

# Academic Libraries of the Future

## Overview, update and next steps

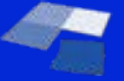
Dr Geoff Curtis

Dr Claire Davies

RLUK 2010, Edinburgh

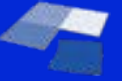
12 November 2010





# Overview

- Futures thinking and methods
- Academic Libraries of the Future project
- Next steps

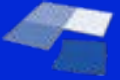


# An uncertain future

**The future** ...cannot be predicted  
...but can be shaped

**Uncertainty** ...cannot be eliminated  
...but creates opportunities and threats

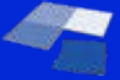




# Futures thinking

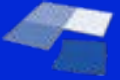
- Futures thinking considers multiple futures
- Working towards a vision of a preferred future
  - Fundamental to the mission of an institution
  - Motivating force for staff
- Helps you read and interpret the strategic environment
  - Positioning yourself for change
  - Help cope with challenges
  - Improve decision-making
  - Identify potential opportunities and threats





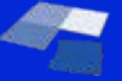
# Futures methods

- Various methods - can be applied in a variety of ways
  - Evidence-based vs creativity-based methods
  - Diagnosis, prognosis, prescription functions

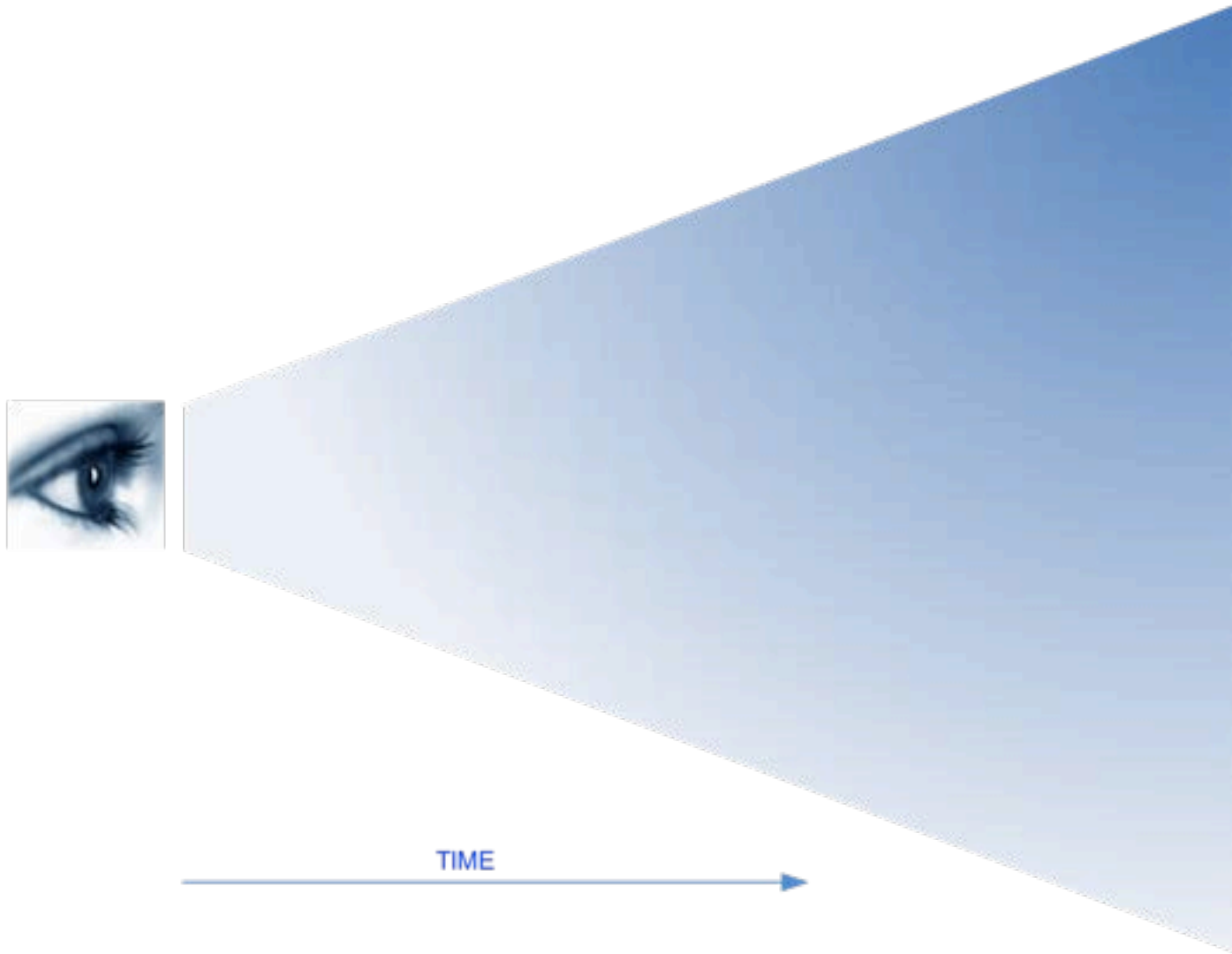


# Futures methods

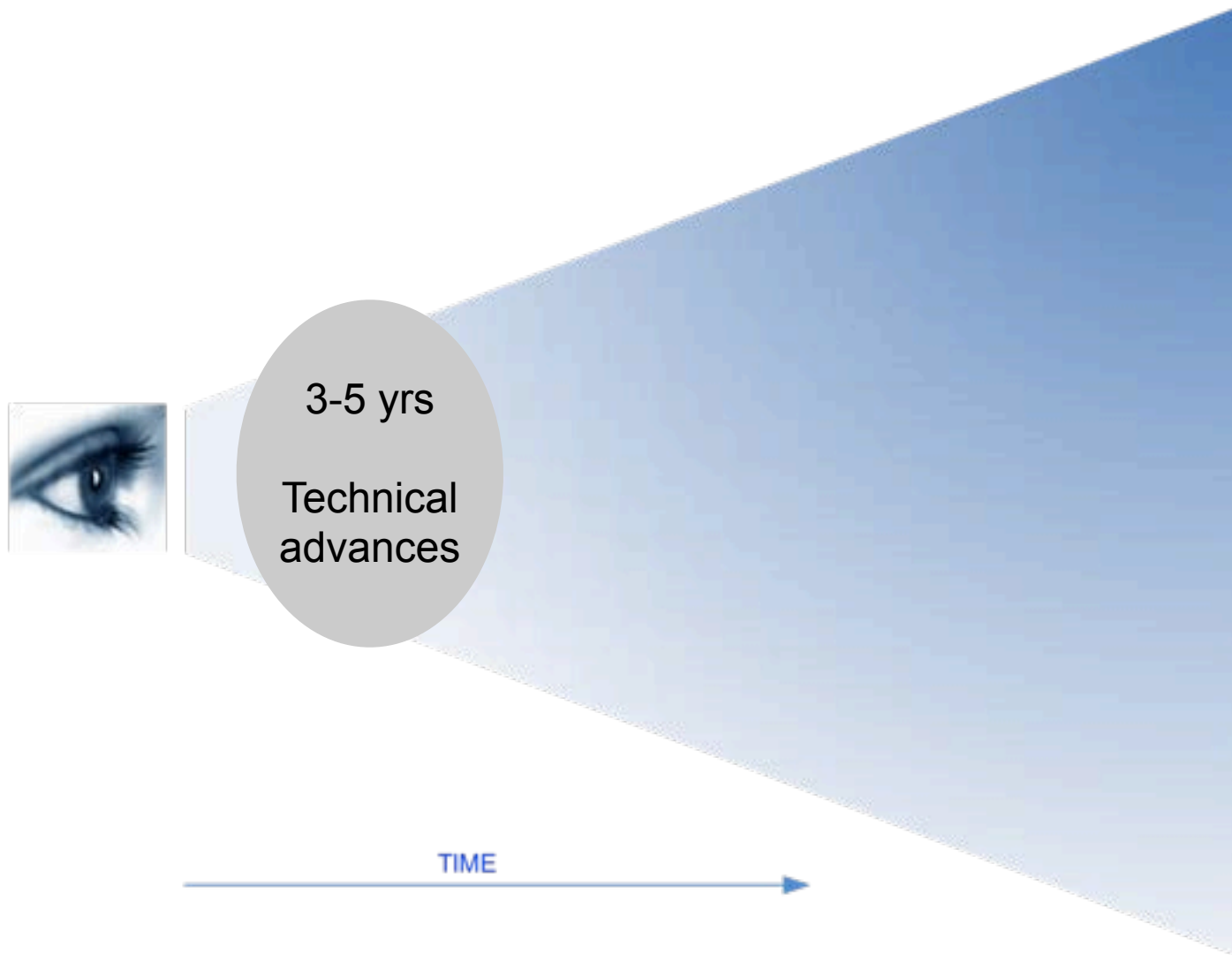
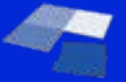
- Methods
  - Horizon scanning
  - Backcasting
  - Scenario building
  - Technology roadmapping
  - PESTLE analysis
  - SWOT analysis
  - Creativity methods
  - Expert panels....*etc*



# Future challenges for libraries

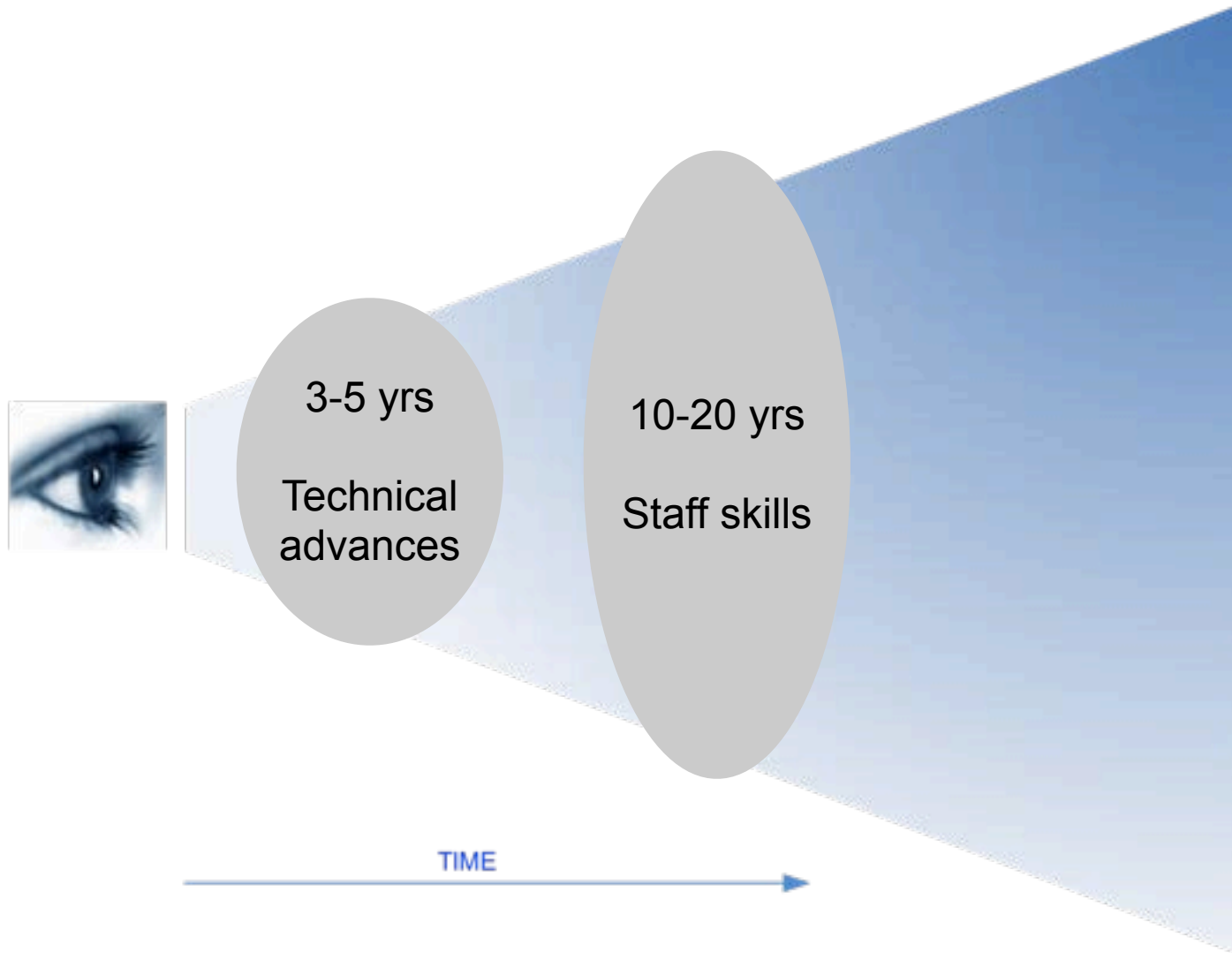
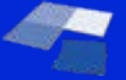


