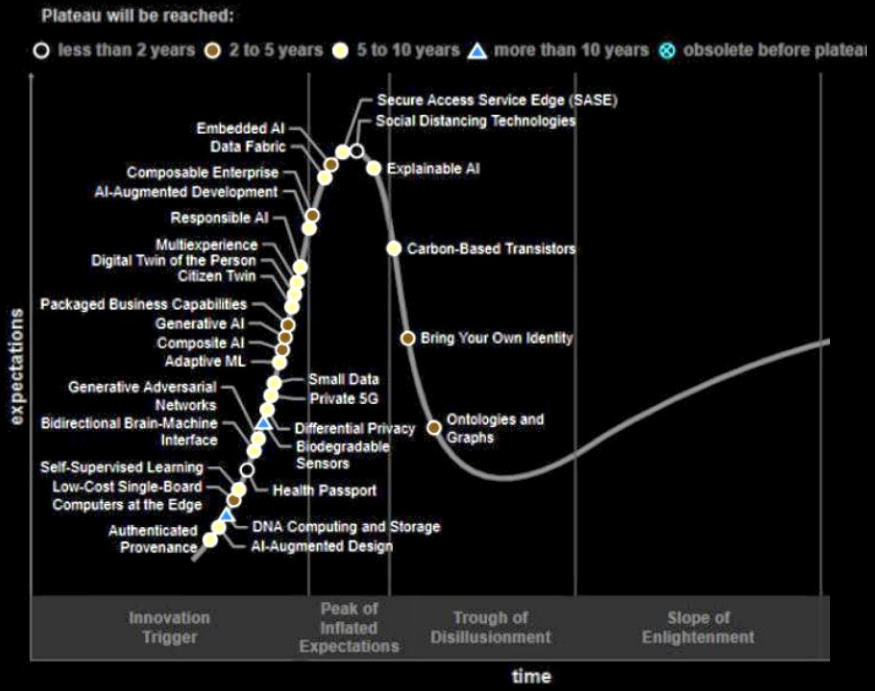
PROXY CATEGORIES



Source: Social listening agency (Semantiweb)

Back-casting (historical pattern analysis) correlates industries or phenomena, revealing the time lapse and connection between event 1 and event 2.

TECH ENABLING



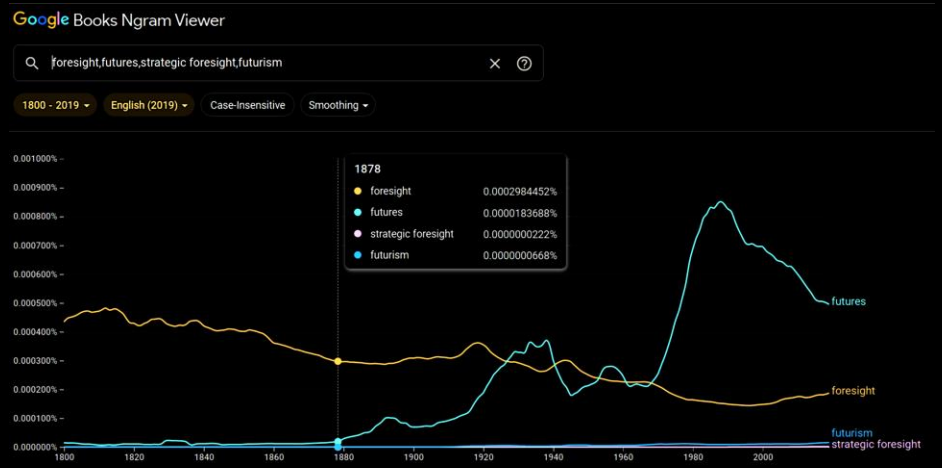
Source: Gartner's Hype Cycle of Emerging Technologies, 2020

