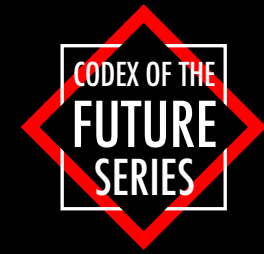


311 INSTITUTE

ANNUAL TRENDS CODEX



3RD ANNUAL EDITION . BOOKLET 3 OF 7

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matthew Griffin, multi-award winning geopolitical advisor, leadership coach, and Futurist, and 15 times author of the smash Codex of the Future series, is described by his clients as a "Walking encyclopedia of the future" and a "Futurist polymath." Matthew is the Founder and Futurist in Chief of the 311 Institute, a global Futures and Deep Futures advisory looking up to 50 years out, as well as the World Futures Forum and XPotential University - two philanthropic organisations whose mission it is to solve global inequality and the world's greatest challenges.

Regularly featured in the global media including the AP, BBC, Bloomberg, CNBC, Discovery, Forbes, Khaleej Times, RT, the Telegraph, ViacomCBS, WIRED, and the WSJ, Matthew's ability to identify, track, and explain the impacts of hundreds of exponential emerging technologies and trends on global business, culture, and society is unparalleled.

Recognised as one of the world's most renowned futurists, disruption, foresight, and strategy experts Matthew is an international advisor and keynote speaker who helps the world's most respected brands, governments, investors, NGO's, and royal households, explore, envision, and shape our collective future.

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PROUDLY BUILDING THE FUTURE WITH ... & MANY OTHERS

ABB

accenture

AXA

BCG

Disney

DP WORLD

NOKIA

NOVARTIS

sky

standard
chartered





WELCOME FROM THE AUTHOR

PEOPLE . PLANET . PURPOSE . PROSPERITY

THE SKELETON COAST . NAMIBIA . 19.9873° S, 13.2605° E

I chose this striking image to represent this section because in many ways it's representative of many of today's realities: The Skeleton Coast is complex and unpredictable, but home to an amazingly adaptable ecosystem, yet it's also representative of the stark contrast between the have and have nots, those with water and other resources and those without, our increasingly polarised society, and even the contrast between our habitable blue planet and the desolation of space. The desert and the sea are also relentless, just like the human spirit, and given the right conditions they can overcome everything in their path, just as humanity can when we work together for the benefit of everyone to create a brighter future for all of us.

THE **311 Annual Trends Codex** contains explicit details about hundreds of trends that affect everything you care about - whether that's you, your business, your industry, your country, our planet, or all of them. Designed to be a one stop shop for everything that's trendy and trending it also contains everything you need to run your very own strategic foresight programs, model scenarios, and develop actionable initiatives and strategies to help you rule the future like a boss.

Furthermore, as our main trends Codex grows exponentially larger I've taken the liberty of splitting it into separate **Minibooks**, like this one, that make it easier for you zero in and focus on only the categories of trends that matter to you.

Most trends are like tides - relentless forces that are hard to control or influence. And, just like tides they can impact a great many things - both directly and indirectly. Having written Codexes that cover the latest emerging technologies and the latest disruptive business thinking, innovation, and strategy, I felt that creating the trends Codex was a natural next step to compliment them, and ergo provide you with a valuable expert set of resources that contain everything you need to design, debate, create, and shape your own future.

This Codex, like all my others, is a living book, it's always being updated with the latest trends and information so that you always have access to the

latest insights and research, but perhaps its biggest benefit is that you can see every trend for everything in one place. This is important because since everything in our world is connected, as I've shared many times during my keynotes, this convenience allows you to easily stay abreast of changes in individual regions or sectors, technologies or trends - any one of which could impact the things you care about, even if the changes occur in areas that at first you don't think are relevant to you.

A simple but powerful example of this are the changes we see in the Energy sector where new energy generation and distribution technologies and trends are impacting everything from the business models and product development in the Transport sector, corporate ESG initiatives and Government policy making, climate change and other environmental trends, as well as the multi-trillion dollar investment portfolios of the global Financial Services sector - and far beyond.

No other trends book puts so many trends across so many categories, lines of business, and sectors in one place, or makes them so accessible, and that you might say is this book's USP. That is, of course, if tens of thousands of insights and statistics at your fingertips aren't enough already!

Explore More,

Matthew Griffin
Founder and Futurist in Chief



USING THIS TRENDS MINIBOOK



WITH SO many trends shaping our world and with more emerging all the time it's easy to get overwhelmed and fail to grasp their individual and collective impact on the things you care about. As a result I've done my utmost to make this Minibook, which is a verbatim extract from my main **311 Institute Annual Trends and Foresight Codex** and that you can download in full from our company website, as easy to use as possible.

In this section you can learn more about how to use the Trend Sheets to get the information you need, and can see the complete list of trends included in this minibook - with more being added all the time.



CLIMATE CHANGE

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Scientists saw it coming in the 1950's. They called it out and made films about it in the 1980's. And now, over forty years later individuals, governments, and organisations are starting to take unilateral global action to tackle Climate Change with many scientist arguing that we are now too late to avoid a "life altering" 1.5C increase in average global temperatures, and that we are within years of crossing a climate tipping point which will see its devastating global effects accelerate and create a run away cascade of **Extreme Weather** and devastation.

Data sources: IPCC, National Geographic, WWF, and various.

IMPACT

The impact of Climate Change can be seen everywhere - from the changes of the seasons, and the subtle changes in the flora and fauna in peoples gardens, to the tree covered mountain slopes that used to be buried by glaciers and snow, to the expanding deserts of the Sahara, and the deep of the oceans. It impacts every living thing and every natural system on Earth.

