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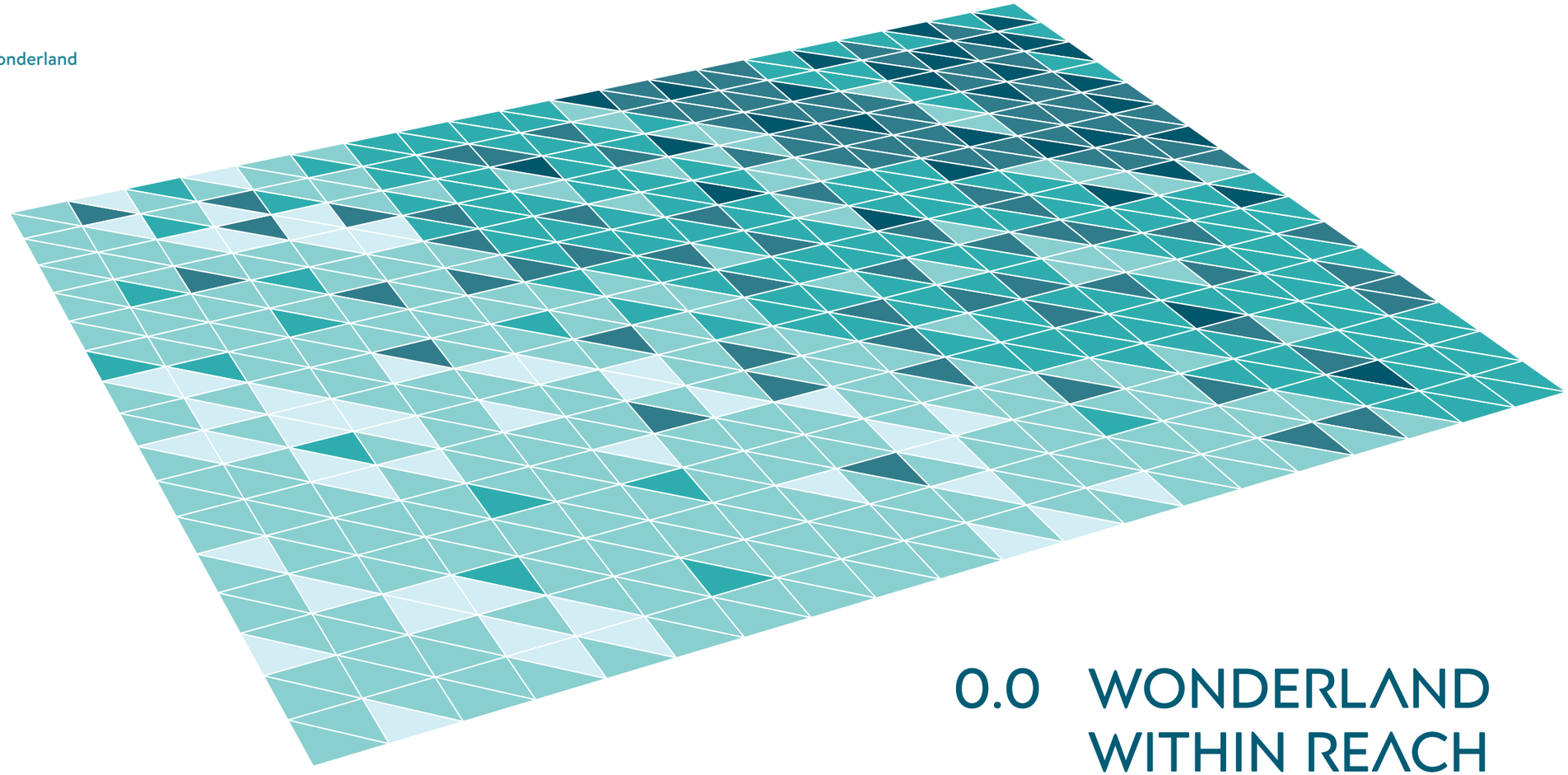
“HOW DO YOU KNOW I’M MAD?”
SAID ALICE.
“YOU MUST BE,” SAID THE CAT,
“OR YOU WOULDN’T HAVE
COME HERE.”

— Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

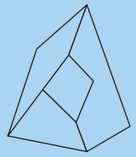


0.0 WONDERLAND WITHIN REACH

An effective solution for wearable technology success would be based on

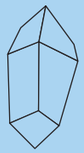
Technology

Further miniaturisation and processing capabilities enhancements, allowing versatile application and effective integration within existing artifacts and usage rituals.



