



Signals Team Operating Handbook

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Strategic Foresight Signals Teams

This document describes the process to set up and operate an Envision Signals Team. Any organization should be able to apply a similar process to establish and activate signals teams around key issues that their organization may be facing.

Background

Envision is applying Strategic Foresight at the community level. One of our primary goals is to provide a framework for local leaders (business, government, nonprofit, education, and labor) to use in making decisions that advance Greater Green Bay as a community of choice.

Mission To guide our community toward a thriving future based on proven foresight strategies.

Vision Community leaders identify trends, events, and choices to systematically drive decisions toward a thriving, preferred future.

Assumptions of Futuring and Strategic Foresight

- The future cannot be accurately known or predicted in detail.
- The future is not predetermined.
- The future can be influenced by actions today by individuals and/or organizations.

Envision Signals Teams

What are the goals of Signals Teams?

- Identify and analyze signals of change that may have a significant impact on each broad topical area (domain) for the Greater Green Bay area.
- Identify the key drivers that affect the domain, for better or worse.
- Share those signals of change and key drivers, using stories and narratives around plausible futures and trend cards describing forces and factors underlying them, with the Envision Board and the broader community as a framework for informed decision making.
- Annually challenge and update the team's work product to incorporate changes and insights gathered from signals, experts and key stakeholders.

Signals Team Composition

There are several layers to the Envision Signals Team structure.

- Signals team leaders – A steering committee comprised of the leaders of each Signals Team which sets the annual objectives, task list and timeline leading up to the annual World Futures Day event. The current timeline is included in **Appendix A**.
- Mentors – Each Signals Team is assigned a University of Houston trained mentor to facilitate discussions, maintain the integrity of the process and introduce strategic foresight approaches and templates to assist the team.
- Board members – The core members of each Signals Team are drawn from the Envision board where they receive a basic level of strategic foresight training and instruction in the signals team process.
- Associate members – Additional non-board members who participate fully in the team’s efforts based on the process described in this document.
- Key stakeholders – Organizations in the community who bring subject matter expertise and are positioned to act on the findings of the Signals Teams.

Signals Team Core Tools

The signals team process centers around research and analysis. The following tools are used to assist in the collection and refinement of those results. Proficiency in the use of these tools is something all team members should strive for.

- **Raindrop.io** – An all-in-one bookmark manager that allows users to save and organize links, articles, videos, and other content from the web. Its primary use is in the scanning phase of the signals process. See **Appendix B** for more information.
- **ChatGPT** – A large language model chatbot created by OpenAI. Two of the most challenging activities of the signals teams are the search and summarization of team results. Large language AI apps can help speed that process. Tips on using AI are noted throughout this document. Alternatives to ChatGPT include Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and Perplexity. Basic instructions in the use of ChatGPT are included in **Appendix C**.
- **Google Alerts, X and Other Sources** – Signals are best drawn from a broad range of sources including articles, posts, podcasts, papers, etc. Google Alerts provides links to articles related to key words or phrases. X (formerly Twitter) is where ongoing postings and comments can provide clues to weak signals and avenues to follow subject matter experts. Other sources, include social media posts (e.g. LinkedIn, FaceBook), published papers from trade or research organizations, and general internet searches. It is best to cast a broad net and narrow the focus as the best signals and sources become clear. See **Appendix D** for more information on setting up and using these research tools.

AI TIP

Google Alert Keywords

Use ChatGPT to find or refine suggested keywords for your Google Alerts. “I’d like some key words to use for Google Alerts related to *your subject of interest*.”

ChatGPT will return core keywords, tips on seeking trends, and variations to tailor your alerts.

You can also use AI to identify “fringe signals” by asking it to use Amy Webb’s concept of “fringe signals”.

Signals Team Collaboration Tools

As the signals team gathers and documents its findings, there is a need for collaborative editing by multiple team members. The method for doing this is left to the discretion of each team.

- **Microsoft Office365 Teams** – The preferred method for collaborative editing is Microsoft Office365 Teams. Each team has a dedicated Teams channel and each Signals Team member is connected as a guest of the channel via their personal email address. Documents can be shared by all team members simultaneously. Microsoft Teams channels and guest access are managed by a member of the Envision Greater Green Bay administrative team. See **Appendix E** for more information.
- **Other Collaboration Methods** – Absent Microsoft Office365, collaboration may be done through other methods such as email attachments and GoogleDocs.

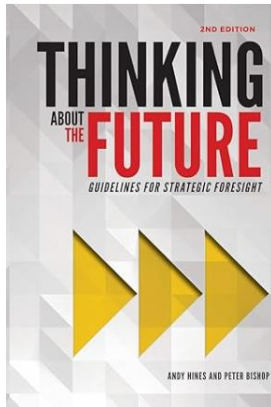
Signals Team Templates

The output of the Signals Team is presented in a variety of standard formats which can be found in the Signals portal of the Envision Greater Green Bay website. The portal is password protected. A list of the templates is included in **Appendix F**.

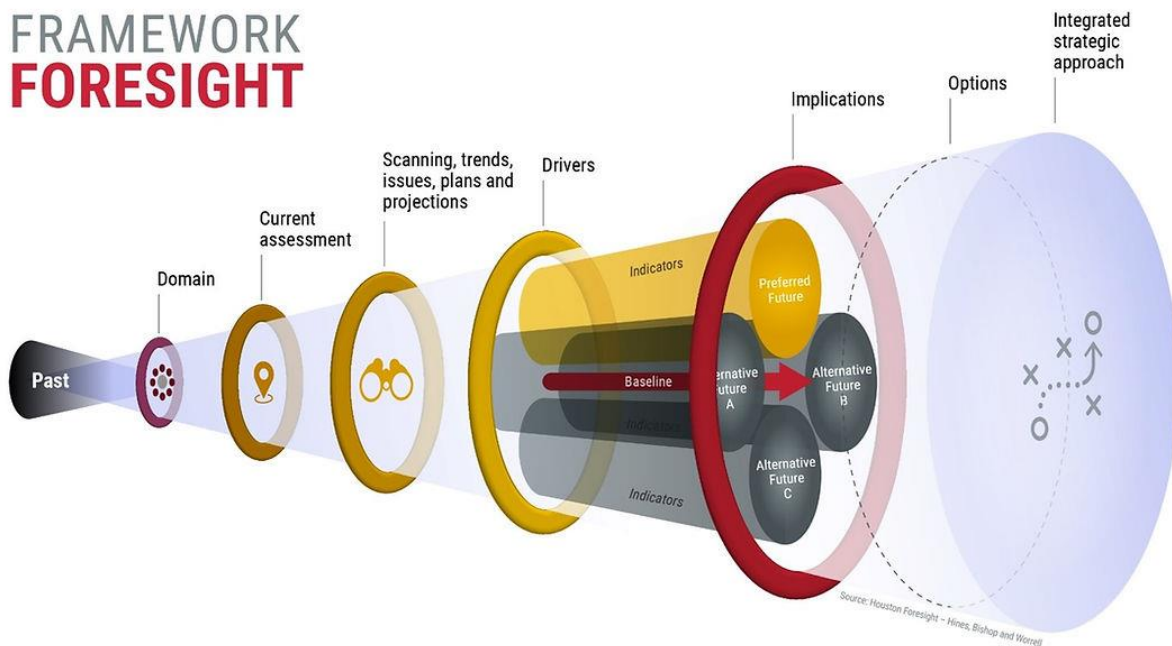
Using AI as a Signals Tool

AI has a lot to offer in gathering, organizing, and summarizing signals and trends. Like any tool, results vary depending on how it is used. **Appendix G** provides some useful tips on how to apply ChatGPT or other large language model app to the Foresight signals process. Tips include how to structure your AI request, and how to use AI to summarize trends or themes, and includes specific tips from the University of Houston Foresight program to find longer term, weak signals with horizon 3 implications.