FREE

7

CLOCK

LANGUAGE OVER TIME

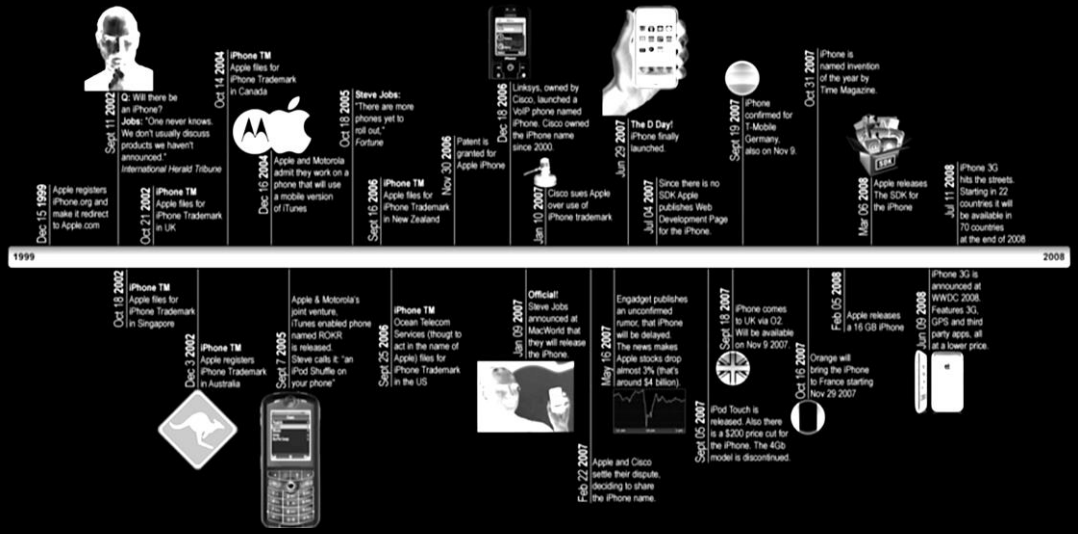


Source: Google Ngram

FREE

Language = thought. Therefore, language over time reflects the zeitgeist.

EVENT TIMELINE

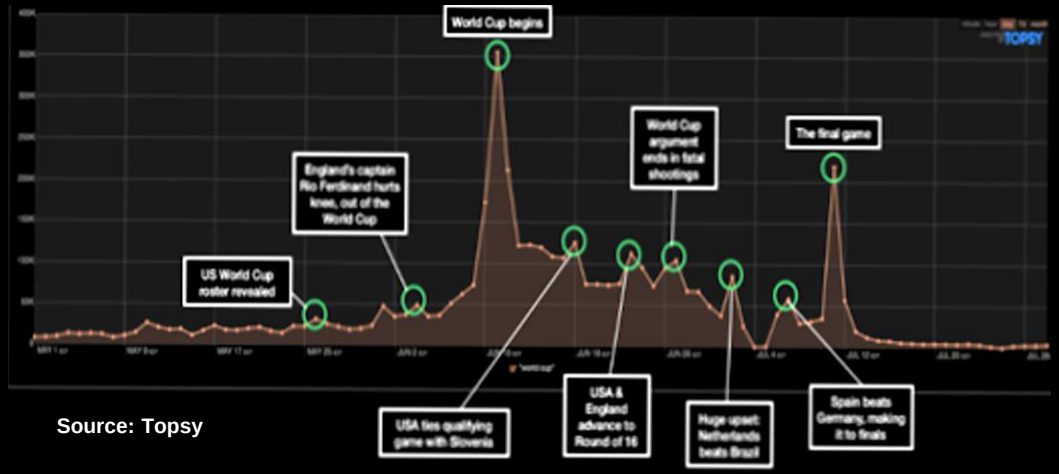


Source: Manual desk research and analysis

FREE

Timelines or "back-casting" can reveal historical cycles and patterns.

