

Club of Amsterdam

the future of the **Future**

November 2011



Utopia versus The End Of The World As We Know It

In collaboration with **Gendo**

Supporter

Gendo

Presentations

Arjen Kamphuis, Co-founder, CTO, Gendo

► [The Cassandra Syndrome, nobody likes a party pooper.](#)

Anders Sandberg, James Martin Research Fellow, Future of Humanity Institute, Oxford University

► [Cognitive biases and what to do about them. The art of usable foresight.](#)

"The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be."
Paul Valery, French poet

The Future of the Future is an examination of the various future vision as portrayed by futurists, academics and scenario thinkers.

Many futurists who try to earn a living telling stories about the future quickly learn that a happy end sells much better than a tale of troubles. Because of this the scenario's futurists tend to publicly talk about tend to be wondrous tales of the Star Trek/Jetsons world were our problems have been solved by technology and sensible policies based on rational thinking.

Telling these tales, and support them with a lot of research data is a genuinely good way to help non specialists think beyond the usual limitation of their profession. But there is a danger in the fact that many futurists need to 'sell' their stories may very well be influencing their objectivity.

Just as is it easy to tell a very positive story about the future it is easy to spin a vision were thing end very badly for humanity. Threats from global warming to peakoil to overpopulation to future wars involving biological, nuclear or perhaps even nano-weapons could be quite real. Our more advanced knowledge about the world makes the original seven biblical plagues seem almost provincial.

Cassandra was cursed by the Greek gods with the combination of accurate foresight and the fact that no-one would ever believe her visions of the future. Today is no different. Most people don't like to hear bad news about their own future let alone pay for hearing it. Acting today to prevent 'possible' big problems tomorrow as a society is even harder. This leads to \$20 million movie budgets for a movie about meteor-impact while the global annual budget for preventing actual meteor impacts is only \$1 million per year.

Can we find better methods for forecasting? And will we want to listen to those forecasts and act on them? These are serious challenges and we need more brains involved in solving it. May we count on your brain?
Concept: Arjen Kamphuis

19:00 - 20:00

Introduction by our Moderator

► **Kwela Sabine Hermanns**

Part I:

► **Andrea Wiegman**, Founder & owner, Second Sight
The work futurists do, humanities great potential.

► **Arjen Kamphuis**, Co-founder, CTO, Gendo
The Cassandra Syndrome, nobody likes a party pooper.

► **Anders Sandberg**, James Martin Research Fellow, Future of Humanity Institute, Oxford University
Cognitive biases and what to do about them. The art of usable foresight.

20:00 - 20:30

Coffee break with drinks and snacks.

20:30 - 21:15

Part II:

Open discussion

Impressions





