

Nesta's futurescoping work



**Nesta is a global innovation foundation.
We back new ideas to tackle the big challenges
of our time.**

We use our knowledge, networks, funding and skills - working in partnership with others, including governments, businesses and charities. We're a UK charity but work all over the world, supported by a financial endowment.

We see Making sense of opportunities and challenges.

We spark Generating new ideas.

We shape Helping to test, grow and adapt promising solutions.

We shift Changing whole systems.

The kinds of big challenges we tackle include ageing; stretched public services; a fast changing jobs market and people feeling disempowered. We focus on areas where the combination of digital technology, empowered individuals, and better use of data and evidence can have the biggest impact.

If you'd like this publication in an alternative format such as Braille, large print or audio, please contact us at: information@nesta.org.uk



How Nesta is tackling the big challenges of our time: Our futurescoping work

The challenge

How can we tackle fatalism about our future and better anticipate the impact of emerging trends and technologies?

Nesta's response

We use methods like horizon scanning, speculative design, data mapping and scenarios to explore alternative futures with experts and the public.

What we want to see

We want to democratise conversations about the future, bringing to life credible possibilities which translate into better decision-making today.

Our approach

Nesta explores trends, technologies and early signals of change to identify the drivers shaping tomorrow. We use both qualitative and quantitative foresight methods, but are increasingly working with new data sources (such as social media data) and experimental analytical methods (such as machine learning).

We've applied futures tools to explore some of the big challenges of our time, for example, looking ahead to the changing skills the workforce will need in the coming decade, the technologies and values we should be putting at the centre of the next generation internet and how to create the healthcare system of the future.

Our foresight work spans all five of Nesta's priority themes.

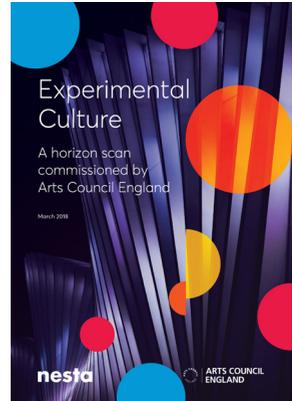
Examples of past and present projects



Creative Economy, Arts & Culture

Experimental Culture

In 2018, Nesta published a horizon scan commissioned by Arts Council England as part of its consultation for their new ten-year strategy to 2030. Designed to be an accessible primer for arts and cultural organisations navigating an uncertain future, it explored trends and innovative practice in audience participation, sector workforce and skills, business models and new technologies. We invited a number of leading experts and practitioners in the field to respond to the findings with provocations of their own.



Innovation Policy

Next Generation Internet

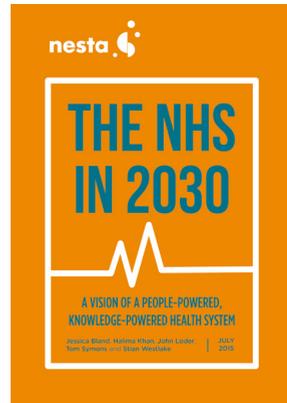
Nesta leads EU Engineeroom, a project which sets the research and funding agenda of the Next Generation Internet initiative, the European Commission's flagship programme seeking to build a more inclusive and resilient internet. Engineeroom will set out a future vision for the internet, using cutting edge data-driven methodologies to map the emerging technologies and social models which should underpin this vision.



Health

The NHS in 2030

In this report, Nesta explored what a health system could look like in 2030 with the addition of more 'people power' and expertise in data, genomics and behavioural insights. In addition to analysis of emerging trends, the report explored possible futures through stories and vignettes in order to prompt a more expansive discussion about healthcare.



Government Innovation

Participatory futures

Futures exercises are regularly led by domain-area experts, professional futurists and policymakers, with limited public engagement and open debate. Nesta is currently profiling more democratic or 'participatory' approaches from around the world, in order to make the case for engaging a wider group of people in shaping a collective vision for a community, city or country.



Education

The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030

Nesta published a major study with Pearson on future skills and jobs, which was underpinned by an innovative methodology combining historical jobs and trends analysis, qualitative foresight workshops and quantitative machine learning techniques. By identifying the bundles of skills, abilities, and knowledge that are most likely to be important in the future, as well as the skills investments that will have the greatest impact on occupational demand, the report provides information that can be used for strategic and policymaking purposes to better prepare us for the future.



