

# AJASN Newsletter

## March 2021

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Please forward contributions for the newsletter to Kate Delaney.

[kate.delaney@ircs.net.au](mailto:kate.delaney@ircs.net.au)

### Next Meeting

TBD June 2021

### Letter about 'One APS'



### Public Sector

Content [analysis](#) shows in the United States extremely conservative and extremely liberal legislators.

A [new Cabinet committee](#) has been formed to tackle problems with Australia's multi-billion-dollar Naval Shipbuilding Plan as more concerns emerge over the complex future submarine and frigate projects. The National Shipbuilding Advisory Board (NSAB) has been abolished, although its former Chair, Professor Don Winter, is now working as special advisor to Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

On the [antitrust front](#) the United States is adopting a strategy of a series of small bills rather than giving the major tech companies and their lobbyists the easy target of a massive antitrust bill.

A new [ANAO report](#) discusses the widespread failure of Commonwealth government agencies to do the most basic cybersecurity requirements. Another [report](#) details how the \$10 million Supporting Reliable Energy Infrastructure Program relied on only partially appropriate advice in awarding Shine Energy a \$3.3 million feasibility study for a proposed coal-fired power station in Collinsville, north Queensland. A [third report](#) (Senate) *Select Committee on Administration of Sports Grants: final report* found evidence of a 'distribution bias' in the award of grant funding in advance of the 2019 federal election.

This [research paper](#) examines how regulation can affect the economy and presents a framework to guide regulatory reform and improve regulatory outcomes. Australia is likely to miss all its own targets to rid the environment of [plastic](#) unless there is a major overhaul of its management and enforcement.

A paper discusses some difficulties people face when trying to access public services. The final paper is paywalled. A pre-publication version is available – [here](#).

Governments use data to understand patterns, pinpoint needs and design better measures. Singapore and New Zealand share their latest [data lessons from the pandemic](#).

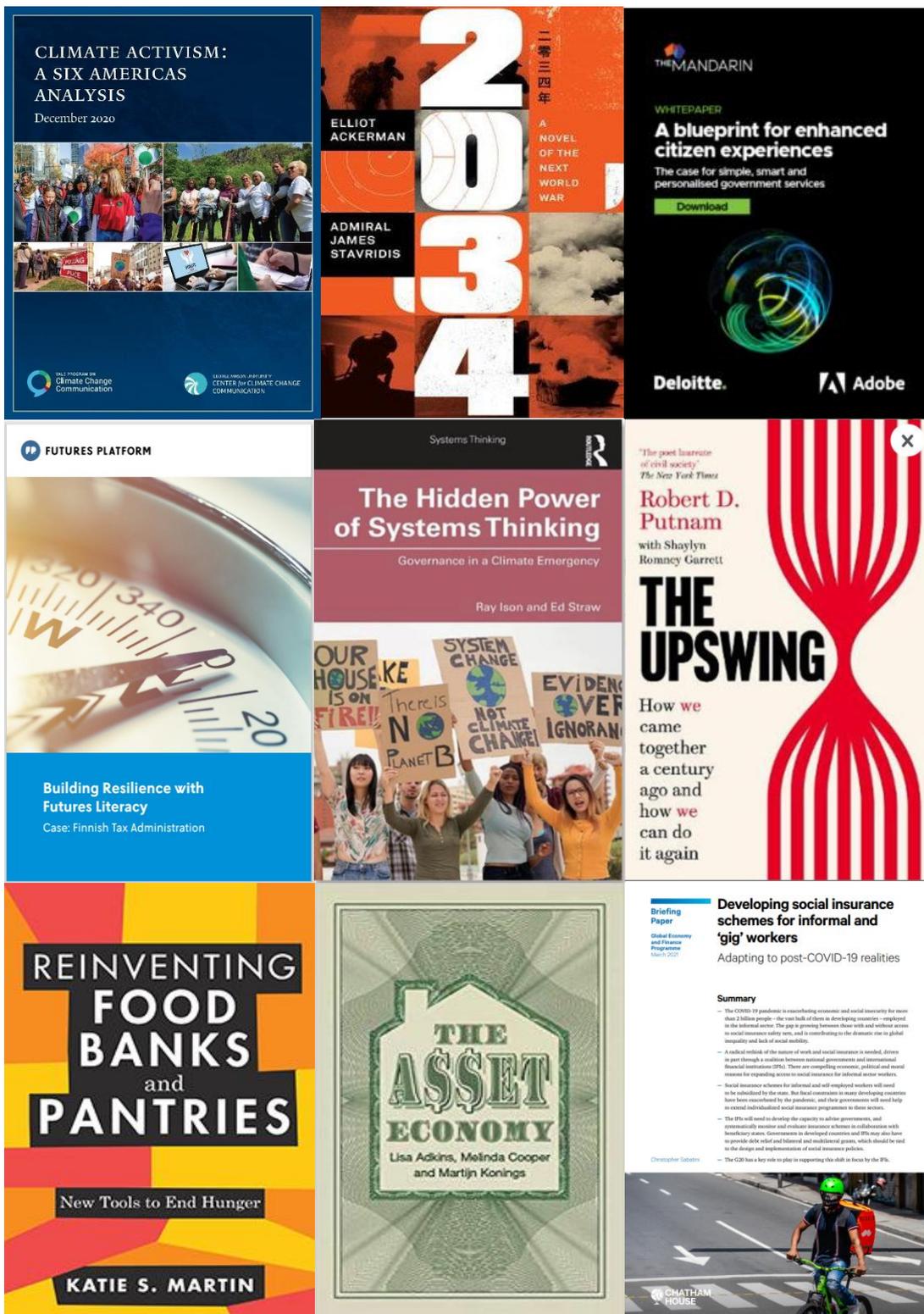
The [2021 Edelman Trust Barometer](#) reveals that trust across all Australian institutions has reached an all-time high. Australia's composite trust index recorded the largest gain globally (+12 points) among the 28 countries surveyed. Despite this, Australia for the second year running has the largest trust inequality gap on record globally, with a 22 point difference between the informed public (77 points) and the mass population (55 points).