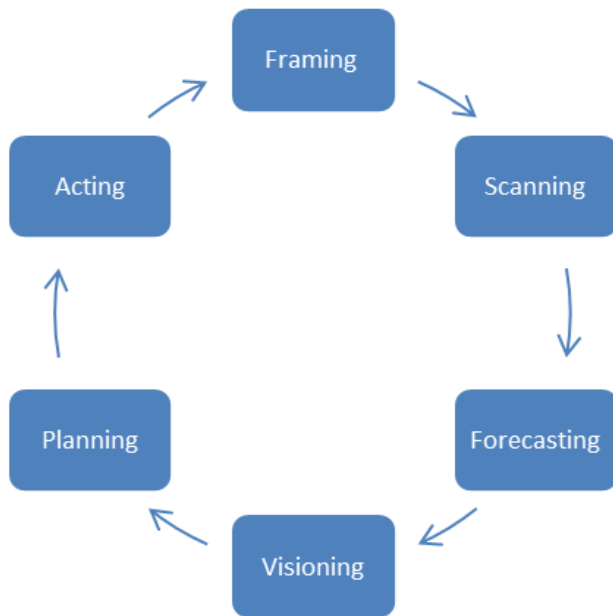
Strategic Foresight Process: The Houston Model



The Envision Signals Teams follow the University of Houston strategic foresight process. The approach and more specific guidance in its application can be found in the book Thinking about the Future: Guidelines for Strategic Foresight, 2nd Edition by Andy Hines and Peter Bishop. The process flows in a continuous cycle of discovery, analysis and action through six phases as shown on the next page. Each phase is documented in one or more standard formats and updated continually as the phase is revisited.



Foresight Process



Framing defines the scope and focus of the problem or subject area of the signals team. Systems thinking is utilized to create a Domain Map of the topic under study. It determines what is included in the project and what is excluded. Framing establishes the team's objectives, structure, key stakeholders and provides a Current Assessment of the topic under study.

Scanning: This is where we begin to look for signals of change from outside sources that provide indications of how the future might unfold.

Forecasting is where signals are analyzed to identify underlying drivers and shifts or trends that might affect the future.

Visioning is the process of developing scenarios regarding the plausible futures of the area under study. The plausible futures generally include:

- *The Baseline or Continuation.* This is perhaps the most common scenario. It basically indicates what the future will be if we keep doing what we are doing now.
- *The New Equilibrium.* In this future, the organization or area under study responds to immediate changes in the environment and hits a stabilizing plateau. When there are significant changes in the environment, another round of adjustment will be necessary to reach equilibrium-either higher or lower.
- *Decline and Collapse.* In this future, the organization does not respond to changes in the environment and gradually declines or ultimately may completely go out of existence.
- *The Transformation.* This is a future in which the organization identifies weak signals of change affecting the organization up to 10 years out, and transforms itself to be successful in this new long-range future.
- *The Preferred.* This is the future an organization decides is the one they see in their future.

Planning is the process of identifying what needs to be done to avoid some of the alternative futures and to achieve the Preferred future.

Acting is carrying out the organization's plan to achieve the Preferred future.

Applying the Strategic Foresight Model to Signals Teams

Framing

The first task of each signals team is to define the starting point for its work through two defining documents.

- Domain Description:** The starting point is to define the object of the signals team by identifying the topic of study, key issues, and the scope of the effort in time, geography and other factors.



Envision Signals Teams are each centered on a specific category of the greater Green Bay “Community of Choice” domain as shown here.

- Current Status:** As part of the domain mapping process the Signals Teams will assess the current status of the categories and sub-categories in the Domain Map

Domain Description		Fill out the right column according to the instructions in the left column.			
DOMAIN DEFINITION Title and one paragraph high-level summary of the topic.	Title: One paragraph high-level summary:				
	KEY ISSUES(S) OR QUESTION(S) Please your topic as a question. You might want to fit out "domain definition" below first.				
TYPE Highlight one Hint: Exploratory is general, Strategic is when you have a specific issue to address	Exploratory — OF — Strategic	CLIENT			
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE Hint: In most cases "global" will be too big.					
TIME HORIZON Insert a range of years for each horizon. Note: this project is due the end of horizon two, meaning H2 should end at the desired timeframe and H3 is the end of H2.	H1	H2	H3		

- Domain Map:** The core framing document of each signals team is the Domain Map. The center of the diagram is the topical **Domain** itself. The Domain is surrounded by **categories** of various elements of the Domain. Think of the Domain Map as the “system” of all the primary elements that will impact the primary Domain topic. Each category of the system is further broken down into **sub-category** components.

Current Assessment		Fill out the right column according to the instructions in the left column.			
FUTURE OF Add title of your project					
CURRENT CONDITIONS Identify 5-6 current "hot topics" in your domain. Including a link to a source.	•				
STAKEHOLDERS Identify 3-5 external stakeholder groups and describe why they are important to the domain in a phrase or short sentence. e.g. State legislature – as a new technology is released, the state legislature needs to verify its safety for general use.	•				
RECENT HISTORY Identify 2-3 important events (include the historical date to your best estimate) in your domain in the last 10 years. Include a link to a source. Hint: put first in chronological order, dates first. Where it's not an obvious connection to your domain, make sure it connects with your overall description	•				

Scanning for Signals of Change

Identifying signals of change follows a process of scanning for signals of change. During the scanning process, the signals are sorted into collections of similar areas. Once enough signals have been collected, clusters of signals will appear as themes. These themes are what we think of as key Drivers of change.

- **Scanning:** Begin by gathering information from multiple sources. This is where you might use Google Alerts, following experts on LinkedIn or Twitter, reading, seeing what is going on in professional associations or watching TED talks, etc.
- **STEEP categories:** STEEP is an acronym for Social, Technology, Economic, Ecology and Political. Using a STEEP framework helps force you to look more broadly across various channels of change.
- **Tagging:** As articles or documents are found, they need to be catalogued for future analysis. The Envision Signals Teams use the Raindrop.io app for that purpose. Each item is tagged in Raindrop.io with the following information:
 - **Thumbnail description** of why the item is relevant
 - **Tags** to help in filtering results. All items should include a time horizon tag indicating its effect.
 - **H1** – Occurring currently
 - **H2** – 3-5 Years
 - **H3** – 10 Years or more
 - **Assignment to one or more preset Raindrop.io Collections** which correspond to the domain map categories.
- **Sorting:** Examine and analyze the information from scanning to identify the valued nuggets of information. This is where you begin to look for patterns of information that are coming together. Watch for weak (often horizon 3) signals of change as well.
- **Drivers:** As you begin to identify and analyze signals, this is the time to identify patterns in the signals having a significant impact on the primary Domain element that point to key drivers of change.