From longer frost free growing seasons, to changes in global rain patterns, longer droughts and more intense heat waves, and more extreme weather, to more powerful hurricanes and higher sea levels, the consequences are as varied as they are acute.

If the world warms by 1.5C then the Arctic Ocean will become ice free once every 100 years, with extreme hot days in the mid-latitudes being at least 3C hotter than pre-industrial levels, and sea levels could rise by up to 0.77m, with a further decrease in global bio-diversity of between 5% and 8%. Meanwhile corals could decline by at least 70% with marine fisheries annual productivity declining by at least 1.5 Million tons. And a 2C rise would be exponentially worse for people and planet.

EXAMPLES

Earth is mission critical for humanity and all life on Earth. And as the rate of Climate Change accelerates we continue to see a variety of records being set and smashed with climactic events that used to be once in a century becoming once a decade, and then the norm. And examples of these are plentiful.

Greenland's ice sheet, the world's second largest after Antarctica, is now melting 12 times faster than in the past 12,000 years and losing over 532 Billion tons of ice a year - and that rate is accelerating. Not only does this melt account for almost 25% of today's sea level rise, but in 2021 the melt rate accelerated even further when, during a time when temperatures in the region were already 18C higher than average, three days worth of rain - where the rain itself was a first for the region - dumped over 7 Billion tons of rain water onto the ice sheet.

And, from the world's biggest, deadliest, and most damaging floods, to the world's biggest, deadliest, and most damaging droughts, heatwaves, hurricanes, and wildfires almost every country on the planet is now feeling the damaging impacts of climate change.

ACT NOW

As we see elsewhere in our universe, from the dust dunes of Mars to the acidic oceans of Venus, our planet will always be able to adapt to new climactic conditions. But life on Earth will find it increasingly difficult as Climate Change accelerates and its effects become more extreme and pronounced. Therefore, ironically, tackling this trend is more about saving humanity's future than the planets.

EXPLORE: 12

- Carbon Capture and Storage
- Emerging technologies and technology roadmaps
- Future of Agriculture, Energy, Government, Manufacturing, Sustainability, Transportation, and Work
- Net Zero Pledges
- Unilateral global accords and coordinated global action

USING THE TREND SHEETS

IN THIS codex we've gone to great lengths to document the major trends affecting all sectors and line of business operations and simplify them for you. Furthermore, we're always surfacing more trends which is why this codex is regularly updated. As a result each trend contains all manner of action points, details, insights, and stats that you can use to your advantage, whether it's developing scenarios and strategies using the frameworks in this and our **other codexes**, or whether it's just exploring the art of the possible. This is the key to the sheets:

1 / UNITED NATIONS SDG NUMBER

The UN SDG most impacted if you act on the trend.

2 / TREND NAME

The most appropriate name for the trend.

3 / YEARS IN THE CODEX

How many years the trend has been listed in our codex since the first edition.

4 / TREND LONGEVITY

● LONG ● MEDIUM ● SHORT

The trends longevity and how long it is expected to have an impact for.

5 / TREND PRIORITY

The higher the number the more attention and weight you should give the trend.

6 / TREND MOMENTUM

⤴ ASCENDING ⤵ FLAT ⤶ DESCENDING

The overall momentum of the trend.

7 / TIMING OF THE TREND

● HERE NOW ● EMERGING ● DISTANT

When the trend is expected to have a measurable and pronounced impact.

8 / RELATED TRENDS

Other trends that either impact the trend or are impacted by it.

9 / DATA SOURCES

A list of our data sources for the trend.

10 / IMAGE

An image to portray the trend.

11 / ACTION

The action we suggest organisations take now based on the available data.

12 / EXPLORE

Other things you can or should explore to better understand the trend and how to solve or use it to your advantage.

13 / DISCOVER MORE

Click or scan the QR code to access more website resources related to the trend.

TRENDS CONTENTS

SECTION CONTENTS

- ... Belt and Road Initiatives
- ... Bi-Polar and Multi-Polar World
- ... Citizenship as a Service
- ... Corporate Blacklisting
- ... Corporate Foreign Policy
- ... Fragile Government
- ... Global Democracy in Decline
- ... Government Golden Shares
- ... Innovation Cold War
- ... Net Zero Pledges
- ... President For Life
- ... Propaganda Campaigns
- ... Soft Power Plays
- ... Splinternets
- ... Twiplomacy
- ... Virtual Nations

**// FOLLOW THE TRENDLINES
NOT THE HEADLINES . //**

- William B. Clinton, 42nd US President

SUMMARY UPDATE

TODAY'S POLITICAL theatre is a tale of of struggle, between nations, agendas, and ideals, and jerking progress with 108 million forcibly displaced refugees and a growing number of political prisoners serving as constant reminders of our world's unequal "political norms," which perfectly highlight the need for strong international actions and a global commitment to uphold human rights and democratic values.

However, as democracy itself comes under fire from all manner of trends, including Fragile Government, Europe and other blocks are fighting back by using technology to help them progress so called Digital Democracy initiatives that, in their words, facilitate greater citizen engagement and government transparency. As promising as these are though privacy questions and governments ability to counter dangerous misinformation campaigns remain.

The past year has also seen dramatic spending shifts including increases in military expenditure and Green spending which last year hit \$1.2 Trillion which shows governments increasing appetite to tackle climate change and its negative consequences, such as energy and food security, and extreme weather and sea level rise, as well as using funding to build new green industries that support future growth and jobs.

Elsewhere we're seeing consumer freedoms expanding in digital-friendly regions but receding further where internet censorship prevails, with global trade tensions further disrupting consumers freedoms by snarling supply chains and pushing the cost of living to all time highs.

