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How do we know what the future holds?

By Anne Lise Kjaer, CEO of Kjaer Global Ltd.

Kjaer Global Ltd. collaborated with the BBC in order to create the different scenarios for the driverless car experience, "A Ride in an Intelligent Machine". Below, Anne Lise Kjaer explains how these scenarios were created.

Being invited to work on the interactive **"A Ride in an Intelligent Machine"** for BBC Tomorrow's World was an exciting challenge, as we got to flex our futurists' muscles to the full.

Our role was to inject inspirational soundbites into the storytelling process, sketching how human beings might experience the future.

For this we used a framework of different value universes and personas, developed using global data value research.

We created eight future scenarios set in Europe and the UK in 2035 to support and inspire the writer **(Joe Lidster)** and co-creators **(Charisma.ai, The Workers)** on the project.

Anne Lise Kjaer / Photo credit: Helene Sandberg

Understanding our nature

Our personas were based on the data from the global data value research. The same research also underpinned the Tomorrow's World **Global Values Calculator**, a psychometric model created by the BBC in collaboration with University of Cambridge social psychology professor Dr. Sander van der Linden.

Before we started, our team members took the psychometric test and found it to be both precise and revealing, a great starting point for gaining insight into the complexity of individuals and how this potentially shapes choices.

In a world that is increasingly digital, it is interesting to reflect and acknowledge the difference between who we think we are, the public face we show to the world (on social media, for example) and how we actually behave.

Taking the test was also an important benchmark for the team to ensure that our own values would not bias the work.
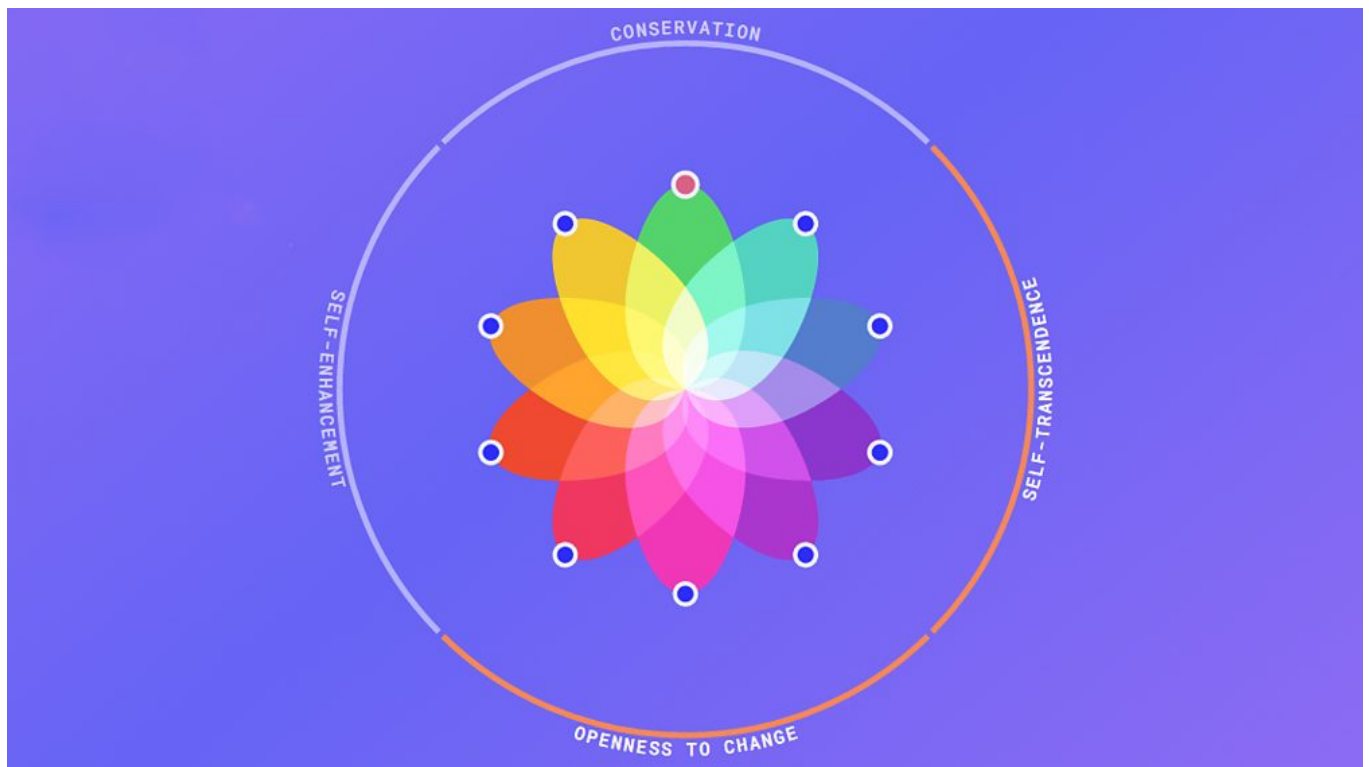
The calculator creates a visual map of your values

Navigating the future

To get a vision of tomorrow's Europe and the UK we catalogued current macro and micro trends in

society.