# Future challenges for libraries

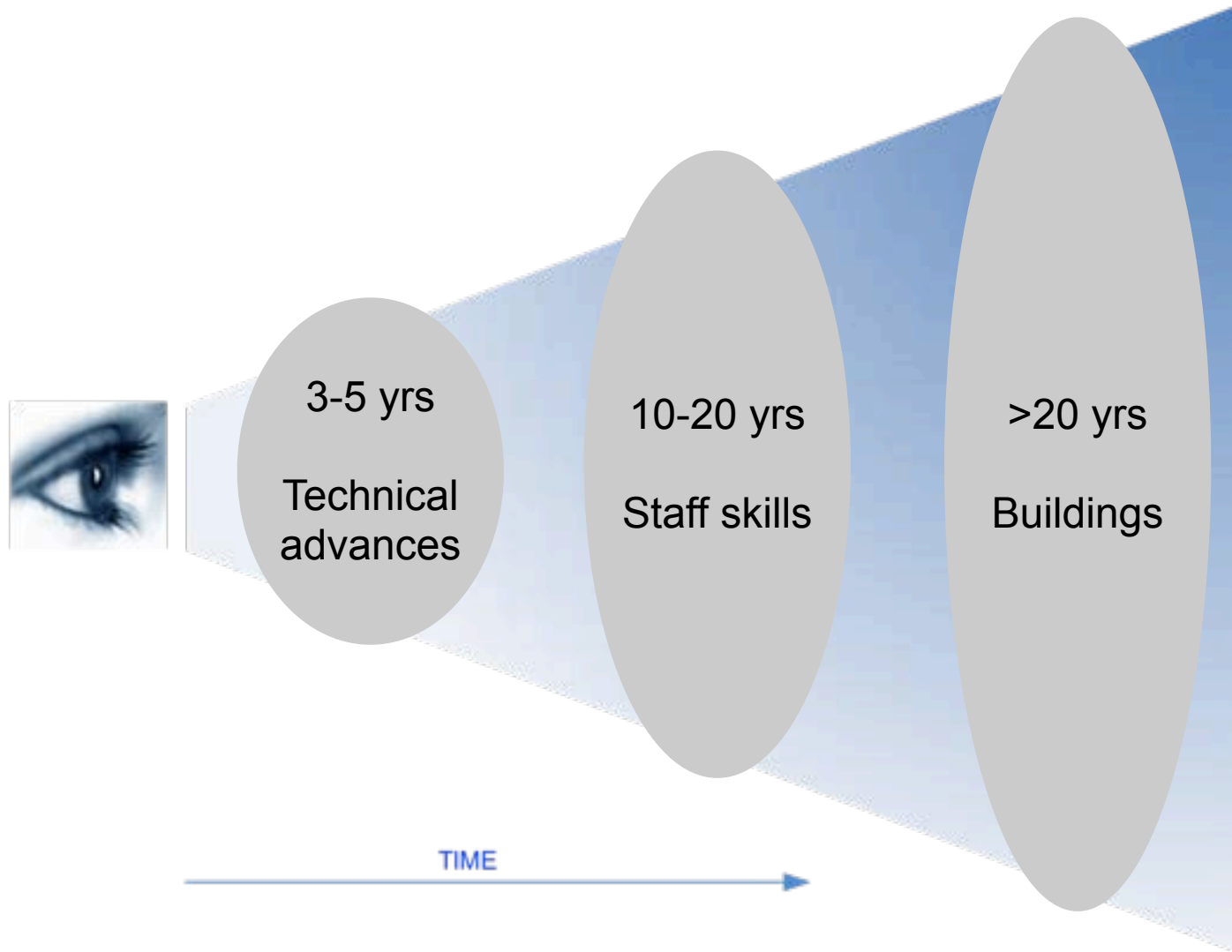
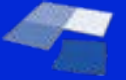


