

Interesting insights from Futurology

Yesterday night I was caught up into browsing about [Futurology](#) (or **Future Studies**). Fascinating.

Futurology is the study of “postulating possible, probable, and preferable futures and the worldviews and myths that underlie them” (wikipedia). Sometimes this is science – sometimes art – and sometimes pure nonsense. But there are a couple of really good [futurists](#) out there. Some quite well-known are, for instance, [Paul Saffo](#), [Bill Joy](#) (co-founder of Sun Microsystems) or [Ray Kurzweil](#) (founder of many ventures and he predicted the growth of the Internet in very early days). [Moore’s law](#) is another great example falling into Future Studies.

I also came across Danish [Anne Lise Kjaer](#). She does a lot of [great work](#). But what I found most interesting are her global [key trends 2020](#). The figure below summarises these.



(Source: Anne Lise Kjaer, Global Key Trends [poster](#))

Anne Lise in her work claims that the future trends are interlinked and connect to socioeconomic and cultural drivers influencing our tomorrow. She established four key clusters of digital technology (4P bottom line) along two axis (me/we vs. rational/emotional):

1. **Smart (profit)**
2. **Social (people)**
3. **Organic (planet)**
4. **Wellness (purpose)**

Within those clusters she talks about ideas and concepts like the internet of things and global connectivity, big data, augmented reality, real-time consumption of services, [crowdfunding](#), global citizenship, 3D printing, mindful consumption, social responsibility, mobile and free education, cloud intelligence, mobile diagnostics, or positive psychology.

Obviously, I am presenting here a very rough overview. If you want to read more about the details have a look at Anne Lise's [blog](#). A lot of these aspects may sound as stating the obvious. I liked, however, the fact how Anne Lise brought them all into a meaningful bigger picture and reusable framework.

How is this related to APIs?

An API [by definition](#) allows and structures access to assets. Competitive advantage is based (among others) on the **value of your assets**. Understanding future trends is certainly helpful to **identify opportunities** or growth areas. It is always risky to move into a new area but on the other hand it can be very rewarding to exploit a first-mover advantage – or at least being a fast-follower. These opportunities can be found in horizontals (e.g., enabling technologies) or verticals (specific industry areas such as health care). Both are addressed by Anne Lise or futurists in general and both can be translated into assets and opened up via APIs.

A final remark about futurology and futurists:

Some of the writings of futurists are really critical and controversial about the rate of technological advancements and the danger it might bring to humankind. Two 'popular' examples are:

- Ray Kurzweil: "[The Singularity Is Near](#)"
- Bill Joy: "[Why the future doesn't need us](#)"