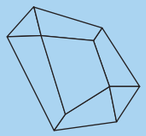
Design

Inoffensive or minimalist design, or an iconic design that will create mass desirability and a new style standard [think about how iPhone shifted the design evolution of all smartphones].



Culture

The understanding of a wearable artifact beyond a specific technological/functional aspect – its core cultural and social significance.



Integration

Development of biological imitating, second-skin and in-body wearables, transforming the category into a prosthetic-like enhancement.

1.8 AugMania

Currently, the easiest way to describe Augmented Reality is to say: "it's like *Pokémon Go*". This is quite curious when we consider that a technology that was first developed in the '70s, and has had functioning prototypes since the '90s, only became publicly known thanks to a yellow manga creature. It wasn't until July 2016 when an Augmented Reality application first gained mass popularity – albeit short-lived. *Pokémon Go* – a free, location-based app for mobile and wearable devices – was downloaded over 100 million times within six weeks of its launch, with an unprecedented 500+ million total downloads worldwide.[26] The app marked the beginning of the Augmented Reality Mania.

Pokémon was a group of mid-90s fictional Japanese anime characters that quickly became a global franchise including playing cards, films, a video game, TV series, theme park and musical. The *Pokémon* Go app was formed as a collaboration between Nintendo and Google-born development studio Niantic. Created as a geo-located quest game for iOS, Android, and Apple Watch devices, the game is free to download, with in-app purchases for digital assets and accessories.

Users engage with their physical environment to catch, train and battle various *Pokémon* creatures. The game's location-based tasks helped to position the game as an activity that promoted fitness and well-being. Eliminating work-arounds such as driving, geo-location and other game features like egg-hatching require physical motion, as their development is based on step count. The game was initially launched in selected territories, with phased launches in new regions to maintain a steady flow of new users and ongoing media hype.

Basing the game on the familiar and massively popular *Pokémon* franchise served as a nostalgic trigger for both new and former fans. This helped to create mass visibility for the product, and generated global curiosity. Building on existing mobile platforms made the application highly accessible, while also ensuring a quick adoption rate. Simple gameplay made the game compelling to a wide range of users, regardless of age or digital fluency.

Beyond the Mirror

Augmented Reality within a socio-demographic context

To understand the implementation of Augmented Reality, it's important to look at how social and demographic factors such as age, population density and habitat influence the interaction between users and technology. Especially as we are currently witnessing major social and demographic shifts on a global scale. There is a direct relationship between such shifts and the implementation of technology platforms – as sociodemographic conditions evolve, so does the nature of the user-technology interaction.

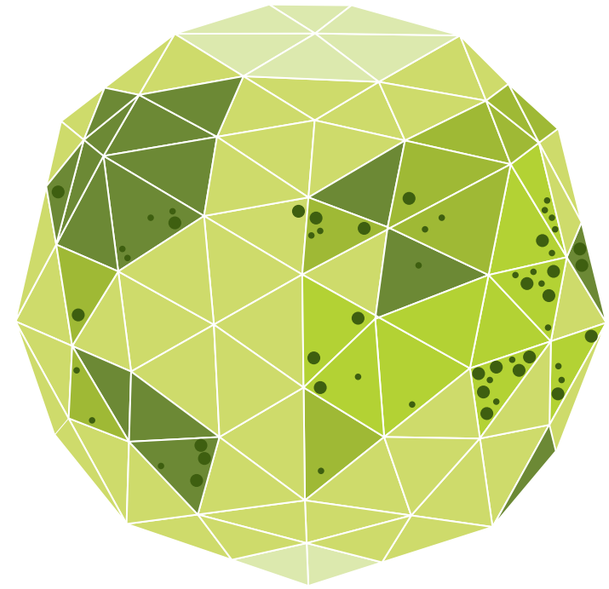
2.1 It's Gonna be Mega

Dense urban areas are catalysts for technology development and implementation, with cities built as a tight network of permanent and interim systems, societies and cultures. The rapid growth of urban spaces combine increased activity and interaction with a decrease in private space. This duality forces us to look for alternative systems that will enable growth.

> We are witnessing accelerated patterns of urbanisation in both established and emerging economies. With a constant 1.1% annual population growth, together with an increase of human life expectancy, the global population is estimated to reach 8.4 billion by 2030, with more than 60% of this population expected to reside in cities.[1]

According to the World Economic Forum, some 77 million people move from rural communities to urban areas each year. The population surge and increased rural-urban migration will see the developing world double the number of megacities [metropolitan areas with a population exceeding 10 million] from 14 megacities in 1995 to 29 in 2016.[2]

Global Patterns of Urbanisation
Author's Image, 2017.
[Based on World City Report, 2016]



“ALICE: ‘WOULD YOU TELL ME, PLEASE, WHICH WAY I OUGHT TO GO FROM HERE?’

