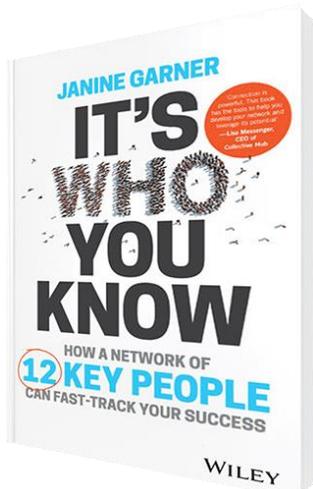


# AJASN Newsletter

April 2017

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A new [book](#) on networking well

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## Public service (& related)

This article discusses a new approach to allocating research funding that eliminates the onerous applications and reviews processes. Scientists would just give each other money instead - called '[self-organized fund allocation](#)' (SOFA). The Dutch parliament adopted a motion last year asking the country's main funding agency, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), to set up a SOFA pilot project. (It may not happen.)

This UK [think tank report](#) outlines the staggering level of change in key UK government policies (e.g. further education) over five decades. The paper argues this re-invention leads to huge waste and little progress (discussed [here](#).)

850,000 public sector jobs in the UK are at risk of being lost by 2030 due to automation, and more than 1.3 million administrative jobs in the public sector have a 77% probability of being automated ([here](#)). So What? One American [report](#) says governments must shift from the current plan then implement policy making, to a more iterative 'sense and respond' approach that monitors impacts of new policies, measures their effectiveness and adapts to optimise policies based on their observed impacts.

This [study](#) of Belgians says protests that bring many people to the streets – which agree amongst themselves – and have a single message are most likely to influence elected officials.

Bill Gates' [proposed](#) tax on robots is [opposed](#) as a 'solution' to job destruction and rising inequality by some economists. This City of San Francisco politician is interested in the idea ([here](#).) Norway's \$915 billion sovereign wealth fund is demanding tax [transparency from companies](#) it invests in (to fight tax havens.) A [paper](#) examines previous studies targeting behavioural change in compulsory and non-compulsory contexts (tax compliance and energy use.)

This is the first systematic literature review of [matrix management](#) and cross-functional teams (CFTs) in public sector organisations.

The European Aviation Safety Agency is worried that banning some electronics from passenger cabins may lead to [fire safety risks](#) in cargo holds of aircraft. Rules to solve one problem can lead to another.

This is an [article](#) discusses 'Grounded' a new social policy tool that relates users experience (ratings) of government services and barriers and enablers.

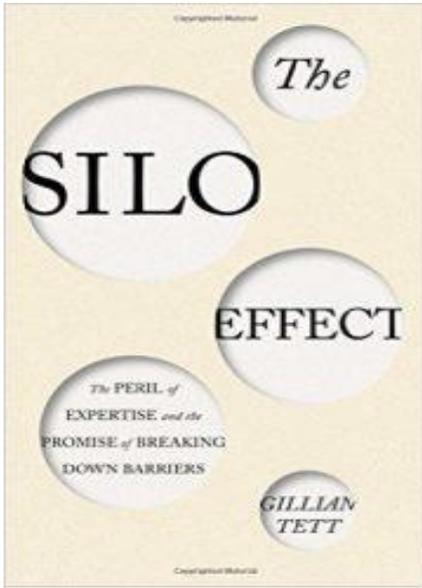
Here is a [new](#) paper on government 'productivity', which is hard to assess. (Earlier papers show a range of issues [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#).)

## Mega-trends

This [article](#) discusses a macro-trend that deserves attention: the rise of personalist "strongmen" authoritarian governments. Research shows that personalist authoritarians are the most likely to [initiate conflicts abroad](#) and pursue risky foreign policies.

An interesting article on the [cashless society](#) asks: What will the cashless economy mean for the poorest people in society? (See also Malaysia [article](#), IMF paper, Australian [article](#).)

## Policy-making



This book is reviewed [here](#).

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*"Democratic theory has spent thousands of years wondering what makes it legitimate for the few to rule the many. We have to cultivate similar awareness of what makes it acceptable for a few to know for the many." (Source)*

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This article discusses a growing conviction among some researchers that well-intentioned [nudges](#) can have negative as well as positive effects - policy makers need to know when and with whom an intervention works well enough to justify its side effects. The OECD has published a book [Behavioural Insights and Public Policy Lessons](#) from Around the World – a comprehensive collection of over 100 applications across the world and policy sectors (read it online.)

The [science and engineering workforce](#) in the United States is aging rapidly, according to a new study (faster than the rest of the workforce as a whole.)

This [article](#) says Australia is looking at the wrong problem in housing. It is not affordability – we should instead be concerned about interest rate rises and long term investment returns. Another article unpacks [housing policy](#) problems too.

