

**Siân Bayne**

**Michael Gallagher**

Centre for Research in Digital  
Education  
University of Edinburgh

@sbayne

@mseangallagher







# Anticipating the near future of teaching

Introduction: a better view on the future

Near Future Teaching: thought experiments for an anticipated university





# Introduction: a better view on the future

# Still-dominant narratives of education and technology

## **Instrumentalism:**

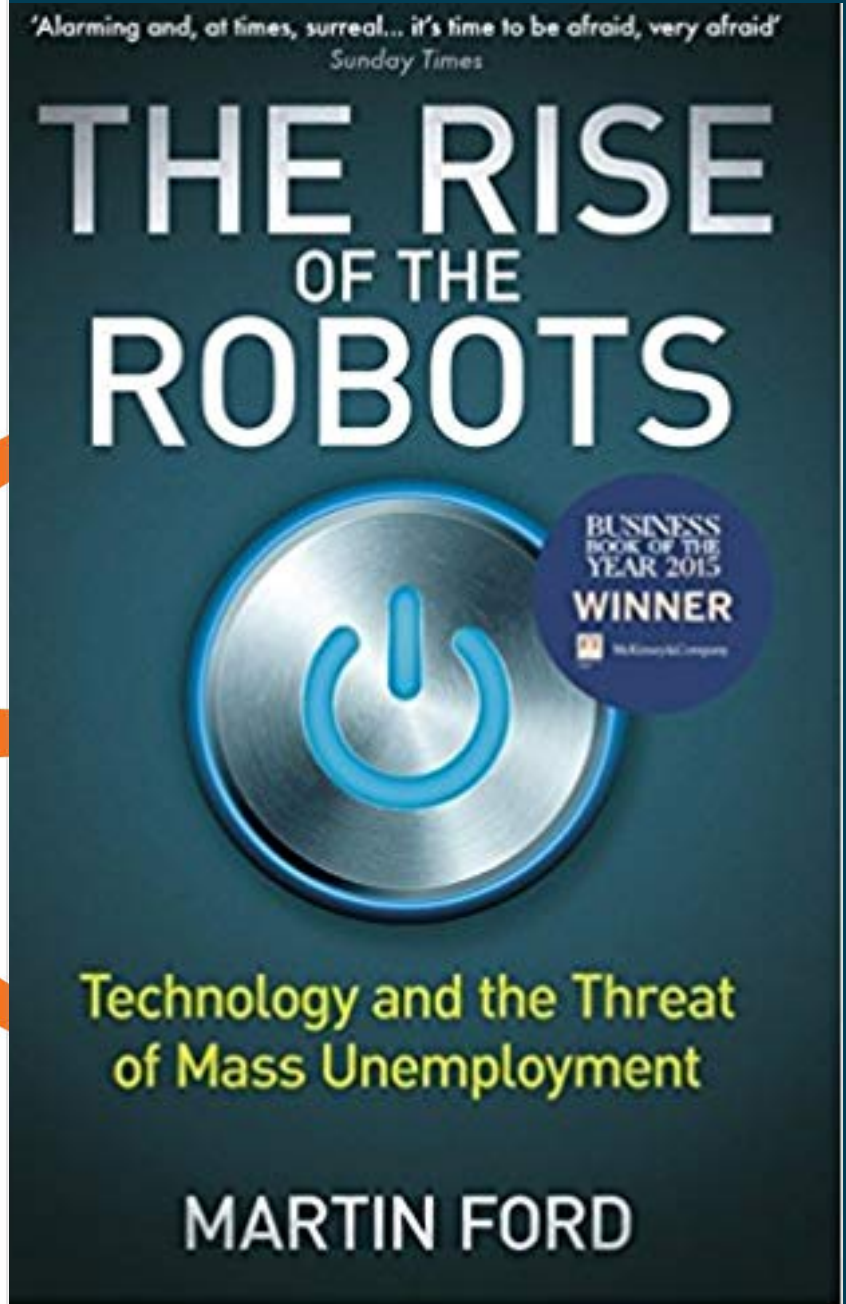
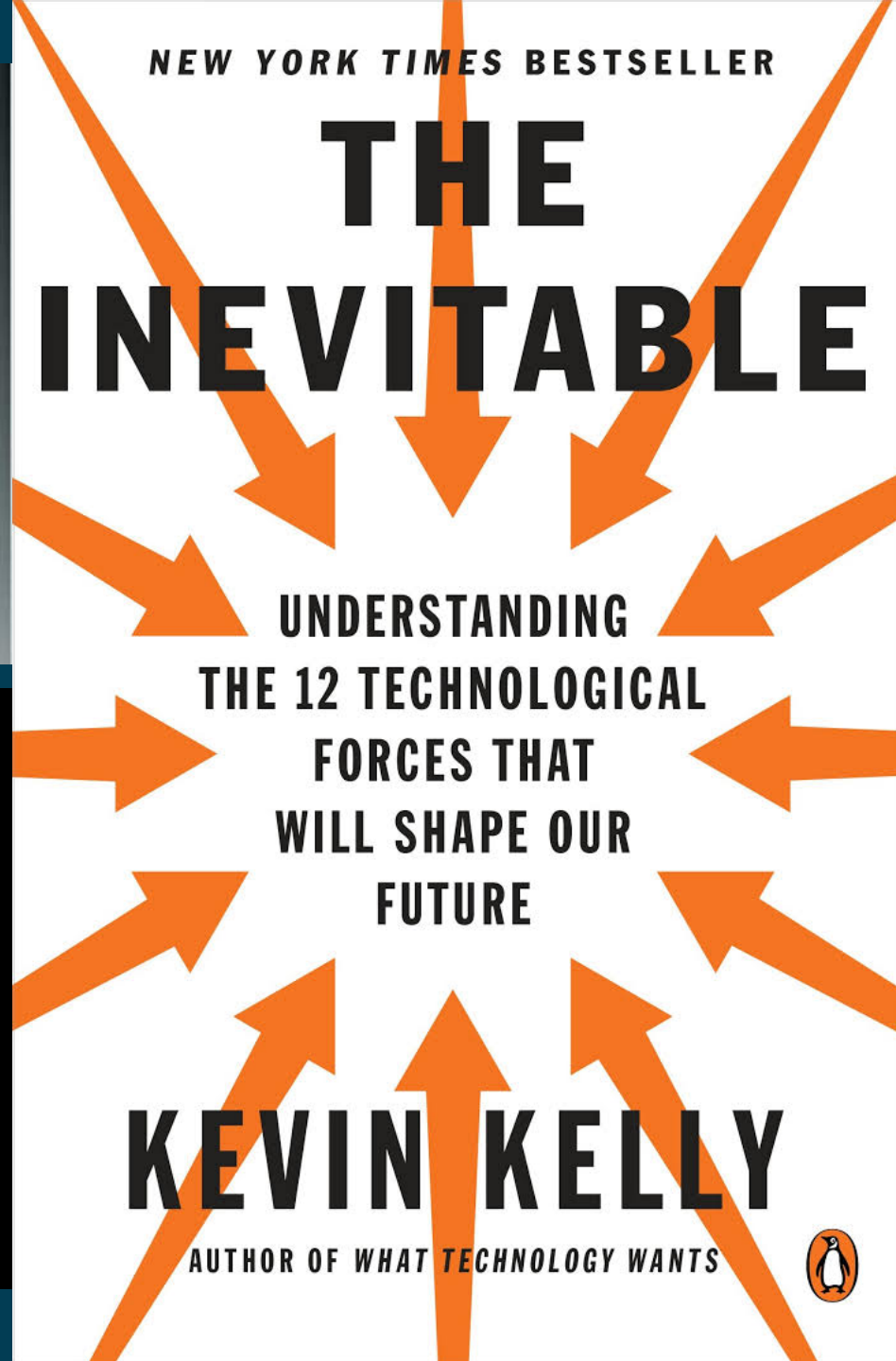
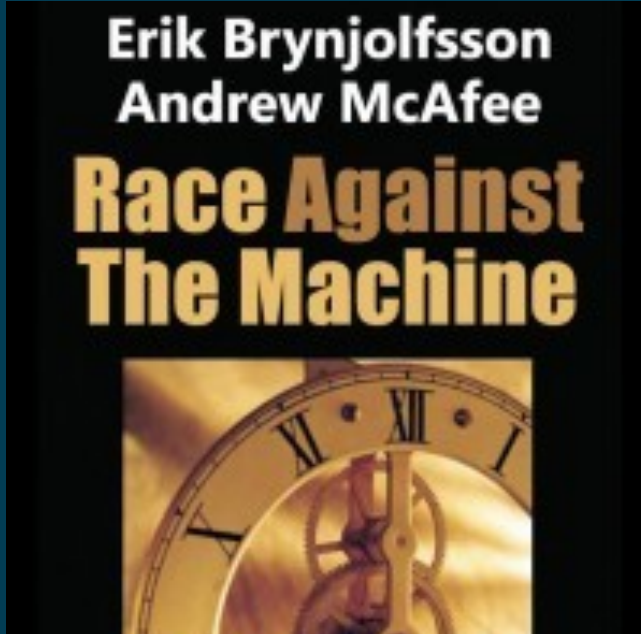
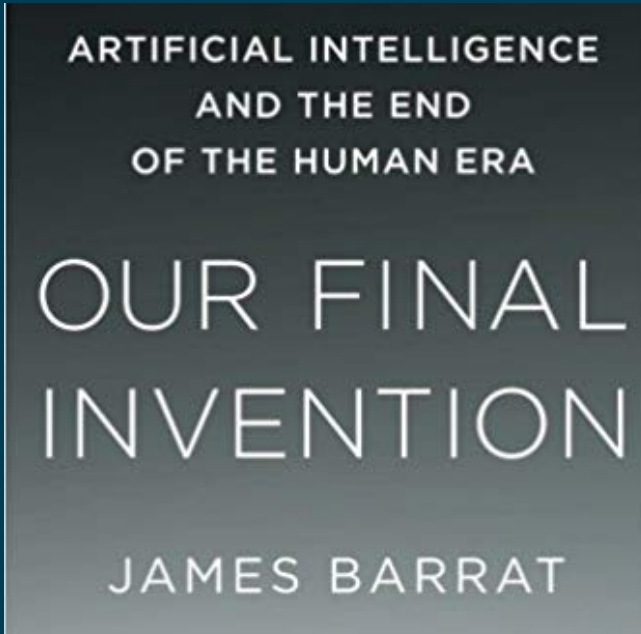
technologies are seen as neutral means employed for ends determined independently by their users.