SOCIAL FORENSICS



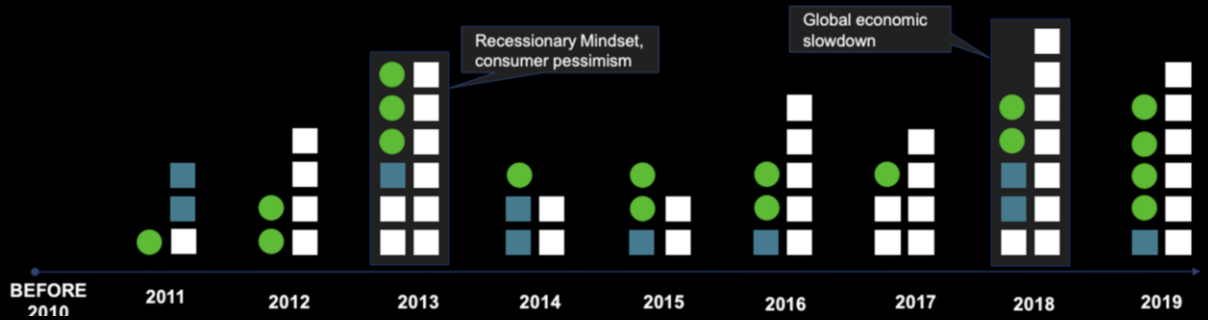
Source: Topsy

Social media conversation volume and engagement, with catalyst (tipping point) call-outs.

8

CHANGE

PRODUCT LAUNCHES



FREE

Source: Desk research & manual counting of product launched

Counting historical new product launches reveals patterns, correlations and causation.

CAGR

$$CAGR = \left[\frac{\text{End value}}{\text{Beginning value}} \right]^{[1/\text{years}]} - 1$$

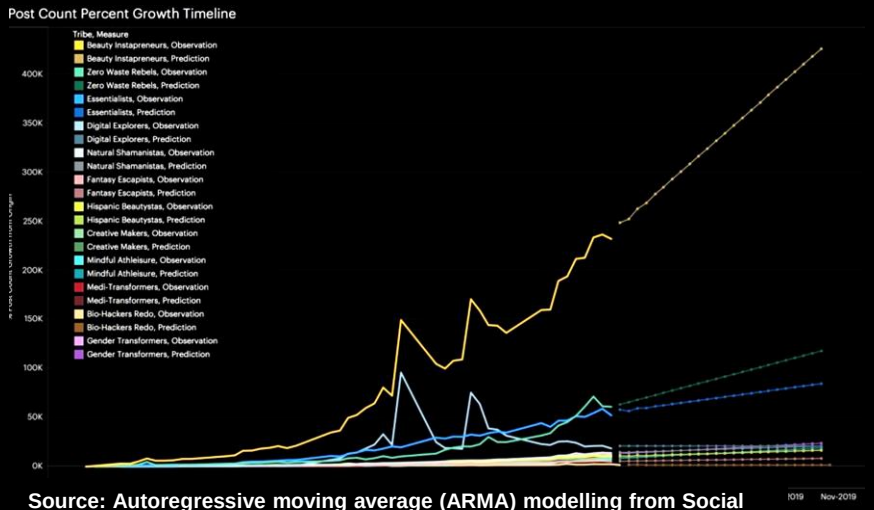
FREE

Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) is the ideal measurement of change.

9

COMPUTE

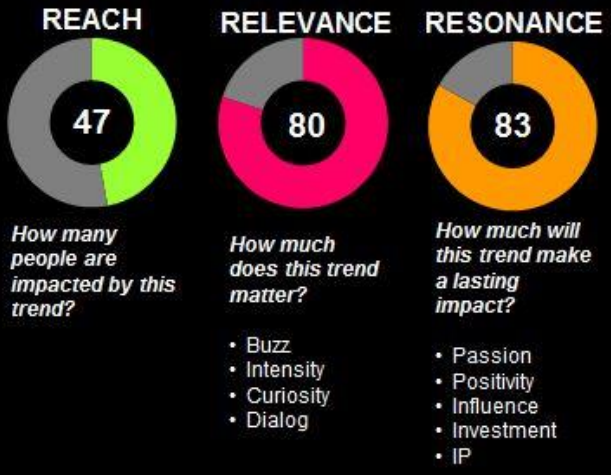
MODELING



Source: Autoregressive moving average (ARMA) modelling from Social media data (ENFLUX).

Predictive analytics software can take trend data (social, sales, econometrics, etc.) and model it to forecast the future.

TREND SCORING



TREND 1	39/100
TREND 2	44/100
TREND 3	37/100
TREND 4	30/100
TREND 5	33/100

Algorithms, manual and machine, can “score” trends for objective evaluation.