Role of the Team Members in Scanning

Your Signals Team's Domain Map has a focused topic and several categories.

- One strategy is to assign each category of the Domain Map to a team member who will act as the primary curator of the signals gathered in that area.
- Give some thought to how trends in the Social, Technology, Economic, Ecology, & Political (STEEP) categories may impact the components of the Domain Map.
- Encourage every team member to contribute signals to all categories as they encounter them.

Identify Resources.

- Every team member should begin a preliminary search for information on the area they are researching and tracking and be on the lookout for information relating to other categories within the domain.

- This preliminary information search will identify terms that appear to be the primary way in which the topic is being discussed.
- Those terms can help refine your search key words and form the basis for locating information on the key topical areas.

Identify Key Drivers

- A Driver is a group of signals that seem to cluster around a theme. For example, one might be conducting a foresight project for the Pet Smart chain of stores. You begin to pick up several signals such as: pets are more welcome in hotels-airplanes, the amount of money spent on pet insurance has increased substantially, more products are being purchased for pets (clothing, pet strollers, etc.), higher end pet foods are becoming more prevalent, pets are receiving dental care, day care for pets, and the growth of dog parks to name a few signals. These all suggest a theme, we are beginning to treat our pets more like humans. The Driver might be the “humanization of pets.”
- Key drivers are the forces influencing the domain/category and its future. The degree of control over drivers varies from externalities, over which limited control is available, to internal forces which are at the core of decision-making toward a preferred future.
- Spending time reviewing all the signals in the Raindrop.io Collections is a good place to start identifying key drivers.
- It is important to have all members of the teams engaged in discussing the drivers and the impact they may have on your primary topic.

AI TIP

Themes and Drivers

Use ChatGPT to uncover key themes from the signal “hits” you have identified.

This can be done by putting all of the URLs from your signals into ChatGPT and ask it to read these sources and produce 5-6 themes that emerge. These can form the basis of potential Drivers.

Develop Scenarios (Four Futures)

- Once the signals have been uncovered and the key drivers of change have been identified, the signals teams can begin to craft scenarios.
- Typically, four archetype scenarios are suggested for each driver identified earlier: continuation, new equilibrium, decline & collapse, and transformation.

Drivers Template to Create the Four Futures	
The Future of <u>Your Primary Topic of Study</u> <i>You should have one form like this for each Key Driver</i>	
FUTURE SCENARIO <i>Hint: For each of the futures below indicate how this Driver and its effects are leading to each future.</i>	Driver Description <i>In this space right a succinct description of the Driver.</i>
Baseline	
New Equilibrium	
Decline & Collapse	
Transformation	

Create Trend Cards

- The goal of Trend Cards is to provide a consistent, common framework for summarizing the Domain findings to share widely among community leaders.
- Trend Cards summarize the signals team’s findings and are designed to present an assessment of the current situation, key signals that suggest future changes, plausible scenarios, implications of the scenarios and resources available.
- Contents of a Trends Card
 - ✓ Topic / Domain
 - ✓ Background
 - ✓ Current Assessment
 - Key issues or Questions
 - Current Conditions
 - Stakeholders
 - Recent History
 - ✓ Signals: Trends, Events, Drivers, Uncertainties & Choices
 - ✓ Scenarios
 - ✓ Implications
 - ✓ Sources
- Trend card content provides the basis for multiple channels of communication, including newsletters, website, community conversations and presentations to funders, trade and other groups.
- A wide variety of formats are used to create Trend Cards. The key is to create a card that engages your audience, provides some data impacting your primary topic, and raises questions for discussion.

Sample Trend Cards

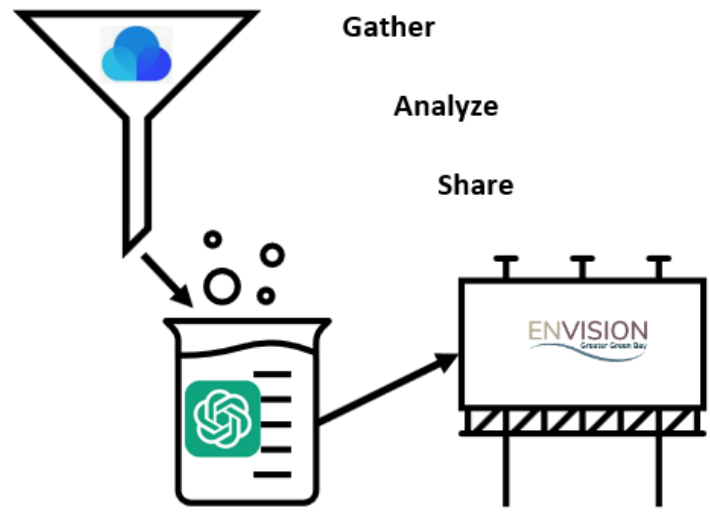


Sample Economy & Employment card



Team Collaboration

- Maximum value from the foresight process occurs when all signals team members discuss each area of the Domain Map. The varied perspectives on the meanings of various signals brings the wisdom of the crowd to bear and greatly benefits the team.
- The transformation of signals to themes, drivers and scenarios can be done with the assistance of AI tools like ChatGPT. The results are presented using standard templates available below.
- The completed templates for each Envision Signals Team will be posted and shared via the Signals Portal on the Envision website. The standard results for each team include the following:
 - Domain Definition
 - Domain Map
 - Current Assessment
 - Drivers of Change
 - Scenarios – Four Futures
 - Trend Cards
- Selected results will be consolidated and published in electronic form by Envision. An example is the drivers booklet that was distributed at the 2025 World Futures Day event.



How will ENVISION use the results of the Signals Teams?

- ENVISION will share results of the Signals Teams in our newsletter.
- ENVISION will develop a new communication tool, report or Trend Cards to stimulate community discussion around the signals we have discovered.
- ENVISION will use signals to potentially develop a community conversation (Huddle) event to discuss the impact and response to these signals of change.
- ENVISION will use results to guide decisions about the content of community conversations, selection of futurist speakers we might invite to Green Bay, etc.

How will KEY STAKEHOLDERS use the results of the Signals Teams?

- KEY STAKEHOLDERS, recruited by the Signals Teams, will participate in the creation of Four Futures scenarios and evaluate the implications for decision making today.

- KEY STAKEHOLDERS will organize collaborative sharing widely within the stakeholder group.
- KEY STAKEHOLDERS will continue to engage with Signals Teams to be aware of changes and their implications.

Appendix A

Current Signals Team Timeline Ribbon

Signals Team Process 2025-26 April – August 2025



Signals Team Process 2025-26 September – February: WFD 2026



Appendix B

User Guide for Raindrop.io

Raindrop.io is a powerful tool for organizing and managing your bookmarks and saved content. This user guide provides a step-by-step description of how to use its primary functions.