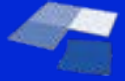


# Future challenges for libraries



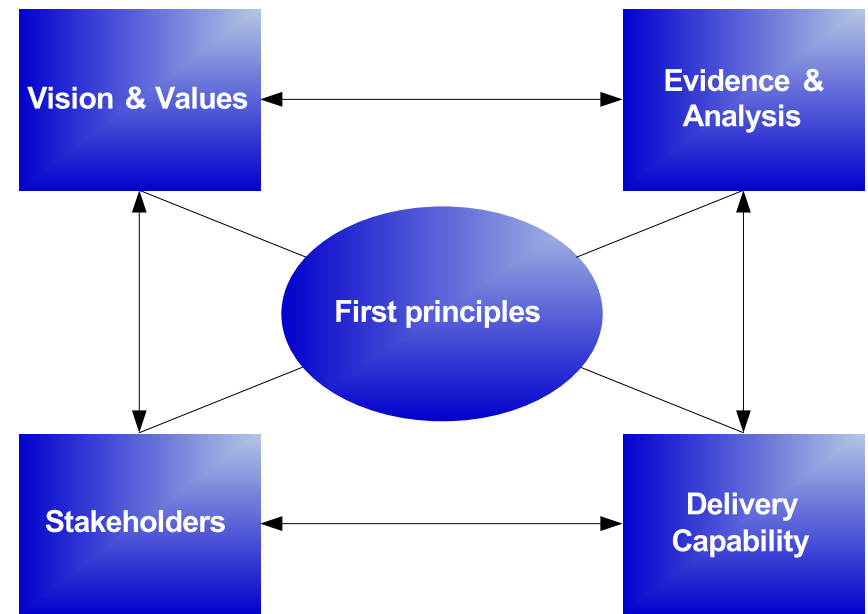
# Future challenges for libraries

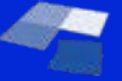




# Short-term: 3-5 years

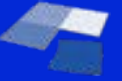
- Commonplace
- Immediate challenges
  - Funding cuts
  - Digital technologies
  - Rising user expectations
  - E-journal costs





# Medium-term: 5-10 years

- Provides context for 3-5 yr planning
- Some level of certainty about the future
- Considerations for libraries
  - New service opportunities
  - Staff skills
  - Strategic positioning within institution
- Example: British Library 2020 vision
  - Trend analysis
  - Being used to develop short-term strategy



# Long-term: 10 years+

- Beyond normal planning horizons
- “Foresight”: 20-80 years
- Visions of the future
  - Different ways it might develop
- Considerations for libraries
  - Future “shape” of the HE sector
  - Changes to qualifications
  - Role of information in society
  - Physical vs virtual
  - Influence of market forces

# Libraries of the Future project

- Joint initiative, five funding organisations
- Autumn 09 – Spring 11
- Based around scenario planning
- [www.futurelibraries.info](http://www.futurelibraries.info)



JISC



RLUK

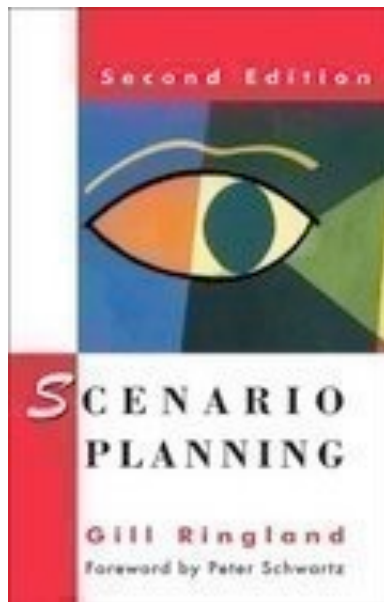


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# LotF – Methodological framework

- “Scenario Planning” by Gill Ringland
- Six steps outlined by FOR-LEARN



**JRC**  
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**FOR-LEARN**

Online guide | Support to practitioners | Important legal notice

## Scenario building

### Online Foresight Guide

- Home
- Why do Foresight?
- Conditions to analyse
- Scoping an exercise
- Methodology**
- Framework
- Main methods
- Managing participation
- Tailored exercise
- Running an exercise

### Definition

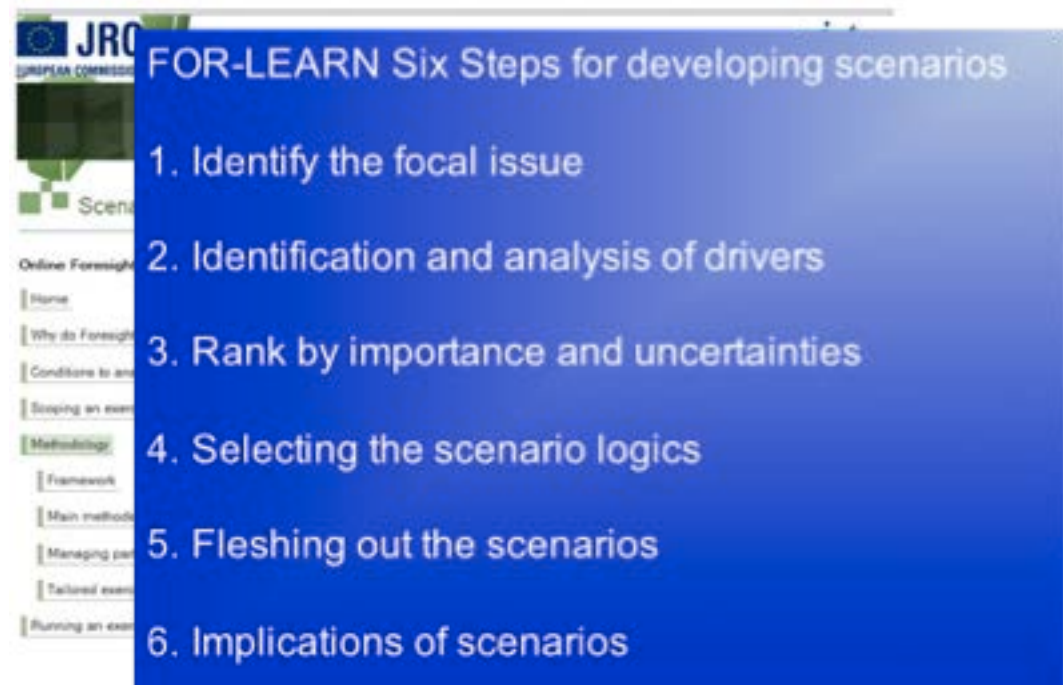
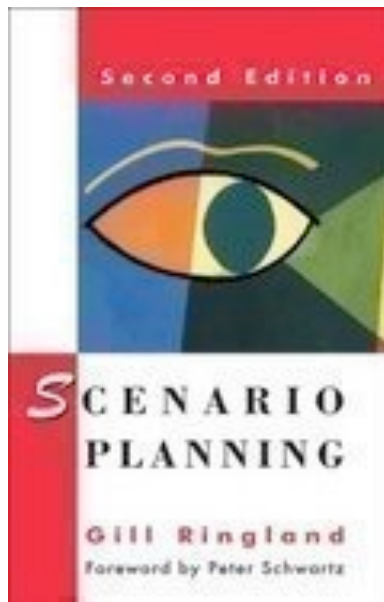
A **scenario** is a “story” illustrating visions of possible future or aspects of possible future. It is perhaps the most emblematic foresight or future studies method. **Scenarios** are not predictions about the future but rather similar to simulations of some possible futures. They are used both as an exploratory method or a tool for decision-making, mainly to highlight the **discontinuities from the present and to reveal the choices available** and their potential consequences.