Undercover Economist Tim Harford offers a clear summary of the research into [why simple truth isn't enough to sway minds](#).

## Changing workplace

Here is a [story](#) about the latest recruitment approach in the Defence sector. One minute pitches and five minute interviews. This [column](#) looks at research that says job interviews are utterly useless (and [here](#), [here](#).) [McDonald's](#) Australia is recruiting via Snapchat.

Hootsuite has appointed a "[Czar of Bad Systems](#)" – with authority to fix processes that aren't working anywhere in the company.

In a new [working paper](#) researchers examined a 3-month program to improve hospital hand-washing – peer pressure in the workplace leads to behavioural change. The study lines up with other research showing [paying people to do things doesn't always work](#); often it backfires (i.e. less interested in task than before the extra money entered the equation.)

This [paper](#) discusses different kinds of 'no' in negotiation: a 'tactical no,' a 'reset no' that permits away-from-the-table moves to favourably alter the underlying setup, and a 'final no,' and BATNAs (best alternative to negotiated agreement.) This [article](#) outlines some emerging online legal business / practice models (incl. tribunals.)

A [report](#) (on a study) explores whether entrepreneurial abilities can actually be taught – apparently, yes, but best to women and minorities. And, a fMRI (brain scan) [study](#) found an entrepreneurial bias that discourages outside perspectives (comparing entrepreneurs' to parents' love.)

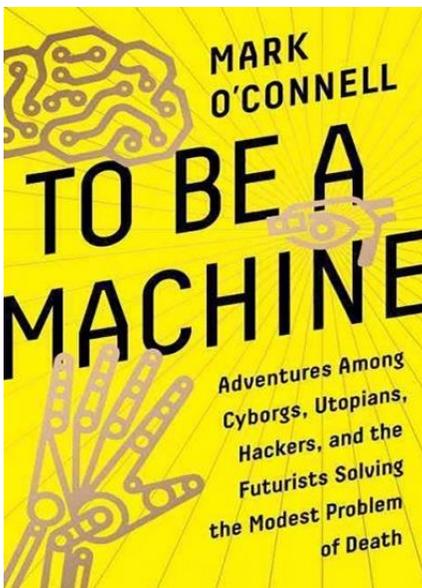
A [study](#) on shared desk workplaces shows some downsides to the growing practice.

## Assumption busting

This [article](#) asks: How can we identify and evaluate decision forks in a modelling project; those points where a different decision might lead to a better model?

The IMF, WTO and World Bank say [role of trade as a driver of global growth](#) is threatened by a slowdown in trade reform (since early 2000s) and an uptick in protectionism (post financial crisis.)

Some companies are relaxing degree requirements for recruitment. The question is: Are these few companies 'outliers' or the forerunners of a new trend?' This raises new questions about the value of a university education.



You can read an excerpt on this book about transhumanism [here](#).

## The Internet & beyond

[Unpaywall](#) allows you to access journal articles that sit behind a paywall, for free (if they are located on the internet before publication.)

The number of mobile phone users globally will surpass five billion by the middle of this year (2017), according to a [study](#) by GSMA, the association of mobile operators. This article discusses what comes after the [death of smartphones](#) (within a decade.)

There has been a surge in interest in [Estonian e-Residency](#) or virtual residency (available since 2004) from the UK since the vote to leave the EU.

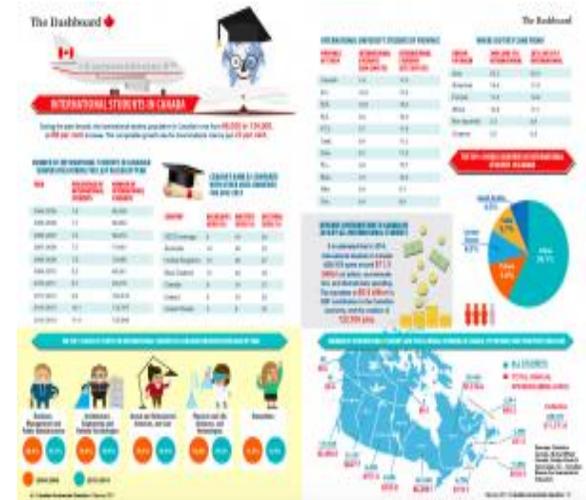
Canada is investing to accelerate research and [commercialisation of AI](#) and machine learning technology – it set up in non-profit Vector Institute in Toronto and hopes to lure (back) talent from Silicon Valley.

Facebook use appears to [reduce well-being](#). An [Italian court](#) has ruled that excessive, work-related use of a mobile phone caused an executive to develop a benign brain tumour.

The [Delaware Blockchain Initiative](#) is applying the technology to its public archives to store, distribute, encrypt and sunset documents in a pilot program.

Want to speak a second language? [WaitChatter](#) is based on the idea of *wait-learning*.