THE CHESHIRE CAT: ‘THAT DEPENDS A GOOD DEAL ON WHERE YOU WANT TO GET TO.”

— Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

3.0 THE CHESHIRE ECONOMY

HUMANS ONCE LIVED WITHOUT ANY CONCEPT OF TIME AT ALL... IN AN ETERNAL PRESENT, WITHOUT ANY NOTION OF BEFORE OR AFTER, MUCH LESS HISTORY OR PROGRESS. THINGS JUST WERE. THE PASSAGE OF TIME WAS NOT RECORDED OR MEASURED, BUT RATHER EXPERIENCED IN ITS VARIOUS CYCLES.

– Douglas Rushkoff, 2013

The pace of living is accelerating, and the amount of activity and interaction we fit into one day may be more than we could have achieved in a week, or a month, only a few decades ago. Even though we see the provision in time measuring as a sign of progress, some question its social value: "Who decides when acceleration is 'good' for society and when it is 'bad'? Or do we simply place our trust in the combination of technology and the free market?"[10]

The immersive nature of technology increasingly [and intentionally] forms gaps between our physical perception of time and our 'high tech' perception of time. Our connection to nature and its cycles is replaced by a modern, more efficient rhythm.

Whether it's by alarm clocks, artificial lighting, high-velocity commuting or information streaming, we are driven to override our physiological rhythm and needs, and to be present and functioning 'on demand'. Such a transition creates the means and context to condition and facilitate control over individuals and society, and to this end utilises technology and the notion of performance [and time] to gain power and profit. It's no wonder that modern anxiety and 'Fear of Missing Out' are leading to increased numbers of work-related burn-outs and even death from self-harm or exhaustion [the Japanese coined the term 'Karōshi' – 'overwork death']. Whereas certain aspects of Augmented Reality, such as Telepresence, are aimed at reducing the need for time consuming commutes to afford us more free time. We are not however, always able to translate technological advantages into a balanced lifestyle. After all, binge watching our newest favourite show is completely irrational, considering we have constant on-demand access to it. The overload of products, options and experiences does not clear our calendar, but fills the gaps with more content and interaction.

business. The brand does not have Facebook or Twitter accounts, nor does it post the full content of its print stories on its website. This maximises the effectiveness of the printed product. Instead, it has a live radio station. In 2011, the magazine launched *Monocle24*, an online radio station offering live-streamed content. Monocle's core identity revolves around content creation, and its strategy remains true to the brand's positioning. However, this solution will not fit every entity or brand, and Real-Time has one major hindrance – the 'right here and now' could create value via immediacy, providing unique and exclusive experiences. Real-Time ensures wonderful accidents, but also unfortunate coincidences [just like life!], melding into the experience. This makes it difficult to deliver a specific and consistent level of experience and content quality.

In an era of Real-Time and cross platform content creation and delivery, storytelling strategy gurus Gaston Legorburu and Darren McColl suggest shifting away from focusing on price, story or experience-based differentiation to 'storyscaping' differentiation[19] – this concept is aligned with our future technological landscape. Brands and content will need to play a different role where they are intertwined with the user's identity on a tangible experiential level, playing a more complex role in the user's value system and perception of reality. The shifting nature and immediacy of interaction will lead to a fluid perception of time and reality, and most certainly a period of adjusting social values. Delivery of instant interactive experiences and a new stream of consciousness creates a new concept of Hyper Reality, where reality itself can be orchestrated, controlled, and manipulated.

The last part of the equation is the new meaning that 'being in the present' would have. Augmented Reality, and especially Mixed Reality, enables a new type of 'in'. We are no longer the participants that are present in the environment – we have a far more dominant role. We are creators and manipulators of reality. This will change our relationships with people, places and things.

4.7 Augmented Intimacies

Technology advancements influence many aspects of our social interaction. We seek to enhance our communication via technology, and as we craft new digital communication tools, it affects us in unexpected ways. Our overloaded digital mailboxes testify to an increasing volume of content exchange, but do not necessarily guarantee better productivity. In fact, it has become a distracting factor that interferes with work efficiency, while new applications and digital assistants are being built to help us declutter our ever-inflating inboxes.