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1. Getting Started
2. Adding Bookmarks
3. Organizing Bookmarks
4. Searching for Bookmarks
5. Editing Bookmarks
6. Deleting Bookmarks
7. Using Collections
8. Sharing Bookmarks
9. Using Tags
10. Accessing the Archive
11. Syncing Across Devices

1. Getting Started

1. **Create an Account:**
 - a. Visit [Raindrop.io](https://raindrop.io).
 - b. Click on "Sign Up".
 - c. Fill in your details or sign-up using Google, Facebook, or Apple accounts.
2. **Download the Extension:**
 - a. For easy access, install the Chrome, Firefox or Safari extension from their respective web stores.
 - b. Once installed, pin the extension on your toolbar for quick access.
 - c. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTfxvs-s8EY> for an 8 minute tutorial

2. Adding Bookmarks

1. **Using the Web App:**
 - a. Click the "+" button in the top right corner.
 - b. Paste the URL of the page you want to save.
 - c. Add title and description if needed.
 - d. Include in the Note box the reason this is a signal of change

- e. Select a Collection to put it in
- f. Add appropriate #Tags, always including a horizon tag (e.g. H1, H2, H3), separating each #Tag with a comma
- g. Click "Save".

2. Using the Extension:

- a. Click the Raindrop.io icon in the toolbar.
- b. The bookmark dialog will pop up; ensure the URL is correct.
- c. Add optional details (title, description) and click "Save".

3. Organizing Bookmarks

1. Creating Collections:

- a. Navigate to the "Collections" section from the sidebar.
- b. Click "+ New Collection".
- c. Name the collection and click "Create".

2. Moving Bookmarks to Collections:

- a. Go to your saved bookmarks.
- b. Select the bookmark(s) you wish to move.
- c. Drag and drop them into the collection or use the "Move" option from the menu.

4. Searching for Bookmarks

1. Using the Search Bar:

- a. Click on the search bar at the top of the interface.
- b. Type keywords related to the bookmark you're searching for.
- c. Results will filter dynamically as you type.

5. Editing Bookmarks

1. Single Bookmark Edit:

- a. Click on the bookmark you want to edit.
- b. In the bookmark detail view, click the "Edit" button.
- c. Make changes to title, URL, or description. Click "Save".

2. Editing Multiple Bookmarks:

- a. Select bookmarks using the checkbox.
- b. Click on the "Edit" button from the menu.
- c. Apply bulk edits where applicable.

6. Deleting Bookmarks

1. Single Bookmark:

- a. Click on the bookmark.
- b. Select "Delete" from the options or use the trash bin icon.

2. Multiple Bookmarks:

- a. Check the bookmarks you want to delete.
- b. Click on the trash bin icon or select "Delete" from the menu.

7. Using Collections

- **Access Collections:** Click on "Collections" from the sidebar to view all your collections.
- **Move Bookmarks Between Collections:** Use the drag-and-drop feature for easy management.

8. Sharing Bookmarks

1. Share a Single Bookmark:

- a. Click on the bookmark and look for the "Share" option.
- b. Choose how you want to share (link, social media).

2. Share Collections:

- a. Go to a collection and click on the "Share" button.
- b. Set the sharing preferences and copy the link.

9. Using Tags

1. Adding Tags:

- a. When adding or editing a bookmark, include tags in the designated field.
- b. Separate multiple tags with commas.

2. Searching by Tags:

- a. Click on a tag in the tag cloud or use the search bar with the "tag:" prefix.

10. Accessing the Archive

- Navigate to the "Archive" section from the sidebar.
- Here you can view deleted bookmarks, which can be restored or permanently deleted.

11. Syncing Across Devices

- Ensure you are logged into the same Raindrop.io account on all devices.
- Your bookmarks and settings will automatically sync.

By following this user guide, you can effectively use Raindrop.io to manage your bookmarks and enhance productivity. For further assistance or detailed features, refer to the official [Raindrop.io Help Center](#) or click on your name in the upper left hand corner and select help & support

Appendix C

ChatGPT

- Go to www.openai.com/chatgpt
- In the upper right corner complete the SIGN UP, create your account and login
- There are three components to OpenAI:
 - ✓ **ChatGPT:** a language model with a conversational interface. This is where you can ask a series of questions and ChatGPT will respond with an answer. This area may be the most helpful to you as you begin look for information that will assist you in your Strategic Foresight process.
 - ✓ **DALL-E:** This is a visual modeling system that allows you to generate images from a description that you provide.
 - ✓ **API:** a component that assists you in developing AI models into your applications of business operations.
- You will probably find ChatGPT the most useful for your Strategic Foresight process.
- Click on the ChatGPT component. At the bottom of the page a window with the phrase “Send a message” type in your question here.
- For example, you might ask “What are the factors that will determine the future of a thriving economy?” Or “How is the GenZ generation affecting the workplace?” Play with any questions you might have.
- Once you have asked a question the answer will appear and be saved in the left-hand column of your screen.
- With each Chat in the left-hand column, you can edit the title, share the link to the Chat or you can Trash the Chat. If you put your cursor on the Chat answer you can save the page and if you have a Raindrop.io account set up you should be able to save it to Raindrop.io.
- Sometime the system is slow if you are using the free version. So you can upgrade to ChatGPT Plus for \$20 a month if you would like. This gives you priority access to the system.

Appendix D

Google Alerts, X and Other Sources

Google Alerts (to set up Alerts for your initial key words)

- Go to www.google.com/alerts and put in some of your key words.
- Go to “settings” to select how frequently you receive the Alerts.
- In the table of selected Alert key words click on the pencil (edit) icon.
- This will open a window that allows you to set:
 - ✓ how often you receive alerts,
 - ✓ what sources (I use automatic),
 - ✓ language, region (I use any region),
 - ✓ how many (I use only the best results) and what email you want the Alerts sent to.

After a few weeks begin to narrow your key words. It is easy to become overwhelmed with the results of Alerts, so adjust as necessary to arrive at a manageable level, generally no more than five. Ultimately, you have to make focus decisions.

Review each Alert to see if they are of value. If so, tag them using Raindrop.io.

X (formerly known as Twitter)

- Create an account at www.X.com
 - ✓ Open X from your computer, phone, or tablet.
 - ✓ If you have a Twitter account, I think it will just transfer you over to X automatically.
 - ✓ Type your phone number or email address in the first text box provided on that page.
 - ✓ Type the password you want to use for X in the second box. Click on # Explore in left column.
 - ✓ Fill in a key word you want to search, (e.g. “aging in place”) in the “Search” box at the top of the page to see a list of individuals, organizations etc. that are engaged on this topic.
 - ✓ Click on the sites that may have some value and evaluate their posts. If they look good, click the “follow” button to receive notifications of their future postings.
 - ✓ X is a great source since it gets you to more of the most recent thinking around your topic.

Other (Blogs, Newsletters, Podcasts)

- Identify experts who blog, have newsletters, podcasts, etc. Subscribe to them to get their feeds into your regular email.

Appendix E

Microsoft Office365 Teams

General – One of the challenges each Envision Signals Team faces is how to collaboratively collect, summarize and publish the results of its work. At present, Raindrop.io offers a collaborative platform for the collection phase. However, the most common approach to summarizing and publishing is to route all changes through a designated editor who serves as the clearing house for changes and official documents.