#### Page contents

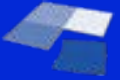
- Definition
- Historical notes
- Main characteristics
- When is this method appropriate?
- Who is this method appropriate for?
- Approach (Step-by-step-guide)
- Resources
- Outputs

# LotF – Methodological framework

- “Scenario Planning” by Gill Ringland
- Six steps outlined by FOR-LEARN





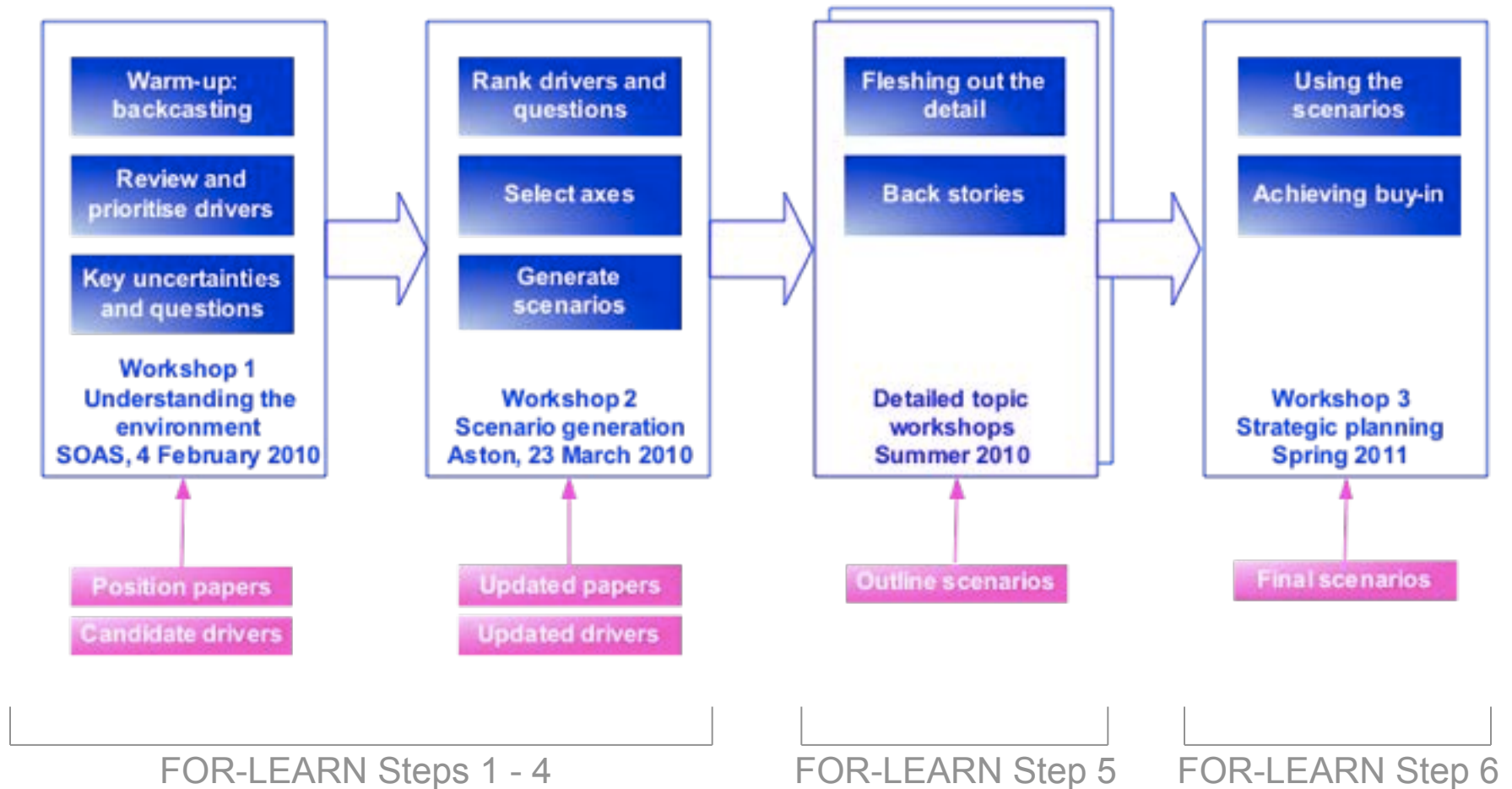
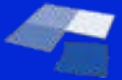


