

Panel 2: Developing Capabilities in Sense-Making

Speaker: Daniel Erasmus

CEO, NewsConsole



For the last 12 years, Daniel Erasmus has been facilitating scenario processes for diverse clients across three continents. As a Founder and Director of the Digital Thinking Network (DTN), Daniel leads a consulting firm that specialises in scenario thinking and transformation processes, and licenses early warning systems to organisations interested in looking ahead. With an international staff of members and associates, Daniel has worked with a range of private and public sector clients that include Nokia, Rabobank, the city of Rotterdam, the Rijksgebouwendienst, Schlumberger, Sanoma, Telenor and Vodafone.

Since 2001, strategic initiatives from DTN scenarios have facilitated an additional valuation of 400 million pounds for its clients. Among others, the DTN scenarios has anticipated the global financial crisis in 2006; a USD\$70+ per barrel oil price when it was at USD\$23; the foundering of the European constitution; the shift to online and mobile television viewing; the rise of Internet; the long recession that followed the dot com-crash; delay in 3G implementation and the dominance of WiFi; the failure of WAP and success of SMS, etc.

Daniel pioneered the use of scenarios to facilitate deep dialogue about the changing information society and its impact on our organisations, our work, and our societies. The initial ideas appeared in the 1999 Financial Times Mastering Information Technology series under the title, 'A Common Language for Strategy'. Since 1996, Daniel has facilitated more than 100 scenario sets on these issues culminating in the three year project and conference series, 'The Future of Digital Civilisation in 2030' hosted in Margaux, France.

In public sector transformation, together with the Economic Development Board of Rotterdam, DTN helped create the International Advisory Board for the City of Rotterdam that led to the ground-breaking initiative of the city to half its CO₂ emissions by 2025 and to become the number one intercultural city in Europe.

Daniel has been the guest editor and columnist for a number of publications. He has authored columns including, 'The Information Society for the Financial Times Review'; 'The Economy of Ideas for Intelligence and Intermediar'; 'and Hello World for PC-Review'. Additionally, Daniel was the guest editor of 'The Journal for Convergence', and the editor of the book, *Reflecting the Internet 1.0: Human*. He has also authored several academic publications in the Internet, multimedia, technology and risk management fields.

In 2008, Daniel captured the DTN scenario thinking methodology together in a case history of a Rabobank scenario project, 'The Future of ICT in Financial Services'.

Released in August 2008, it explores the future role of IT in financial services in response to the opportunities of outsourcing, lifestyle banking, consolidation and the challenge of a pending global financial crisis. The book sketches both the final scenarios and the journey of the executive team to grasp the changing environment. This comprehensive study is the first scenario casebook of its kind.

Since the age of 14, Daniel has been fascinated by the process of creating compelling emotional experiences on computers. Daniel led the development of the Van Gogh Museum's e-commerce site, the vangoghmuseumshop.com, in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Accompanying the landmark Van Gogh Museum's Van Gogh Gauguin Exhibition in 2001, he developed the Van Gogh Gauguin Experience together with a team from SQR and the Van Gogh Museum.

The end result, Web Experience, is neither a film nor a web-site but a meshing of the two media. Web Experience, Daniel's first site, won an ID Magazine Bronze prize and a nomination for a Cannes CyberLion in 2001. It had 250,000 visitors during 6 months of the exhibition, which is equivalent to a quarter of the visitors that visited the exhibition. It was the largest and most complicated Adobe Flash animation created at the time.

In addition, Daniel is also a visiting professor at Ashridge Business School and a fellow at the Rotterdam School of Management. As a lecturer, he has taught scenario thinking to more than 1,000 executives and post-graduate MBA students at companies and business schools from Helsinki to Cape Town, and from Paris to Seoul.

Daniel holds degrees in Electronic-Industrial Engineering from the University of Stellenbosch where he received full honours (Rector's List) and a MBA/MBI from the Rotterdam School of Management at the Erasmus University. He is currently completing his Phd on complexity theory, post-structuralist intervention strategies and scenario thinking at the University of Humanistics in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Daniel is also the Chairperson and co-Founder of the Foundation Reflecting, which organises 'Reflecting the Internet', an occasional event designed to examine the influence the Internet has on our commercial, economic, social and cultural lives. Themes in the past have included Human, Greed, Control and Transparency.

He is a board member of the European Internet Archive, a digital library of cultural artefacts in digital form, and a sister organisation of the Internet Archive. It provides free access to researchers, historians, scholars, and the general public to preserve our digital memory.