In this turbulent political climate, as trade tensions continue to simmer and as strategic dislocation accelerates, and as the world continues the process of adapting to the new emerging world order there's no question that we live in increasingly uncertain and volatile times which means governments will have their work cut out for them to safe guard human rights and freedoms, and ensure equal equity and access to opportunities for all - should they wish to.

23

COUNTRIES WITH
"FULL DEMOCRACIES"

EIU

25%

WOMEN IN NATIONAL
PARLIAMENTS, PERCENT

IPU

193

UNITED NATIONS
MEMBER NATIONS, 2022

UN

108 ML

FORCIBLY DISPLACED
REFUGEES, 2022

UNHCR

\$4.1 BILLION

TOTAL POLITICAL LOBBYING SPEND, USA 2022

OPENSECRETS

\$2 TR

ANNUAL GLOBAL
DEFENCE SPEND, 2022

SIPRI

9

RECOGNISED NUCLEAR
POWERS, 2022

IAEA

1 ML

EST. GLOBAL POLITICAL
PRISONERS, 2022

US STATE DEPT

\$3.6 TRILLION

ANNUAL ESTIMATED VALUE OF GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION,
BRIBES AND THEFT, 2022

TRANSPARENCY INT'L

\$204 BN

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT
AID, 2022

OECD





BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVES

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

The multi-trillion dollar Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) that we are seeing being promoted today are a modern spin on the old silk and trading routes that connected different parts of the world centuries ago. And their objective - to grow trade and improve supply chain resilience - is the same. By aiming to improve regional co-operation through better connectivity between countries it's hoped that by creating vast networks of energy pipelines, highways, ports, railways, and streamlined border crossings, blocks such as China and the EU will benefit significantly economically and politically from them.

IMPACT

In 2013 Xi Jinping unveiled his ambitious \$1 Trillion One Belt One Road (OBOR) BRI initiative, which also included the bundling of Chinese technology MOU's with the deals, with ambitions to invest in over 1,590 infrastructure projects in 150 countries which would touch 30% of global GDP and 60% of the world's population. With the objective being to, in his own words, break the bottleneck in Asian connectivity and expand the use of China's currency and technologies, supported by the creation of a parallel Digital Silk Road initiative, there is little doubt that OBOR will have a significant impact on trends including the transition to a **Bi-Polar and Multi-Polar World, Global GDP Growth, Global Reserve Currency Wars, Innovation Cold War, Soft Power Plays, and Standards Shadow War.**

However, worried that Chinese OBOR loans would make countries indebted and or loyal to Beijing in 2021 the EU unveiled the Global Gateway project and €300 Million to support 70 major infrastructure projects. However, while both projects have similar objectives the EU's also includes using the funds to strengthen education, health, and research systems across the world.

EXAMPLES

These BRI and Digital Silk Road projects will change the global economic, political, and technological landscape but, as with all initiatives of this kind there are good stories and bad.

Successes include China's investment in Piraeus Port in Greece, which helped it become one of the world's fastest growing ports, the Mombasa-Nairobi railway which boosted trade and tourism between Kenya's two largest cities, and investments in Gwadar Port in Pakistan which gave the country better access to international markets. And the China-Laos railway and Central Asia-China gas pipelines have also increased the partner countries exports.

However, there are growing concerns of **Debt-Trap Diplomacy** as concerns grow over countries ability to repay OBOR loans - 60% of which are now in distress as **Global Public Debt** soars - with Zambia handing over the control of their state owned electricity company ZESCO to Chinese authorities to repay debts, Sri Lanka handing China 99 year leases on its ports after defaults, and many wondering how Pakistan will repay its \$62 Billion of loans after years of financial mismanagement and floods.

ACT NOW

With BRI having so many short, medium, and long term economic, political, and technological advantages it's surprising that more countries don't promote or participate in them. For the countries that do though there is no denying the out sized impact they'll have on those countries future political influence and prospects on the global stage which makes this trend an important one to explore.

EXPLORE:

- Anti-Corruption and ethical infrastructure investment policies
- Economic, financial, and political assessments
- Emerging technologies and technology roadmaps
- Future of Communications, Construction, Energy, Financial Services, Government, Logistics, Manufacturing, Retail, Supply Chains, Transportation, Work and the Workplace
- Impact and risk assessments



BI-POLAR AND MULTI-POLAR WORLD

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Historically we used to live in a Bi-Polar world, where world politics and the global agenda were largely directed and influenced by two countries, namely Russia and the USA. However, since the dissolution of the USSR Russian influence has somewhat waned so today we live in a hegemonic world largely dominated by the USA and their agenda.

As we look forwards though and see the rise of China, a revitalised Europe, and a slowly ascending India, we can envisage a time where global agendas are dominated and influenced not by one world power, but by two or many.

Data sources: Various.

IMPACT

The ultimate impact of a Bi-Polar or Multi-Polar world is that no one country's voice will be the loudest - although make no mistake, all of their voices will be loud. As a consequence this means that trends, such as Hard Power Plays and **Soft Power Plays**, as well as **Belt and Road Initiatives**, **President For Life**, **Propaganda Campaigns** and so called **PsyOps**, will play much greater roles in influencing and shaping future global agendas and opinions. Agendas, for example, that could influence the strategic direction of international organisations such as the World Bank, World Health Organisation, World Trade Organisation, and others.

There will also be an impact on global politics and the world order, and for the majority of us the most dangerous period of time will be during the transition period - when we move from a hegemonic world to a Bi-Polar world, and when both "rivals" have roughly equal capabilities. In the past it's been these transitions that have given rise to aggressive juxtapositioning and war so the world will need to be prepared and remain vigilant to any and all threats great and small.