# Our approach

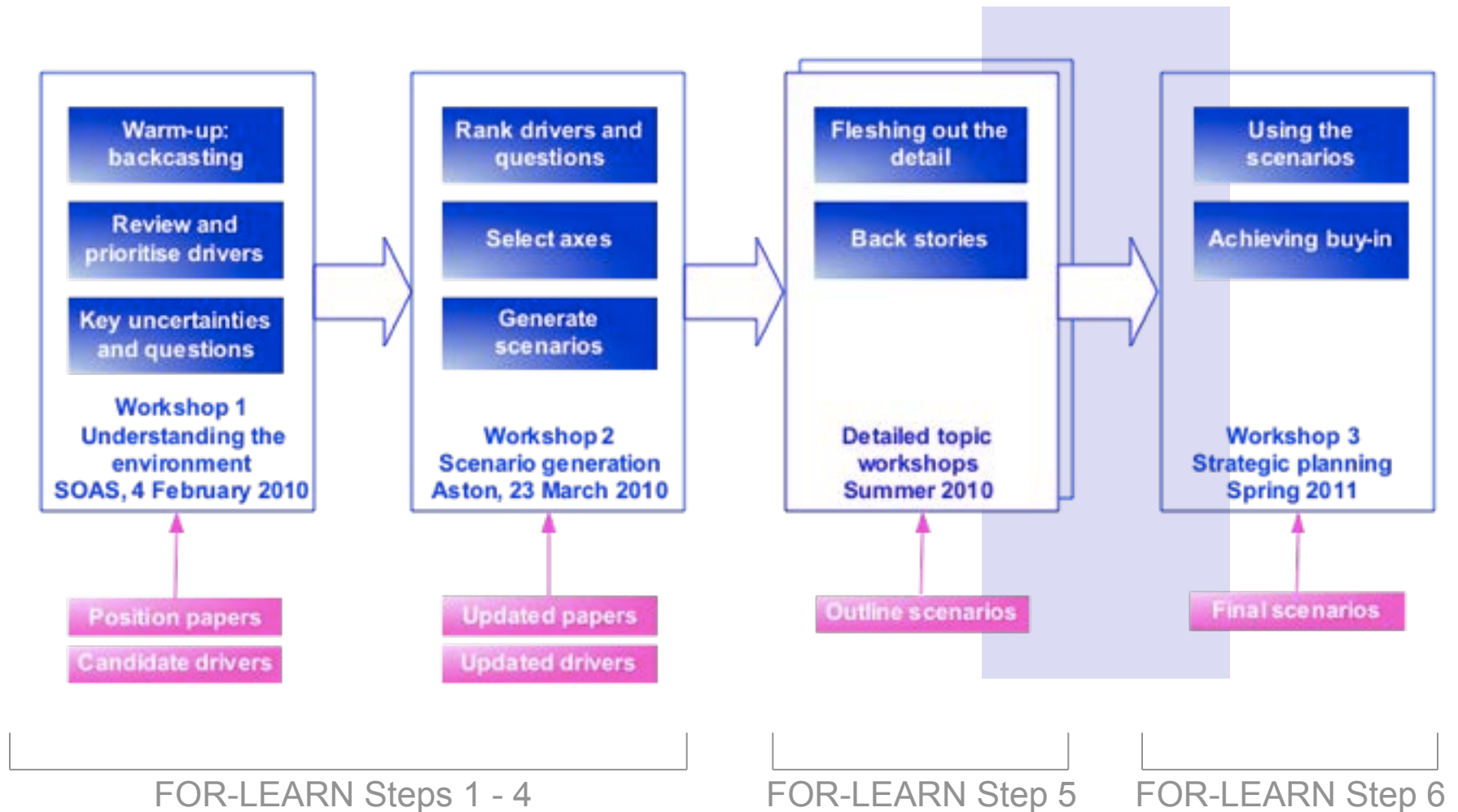
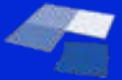
- Focal issue
  - The academic and research “library” in 2050
- Consider
  - Global influences
  - Impact on HE
  - Learning and research
- Series of structured workshops
- Broad stakeholder participation



# LotF - Timeline

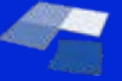
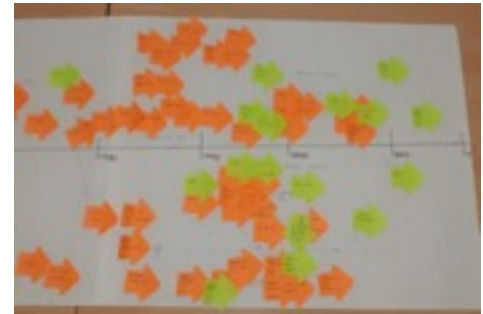


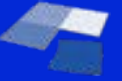
# LotF - Timeline



# The story so far

- Chosen scenario axes
  - Quality vs quantity (of students)
  - Open vs closed (values, content *etc*)
  - Market vs state (funding, governance *etc*)
- Eight scenario spaces
  - Six scenarios developed at workshop
  - Down-selected to three scenarios to take forward