This approach and the attendant passing of document versions among team members via email is slow and cumbersome. The fact that the Envision directors and Signals Team members do not share a common technology platform or expertise makes the task more challenging.

Microsoft Office 365 Teams – As of this writing there is a rudimentary Envision Signals Team collaboration platform constructed based on Microsoft Office365 Teams and its suite of office apps (e.g. Word, Excel). The email addresses for the two Envision staff members are on this platform and the Livable Neighborhoods Signals Team has made the most progress in adopting the platform for collaboration. The biggest barriers to broader use are the wide variety of technology environments, often including other Teams instances, that the directors and team members operate from, and the level of technical expertise required to administer and function in the Teams environment.

More study and discussion on this topic is needed, with the Signals Team leaders likely leading the way.

Appendix F

Signals Team Templates

General The following standard formats are used to present the output of Envision Signals Teams in a manner which is easily understood and combined for publication.

Domain Description

Domain Map (4)

Current Assessment

Driver (FEMA format)

Scenarios-Four Futures

The templates are constructed in Microsoft Word and designed to be copied and pasted to create starting points for the signals team results.

Some inconsistencies may appear when a single document is opened and edited in more than one version of Word. Specifically, web-based versions tend to have fewer features and may cause unintentional changes to graphic placement, table content and bullet point formatting.

These Individual template files may also be found in the Signals portal of the Envision website.

Domain Description

Fill out the right column according to the instructions in the left column.

<p>DOMAIN DEFINITION</p> <p><i>Title and one paragraph high-level summary of the topic.</i></p>	<p><u>Title:</u></p> <p><u>One paragraph high-level summary:</u></p>		
<p>KEY ISSUES(S) OR QUESTION(S)</p> <p><i>Phrase your topic as a question. You might want to fill out "domain definition" below first.</i></p>			
<p>TYPE</p> <p><i>Highlight one</i></p> <p><i>Hint: Exploratory is general, Strategic is when you have a specific issue to address</i></p>	<p>Exploratory</p> <p>— or —</p> <p>Strategic</p>	<p>CLIENT</p>	
<p>GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE</p> <p><i>Hint: in most cases "global" will be too big.</i></p>			
<p>TIME HORIZON</p> <p><i>Insert <u>a range of years</u> for each horizon.</i></p> <p><i>Note: this project is thru the end of horizon two, meaning H2 should end at the desired timeframe and H3 is the end of H2+</i></p>	<p>H1</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>H2</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>H3</p> <p>_____</p>


Domain Map

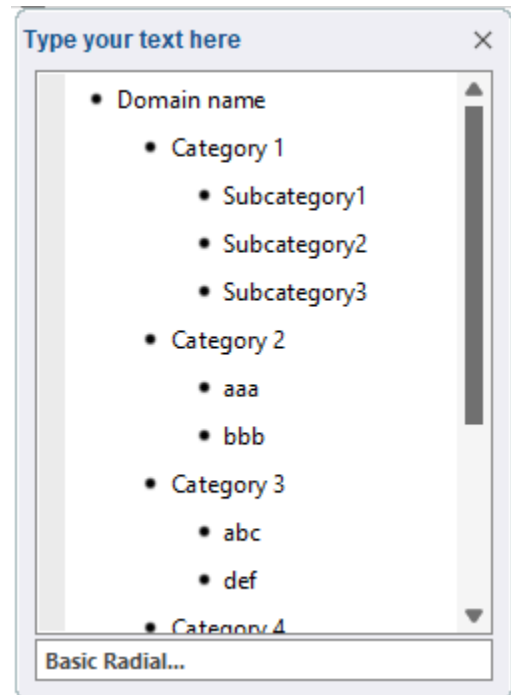
There are four variations of domain map templates. The first is constructed with standard Word objects. The others are built using the SmartArt extension for Word which is not available in web-based versions of Word:

1. Standard concentric structure built around the domain name and extending to the underlying categories and subcategories, each contained in a Word object.
Strength: Ultimate flexibility
Weakness: Every object is defined independently
2. Standard concentric structure based on the Basic Radial SmartArt design.
Strength: Ease of formatting and flexibility to adapt to changes in the domain map
Weakness: Sub-categories are listed within the category rather than independently
3. Tabular structure based on the Vertical Block List SmartArt design suitable for displaying STEEP factors related to a domain.
4. Combination of 2 and 3 above
Strength: Combines traditional and STEEP factors on one page

Using Word SmartArt add-in

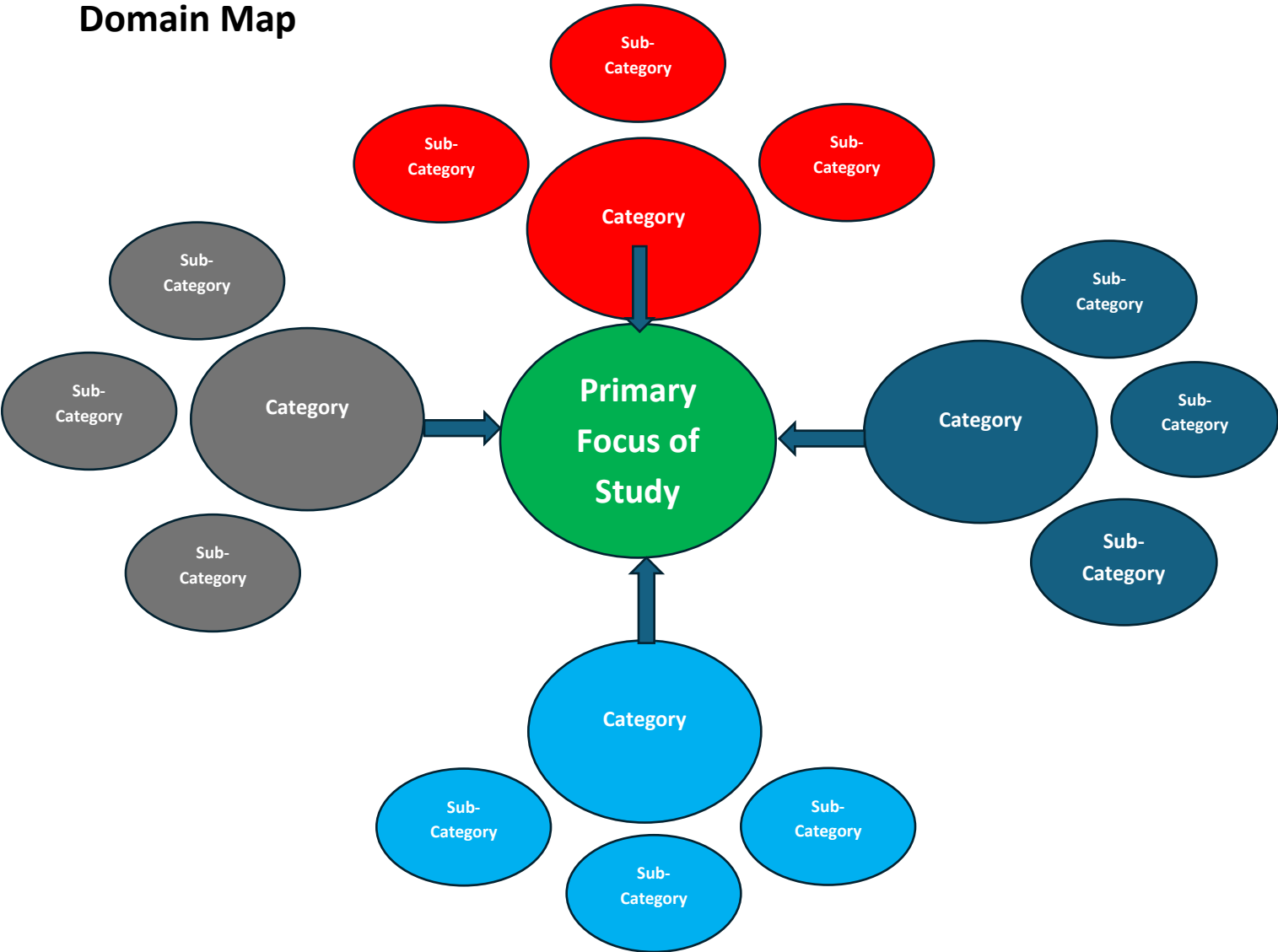
The templates below can be copied and used directly. SmartArt designs can be accessed via the Word Insert menu from a desktop app version of Word.