EXAMPLES

Perhaps a good example of today's juxtapositioning, as we look ahead to a Bi-Polar World where the future is dominated by China and the USA, then perhaps India, and even the BRICS, is China's quest to assert their authority over and dominate several hotly contested areas including Taiwan, provinces along the China-India border, and the hotly contested South China Sea. And then there's the **Global Reserve Currency Wars**, **Innovation Cold War**, and **Standards Shadow Wars** which are all being used as tools to accelerate China's ascension and dominance on the global stage.

With so many converging trends it wouldn't take much for some of them to escalate and change the global status quo. Although with respect to military conflict in the South China Sea it's likely all sides will continue to test each others resolve rather than risk drawing blood and finding themselves embroiled in all out war. Nevertheless in the future we could look back at these and other trends and see them as the signals that marked the start of China's ascension as it looks forwards to a Bi-Polar World and begins the process of transitioning from today's status quo to tomorrows.

ACT NOW

It is the transition periods between global power shifts that people should be wary about and we face several of those as we look into the future. The question then becomes will the activities that define these transition periods be net positive or net negative for us, and how do we navigate them so we all benefit.

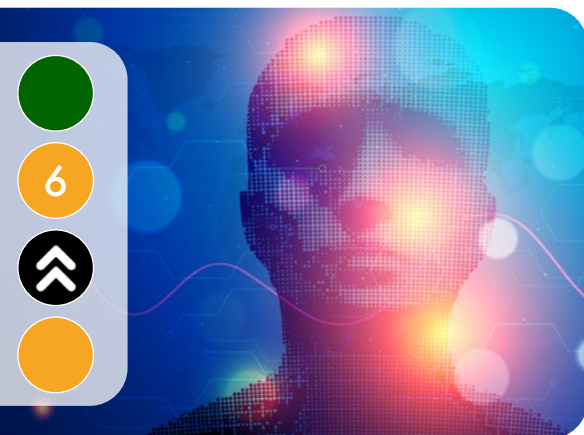
EXPLORE:

- Emerging technology and technology roadmaps
- Dominating global standards and strengthening global standards boards
- Future of Governments
- Hard and Soft Power plays
- Strong institutions
- Unilateral global accords and coordinated global action



CITIZENSHIP AS A SERVICE

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

When governments are faced with the prospect of needing to, or wanting to, invest in the development of their country and their citizens their budgets, and therefore their plans, are often constrained by their country's GDP and other economic indicators. And many of these are themselves constrained by factors such as productivity, and population demographics and size.

However, when it comes to both of these Citizenship as a Service offers countries a way for governments to artificially grow the size of their populations and reap the economic rewards.

Data sources: Republic of Estonia, and various.

IMPACT

Ultimately the positive impact that Citizenship as a Service, which is also sometimes referred to as E-Residency, has on a country's economic prosperity is the direct result of the fact that it gives people from outside of the country a way to participate in its local economy, contribute to it, and benefit from its policies and successes in a way that wouldn't otherwise be possible. And, needless to say, provided governments can balance their programs correctly the trend is very appealing.

While the number of countries offering such programs are still limited so far in the first five years Estonia, the pioneer in the space, saw 80,000 people from 167 countries sign up, start over 10,000 new local businesses - which represents over 8% of the total number of businesses registered in the country - and contribute over €31 Million a year in taxes. All of which is run and managed by a team of just 18 people, with 87% of the participants being men between the ages of 26 and 45.

Additionally, and in time, this trend could help fuel the development and rise of so called Virtual Countries - another powerful trend I discuss in this Codex.

EXAMPLES

Estonia was the first country to establish an E-Residency program back in 2014 and given its success it's no surprise that the program's being expanded to at least another 20 countries including Brazil and South Africa, as well as Japan, Singapore, Thailand, the UAE, and the USA, to name but a few.

In Estonia's case the program has essentially two sides. The first is the E-Residency initiative itself, and the second is access to an online E-Residency marketplace.

Described as a "location free" digital toolbox built to support people from around the world the program is completely digital with the aim of making borders meaningless and letting location-independent business owners, entrepreneurs, and freelancers access a wide range of private and public Estonian services, access European banking services and marketplaces, and join a community of like minded people.

ACT NOW

Citizenship as a Service programs not only provide real benefits to their host countries and participants, but their architecture and design could also be very easily adapted to enable countries to build out the first true Virtual Countries.

EXPLORE:

- Business and impact assessments
- Case studies and examples
- Future of Government, the Workforce, and the Workplace
- Partner ecosystems and solutions
- Societal trends



CORPORATE BLACKLISTING

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Just as **Sanctions** are designed to have a negative impact on the ability of countries to operate Corporate Blacklisting does much the same thing but at an individual company level rather than the national level, and it's a trend that been increasingly used over the past number of years as organisations get more powerful and as geopolitical fire fights, such as **Trade Wars**, flare.

It's also a trend that's likely to only get worse as we head towards a **Bi-Polar and Multi-Polar World**.

IMPACT

While blacklisting companies has many impacts some of the most severe include cutting off access to important markets, and restricting access to capital, talent, resources, and suppliers.

Blacklisting can happen for many reasons, including human rights violations, money laundering, national security concerns, as well as unfavourable business practises and partnerships - especially when it comes to surveillance or military related work, and questionable associations and contracts with unfavourable governments.

In some cases this trend can be a death knell for some companies and drive them into bankruptcy, and for others it can act as a wake up call that they need to improve their GRC processes, diversify their markets and supply chains, and dramatically improve their balance sheets. The increased use of this trend, rightly or wrongly, has undoubtedly accelerated the inwards development of some countries investment, market, and technology ecosystems, as well as fuel the **Shadow Standards War** and the trend of **Selective Decoupling**.