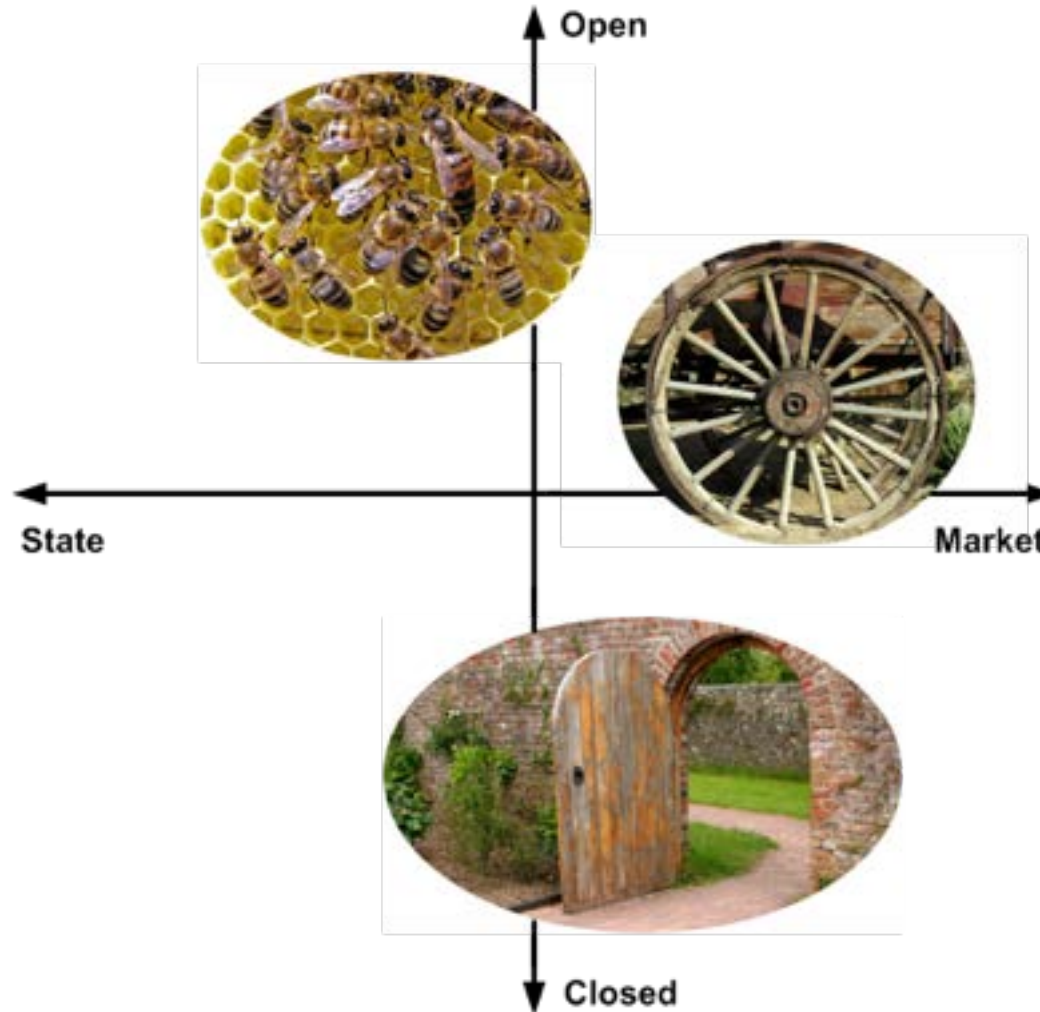
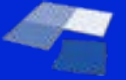


# LotF – choosing the scenarios

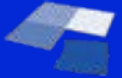
- Criteria for accepting scenarios
  - Tell us something that we don't know
  - Different and interesting for information services
  - Visionary but plausible
  - Creative
  - Have a degree of risk



# The scenarios



# Scenario outlines



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## Academic Libraries of the Future

### Outline scenarios for 2050: Beehive

[www.futurelibraries.info](http://www.futurelibraries.info)

#### Introduction

This is one of three outline scenarios that have been developed as part of the Academic Libraries of the Future project. The scenarios are based on the contributions from a wide range of stakeholders at workshops earlier this year – librarians, institutional managers, funders, service providers, publishers and government. This document provides an outline of the global, education and HE context for Scenario 2: 'Beehive'. This scenario is not intended to be a 'preferred' scenario; it just describes one possible future world.

This document has been drafted to stimulate discussions about the information services that need to be delivered in this world, and on how we might reach this world from today. These discussions will be held with participants at the SCONUL Conference 2010, and at three project workshops with various stakeholders from across the sector which are being held in July and August 2010.

#### Scenario 2 overview: Beehive

The need for the old European Union countries to maintain their position in the world and their standard of living in the face of extensive competition from Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) has led to the creation of the European Federation (EF) under the treaty of Madrid in 2016. The strength of the EF has meant that values in the EF have remained open in the long tradition of western democracy and culture.

In the years leading up to 2050 the world became increasingly competitive; the continuing economic progress of the BRIC countries and their commitment to developing high quality HE systems means that even high-tech jobs are now moving from the West. On a worldwide scale, and in the US, UK and Europe especially, employer expectations now define that virtually all skilled or professional employment requires at least some post-18 education. In the UK, these trends have resulted in a state-sponsored system that retains elements of the traditional university experience for a select few institutions where the majority of young people enter a system where courses are so tightly focused on employability they are near-vocations.

#### The global environment

**Political:** There is now a balance of power and influence between the EF and the US on the one hand, and India and China on the other. The EF has responsibility for the European economy, foreign policy and defence. In other areas such as education and social welfare, the EF has overall responsibility for strategy and high-level policy with state-level policy and implementation devolved to the individual states.

**Economic:** Globalisation has largely 'worked' in as much that free-trade and cooperation between states is the natural way of things. However, in the years leading up to 2050 the world has become increasingly competitive. The nature of the global knowledge economy and international competition for jobs, together with the confluence of pressures from an increasingly long-lived population, low job security and the affordability of pensions, means that people are now working longer than ever and it is important to be information and technology literate to find and retain a well-paid job.