The UK is adopting an Australian approach to [asylum seekers](#), according to this article. But this [opinion piece](#) says 'Conservative politicians in both Australia and the UK profess to believe in small government. However, UK conservatives are prepared to increase tax to fund essential government services while in Australia, our conservatives try to achieve small government by stealth by not properly funding key government responsibilities.'

Improving operational delivery is crucial to ensuring that taxpayers' money is spent as efficiently as possible. The [National Audit Office's \(NAO\) guide](#) intends to help senior leaders in government departments and wider public services to effectively manage and improve the way public services are delivered.

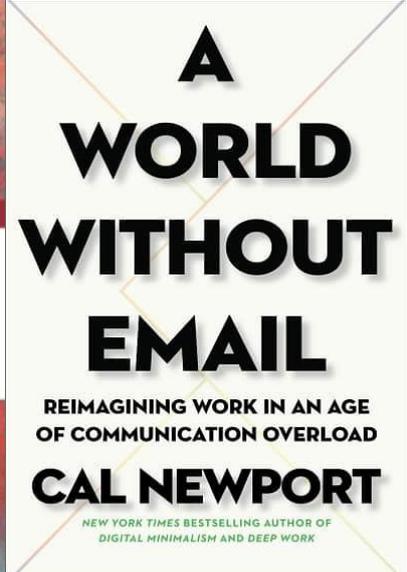
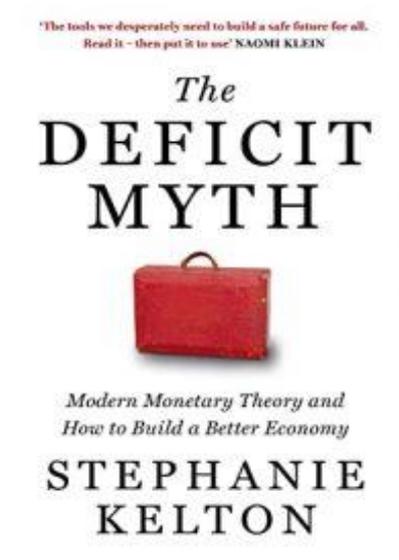
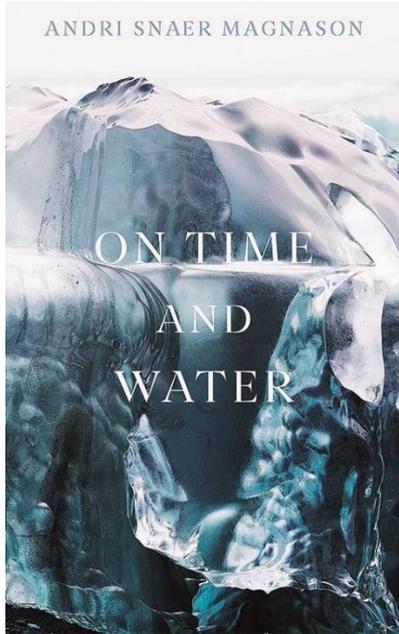
The 37 OECD Member Countries have appointed Mathias Comann of Australia as Secretary-General. He will take up his duties on 1 June for a five-year term.