The two SmartArt designs are based on indented content lists (partially shown here) which are accessed by clicking on the  arrow on the left side of the graphic outline. The list does not appear in the final document.



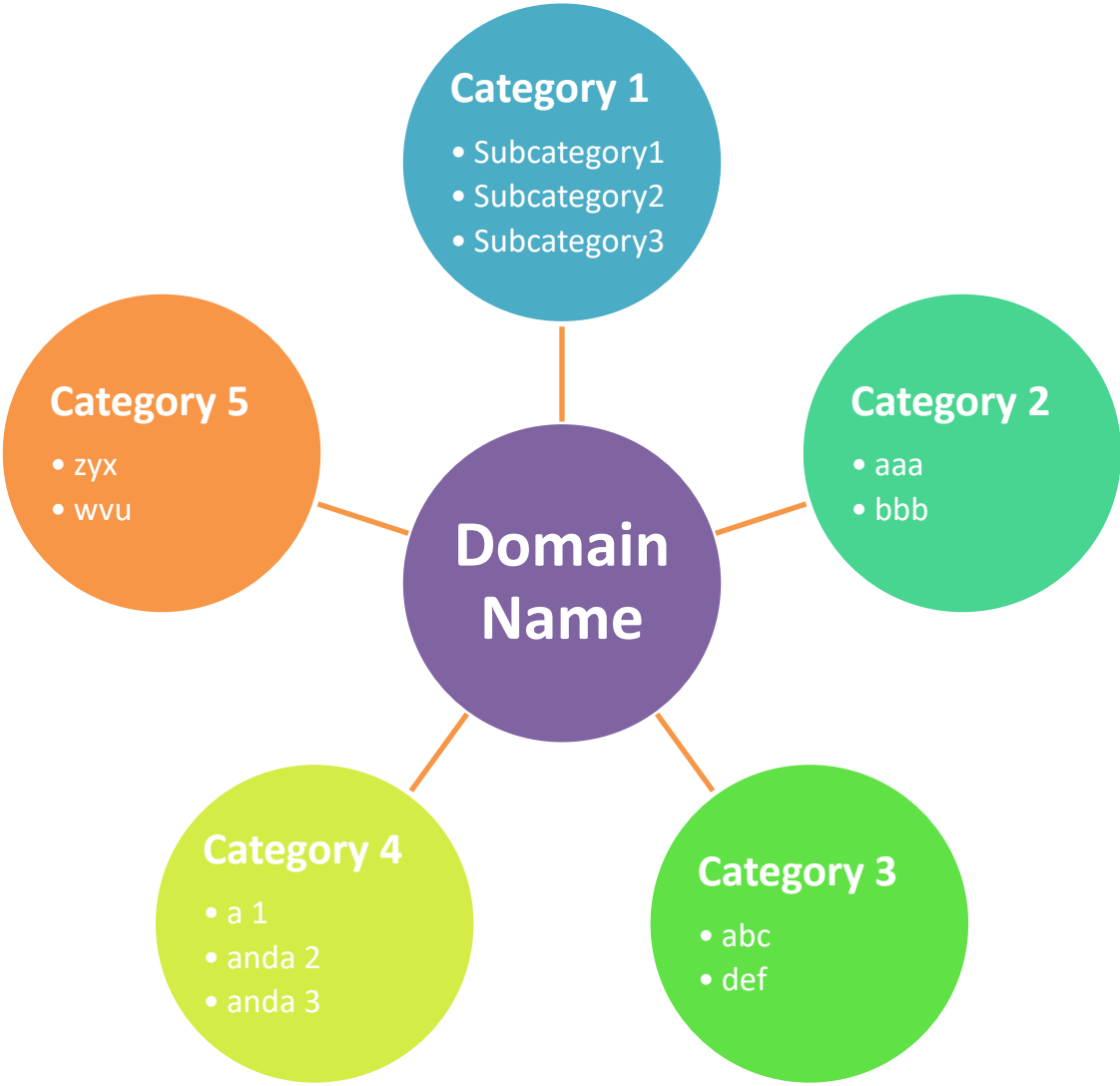
Signals Team Name

Domain Map



Signals Team Name

Domain Map

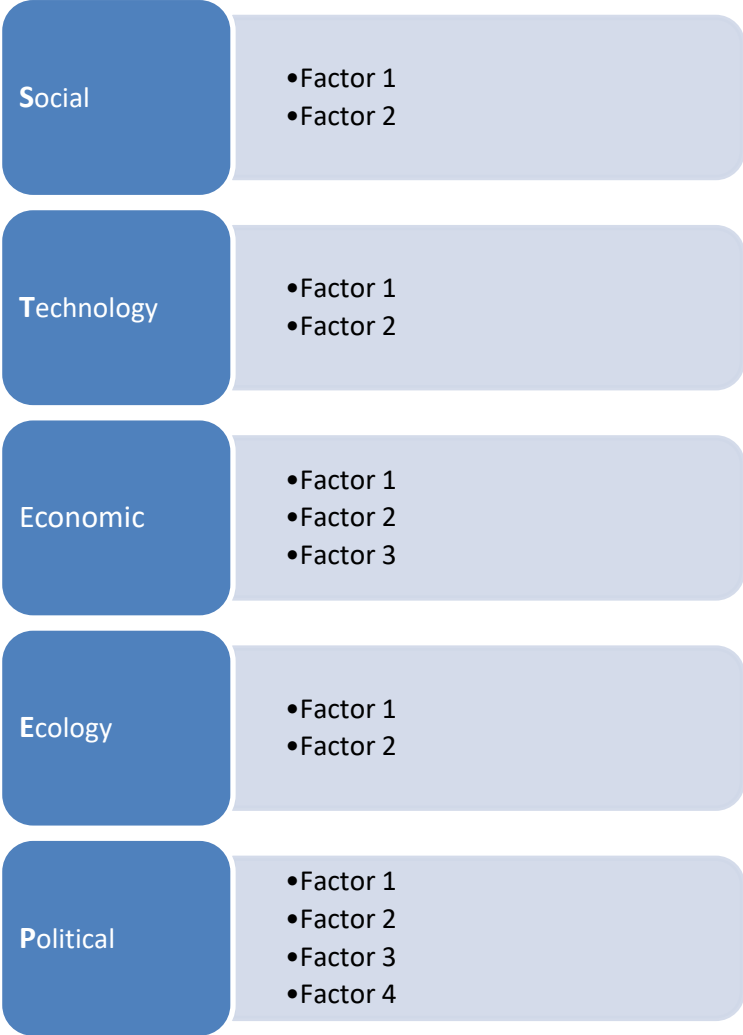


Place narrative content here

Signals Team Name

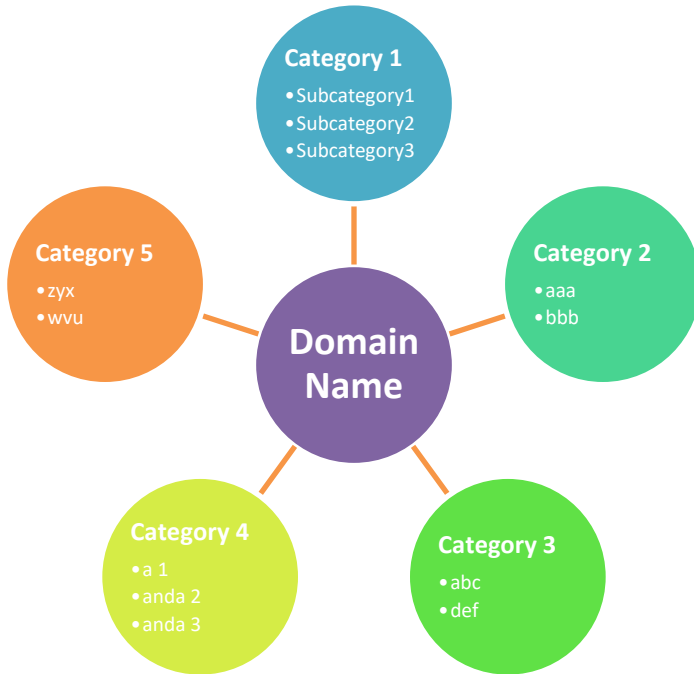
Domain Name STEEP Factors

Place narrative content here.



Signals Team Name

Domain Map and STEEP Factors



Place narrative content here

Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Factor 1 •Factor 2
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Factor 1 •Factor 2
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Factor 1 •Factor 2 •Factor 3
Ecoology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Factor 1 •Factor 2
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Factor 1 •Factor 2 •Factor 3 •Factor 4

Current Assessment

Fill out the right column according to the instructions in the left column.

FUTURE OF <i>Add title of your project</i>	
CURRENT CONDITIONS <i>Identify 5-6 current "hot topics" in your domain. Including a link to a source.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
STAKEHOLDERS <i>Identify 3-5 external stakeholder groups and describe why they are important to the domain in a phrase or short sentence.</i> <i>e.g. State legislature – as a new technology is released, the state legislature needs to verify its safety for general use.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
RECENT HISTORY <i>Identify 2-3 important events [include the historical date to your best estimate] in your domain in the last 10 years. Include a link to a source.</i> <i>Hint: put list in chronological order, dates first. Where it's not an obvious connection to your domain, make sure it connects with your added description</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Drivers of Change

SIGNALS TEAM NAME

[Name of change driver]

[Explanation: several sentences explaining the driver]

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

[list several of the most important impacts this driver is likely to produce; several implications of this driver for our community]

-
- 7
-
-

SIGNALS:

- [first related signal]¹
- [second related signal]²
- [third related signal]³

¹ [insert link here to article describing first signal]

² [insert link here to article describing second signal]

³ [insert link here to article describing third signal]

Drivers Template to Create the Four Futures

The Future of Your Primary Topic of Study

You should have one form like this for each Key Driver

FUTURE SCENARIO <i>Hint: For each of the futures below indicate how this Driver and its effects are leading to each future.</i>	Driver Description <i>In this space right a succinct description of the Driver.</i>
Baseline	
New Equilibrium	
Decline & Collapse	
Transformation	

Trend Cards

Trend cards come in a variety of formats. At present, no specific trend card format has been identified/developed for Envision Signals Teams. The recent experience of adopting the FEMA format for communicating Drivers has shown the value of using a single standard across all Signals Teams.