## **Determinism:**

technology drives social practice and change...humans must adapt to technical demands, while technology, like a Newtonian god, watches unaffected as the drama unfolds.

Hamilton, Edward C. and Norm Friesen (2013) Online Education: A Science and Technology Studies Perspective. *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology*. 39 (2).







# Anticipation

attempts to **predict** the future aspire to eliminate risks of uncertainty

**foresight** aims to equip actors with insights into multiple possibilities

**anticipation** assumes an active and critically reflective interaction with futures that are unknowable.

Amsler and Facer (2017) Learning the Future Otherwise: Emerging Approaches to Critical Anticipation in Education. *Futures*. 94.



# Principles for anticipating the future

- 1: educational futures work should challenge assumptions rather than present predictions
- 2: the future is not determined by its technologies
- 3: thinking about the future always involves values and politics
- 4: education has a range of responsibilities that need to be reflected into visions of its future

adapted from Facer, K. and Sandford, R. (2010) The next 25 years?: future scenarios and future directions for education and technology. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. 26.



# Near Future Teaching





## Define

What is our preferred future for digital education at our university?

## Discover

What values do we want to shape this future?

What are the global trends which are impacting on it?

## Values and preferred future defined

## Develop

What are our aims and objectives for this future?

## Deliver

What actions will enable us to get there?

# Defining values





# Mapping trends



## *Future Teaching trends:*

# EDUCATION & SOCIETY

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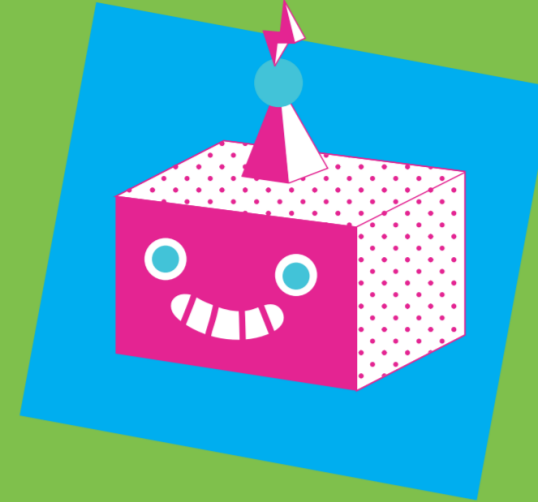
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## Introduction

*This review partners with **Future Teaching trends: science and technology**, providing a short overview of the global societal shifts likely to impact on education over the coming few decades, in order to inform the Near Future Teaching project. It is not a comprehensive review: rather it highlights a few key areas we feel are of particular relevance.*



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## *Future Teaching trends:*

# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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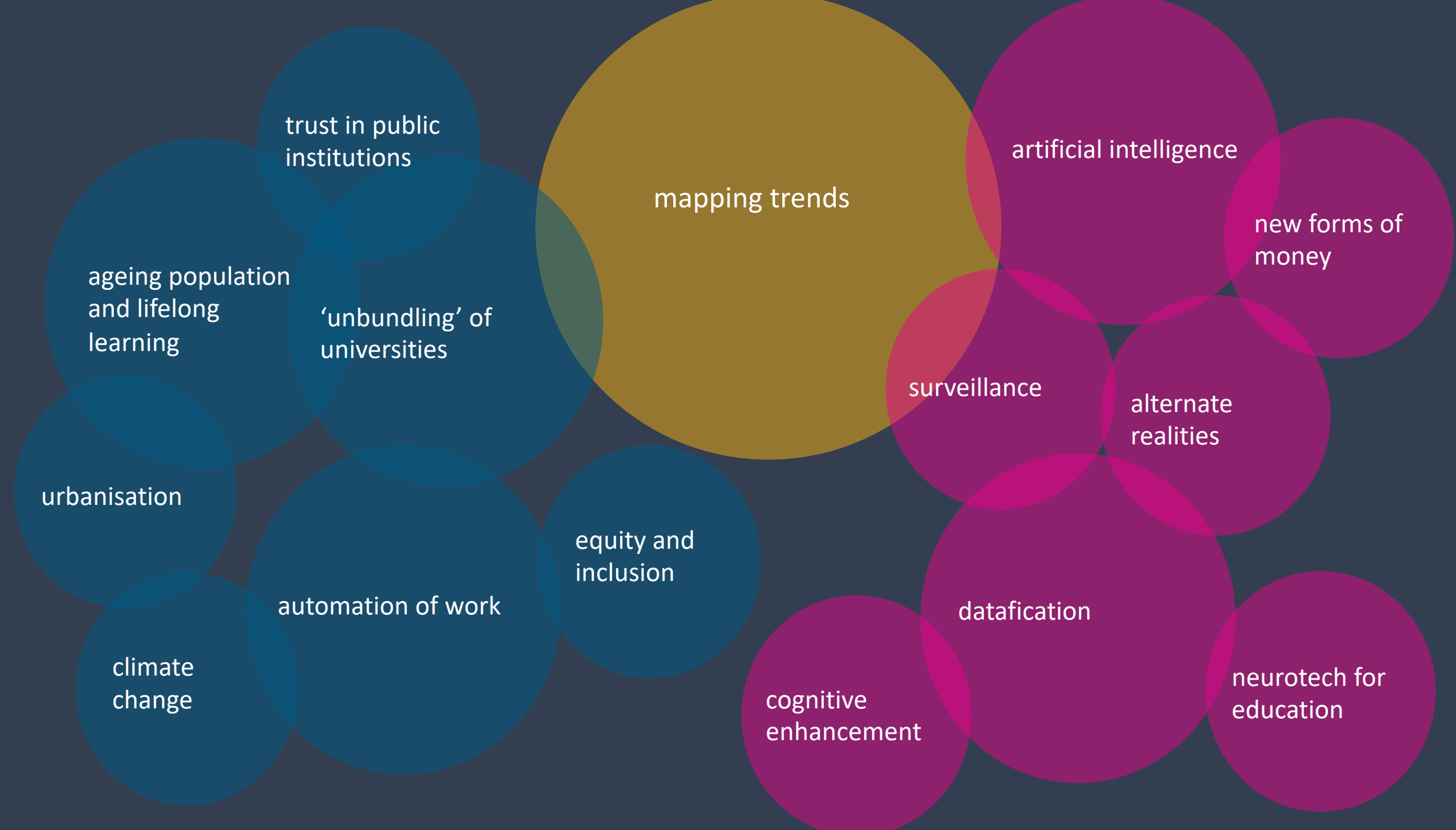
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## Introduction

*This review partners with **Future Teaching trends: education and society**, highlighting the technological trends likely to have significant implications for the future of higher education over the medium term, and those we should attend to in thinking about near future teaching. This is not a comprehensive review of technological shifts, but rather a brief overview of a few areas chosen for their potential high impact.*



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What would a near future for teaching look like, built on these values and influenced by these trends?