EXAMPLES

While a lot of press coverage has been given to the USA's use of this trend against Chinese companies, and vice versa, the fact is that it affects many companies in many countries. Some of the more notable examples include India's blacklisting of over 270 Chinese companies in 2020 including the likes of Alibaba, Bytedance, Taobao, Tencent, Xiaomi, and Yotta Games after tensions between the two countries were heightened after several deadly Himalayan border clashes. And then there's the USA's blacklisting of more than 50 major Chinese companies including Dahua, DJI, Hikvision, Huawei, SenseTime, SMIC, ZTE, and others for a variety of abuses including human rights abuses against the Uighurs.

In almost all cases these companies lost access to critical components, investment, markets, talent, and even software critical to their operations and product development which, in DJI and SMIC's case meant they couldn't develop products, and which in Huawei's case meant they couldn't access computer chips, the Google Play store, and other important resources with the result being they developed their own alternatives.

ACT NOW

The more that countries use this trend the more likely it is that the companies and countries affected by it will find ways to circumvent the problems they cause which, in turn, will accelerate the **Innovation Cold War** and the splintering of various institutions, partnerships, and standards.

EXPLORE:

- Business and impact assessments
- Emerging technologies and technology roadmaps
- Future of Artificial Intelligence, Creativity and Innovation, and Government
- Policy and regulation reform



CORPORATE FOREIGN POLICY

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

As corporations become increasingly powerful in terms of global reach, resources, and wealth, and as the trend of **Fragile Government** accelerates, many people are starting to question whether they are more powerful than governments when it comes to being able to influence and change the status quo - whether it's at a business, cultural, political, or even societal level. As a result many of them, not content with just lobbying, are starting to play key roles in developing and driving local and global political strategy, and are directly getting involved in diplomacy and geopolitics.

Data sources: Various.

IMPACT

Corporations that have direct connections to every level of government are not uncommon, and in some cases they act as a convenient back channel in times of crisis and uncertainty, such as the recent US-China **Trade Wars**.

However, when we look at many governments track records of being able to push through change and transform the status quo their litany of failures often out numbers their wins which then leaves the door wide open for corporations to make their move and take the lead.

Not burdened by the complex democratic decision making processes of government, which all too often end in deadlock and stalemate, the ultimate impact of this trend is that increasingly if you want to get something done then the best way to achieve it is to get a private corporation on side to lead the initiative - whether it's transforming the communications, education, energy, healthcare, manufacturing, space, technology, and transportation industries, or whether it's drafting and helping push through new foreign policies or regulations.

EXAMPLES

As many governments simply watched from the sidelines and threw political sticks at one another in 2017 Microsoft took the lead in working with the United Nations to draft and promote a new Digital Geneva Convention - a binding international treaty based on the Geneva Convention protocols aimed at protect citizens from state sponsored cyber attacks. And that's just one of their initiatives.

Elsewhere Google has been actively involved in shaping the communications and energy policies of countries as diverse as Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the USA, and Amazon and Meta have been actively involved in shaping India's communications, financial, internet, and retail markets and laws.

And that's before we discuss the impact that Alibaba, Huawei, and Tencent are having on Asian and African political direction and thinking even though much of their influence was reigned in after the Chinese governments ideological and political crackdown of them.

ACT NOW

Governments used to be all powerful, but increasingly, dissatisfied with the pace of change and the inability of governments to look beyond the short term, large corporations, some of which now resemble **Virtual Nations** themselves, are now taking matters into their own hands and are taking a much more proactive role in helping transform the status quo - whether it's making a meaningful impact on climate change or space, or many other topics.

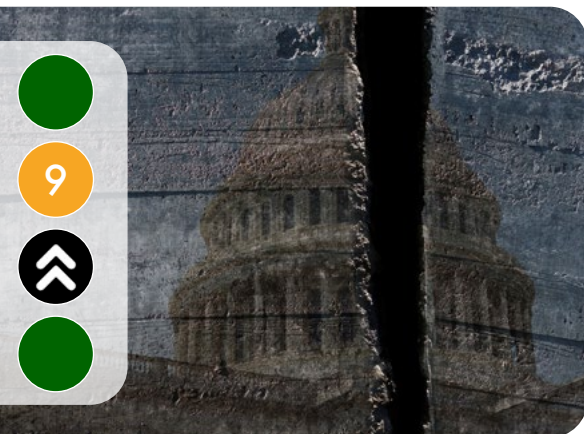
EXPLORE:

- Business and impact assessments
- Future of Government
- GRC Reform
- Policy and regulation reform



FRAGILE GOVERNMENT

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Even though there is now a growing case to say that large multi-national organisations and **Virtual Nations** are more powerful and can have a greater impact on global business, culture, and society than sovereign governments there are still many times when we need strong governments - especially when it comes to the democratic process, law, regulations, trade, and the protection of social norms. Today though there are all too many examples that governments are becoming more fragile and that their ability to debate and pass meaningful legislation is being impacted at all levels.

Data sources: Brookings, CIA, IMF, Nasdaq, and various.

IMPACT

Different from **Fragile States** where governments lack legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens fragile government is a trend where, for a multitude of reasons, including so called Partisan Warfare, the governments in power are unable to get things done, whether that's passing new laws or legislation, or making progress on important issues.

The impacts of this are numerous and some are unexpected. In the case of the USA there are many on Wall Street who believe this trend benefits them because essentially it keeps the government out of the way of business and lets businesses just get on with business. However, on the flip side budgetary paralysis and stalled decision making has consequences on everything from infrastructure and R&D spending, to tax collecting and enforcement which in the latter's case means that, in the IRS' own words for every extra dollar in tax enforcement that they loose the government looses between an estimated \$24 to \$66 in income, which then creates a virtuous cycle of budget issues. In the end though you could easily argue that a paralysed government is a useless government that serves noone and little to no purpose.