Read



Click on the image to be taken to the actual document or to access a related link.

Please Note: The Mandarin 'blueprint' requires registration to download. So too does the Finnish case study.



## **Agriculture, food ...**

This [research](#) says there are far fewer technical, economic and resource constraints for freshwater aquaculture than for ocean farming, and far greater potential for land-based fish farms to contribute to global food security. In a [new study](#), researchers used neural electrodes and a micro CT scanner to measure the first evidence of what happens to reef fish hearing when larvae develop in a more acidic ocean. They found that the juvenile Australasian snapper can be roughly 10 times less sensitive to sound – a potentially fatal blow to animals that rely on hearing to find their way home. The team's result highlights a surprising example of knock-on effects of atmospheric change. Soil erosion is an accelerator of the coming global phosphorus shortage ([topsoil crisis](#).) A [study](#) is the first to systematically examine the scientific knowledge about animal welfare for the 408 aquatic animal species being farmed around the world (animals that include salmon, carp, and shrimp.)

Our [food systems](#) are about one-third of global greenhouse emissions – 34% – every year, according to new research. (These results agree with the findings of several previous studies.) However, what is new about this most recent work is that it goes into intensive detail to build up a huge dataset that identifies the sources of those emissions across the whole food production and supply chain. This enables researchers to reliably pinpoint emissions by sector and country for the first time. It also reveals some surprising facts in the process – such as the rising contribution of refrigeration and plastic packaging on global emissions.

A bit of [seaweed in cattle feed](#) could reduce methane emissions from beef cattle as much as 82 percent, according to new findings from researchers at the University of California.

Bees (that are far away) get messages from their queen by forming what looks like a miniature telecommunications network, according to new [research](#).

Data shows [collapse of UK food and drink exports](#) post-Brexit. The [UK public](#) are broadly in favour of government intervention to encourage healthy eating – particularly after the pandemic – with 71% thinking the government should be doing a “great deal” or a “fair amount” to encourage people to eat more healthily.

## **Corona virus/pandemics (not exhaustive)**

This [research](#) finds that pandemic outcomes hinged primarily on how egalitarian a country is. Countries that prioritise the well-being of society in general fared better over the past year than more individualistic cultures. The work identified two cultural variables with a statistically significant effect on death rate: individualism and ‘power distance’ – a measure of power disparities among citizens.

An opinion piece suggests we must plan for a permanent pandemic. The piece sites an [analysis](#) (about achieving herd immunity amongst other sources. This [interesting - Scientifically proven](#): An analysis of the most talked about covid-19 treatments. Here is a systematic review on airborne transmission (awaiting peer review.)

Viral genetic sequences from current [Ebola cases in Guinea](#) and from the 2014–2016 West African outbreak are almost identical, indicating that the new outbreak was triggered by someone who harboured the virus for five years or more.

A new study suggests two types of [mouthwash](#) disrupt SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, preventing it from replicating in a human cell. Further studies are needed to test real-life efficacy in humans. An [important takeaway from a new study](#) is that pollen can be a factor in exacerbating COVID-19. Pollen can suppress the immune system and climate change is making pollen season longer.

## **Defence, National Security, Geopolitics, Emergency Management, etc.**

The Canada Border Services Agency says its officers intercepted 10 suspected [fraudulent COVID-19 test results](#) at airports, and 20 more at land ports of entry.

President Biden's Director of National Intelligence has released the unclassified version of the intelligence community's assessment of [Foreign Threats to the 2020 US Federal Elections](#). [Election interference is now considered a low-cost strategy by American adversaries, likely to increase, and the most sophisticated country doing so is Russia.]

[Non-traditional security threats](#) have unique and disproportionate impacts based on gender, for example, when it comes to disinformation (e.g., have overlooked the weaponization of disinformation against women and minorities and the risks for democracies where these communities play more active public roles.) This article suggests that [grounding ships purposefully](#) is a more effective strategy today than in the past (think about the unintentional Suez Canal blockage.)