AI in Education

Nesta is currently exploring the potential and risks of the so-called 'Fourth Education Revolution' that artificial intelligence promises. Computers can mark essays, and algorithms are becoming capable of judging what students need to learn - carrying out such tasks for more students and, often, more cheaply, than a human teacher. Does artificial intelligence promise a low-cost education for all, or yet more advantages for those who can afford it? And who will we trust to guard our children's data?

Exploring new ground

Nesta futurescoping also extends beyond current areas of work to fields, topics and technologies which are new to the organisation. For example, in recent years our exploratory work on the potential of artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality, and the impact of automation on the workforce paved the way for larger scale Nesta research projects and programmes. Our new centre on collective intelligence is one example of this exploratory approach.

Centre for Collective Intelligence Design

Rapid advances in technology mean that we have more opportunities than ever before to advance collective intelligence. Many organisations are now experimenting with new ways to harness the insights of large groups, in fields ranging from citizen science to democracy. Nesta's new Centre for Collective Intelligence Design will explore how human and machine intelligence can be combined to develop innovative solutions to social challenges. At the heart of the Centre will be a focus on applications with public benefit in fields like health and education.



Futures events programme

Nesta's futures events serve as a showcase for the next generation of 'big ideas' in governance, education, health, and culture. They are highly interactive in design, providing a platform for technologists and artists to demonstrate new tools and technologies so that the audience can experience a taste of things to come.

FutureFest

Since 2013, FutureFest has taken an estimated 9,000 people on a multi-sensory journey to touch, feel, debate and experience the future. The eclectic line-up of speakers has included **Edward Snowden, Vivienne Westwood, Brian Eno and Lord Martin Rees**. Each year we team up with artists, design studios and universities to provide a platform for installations and immersive experiences like **Neurosis** (a 'neurological thrill ride') and the **Fertility Shop of the Future**.

2018 marked our our biggest ever festival - with speakers such as **Ruby Wax, Nick Clegg, Nicola Sturgeon, Kate Raworth, Annie Mac, Akala and Imogen Heap**. The 2018 audience was invited to occupy 'alternative futures' and we worked with collaborators to create a **FutureFest Garden, a data casino and an interactive journey into the reality of human consciousness with leading neuroscientists**.



Nesta Predictions

Since 2010, Nesta has published an annual series of 'predictions' for the year ahead, articles authored by staff which shine a light on a trend or technology which is about to tip over into the mainstream. For example, back in 2011 we predicted that we would soon be using our phones as mobile wallets, and anticipated the boom in crowdfunding platforms.



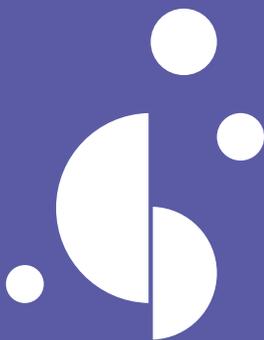
While we keep track of how accurate these predictions prove to be (publishing a summary at the end of the year), their true purpose is to ignite a debate about below-the-radar trends or, in some cases, even send up a warning signal about unintended consequences (most recently about the potential for misuse of facial recognition technologies). The very act of making a 'prediction' also serves as a means of building momentum around a new idea or method - enabling others build on it.

We never work alone

Nesta's partners in exploratory futures work have included: the UK government, Innovate UK, the European Commission, Oxford and Cambridge Universities, Pearson, the V&A, BBC, British Council, Science Museum, Microsoft Research, Arts Council England and Doteveryone.

If you would like to find out more about Nesta's Futurescoping work you can visit our website: www.nesta.org.uk/futurescoping or contact the explorations team: Explorations@nesta.org.uk





nesta

58 Victoria Embankment
London EC4Y 0DS

+44 (0)20 7438 2500

information@nesta.org.uk

 [@nesta_uk](https://twitter.com/nesta_uk)

 www.facebook.com/nesta.uk

www.nesta.org.uk

July 2018

Nesta is a registered charity in England and Wales with company number 7706036 and charity number 1144091. Registered as a charity in Scotland number SCO42833. Registered office: 58 Victoria Embankment, London, EC4Y 0DS.