The Internet has had a positive initial impact in other functional areas, such as job searching, yet with both recruiters and applicants using the same formulas to both screen candidates and beat the screening bots, there seems to be no constructive benefit to using online algorithms to match jobs and applicants over using old-school personal networks to find candidates. Yet, digital tools play a significant role in areas more related to social and intimate behaviour, such as forming relationships. Stanford professors Michael J. Rosenfeld and Reuben J. Thomas,[20] researched the influence of the Internet as a rising social arena for relationship creation among heterosexual Americans. They found a substantial peak in encountering a romantic mate encountering from the '90s onward, becoming the most likely method leading to romantic pairing by 2009. This is the result of several factors, including increased access and mobility, improved search algorithms, the emergence of designated and non-designated social and dating platforms, as well as the social acceptance of online interaction and dating.

While there has been a decline in couple pairing in traditional structures such as primary and secondary schools, religion and family, Internet coupling has been accelerating. This is not to undermine the Internet's role as a tool that complements other ways of meeting. Traditional structures and physical locations remain influential for relationship first encounters. The Internet might be an effective platform, yet certain behavioural and physical factors [such as proximity] are still essential to form and initiate relationships, even when initiated via digital means.

The research finds no difference in quality or stability of relationships formed online versus those formed elsewhere. However, online relationships are

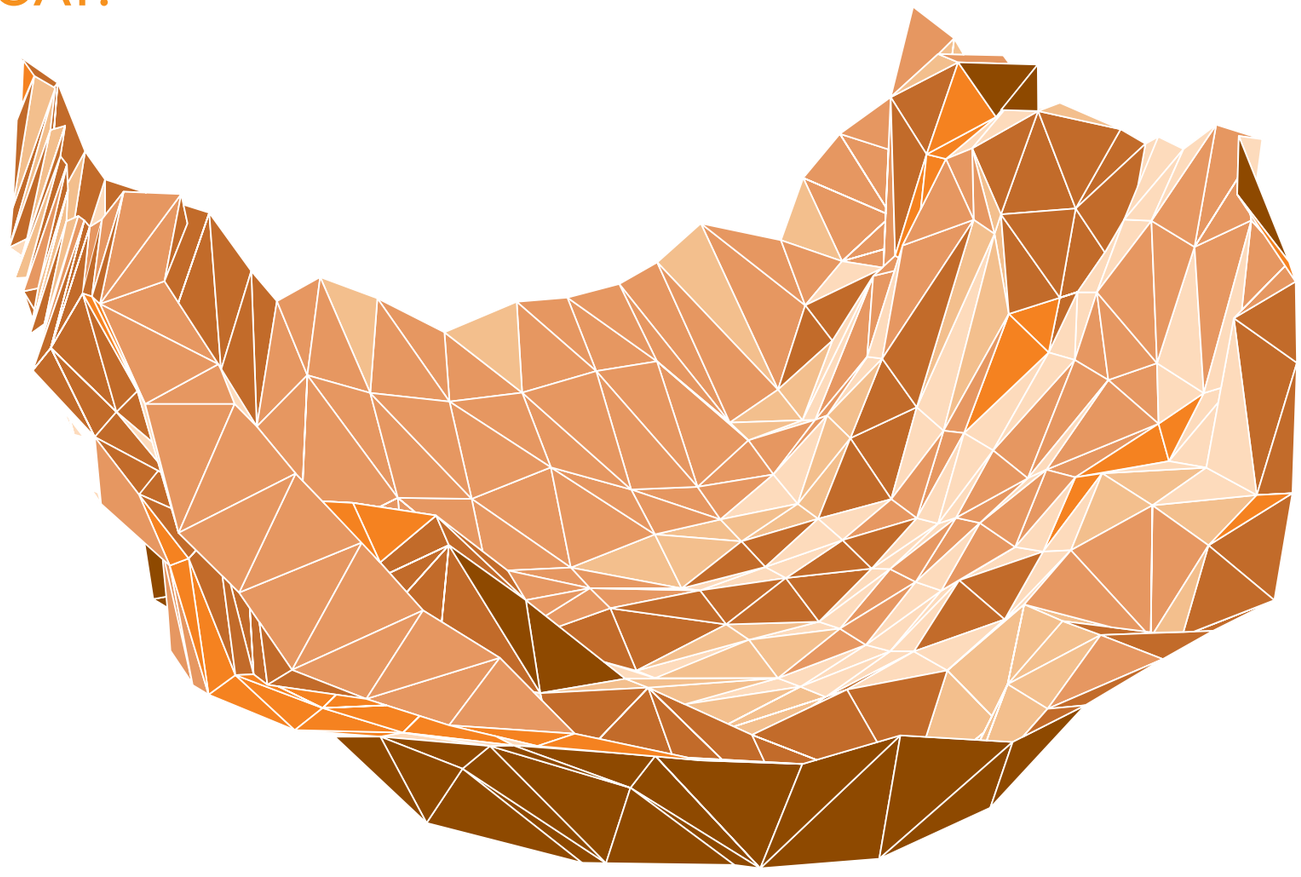
“ALICE: WHY, SOMETIMES I’VE BE-
LIEVED AS MANY AS SIX IMPOSSI-
BLE THINGS BEFORE BREAKFAST.”

— Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

6.0 CATERPILLARS & BUTTERFLIES

“IMAGINATION IS THE ONLY WEAPON IN THE WAR AGAINST REALITY,“ SAID THE CHESHIRE CAT.

— Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland



7.0 THE HUMAN / CYBER CONTINUUM

The World Wide Web and social media have had a major effect on individual and social behaviours. The known friction between 'perfect' technology and 'imperfect' human behaviour could be better anticipated, and dealt with more acutely based on recent global experiences. We must understand that Augmented Reality may form small ripples at first, influencing specific industries and activities, and making us oblivious to its long-term effects. It is a technology that will have a direct impact on our individual, group, social and cultural interactions. Influencing our perception of identity, experience and reality itself on both an individual and societal level.

Augmented interaction and content will bring back human-centric interaction, and reinstate heritage mental and physical skills. No more adapting to machine thinking, but building on human intelligence and emotional value. We will be talking more and more about Affective Computing that "relates to, arises from, or deliberately influences emotions or other affective phenomena."[4]

7.2 The Final Frontier

At this point we can and should construct scenarios and hypotheses regarding the endeavour of implementing Augmentation. It is more likely to take the obvious route of being applied via traditional accelerating industries – the military, gaming, entertainment and porn [highly underestimated for its power to diffuse, test and make emerging technologies accessible]. Despite our educated guessing, guidance and strategising, it is ultimately the user who will define how quickly and through which game mechanics and interaction realms it will best be implemented.

Augmentation would stretch beyond our digital interactions as it crosses the screen boundary and layered on top of physical elements within our environment. We would find new ways to explore and bond with technology, and the role of social/behavioural psychology embedded within its development will aid in applying it in a wider and more sustainable context. What is certain is that there will eventually be an absolute synergy between the information economy and the experience culture. While behavioural marketing was based on identifying and enticing usage patterns, the new value

Augmenting Alice
— the future of identity, experience and reality —

7.0 The Human/Cyber continuum

of augmented experience would be based on finding new ways to facilitate, create and curate digital content that is reactive and complementary to physical behaviours and social nodes, and that explores and enhances obstacles and opportunities that are rooted in the way we interact and experience our physical world. This would be a new age of exploration, reinterpretation and remixing of the digital and physical realm. With mixed reality, Tangible User Interface and multisensory experiences becoming a norm within communication and content delivery.

The shift would be towards a societal and experiential brand, product and value creation – a truly heterogeneous system that would immerse the user, not only on a sensory level, but with a deeper alignment between values and emotional bonding. The alignment between product, brand, content and marketing will need to become seamless. You can see that tech service agencies such as Cognizant and Accenture are already moving towards branching and clustering through having acquisition, creative, digital, innovation, service and design disciplines all under one roof. Yet, the biggest question is how do the systems builders approach, develop and create applications and platforms – learning from past mistakes and building a new experiential platform that would benefit users, creators and curators alike – guaranteeing a new level and value of digital experience.

Technology is as restrictive as the tools it supplies to the user – open platforms of content creation can unlock new levels of creativity. Minecraft is a 'digital Lego' game – and as digital architecture leaks into our physical space, we will be able to create a new open world within the confinements of our existing one.

New experiential applications may include Augmented Synesthesia – where we link new experiential layers within specific spaces or interaction levels. A multisensory ability to mediate new layers of experience on top of our physical reality may allow us to re-experience segments of our life – your honeymoon or first date, whenever your spouse is in the room.

Or imagine the interior of an Art Deco movie theatre with the scent and sound of popcorn cracking as you settle into a binge-watching weekend of your favourite TV series. The ability to weave experiential layers into our private and public realms would mean that we can construct multiple versions and