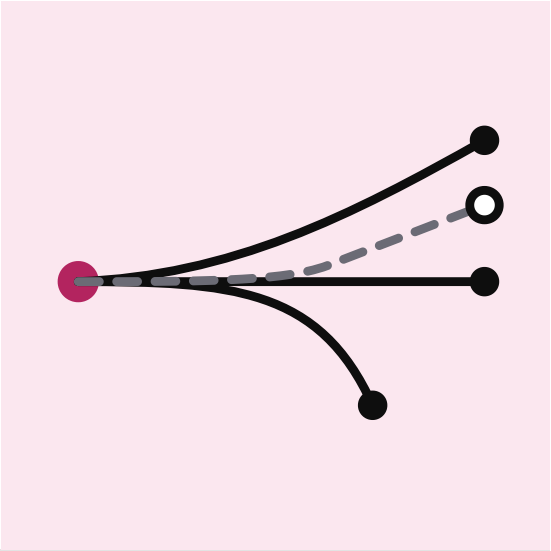
Model

Four generic alternative futures

Four types of future from which almost all images of the future derive: continued growth, collapse, discipline and transformation.



In Spanish
Cuatro futuros arquetípicos

Origin
Dator, Manoa School (University of Hawai'i)

What problem it addresses

Avoids thinking about a single future, almost always the one of continued growth, and forces you to explore the others too.

Components

Continued growth
The future as more of the same: the economy and technology keep growing.

Collapse
Something fails on a large scale and the current system breaks down.

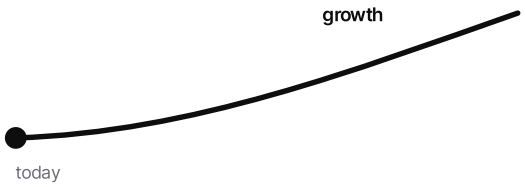
Discipline
Society organizes around shared values and puts limits on growth.

Transformation
A deep change, often technological, creates a very different society.

An example

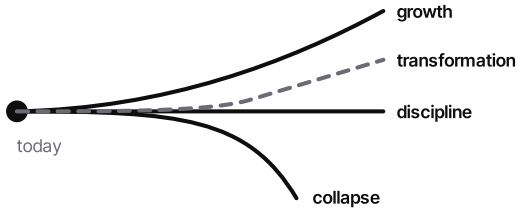
Think about how people will eat in your city thirty years from now.

A single future



It is taken for granted that everything keeps growing: more choice, more delivery, faster. **The official story.**

Four futures



Growth, collapse, living within limits or changing the way of life: four different cities. **More questions.**

Thinking through all four helps design something that works even if the expected future doesn't arrive.

How it works

1

Images of the future repeat in the news, films and plans.

2

Dator grouped them into four basic stories.

3

Exploring all four brings out the assumptions behind each plan.

Applications in design

Use it like this

Write a short scenario for each of the four and test your idea in all of them.

Avoid

Telling the collapse story only to scare, or the transformation story only to sell.

Don't fall for it

If you only imagine growth, ask what would happen to your design in the other three.

Connections

Used in

- Scenario planning
- The Thing From The Future

Authors and works

2009	**Jim Dator**	Described the four futures that the Manoa School works with.

Sources

Original sources

- Dator, J. (2009). Alternative futures at the Manoa School. Journal of Futures Studies, 14(2), 1–18. View source (https://jfsdigital.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/142-A01.pdf)

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