Some useful links to examples of trend cards:

Futures Platform: <https://www.futuresplatform.com/blog/trend-cards-futures-platform-and-how-use-them>

Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra: <https://www.sitra.fi/en/cases/getting-to-grips-with-a-trend/>

Mural: <https://www.mural.co/templates/trend-card-deck>

The purpose and place for trend cards in the Envision foresight process needs clarification, leading to a standard format and content for all Signals Teams to use.

More study and discussion on this topic is needed, with the Signals Team leaders likely leading the way.

Appendix G

Getting the Most out of AI in Foresight Scanning

General: When using AI for foresight scanning, **the quality of the questions you ask is critical** to obtaining meaningful, actionable insights. AI can process vast amounts of data, identify weak signals, and explore potential future scenarios, but it relies on well-structured, strategic prompts to deliver valuable results. Below are key strategies for crafting effective foresight scanning questions for AI.

1. Be Specific and Contextual

AI performs best when given clear, specific, and contextual prompts. Avoid vague or overly broad questions, as they may lead to generic or irrelevant responses. Instead, frame your questions with enough detail to guide the AI toward the desired focus area.

Examples:

- Instead of asking, "What are future trends?" ask:
 - "What emerging technologies could disrupt the renewable energy sector in the next 10 years?"
 - "What weak signals suggest shifts in consumer behavior in the fashion industry?"

2. Use Open-Ended Questions to Encourage Exploration

Foresight scanning is about exploring possibilities, not predicting a single outcome. Open-ended questions encourage the AI to provide a range of insights, trends, or scenarios.

Examples:

- "What are the potential societal impacts of widespread AI adoption in healthcare?"
- "What geopolitical trends could influence global supply chains by 2035?"

3. Incorporate Timeframes and "Bubble" Words

Adding a timeframe to your question helps the AI focus on trends or signals relevant to a specific period. This is particularly useful for distinguishing between short-term and long-term foresight.

Examples:

- "What are the key drivers of change in urban transportation over the next 5 years?"
- "What long-term environmental risks could emerge by 2050 due to current energy policies?"
- Sample "bubble" words provided by UH Foresight program. Can you think of other "bubble words you can incorporate into your AI scanning (e.g. keywords for Google Alerts)?

"of the future" "of tomorrow" "implications" "emerging" "long term" "trend"
"by the year" "vision" "scenario" "wildcard" "sea change" "the next * years"
"2020" "2030" "crossroads" "dilemma" "disruption"

4. Ask About Weak Signals and Emerging Trends

AI is well-suited to identifying weak signal's subtle indicators of potential change that might not yet be widely recognized. Asking about these can help uncover early-stage trends or disruptions.

Examples:

- "What weak signals in the tech industry suggest the next major innovation?"
- "What early indicators point to shifts in global consumer spending habits?"