EXAMPLES

Today in many countries concepts such as bipartisanship, collaboration, compromise, and consensus, are seen by many as evidence of weak will, or worse weak principles, and while some of this is driven by and exacerbated by trends such as **Truth Decay** and **PsyOps** some of it is simply driven by political careerism and egos. Today, there are many examples of this trend in action, especially in democracies whose beliefs and philosophies are constantly being attacked and eroded by foreign powers who want to sow division and manufacture a **Polarised Society**.

From Brexit which took over four years for the UK government to deliver because politicians on all sides couldn't, or wouldn't agree, and which essentially kept the UK in a state of useless suspended animation unable to move forwards or make plans, to the USA and the increased use and threat of filibusters to kill acts such as the S1 For the People Act, and the investigation into the Capitol Riots, as well as their use to stall climate, criminal justice, civil rights, immigration, infrastructure, minimum wage, and voting rights bills, there are plenty of examples - all of which impact everyday people.

ACT NOW

Faith in governments ability to deliver it at a historic low, and much of this is due to this trend which only seems to be getting worse as you look across countries which is why increasingly multi-nationals are stepping in under the auspices of the **Corporate Foreign Policy** trend. Furthermore, with no end in sight this trend plays perfectly into the hands of those foreign powers who want to show the world that democracy is broken as a concept and that it's time has come and gone.

EXPLORE:

- Budget and process reform
- Future of Communications, Financial Services, Media and Entertainment, and Government
- Policy and regulation reform
- Unification strategies



GLOBAL DEMOCRACY IN DECLINE

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Globally many people feel democracy, and democracies, that extol civil liberties and the freedoms of expression and speech are under threat and in decline. And even though democracies generate two thirds of all global GDP, which is also in decline, they're right which is why societies must remain vigilant. In the past decade the number of countries that identify as democracies has slid from 79 out of a total of 167 countries to 72, and the number of people who live in democracies, including in India which is both the world's largest democracy and the world's most populous, stands at 3.6 Billion.

IMPACT

With 45% of the world's population living in democratic countries it's clear that democracy is unfortunately not a reality for many people. In 2022 out of 167 countries 24 were full democracies, 48 were flawed democracies, 36 were hybrid regimes, and 59 were authoritarian. And, as our world changes beyond recognition, many of the democracies that remain are struggling to combat the realities of our fast paced modern world which includes trends such as the **Bi-Polar and Multi-Polar World, Fragile Government, Polarised Society, President for Life, Propaganda Campaigns, Soft Power Plays, Truth Decay, Virtual Nations**, and many other trends.

While the impact of democracy is hard to quantify studies show that democratic countries are more likely to have better political stability, fairer and more robust judicial systems, and more accountable governments than their non-democratic peers. They're also more likely to have better education and health outcomes, better gender and income equality, and better human rights records, and when it comes to **Global Productivity** democracies have been shown to have a 1% higher GDP per capita.

EXAMPLES

Even though democracy is under threat though it might surprise you than many democracies are less than a generation old with countries such as Liberia, Moldova, Nepal, and Sri Lanka being less than twenty years old, and Indonesia, Mexico, and South Africa being less than thirty years old.

Human freedom and the protection of civil liberties is a right, but for many people in the world it's not reality, and increasingly many experts are concerned about the rate of democracy decline whether it's in the USA or in India, Hungary, Poland, and others.

They've also seen a worrying up tick in the number of authoritarian regimes trading technologies and tactics, as well as practising **Transnational Repression**. Furthermore, backsliding democracies also have a common pattern with the governments of those countries lauding their country's glorious past and spreading falsehoods before strongly affiliating themselves with religious groups and undermining the integrity of the country's election processes, judiciaries, and press. Interestingly the opposite is then often true for democracies on the ascent.

ACT NOW

The bar to be classified as a full democracy is admittedly very high, and there are many forces that help push a country towards authoritarianism or democracy, but of them all **Wealth Inequality** which then often leads to social inequality, local polarisation, and the fear of the future, are often the most significant drivers which spur societies into action - for better or worse. As a result companies should regularly audit the countries they're present in and trade in and, if weaknesses are identified have plans to mitigate them.

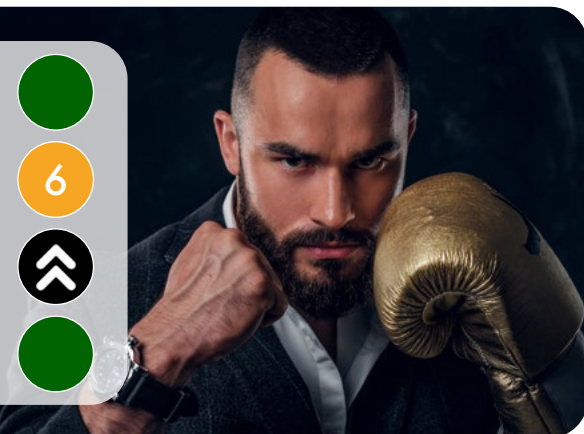
EXPLORE:

- Democracy support, international engagement, and two term limits
- Future of Government, Media and Entertainment, Work and the Workplace
- Strong institutions and judiciaries independent of the Executive
- United opposition and peaceful engagement



GOVERNMENT GOLDEN SHARES

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

As the world transitions to a **Bi-Polar and Multi-Polar World** some experts have questioned the ability of governments, whatever their flag or political leaning, to control the activities and strategic direction of private organisations and individuals who, in some cases, have revenues, market valuations, and private wealth that exceed the GDP entire nations, and which left unchecked could end up becoming an economic and political threat to the ruling parties. Where regulation has failed though forced leadership re-education programs and golden shares seem to be succeeding.