TOPIC SIZING

FREE

	Immunity	Yoga	Mindfulness	Supplements	Antioxidant	Aromatherapy	Micro-needle	Bio-hacking
Total # of Questions	80	80	80	80	69	76	67	37
Total # of Prepositions	56	56	56	53	52	56	51	47
Total # of Comparisons	40	40	40	40	38	31	32	27
Total # of Alphabeticals	208	208	208	208	208	207	205	204
TOTAL SCORE	384	384	384	381	367	370	355	315

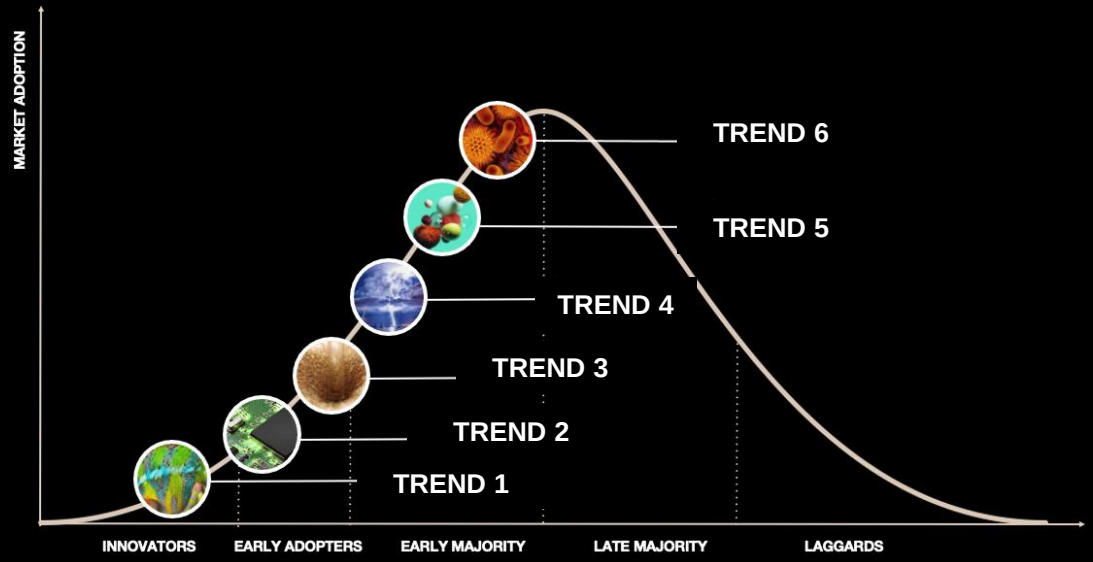
Source: Answer the Public

Compute the number and types of questions around a topic to find a relative ranking of topics.