**Societal:** Social justice and social mobility are still powerful forces in the UK political landscape and have taken root as the drivers behind UK HE policy towards employability. The idea of corporate social responsibility has matured into a fully-fledged ethos.

**Technological:** There is a second industrial revolution in the EF and the US, based on effective use of low-carbon energy production and nanotechnology. Technology continues to find new ways of integrating itself further into daily life.

**Legal:** The values of sharing and openness have come to be held as defining principles. Intellectual Property (IP) still exists, but its worth is now based more on the value-added services that are enabled by the IP. These attitudes extend into the commercial sector through stricter controls on monopolistic and anti-competitive practices.

**Environmental:** The climate change challenge has proved difficult to address. However, a large reduction in the use of fossil fuels has been brought about by advances in ICT, such as holographic displays and ultra-virtual reality, which have made virtual meet-



[www.futurelibraries.info](http://www.futurelibraries.info)

ing effective and significantly reduced the need for business travel and, in some cases, traveling to work.

#### UK HE context


<b>Number of teaching and learning institutions</b>	Around 200 institutions deliver teaching and learning services, although only around 10% do so using the traditional methods of teaching and subject classifications.
<b>Number of research institutions</b>	There are around 20 research-led universities, which are those who emerged as the strongest as research funding came under pressure from expanding student numbers.
<b>% of population in post-18 learning</b>	In 2050, the target across the EF is for ~60% of the cohort of 18 year olds to attend a HE academic or vocational training course. The increase in the number of work-based, vocational and part-time students has driven the total number of students to ~4 million (around 8% of the adult population) at any one time.
<b>Number of researchers</b>	In total there are around a quarter of a million researchers in the UK. Approximately three quarters of these are in the research-led universities, with the remainder in other research institutes backed by State funding.
<b>Number of non-UK learners and researchers</b>	There is no restriction on the mobility of students other than cost, and while not reaching the peak numbers of 2005, the opportunity to study in England is still enough of an attraction to entice large numbers of European and overseas students to attend either academic courses (~6% of total student numbers) or vocational courses (~2% of total student numbers) in the UK. A number of institutions increase their income through courses targeted directly at the overseas market.
<b>Funding of post-18 learning and research</b>	Funding for institutions is split between the State and the student in the form of fees; a handful of institutions are privately funded. Research funds come from the state in targeted areas of strategic importance, and are topped-up by commercial investment.
<b>Regulation of post-18 learning and research</b>	HE strategy is set on a European level with implementation of the strategy delegated to the individual states. The UK uses this authority to maintain control over the accreditation of awarding bodies, and through the distribution of funds.

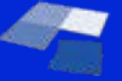
#### Learning – how is it organised?

The EF has brought about harmonisation of European school and HE qualifications across the EF. Harmonisation of vocational qualifications is patchier. For example, the creation of the EF has led to common accountability standards and practice but has not removed the differences in the state-level systems. The EF and UK governments view the primary purpose of HE to be the production of a skilled workforce, whilst remaining committed to the ideas of social mobility and equality. The employment-focused nature of the qualifications and combination of a wide range of student backgrounds means that a range of study options are available. These include distance learning courses, vocational courses, workplace-based learning and courses developed by or in partnership with employers. 'Traditional' subjects in the humanities are still available – but they are considered a luxury and their fees are steep. Most institutions offer life that is distinctive in terms of the student experience, although a small number of elite institutions preserve the traditional university experience.

#### Research – how is it organised?

Europe's continued strong focus on the knowledge economy has provided an environment which allows research to flourish although in the UK context the increased focus on student employability has had the effect of reducing the overall size of the research base while increasing its focus on areas of strategic importance. The small number of Higher Education institutions in which research is conducted are notoriety autonomous in how they go about their research, but they remain accountable to the funding agencies. Collaborations across institutions and data sharing with other institutions and the public are the standard working practices, and there is much collaboration with commercial research for their mutual benefit. However, to ensure return on its investment, research quality is required by government-controlled 'kite marking' which is internationally recognised. There are also now much stricter controls on research funding than in the early 2000s, with the government allocating through the funding bodies the areas that receive the most funding.

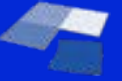




# Project next steps

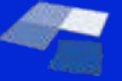
- November 2010 – April 2011
  - Developing final outputs
  - User focus groups
  - Final workshop
- Launch and communication by sponsors





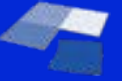
# How could the scenarios be used?

- To assess existing strategies
  - “Wind tunnelling” robustness
- To develop new strategies
  - Single vs multiple scenarios
- To highlight early indicators of change
- As a long-term planning focus
- To avoid complacency



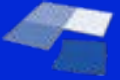
# How could the scenarios be used?

- Candidate problems for strategic planning
  - Librarian: replacement of an existing library in a multi-site campus
  - CIO: planning research support services
  - Head of Library school: establishing curriculum and staff skills
  - PVC teaching and learning: strategy for information resources



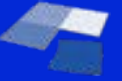
# The future

- The future is already here – just not yet in sufficient quantity to notice
- Bookless library at UTSA
  - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/news/business-11735404>



# Useful resources

- UK Foresight
  - [www.foresight.gov.uk](http://www.foresight.gov.uk)
- FOR-LEARN
  - <http://forlearn.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>
- Scenario Planning – Gill Ringland (Amazon)
- Strategy Survival Guide – Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit
  - <http://interactive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/survivalguide/>
- UUK Long-term strategy Group
  - [www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/PolicyAndResearch/PolicyAreas/Pages/Longer-Term-Strategy.aspx](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/PolicyAndResearch/PolicyAreas/Pages/Longer-Term-Strategy.aspx)



# Contact

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Any questions?