Data sources: FT, OECD, SMCP, WSJ, and various.

IMPACT

Traditionally used to maintain control over State Owned Enterprises (SOE) today government owned golden shares are increasingly being used as an iron fist rather than a velvet glove to help various governments exert control over private companies that they deem need to be controlled - for whatever reasons. While golden shares are used by many countries the Chinese government thrust them back into the limelight after bearish regulations, aimed at curtailing the independence and power of their largest companies backfired and damaged consumer and investor confidence.

Now, this trend which let them influence and veto everything from board selection, investments, M&A, ownership, strategy, and even workforce policies, is the new tool. However, it can distort markets, soften company share prices, and having so much power concentrated in the hands of just one shareholder worries corporate governance experts. Furthermore, it's also an effective tool to help governments manipulate the allegiance of boards, and ergo entire companies and markets, as well as use it to strengthen and promote their own agendas and **Soft Power Plays**.

EXAMPLES

While this trend has its critics supporters argue it's a necessary tool for ensuring the stability and strategic direction of a country's key industries, and that it can help to protect companies from takeovers and outside influence.

In China, where the states ownership can be opaque, the ruling party has golden shares that give them decisive voting rights in over 100 companies - the most of any government. While these are mostly SOEs increasingly it also includes a collection of private companies. SOE examples include 86% ownership of China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), 72% of China Mobile, and 34% of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), the largest bank in the world by total assets.

However, while you'd expect this they also have golden shares in many content, energy, finance, tech, and telco companies including 36kr, Alibaba, ByteDance, Didi, Qutoutiao, Tencent, and Weibo, and as all these companies look for international growth many foreign governments are growing increasingly suspicious of the Chinese governments influence over them and potential links to the Chinese military.

ACT NOW

When one shareholder wields so much power over a company undoubtedly governments, investors, and people who do business with them are going to ask tough questions about their allegiances and how far they can be trusted. As more governments use this trend as a tool to exert their will over companies it will likely play a more prominent role in trends including the transition to a **Bi-Polar and Multi-Polar World, Corporate Blacklisting, Selective Decoupling, Trade Wars, Zero Trust**, and many others, and as such companies should be wary of it and its consequences.

EXPLORE:

- Alternative suppliers, supplier diversification, and supplier audits
- Business, impact, and risk assessments
- Friend shoring and on shoring
- Future of AI, Creativity and Innovation, Cyber Security, Government, Manufacturing, and Supply Chains



INNOVATION COLD WAR

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Innovation and R&D have always been competitive spaces with many governments and companies wrapping their most special projects in secrecy, and in 2022 the world spent at least \$2.63 Trillion a year inventing what's next.

Unsurprisingly, some countries have reaped significant economic, political, social, and national security advantages from their focus on science and technology innovation, so it's only natural that now other countries want to harness it for their own advantage and to further their own agendas.

Data sources: Bloomberg, PWC, UNESCO, and various.

IMPACT

Innovation has significant benefits across the entire spectrum of society as well as to **Global GDP Growth**, but many of those benefits are the result of common collaboration, common market policies, and common standards, all of which are now under extreme pressure as various countries around the world continue to ratchet up their rhetoric and pursue their own commercial and political agendas by effectively weaponising their innovation policies and programs and by using cyber attacks to steal their opponents' ideas and IP.

Emboldened, empowered, and encouraged by these policies the **Global R&D Spending** among the world's 1,000 largest corporate R&D spenders is increasing on average by 12% per annum, and now stands at \$858 Billion.

Furthermore, besides from helping these organisations defend their existing markets and enter new ones, and both avoid and drive disruption, many innovation initiatives are also increasingly being used as a vehicle to demonstrate and promote alternative standards, national pride, patriotism, and **Soft Power Plays**.

EXAMPLES

While there have been literal innovation cold wars in the past they've generally been constrained to specific activities and industries. Today though the emergence of increasingly powerful technologies combined with new market forces are giving some countries a prime opportunity to disrupt the global status quo, and while China aren't alone in this ambition in their case they finally see an opening to overtake the USA, realise technological dominance, and create a new prosperous future for their citizens - as well as use it as an opportunity to extend their soft power via their **Belt and Road Initiatives**.

In order to fuel their ambitious rise to dominance the CCP have set aside over \$1.4 Trillion to accelerate their rate of innovation across almost all sectors and all **General Purpose Technologies**, and they have re-doubled their efforts to develop the country's innovation culture and ecosystems which also include duplicating some of the US's most successful initiatives. The net result is that increasingly China, not Europe nor the USA, may soon be setting future global technology standards as we see the start of a **Standards Shadow War**.

ACT NOW

While there will always be competition between countries an Innovation Cold War will inevitably have a variety of unfavourable outcomes which, among other things, will affect society at large by reducing choice and trust, and by forcing companies to decide which and whose technology standards they adopt.

EXPLORE:

- Collaborative government policies
- Emerging technology and technology roadmaps
- Policy and regulation reform
- Strengthening global standards boards
- Market impact analysis
- Unilateral global accords and coordinated global action



NET ZERO PLEDGES

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Net zero targets are all about reaching net zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions whereby the same amount of greenhouse gasses that are put into the Earth's atmosphere are removed - and thereby balanced. And the targets are enormous.

In order to balance just today's emissions, let alone future emissions whose rates will be greater, we will need to remove at least 36 Billion tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Flourinated gases, Methane, and Nitrous Oxide a year from the atmosphere.

