Introduction to Scenario Planning

Matt Finch - mechanicaldolphin.com
STRATEGIC REFRAISING
The Oxford Scenario Planning Approach

Rafael Ramirez & Angela Wilkinson
What are we going to do?
What are scenarios?

A small set of manufactured possible future contexts of something for someone for a purpose with a pre-specified usable interface and used.
We construct possible futures for a **specific context, user, and purpose**;

We only construct **enough** futures to **usefully inform** decision-making;

We attend, in advance, to **how** the user will **receive** and **incorporate** the scenarios into their work;

and the scenario engagement is only truly **successful** if the scenarios are **used** – that is to say, if they inform the decision which needs to be made.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Task Name</th>
<th>Predecessors</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<td>a</td>
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<td>4 days</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.33 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.17 days</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Finish</td>
<td>7, 8</td>
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"Most of the time, forecasts are quite good, and this is what makes forecasts so dangerous. Forecasts fail you just when you need them most. Forecasts fail to anticipate major changes, major shifts."

- Pierre Wack
Plausibility not prediction

You don't need to correctly foretell the one future that really comes to pass

You need to spot the futures which would catch you in your blind spot
A scenario is good if:

it challenges your assumptions

you can use it to inform your decision-making
everyone interact with you
Transactional environment
Contextual environment
Contextual environment

Factors

Factors

Factors

Factors

Factors

Factors

Factors

Factors

YOU
If this happens, does our plan make sense?
What signals would tell us this scenario is emerging?
‘Schools and/or Screens’
Scenarios for the digitalisation of education in Norway

Matt Finch / mechanicaldolphin for the University of Oslo
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Scenario A

“Barnet som måtte vokse opp”
(The child that needed to grow up)

• Stavanger in 2050 - Catastrophic climate change has led to a new world order

• 14 year old Anna walks to the Library to teach young children using virtual Moomins

• Schools have been replaced by digitally enabled self-directed learning

• Teenage years are now more like being a university student
Scenario B
“Norway Prime”

• Oslo in 2050 - Corporate power is ascendant

• Knowledge workers serve corporate communities which have effectively replaced the nation-state

• Data-driven machine intelligence supervises us at home and work

• Every aspect of education is tailored to meet future social needs

• This world is materially comfortable but democracy is vestigial
Scenario C
“Make Norway Great Again”

- Oslo, 2050 - The climate crisis and a financial scandal have caused a shocking end to Norway's wealth
- Norway is dominated by far-right politics and decline of its prosperity
- The government invests in policing and expects schools to reflect their values
- Underfunded schools now take on duties which resemble social work
OPPGITT: Fanny Bronken er administrator i Facebook-gruppen «Steng alle skoler og barnehager nå, før det er for sent». Hun opplever at flere foreldre lurer på hvorfor landet skoler ikke holder stengt. Foto: Privat

Holder barna hjemme fra skolen: – Har et kollektivt ansvar for å begrense
Arrows of Time

Past

Future
Future
What do we know is coming?
What do we fear? What do we hope?
What do we expect?
What have we failed to prepare for?
What can’t we avoid?
Past
What will we still be dealing with?
What can’t we get away from?
What isn’t finished yet?
What are we going to do now?
Command Intent

If we achieve only one thing in the next 3 years, it should be...

Examples of actions we could take that would help us to achieve this are...
How will we know if we’ve been successful?

What would excellence look like?
To make this happen, what should we:

Start?

Stop?

Continue?
To make this happen, what should we:

Stop?
Go deeper into these questions with the **Oxford Scenario Planning Approach**.
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