This article challenges several current assumptions in recent threads on the [future of arms control](#).

## Economy

The European Union wants to impose [carbon tariffs on Australian exports](#). And it can probably do so because the World Trade Organisation's dispute resolution (appellate body) isn't working at the moment.

Shell's accountants predict the Dutch giant [will never pay Australia for gas](#) (no Petroleum Resources Rent Tax) extracted at the Gorgon and Prelude LNG projects that it can sell for up to about \$4 billion a year. This could be significant: The OECD is working toward a [global system to tax companies](#) based on where they have customers, not in whatever tax haven they are pretending to be in.

In studying platform businesses like Airbnb and Uber, researchers found that [regulatory complexity<sup>1</sup> and regulatory risk<sup>2</sup>](#) are two significant but often neglected factors in the success of platform growth strategies. Parts of Australia are uninsurable. An interesting article related to risk (climate associated) and the [cost of insurance](#) (i.e. affordability.)

McKinsey [analysed](#) consumer demand recovery and lasting effects of COVID-19 in China, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. [Related](#): A Guide to Predictive Analytics in Retail

Women have been disproportionately affected by pandemic disruptions over the last year. The US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released a [report](#) showing how disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have taken a toll on women's careers in research. Australia [fell six places](#) on the Global Gender Gap Index. Australia is now ranked 50th. In 2006, we ranked 15th

The value of [Australian trade with China](#) for almost all industries has plummeted by 40 per cent since a trade dispute ramped up between the two countries. China is building and planning more [coal-fired power plants](#) than the rest of the world combined.

OpenAI's Sam Altman: [Artificial Intelligence can generate enough wealth](#) to pay each adult \$13,500 a year – but the tax system needs to change.

[Speculative](#): The Ever Given's massive global impact suggests that workers could disrupt choke points like the Suez Canal intentionally to win demands.

Dutch firm Philips [announced](#) the sale of its home appliances business to Asian investment firm Hillhouse Capital for 3.7 billion euros (\$4.4 billion), as the former electronics giant focuses on healthcare. British Airways considers [selling its headquarters](#) after homeworking switch, according to this news item.

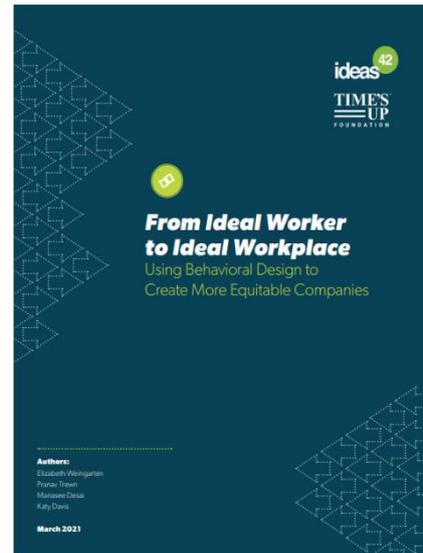
## Environment

*'Environmental governance is like playing whac-a-mole, albeit the moles are not popping up at random - they are interdependent.'* This paper discusses [a method to map out interdependencies between](#) different

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<sup>1</sup> *Regulatory complexity* describes the current level of legal and regulatory barriers that govern platform entry and operations in a sector. The costs of operating in sectors with high levels of regulatory complexity, such as financial services or pharmaceuticals, can be significant, but legal and compliance teams can analyse and accurately predict them.

<sup>2</sup> *Regulatory risk* refers to the probability of an increase in legal and regulatory costs and complexity in the future. It includes a higher degree of uncertainty than regulatory complexity.



policy issues. This author [argues](#) that fifty years after the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, we need to revisit the 'environmental policy' paradigm because it falls short on five grounds. A paper argues that the way the concept of [biodiversity is defined](#) and used is blocking progress in protecting nature. It notes that the mainstream Western conservation movement tends to focus on charismatic species and wilderness. The economic benefits of conserving or restoring natural sites now [outweigh](#) the potential profit of converting them for intensive human use, according to researchers from the Cambridge Conservation Initiative.

