

<press release>

2040: What responsible digital worlds could exist?

b<>com partners with fictional design studio Imprudence to imagine possible responsible futures in 20 years

Rennes, 02/23/2022 - b<>com and the fictional design studio Imprudence have conceived 4 scenarios around responsible digital technology as it may exist by 2040. This work is part of the forward-looking work* carried out by the b<>com Institute of Research and Technology.

What responsible digital worlds could exist in 20 years? : 4 plausible scenarios, documented and illustrated to help with thinking ahead

b<>com and Imprudence have imagined responsible digital worlds 20 years from now through the exploratory, analytical, and creative discipline of design fiction.

"Design fiction is a critical discipline that does not aim to deliver self-fulfilling prophecies, but rather to imagine the future and to assume that we can influence it" explains Julien Tauvel, co-founder of Imprudence.

Through the study and analysis of the major factors of change (educational, political, demographic, economic, and technological trends) as well as the evolution of practices through sociology and anthropology, the research teams have established the plausible framework needed to think about the responsible digital world of tomorrow.

[Spotlight on scenarios](#)

Living in Digital Archipelagos

The local scale is becoming the place where power is organized: Societies are reorganizing themselves into a multitude of digital archipelagos, each one offering its own solutions to the challenges of the century. Individuals are reclaiming digital technologies: They own their own networks, print their own sensors, make their own connected objects, have their own artificial intelligence, and thus regain control over the entire value chain from which their digital tools are formed. They create independent communities, where



Living in digital archipelagos ©ClementBarbe

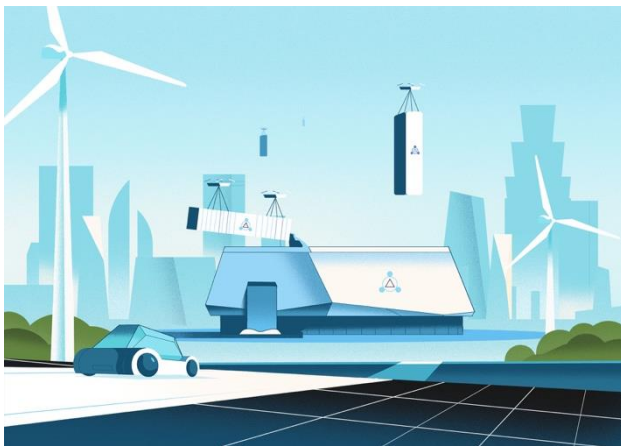
resource management, skill-sharing and intergenerational relations lead to the conditions for a new way of living together.

Tame the Digital, Save the World

In this second scenario, Europe will make sure that digital technology adapts to society and not the other way around. It sees itself as the responsible technological power of the century by founding the "Europe of the digital and the environment". A revolution in user experience with non-exclusive adaptive design, rather than applying standardized designs. The main revolutions concern the implementation of the individual carbon tax and the eco-coin. From a macro perspective, digital is seen as an inclusive common good.



Tame the digital, save the world ©ClementBarbe



Reinventing the Factory of the Future ©ClementBarbe

Reinventing the Factory of the Future

This scenario projects a change in the behavior of private digital champions who, motivated by social pressure and business opportunities, transform their tools and technologies into drivers of environmental change. What was once pollution becomes a positive-impact solution. Data centers become hydroelectric plants, e-waste becomes a windfall for clean technologies like electric cars, and soft wearables help reduce our individual impact.

Succeeding in the Digital Bio-Revolution

This fourth and last scenario imagines a world where the natural resources linked to digital technology have almost disappeared. Digital technology must change, and anthropocene pressure makes living things more central to our societies. Digital technology then follows this new path, between ore-creating bacteria, DNA storage, and plant interfaces which will extract rare metals, for instance.



Succeeding in the Digital Bio-Revolution ©ClementBarbe

→ The complete presentation of these scenarios can be found in the Julien Tauvel's interview for b<>com (add hyperlink).

Looking forward to spur technological innovation

b<>com has been following this thinking for several years: After studying the impacts of artificial intelligence on work by 2030, the researchers are now looking into the subject of responsible tech.

"The need to reduce the social, environmental and economic footprint of digital technology has become paramount. By looking ahead, b<>com intends to innovate differently by asking social and environmental questions before launching technologies" explains Martin Ragot, a researcher in Cognitive Sciences in charge of forward thinking at b<>com.

The work in progress on responsible digital technology, carried out with several partners*, involves some twenty researchers in a wide variety of disciplines (social sciences, cognitive sciences, psychology, etc.).

In this respect, the collaboration between the Institute's research teams and those of Imprudence will continue over the next few years. Some of what's in store: Creating artifacts to give tangible form to each of the imagined worlds, and ideation tools to foster responsible innovation or the creation of a frugality index. The results of this research will help inform tomorrow's responsible innovations in the face of future societal and environmental challenges.

**The partners of the foresight work carried out by b<>com:*

Project led by b<>com. Partners: University of Rennes 1, Rennes School of Business, IMT Atlantique, UBO, Orange, Imprudence. Disclaimer: This work has been supported by the French government under the "Investissements d'Avenir" program as number ANR-10-AIRT-07

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About b<>com

b<>com is a private French innovation center that pioneers, designs and delivers technologies to companies that want to digitally boost their competitiveness. Its technologies are developed to address digital infrastructure, the cultural and creative industries, health, defence, and industry 4.0. Its experts come up with solutions in areas like 5G networks and beyond, image and audio processing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cognitive science and mixed realities. Thanks to its world-class engineering team and its unique mix of scientific and industrial know-how, b<>com offers its clients technology innovations that make the difference.

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