# Future university: thought experiments







# 1. Data, data everywhere

Datafication  
Marketisation  
Tight borders  
Competition

STEM and data science  
Skills focus  
Diversified sector  
Unbundling

## 2. A new ecology

Climate crisis

Data-driven decision making

Eco-bottom line

All activity focused on addressing crisis

Practical solutions

Global alliances for research

Local networks for teaching



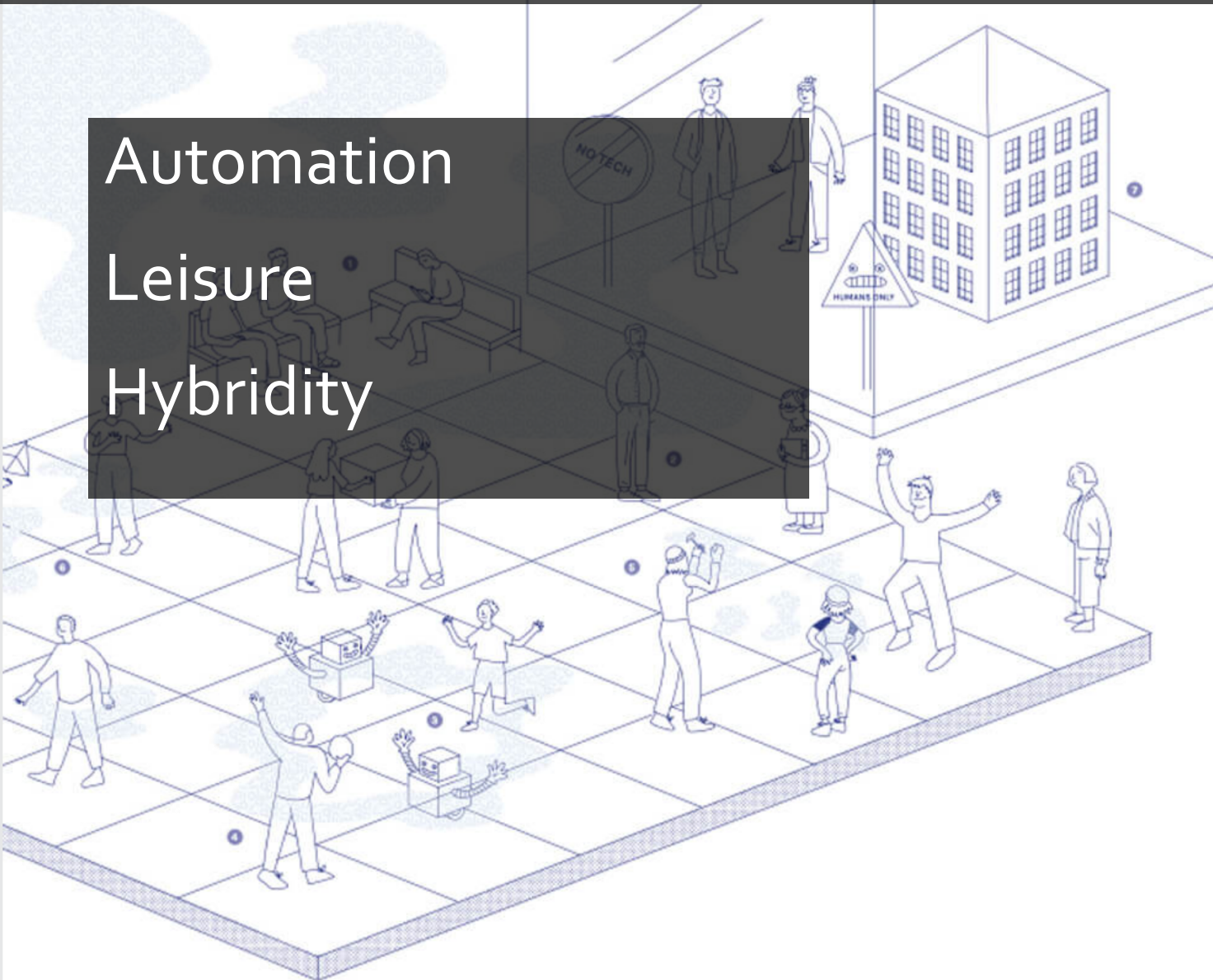


### 3. Human-machine interdependence

Automation

Leisure

Hybridity



Teaching focused on student experience

Time-intensive, student led, lifelong

Resurgence of humanities

Human-agent co-teaching

Ennui

## 4. 'Uberfication'



Sharing economy  
Consumer power  
Unbundling  
Ageing population

Commodified learning:  
micro-credits built  
through life

Students purchase  
services from academic  
freelancers

Universities shift from  
campus to platform



# Aims for a preferred future



The future is a murky world but it is  
one that we have to enter,  
interrogate and hopefully re-shape.

John Urry 2016 *What is the Future?* Polity







@mseangallager and @sbayne

michael.s.gallagher@ed.ac.uk and sian.bayne@ed.ac.uk

<https://www.nearfutureteaching.ed.ac.uk/outcomes/>

references and links: <https://tinyurl.com/yda23p83>