Researchers have pioneered a novel way to [identify marine areas](#) that – if protected – will bolster food security and safeguard marine life, all while reducing carbon emissions. This [article](#) discusses some of the theoretical impacts (water cycle focus) we can expect on Australian rainfall as climate change continues. One researcher has put a date on a prediction for the [Amazon](#)'s impending death: 2064. This study says [emphasising urgency alone](#) (German, American participants) won't increase support for major climate policies. A [recent study](#) examined how climate change is affecting the pattern and duration of Earth's seasons.

An image (see below) by PRI (UN connected) shows their forecast of [inevitable policy responses](#) to climate change.



This article links [plastics](#) and the oil and gas industry; saying that plastics is an insurance for the latter. It also says plastics is a long-term environmental menace that could rival climate change. The federal government announced it would [bring forward a planned phase-out of expanded polystyrene](#) for products bought by consumers from 2025 to 2022.

Bits:

- Researchers have confirmed for the first time that [Pine Island Glacier in West Antarctica](#) could cross tipping points, leading to a rapid and irreversible retreat which would have significant consequences for global sea level.
- Worldwide [losses of old-growth](#) tropical forests increased 12% in 2020. Deforestation is leading to more infectious diseases in humans according to this [item](#).
- Light pollution may pose a [new threat to marine life](#) – i.e. behaviour like where to be in the water column, when to mate, when to develop—all of this is regulated by light.
- A [plant gene found in insects](#) (whiteflies), shields it from leaf toxins. Scientists are working to counter this to control the pests.
- A new study shows [microplastics](#) can turn into 'hubs' for pathogens, antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
- In Europe, a backlash is growing over [incinerating garbage](#).

## Foresight

This [paper](#) (and [post](#)) covers 'Exploring the future of fisheries conflict through narrative scenarios.'

From an article in the Washington Post: 'There are *pockets of strategic foresight* throughout the U.S. government — in the Secret Service, the *Government Accountability Office*, the *Office of Personnel Management*, the *Forest Service*, the *Agency for International Development* and various parts of the *Defense Department*, including the *Office of Net Assessment*, the *Army Mad Scientist Laboratory* and the *Air Force's futures directorate*. (I do some foresight work with the Air Force.) But these pockets are scattered. Often, as with the *National Intelligence Council's "Global Trends" report*, efforts to imagine possible futures are disconnected from policy.'



The Future Today Institute [published](#) its 14th annual Tech Trends Report (really 12 separate reports with trends grouped by subject.) FTI includes Book Zero, which details methodology and shows how the work was done.

Here is an example of [experiential futures](#) done for the UNDP in 2021.

# THE DOs AND DON'Ts OF SCENARIO PLANNING

1 Fight the urge to make decisions based on what you already know	2 Beware giving too much weight to unlikely events	3 Don't assume the future will look like the past	4 Combat overconfidence and excessive optimism	5 Encourage free and open debate
<p><b>What to do</b> Review all trends likely to affect your company's business, especially interconnections between issues and markets</p>	<p><b>What to do</b> Evaluate and prioritize trends using first qualitative, then quantitative approaches</p>	<p><b>What to do</b> Build scenarios around critical uncertainties, engaging top executives through experiential techniques</p>	<p><b>What to do</b> Assess the impact of each scenario and develop strategic alternatives for each</p>	<p><b>What to do</b> Instill the discipline of scenario-based thinking with systems, processes, and capabilities that sustain it</p>
<p><b>What to avoid</b> Relying on readily accessible information or evaluating trends only within the same geography or industry context</p> <p><i>Availability bias</i></p>	<p><b>What to avoid</b> Focusing on numerical precision early in the process</p> <p><i>Probability neglect</i></p>	<p><b>What to avoid</b> Outsourcing or delegating the creation of scenarios to junior team members</p> <p><i>Stability bias</i></p>	<p><b>What to avoid</b> Planning for a scenario deemed most likely, to the exclusion of all others</p> <p><i>Optimism, over-confidence biases</i></p>	<p><b>What to avoid</b> Using scenario planning as a one-off exercise or ignoring social dynamics such as groupthink</p> <p><i>Social biases</i></p>

McKinsey&Company

## Health

This article states: It could be that [QAnon](#) is less a problem of terrorism and extremism than it is one of poor mental health. Interesting implications for public policy responses if this holds true.

New [research](#) (Australia) shows for each new fast-food outlet the number of heart attacks per 100,000 people went up by four.