An [article](#) describes how online retailers vary prices – and don't even have an original fixed price – to get the highest price they can from each customer. This contrasts to the fight against collecting GST on online sales (e.g. [here](#).) Woolworths plans to move [rounded pricing](#) in its supermarkets.



This is an international student dashboard prepared for Canada. A larger version is available [here](#). Here is a [review](#) of MOOC Stats and Trends in 2016.

## Science & technology

The 2004 – 2007 expansion (+ 12 member states) of the EU had a negative impact on [cross-border collaboration](#) in science – an unintended consequence.

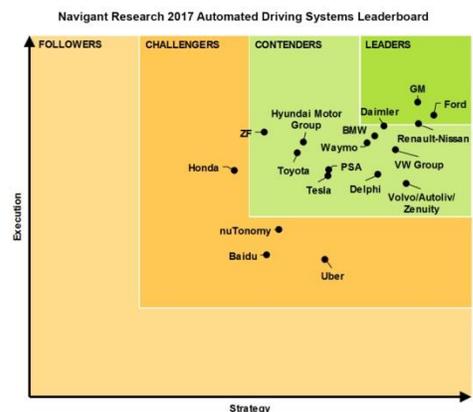
Here is an article on [pilotless planes](#).

## Urban

A San Francisco-based, 3D-printing startup is able to [3D-print concrete](#) walls for a small house in less than 24 hours. Local government in Portland, Oregon will build you a free [tiny house](#) for your backyard if you agree to let a homeless family live there for five years. After that, you can rent it to whoever you want. This [article](#) discusses how the welfare system in Australia depends on high housing costs (e.g. assets tests) and this is a long term vulnerability that could lead to the welfare system collapsing if housing prices fall. This [report](#) shows how the Province of Alberta in Canada took a deliberate stand to reduce homelessness, and it is working. Both ASIC and APRA (Australian regulators) are concerned about home lenders practices – in particular [interest only loans](#) and calculations of living expenses for purposes of home loans. Richard Florida maps out which American cities are [hit hardest by the 'New Urban Crisis'](#).

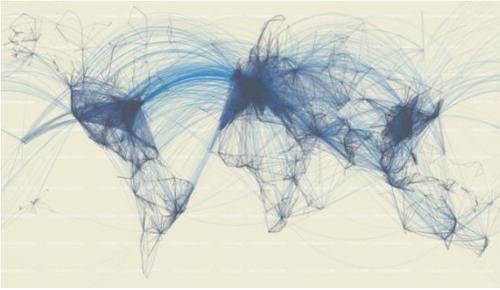
Start-ups that supply [young people to run errands](#) and provide companionship to India's seniors are mushrooming.

This [article](#) discusses the ways Uber tries to get the most out of its drivers through behavioural science (nudge.) It is discussed [here](#) too. [Uber and Lyft](#) have cut into another business: ambulances to the ER in the U.S.



Navigator Research released a report laying out the contenders in self-driving car tech. Ford, ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, Chinese company Baidu last and Uber 16<sup>th</sup> ([Here](#)).

## Society



In this map of flight patterns “No continental boundaries were used. It is simply the combination of colour, transparency and thickness of flying patterns which cause the extents of cities, countries and continents to emerge.” ([Source](#))

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*In case you missed it ... A 2015 guide from Behavioural Economics in Action at Rotman School of Management (BEAR program) the University of Toronto [The 1-2-3-4s of Behavioural Insights](#) -- And a 2017 [article](#) on rethinking the concept of nudge ...*

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This chart plots how the public perceives different scientific fields, from the least precise (left) to the most precise (right).

This shows how the general public understands scientific evidence, specifically uncertainty. ([Source, here](#))

For the second straight year Australia is the top country worldwide for [millionaire inflows](#), beating out traditional destinations such as the US and the UK. An [article](#) on why India is ready for a universal basic income.

This [research](#) found people are less likely to attend religious services regularly if their income rises. Researchers [found](#) people who were given the opportunity to judge each other's morality were more likely to cooperate and trust each other in a group than those who could not. This [research](#) partly explains why we shut ourselves off from opposing viewpoints. Here is a copy of the 2017 [World Happiness Report](#). Canada, New Zealand and Australia rank 7, 8 and 9; the United States was 14<sup>th</sup> and Norway 1<sup>st</sup>.

Adults who heard but never spoke Korean as babies benefit from their latent language knowledge decades later ([study](#).)

## Frames / framing

Changing whether an option is framed as a gain or a loss results in different decisions to play it safe or take a risk (called the framing effect.) This [study](#) using brain imaging data showed the framing effect results from a lack of mental effort, or using a decision-making shortcut, and that spending more mental effort can counteract the framing effect. A [new paper](#) on motivating people through long tasks says switch from a promotion to prevention focus as you get closer to the end of the task. Here is an earlier [explanation](#) of the promote vs prevent concept. This [research](#) explains how the developing brain learns to integrate and react to subtle but simultaneous sensory cues — sound, touch and visual — that would be ignored individually.