10

CONSIDER

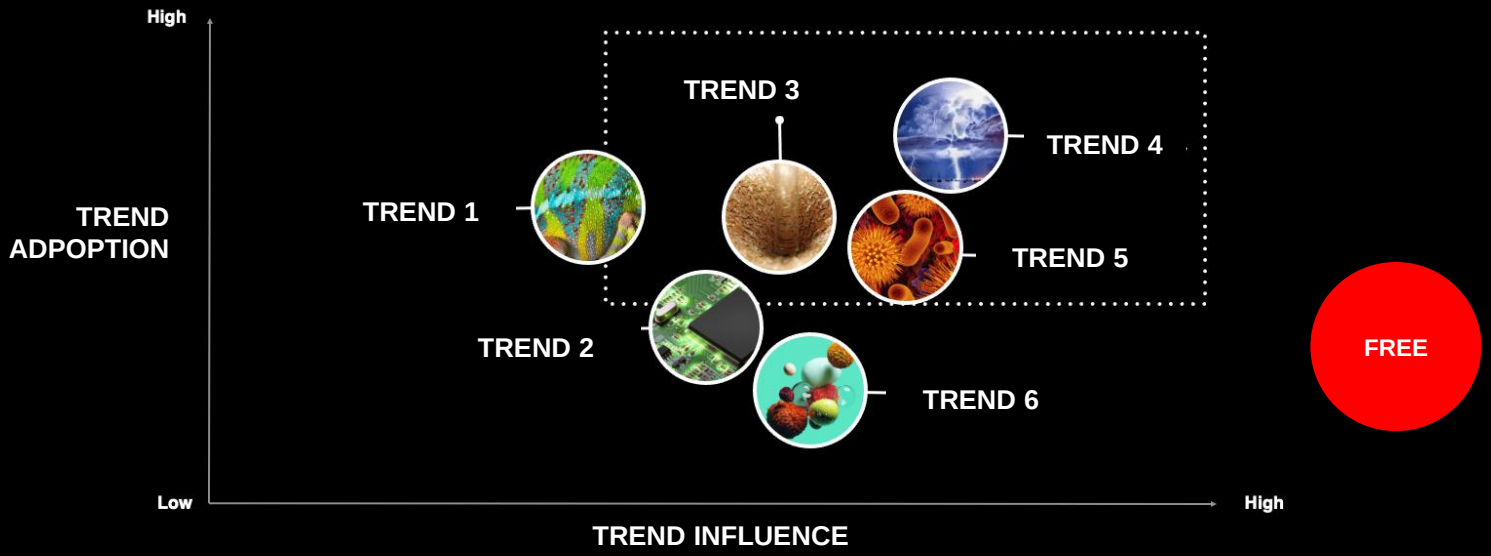
LIFESTAGE



FREE

The adoption curve is a helpful framework when considering the lifestage of a trend.

X / Y CRITERIA



Select relevant criteria for two axes and then evaluate the trends on the criteria, ideally multiple people score independently, confer and align.

SELF-CONSIDERATION

THE MINDFUL FUTURIST

FREE

Reflect on biases and lack of diversity.

10 HABITS OF A QUANT FUTURIST

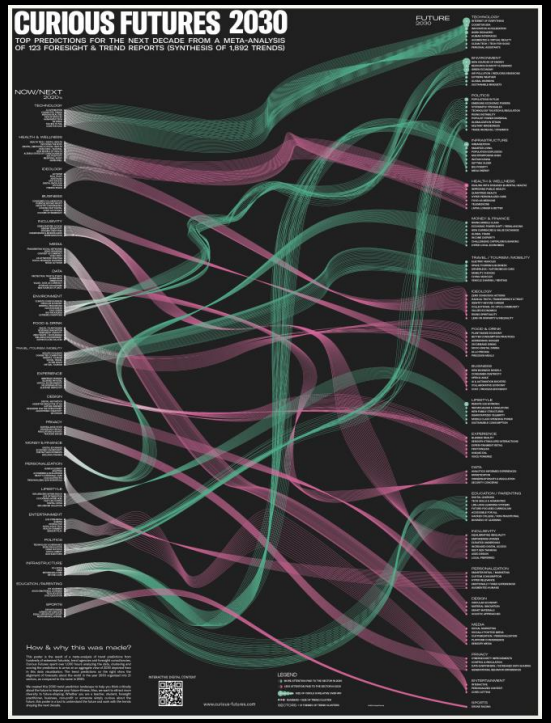
CAST (A WIDE NET)
CROWD
CLASSIFY
COUNT
CLUSTER
CORRELATE
CLOCK
CHANGE
COMPUTE
CONSIDER

10 RFP MUST-HAVES

1. **CAST (A WIDE NET)** *Are data sources diverse? How is bias addressed?*
2. **CROWD** *Is crowd intelligence leveraged?*
3. **CLASSIFY** *How are signals managed and trends classified, do you have a tagging taxonomy?*
4. **COUNT** *What data sets are your counting?*
5. **CLUSTER** *What is your method for clustering topics, trends and data?*
6. **CORRELATE** *What is your method for correlation (connecting dots) and causation?*
7. **CLOCK** *How will you analyze the past, conduct historical forensics to project the future?*
8. **CHANGE** *What is your process for measuring change?*
9. **COMPUTE** *Are you planning to do manual, AI-assisted or hybrid computations?*
10. **CONSIDER** *How do you parse data, visualize data, reflect on data and your methods?*

Limited Edition: **only 500 printed**

DATA VIZ OF A QUANTIFIED FUTURE



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