Diphtheria is evolving to become resistant to several classes of antibiotics. It could also evolve to escape vaccines. The impact of COVID-19 on diphtheria vaccination schedules, coupled with a rise in the number of infections, risk the disease becoming a [major global threat](#).

[A new paper](#) discusses how stressful experiences — or psychedelic drugs — might produce profound mental change i.e., the concept of pivotal mental states.

The Productivity Commission has released its 'Innovations in Care for Chronic Health Conditions' [report](#).

**Paper:** A. Murashima-Suginami et al, Anti-USAG-1 therapy for [tooth regeneration](#) through enhanced BMP signalling, Science Advances (2021).

## Science and Technology

A research program at the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea is exploring [whether fish will grow on the moon](#).

Eye tracking cameras and AI analysis can reveal your identity, gender, age, ethnicity, weight, personality traits, drug habits, emotions, skills, abilities, fears, interests, and sexual preferences, according to a [dystopian research review](#).

Bacteria collected from more than a mile below the surface of the Pacific Ocean are so alien to humans that our [immune cells do not even](#) register that they exist, making them completely invisible to our immune systems. They are not toxic to humans as they have evolved to infect species w/i different ecosystems.

Researchers have grown ['human embryos'](#) from skin cells.

Apple and Facebook are having a [stoush](#).

Paper: [Conceptualizing Technology](#), its development and #future: The six genres of Technology (abstract only.)

## Society

A new [Pew Research Center analysis](#) finds that the global middle class encompassed 54 million fewer people in 2020 than the number projected prior to the onset of the pandemic. Meanwhile, the number of poor is estimated to have been 131 million higher because of the recession

A [pay rise](#) that means a woman earns more than her male partner increases her chance of domestic violence by 35 per cent, Australian research. Suggests men struggle to deal with not being the family breadwinner. (also, [here](#))

A [study](#) says that many people who share fake news do not lack media literacy -- they're just not paying attention to accuracy. Social media design, encouraging fast scrolls through a mix of serious and emotionally engaging content, does not help. There is a huge business in Europe of [providing fake reviews for Amazon](#) products (apparently many Italians are doing this to offset economic challenges of the pandemic.)

New research suggests that for many employees, [increasing mindfulness at work](#) can actually decrease both well-being and job performance. (Depends on the job.)

British students are being brought together by [a scheme](#) that connects young people learning French with seniors living in France.

This [study](#) shows how we all tend to filter information in ways that support our existing beliefs (World Bank employees' confirmation bias amongst policy professionals.)

## Resources

### Tools

Scanning sources? The European Leadership Network (ELN) is an independent, non-partisan, pan-European network of nearly 300 past, present and future European leaders working to provide practical real-world solutions to political and [security challenges](#).

'... if we're to thrive in the future, we need to get a better handle on risk and how we think about it. The consequences of not doing so, ironically, are that our outmoded ideas about risk actually become a risk in themselves and threaten the future we aspire to.' Tools developed by the **Risk Innovation Nexus** are freely available – [here](#). This is an October 2020 [report](#) that might be an interesting read.

This is an interesting web tool for quickly generating little scenarios based on a keyboard or words that the user enters: <https://thirdwaveberlin.com/scenario-generator/>. The results are uneven. But it's easy to run. More background here: <https://medium.thirdwaveberlin.com/explore-synthetic-futuring-59819a12c4ee>

### Read



#### Responding to shocks

##### 10 lessons for government

Alex Thomas and Rhys Clyne

#### Summary

The past year has tested the UK government as rarely before, as it responded to the Covid-19 pandemic with a system already strained by Brexit. The country is now marking the anniversary of the first national lockdown and, thanks to the successful vaccine rollout, the mood is changing. Ministers and their advisers are beginning to think about life after the acute stage of the crisis.

The pandemic and, before that, Brexit have exposed strengths and weaknesses in the British state. Now is a good time to start to record insights from this recent history. This paper sets out 10 lessons distilled from interviews with politicians and public servants with recent first-hand experience of UK government.

### Journal/other articles

Zapletal, M. (2019). The Effects of Occupational Licensing: Evidence from Business-Level Data. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 57(4), 894-918.

### Listen

The Behavioural Design Podcast – example: [Behavioral Design 2021 - State of the Field by The Behavioral Design Podcast • A podcast on Anchor](#)

A 2020 (podcast) [report](#) finds new technologies are changing the skills early-career accountants need to succeed.