5. Comparative and Scenario-Based Questions

Comparative and scenario-based questions encourage the AI to analyze multiple possibilities or compare different outcomes. This is particularly useful for exploring alternative futures.

Examples:

- "How might the adoption of autonomous vehicles differ between developed and developing countries?"
- "What are the potential outcomes of increased regulation in the cryptocurrency market?"

6. Use AI to Handle Repetitive or Data-Intensive Tasks

AI excels at processing large datasets and identifying patterns. Use it to tackle repetitive or time-consuming tasks, such as synthesizing information from multiple sources or analyzing trends across industries.

Examples:

- "Summarize the key trends in renewable energy from the past 5 years."
- "Analyze recent news articles to identify emerging risks in global trade."

7.1 Iterate and Refine Questions

AI interactions are iterative. Start with a broad question, then refine it based on the initial response to dig deeper into specific areas.

Example Workflow:

1. Broad question: "What are the major trends in global education?"
2. Follow-up: "How might AI influence access to education in low-income countries?"
3. Drill down: "What are the potential risks of AI-driven education systems?"

7.2 Words you choose can alter the results, so try several.

Example: The same questions with two different action words provide similar but different results.

What are disruptive **strategies** in treating mental health?

Disruptive strategies in treating mental health refer to innovative and boundary-pushing approaches that aim to significantly improve or transform the delivery of mental health care, often challenging traditional methods and the existing system.

What are disruptive **theories** in treating mental health?

In the context of mental health, "disruptive theories" refer to innovative approaches that challenge existing paradigms and potentially transform the way mental healthcare is delivered and perceived. These theories and their associated innovations aim to offer more accessible,

affordable, and effective treatment options, especially in the face of the ongoing mental health crisis.

8. Collaborate with AI as a Partner

Treat AI as a collaborator in your foresight process. Use it to challenge assumptions, explore alternative perspectives, and generate ideas you might not have considered.

Examples:























- "What are some unconventional factors that could influence the future of urban planning?"
- "What industries might be indirectly affected by advancements in quantum computing?"

By framing AI as a partner, you can enhance creativity and strategic thinking.

9. Where to search

Free AI search engines

From sources across the web

 Perplexity AI	 You.com	 Microsoft Bing
 KOMO4 KOMO	 Andi	 ChatGPT
 Brave Search	 Google Gemini	 Phind
 DuckDuckGo	 Exa AI	 Google AI Overviews
 Microsoft Copilot	 Bagoode AI Meta Search	 Google Search
 SearchGPT	 You AI search engine	 Brave
 DeepSeek	 Ecosia	 Yep
 Waldo		

10. University of Houston Scan Training suggestions for finding longer term, weak signals.

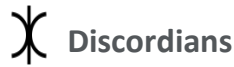
Finding the Fringe

Where 2018 "Scanning the Fringe" participants found their fringe

Blogs	Listserves
Science fiction	Places/locations (physical geographies)
Virtual reality	Video (youtube, Alternative TV channel (eg. Twitch TV))
Bots	Movements (transhumanism, biohacking)
Research Labs (DARPA)	Mainstream pubs (Wired, NY Times)People
Fields/disciplines (consciousness studies)	

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Finding the Fringe: Groups



MICRODOSING AND PSYCHEDELICS:

- *Silicon Valley's Best-Kept Productivity Secret: Psychedelic Drugs*
- *Micro-dosing: The Drug Habit Your Boss Is Gonna Love*

CREATIVE CHAOS AS INNOVATION:

- Enabling Creative Chaos: The Organization Behind the Burning Man Event
- Burning Man: Quality and Innovation in the Spirit of Deming

SKUNKWORKS, LABS, AUTONOMOUS ZONES:

- The Power of Play: What Burning Man Means for Innovation
- Consent Culture in Temporary Autonomous Zones

POST-SCARCITY COMMUNITIES:

- Does Burning Man Mean That a Post-Scarcity Society Would Be a Libertarian Utopia?

VOLUNTEERISM / PARTICIPATION:

- No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man

ART AS SUBVERSION:

- *Prawn Worship, a Giant Vagina and Lee Lin Chin at Discordia*

PARODY RELIGIONS:

- *Jedis And Pastafarians: Real Religion Or Just A Joke?*
- *Do "Parody Religions" just prove God even more?*
- *Serious parody: Discordianism as liquid religion*

HUMOR AS RESISTANCE:

- *Discordianism: When Parody Becomes Reality*
- *Fringe: Politics and protest parties*
- *Pranking rhetoric: "culture jamming" as media activism*

REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

TRIBES INSTEAD OF NATION STATES:

- *The New Tribalism and the Decline of the Nation State*
- *Instead of Wreaking Havoc on Native Land, the Rainbow Gathering Needs to Find a Permanent Home*
- *The United Communes of The Global Hippie Alliance*

ECO-CONSCIOUSNESS:

- Into the woods with the Rainbow Family of Living Light

DIRECT DEMOCRACY:

- *Rainbow Disorganization and Decision Making*

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE:

- *Rainbow Family Center for Alternative Living Medicine*
- *No worse place to be sick than at a Rainbow Gathering*

NOMADIC LIFESTYLES:

- *Love, Bums, and Drum Circles: Postcards from a Modern-Day Hippie Paradise*

COLLECTIVELY, THESE COUNTERCULTURES STRUGGLE WITH AND CHALLENGE THE FRAMEWORKS OF CAPITALISM, SEXISM, RACISM, SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION, REPRESSION.

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Finding the Fringe: Social Media

1. Log on **REDDIT**
2. Get distracted by: [R/TIFU](#), [R/AWWW](#), [R/LifeProTips](#)
3. Search for your topic
4. Find stuff
5. Success!

- Great source for links to direct sources
- Don't discount the comments section
- Use the search function
- Subscribe to the right subreddits:
 - [r/AMA](#), [r/Futurology](#), [r/technology](#)

#DeleteFacebook and alternative opensource federated social networks (self.opensource)
submitted 11 days ago * by P-e-t-a-r

In the wake of data privacy on social networks amid Facebook scandal, mass abandoning of Facebook #DeleteFacebook and earlier of Twitter (#TwitterEvacuationDay), the need for non corporate, and privacy friendly alternatives are ever rising. So look for alt.networks on [fediverse.party](#), original discussion on [THN](#).

---Edit:
Another social network alternative is [Movim](#) based on XMPP.
Forgot to mention [Swarm](#) on Ethereum, and [Decentralized StatusPage](#) based on IPFS.
[Kune](#) is also worth mentioning.

47 comments share save hide report

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11. Always double check your results, think them through and investigate.

Criteria for a Good Scanning Hit	
Credibility <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is the source reputable, expert, popular, or fringe?- Do they have a hidden agenda (selling you something?)	Novelty <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is the hit new? or has it been widely reported?- Is it new to the client/audience?
Likelihood <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What are the chances that the hit will amount to something?- Will it change the future?	Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none">- If it does, how big a change will that be?- How important is that change to the client or the domain?- Will it change the framework document?

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Three ways to being a better scanner

1. Set aside a regular daily/weekly time interval to scan for “interesting stuff”
2. Set up you own scanning library to capture interesting scan hits
3. Build your STEEP trend inventory

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