A macro trend may evolve as a result of global advances in science and technology or can appear abruptly in the wake of a significant event, such as war, financial or social disturbance.

Micro trends develop faster and often originate in a local region or within a specific group of people as a reaction to a macro trend.

These are the elements that will potentially influence how our lives unfold over the next two decades.

When developing soundbites for visual storytelling, the key is to find a balance between:

a) the future narrative rooted in trends but exaggerated to present a clear definition and make a point

and

b) the credible storyline derived from case studies and lifestyle behaviour shaping tomorrow's world.

We linked the value universes to trends, scoring them on an index to indicate how relevant particular trends may be for a specific persona.

For example, will a person representing certain values be more interested and invested in the sharing economy? Or will they be more concerned about the implications of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and automation of jobs?
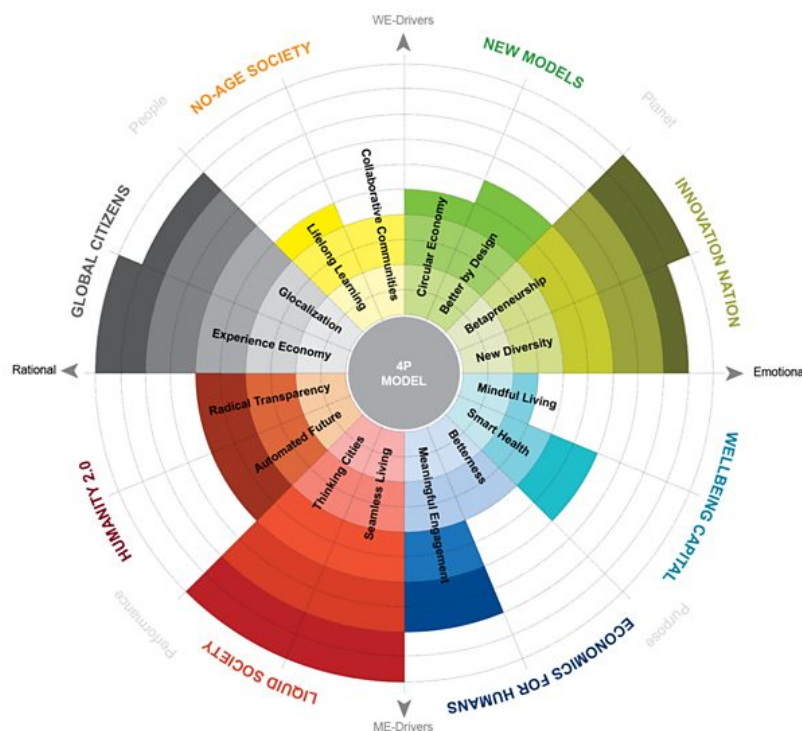
How to understand tomorrow's people

To highlight differences in perspective for each value universe and bring the personas to life, we developed mini scenarios.

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These close-up narratives draw out points of interest and explore the Personality (lifestyle attitude, self-development and family values), Material (consumption universe), Environment (work, transport and spaces) and Outlook (technology, progress and sustainability).

In addition, we supported the scenario narratives with evidence from case studies, covering everything from education, relationships and parenting to housing, the future of food and how we will potentially deal with death.

We create the future

As futurists we do not predict the future – no one can.

But using our methodology in a design-thinking process for systematic filtering of data points and qualitative research, into analysis and synthesis enables us to narrate inspiring scenarios of how the future may unfold.

Since change itself is seemingly exponential, we pin down what is known for certain to spot valuable insights and patterns –that is the only way to connect the dots in a meaningful framework that guide inspired thinking about the future.

As experienced futurists we believe the future is not a destination or an object set in stone, because as people, we create the future through our values, beliefs and choices.

We hope you will enjoy your ride into the future and your chat with the bot as much as we did during our co-creation process. Just remember: we are all potential change-makers, working to shape the future we dream of.
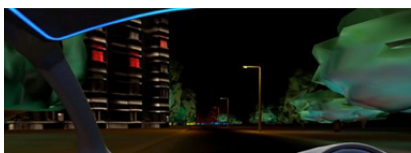
Find out more

Kjaer Global
Discover more about Kjaer Global.

Global Values Calculator
This calculator uses science to assess your strength of belief in certain 'guiding principles for life'.

A Ride in an Intelligent Machine
Welcome to the year 2035, a future that has been designed around your values, from the 'Global Values' test. You are about to have a conversation with a driverless car.

BBC - Tomorrow's World - How do we know what the future holds?

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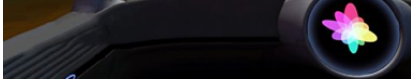
have a conversation with a driverless car.

More from Tomorrow's World

Life's big questions... answered.