A [new study](#) says a five-minute chat about their recent past or future selves seems to help preschoolers remember to do things in the future, and to ‘time travel’ mentally, so that they make better decisions about their forthcoming needs.

The more a person is inclined to visualise the more impulsive they are, [a new study](#) reports. People are [less creative](#) and cognitively flexible when asked to complete tasks using categorised sets of information, compared to those asked to work with items that were not ordered in any way. (The organised group spent less time on their tasks, suggesting reduced persistence, a key ingredient for creativity.)

A [study](#) finds people spontaneously prefer their own theories (confirmation bias.) Within [science](#) there are ‘clear differences in readership of specific topics and books’ i.e. consumption of science is partisan. Conservatives and liberals read different books esp. in climate and social sciences (that currently affect policy making a lot.)

Experienced auditors can better detect fraud if they look for signs of guilt in the CEO's voice (narratives) according to this [study](#). (It doesn't help students detect fraud.) The [latest public sector fraud update](#) from the Australian Institute of Criminology.

Apparently some [diseases](#) are more prestigious than others (at least to Norway's doctors) – overall physicians seem to ‘value disease categories associated with acuteness and drama over those considered chronic and mundane.’

## What if thinking

The Carnegie Museum of Art is using [virtual reality](#) to show dystopian future scenarios. See here for [another](#) article on using your avatar in VR. Here is a new not-quite-here [commercialised](#) foresight [game](#) (based on earlier work by the Canadian Government.)

## Health

Ten people in [Auckland](#) have been hospitalised with typhoid, and health officials say more cases are expected. (More than normal number co-occurring.) A [new analysis](#) found spending more on health care has little impact on improving key health outcomes. A 10% increase in health-care spending reduces the number of deaths by only 1.3%, and increases life expectancy by only 0.4%. An article on [digiceuticals](#) i.e. software designed to run on a smartphone and help improve a person's health, usually via tracking or coaching. An article highlights some promising [new research](#) on the fight against drug resistant bacteria.

## News

The [Global Challenges Prize 2017](#): A New Shape is for proposals outlining an alternative world governance model. The BBC explores the 'why' of [famines](#) facing Somalia, South Sudan, Nigeria, and Yemen

The Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) called for Turkey to [come under its formal scrutiny](#), a status reserved for members that are deemed to be backsliding on democracy. Nine countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Russia are currently on that hook.

The G20 [back-pedalled](#) on a pledge to keep an open and inclusive global trade system after being unable to find a suitable compromise with an increasingly protectionist United States.

This [study](#) suggests more educated people are less likely to believe in conspiracy theories – in part – because educated participants feel more in control, have less belief in simple solutions, and have stronger analytical skills.

The UK is adding satellite navigation to driving tests. Getting a license [will require demonstrating skills](#) in following directions from GPS devices.

## Web sites

The University of Florida has a [website](#) canvassing Public Interest Communications. [Science Sandbox](#) is a new educational initiative designed to 'unlock scientific thinking' in everyone. (See this [video](#).) This NZ blog post also tackles [science communication](#) (notes new practices.) Check out this: The Initiative for Open Citations [I4OC](#). This independent [website](#) is trying to turn peer review into a measurable indicator of a researcher's expertise and contributions to their field. The website [SciRev.sc](#) is designed for (journal article) writers to share their experiences with the peer review process.

Here is a free online course / learning program on systems thinking skills (one form of 'connecting the dots') from <https://kumu.io/stw/cst> and a place to do systems diagrams <https://insightmaker.com/news> for free. Here is an online horizon scanning course (not tried) <https://www.thefuturescentre.org/signal-spotter-starter-kit>. This website (<https://lbry.io/news/20000-illegal-college-lectures-rescued>) copied some 20,000 lectures from the UC Berkeley YouTube channel. Berkeley removed the videos because of a lawsuit but LBRY claims Creative Commons allows them to provide access. This new [website](#) and [group](#) uses a different than normal take – the emerging theory and methodology of [Postnormal Times](#) – to explore the future.

Co:tunity is a new smartphone and web [application](#) for collaborative problem solving. A new fact website <https://www.usafacts.org/> based on US government data, supported by a philanthropist.



Authors Ito & Howe argue: The logic of a faster future overshoots the received wisdom of the past, and the people who succeed will be the ones who learn to think differently. ([Book](#))

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*"The mistake that governments are making when they collaborate ... with industry is that they conflate the common good with common ground."* ([Ted Talks](#))

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## Upcoming meetings

Next meeting:

9 August & 10 August 2017