IMPACT

Increasingly being referred to as the "world's landfill for CO₂" and other GHG's today the Earth's atmosphere has reached a value of 457 ppm in GHG equivalents. Not only is this the highest figure for over a million years, but this figure is increasing at an accelerating rate with the IPCC and other international institutions saying we now have a 67% chance of exceeding the world's 1.5°C temperature threshold, and that the GHG concentrations corresponding to a 2°C increase could be exceeded by 2034. It is also estimated that the world will need to invest between \$1 to \$2 Trillion of additional investment every year to reach Net Zero.

So far 191 countries have come together under the Paris Agreement to pledge they will reach Net Zero and take a leadership role in helping the world transition to a net zero carbon economy by 2050. However, to date only 110 countries have submitted viable national action plans, called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which means that as things stand the combined emission reduction plans fall far short of the targets needed to remain within the 1.5°C goal.

EXAMPLES

One of the greatest issues that people see with Net Zero pledges today is the fact that there are no limits on how many Carbon credits or organisations countries can buy to offset their own emissions. In short you can still be a global GHG polluter, and your pollution rates can get worse over time, but provided you are offsetting those you could still meet your pledge.

However, while we assume that most institutions aren't going to take that rather unscrupulous route, on the flip side we're seeing rapid increases in both the number of countries and organisations committing to hit Net Zero by 2050, or sooner, with most of their efforts focused on reducing emissions from construction, energy generation and distribution, manufacturing, shipping, and transportation, which collectively account for around 75% of all global emissions.

As a result we are seeing the fast uptake of renewable energy and alternative energy sources such as Ammonia and Hydrogen, the rapid electrification of industries, and the development of new sustainable and environmentally friendly industrial processes and Smart Cities.

ACT NOW

Reaching Net Zero will require a truly global effort and there is no room for wavering. But the world's biggest challenges are also the world's biggest opportunities, both in a commercial and social sense, and with the cost of polluting set to become increasingly expensive as the price of Carbon credits, for example, increases it will soon be more expensive to pollute than to protect. And then this, in turn, will hopefully accelerate our transition.

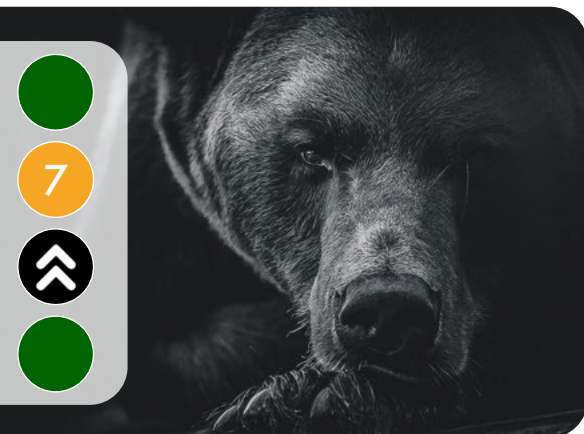
EXPLORE:

- Emerging technology and technology roadmaps
- ESG review and reform
- Financing and investment strategies
- Future of Construction, Energy, Manufacturing, Sustainability, and Transportation
- Innovation and Partner ecosystems and solutions
- Unilateral global accords and coordinated global action



PRESIDENT FOR LIFE

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

When it comes to developing and implementing long term future visions that benefit their countries - more in the medium and long term than the short term - today many democratic governments suffer from the unintended consequences of short political terms that let future focused leaders with bold and progressive visions get swapped out every few years for others with opposing views. Seen as the equivalent of swapping out an airline pilot, who set one course, with another who can change that course, now some countries are giving those pilots lifetime terms and just swapping out the co-pilots instead.

Data sources: EIU, Pew Research, and various.

IMPACT

Imagine a country whose leadership changes course and policy direction every few years - one leader develops policies promoting innovation and R&D, and the next dismantles it all, one develops environmental policies to promote the development of a greener economy and fuel jobs growth, and the next dismantles it all. And repeat. If this happens regularly then not only does that country's progress stall, but compared to its peers its competitiveness and attractiveness as a place to invest and conduct business diminishes. This is commonplace, especially democracies, today as the **Fragile Government**, **Polarised Society**, and **Propaganda Campaigns** trends surge.

Some countries though, primarily those with regimes that aren't elected - either often or at all - such as Authoritarian and Competitive Authoritarian, Autocratic, Communist, Constitutional Monarchies, or Totalitarian regimes don't have this issue because once their leaders have set a future vision they can execute and deliver it either completely or largely unopposed. And, when it comes to building future competitiveness this is giving many of them a distinct advantage over their democratic peers.

EXAMPLES

While this trend has been the status quo for many countries for centuries, especially those in the Middle East and Asia, it goes without saying that the differences between how different regimes govern their citizens and countries varies immensely with some being more progressive and utopian in nature, such as Singapore and the UAE, and others being more regressive and dystopian, such as North Korea.

Over the past decade there has been a concerted effort by certain leaders, most notably President Xi Jinping of China and Vladimir Putin of Russia, to change the presidential term limits to let them lead for life, and while in 2018 Jinping successfully passed legislation to remove the Chinese two term limit Putin meanwhile in 2020 signed legislation to let him retain power until at least 2036.

In all cases the main advantage of this trend, for better or worse, means that the leaders concerned are able to lay out multi-decade visions for their countries - whatever that entails - and implement them almost unopposed which lets them develop short, medium, and long term competitiveness in ways that elected officials struggle to match.

ACT NOW

While the more authoritarian leaders use this trend to consolidate power and as a lever to impose their will and visions on others it's undeniable that when it comes to building future competitiveness and dominance the consistency of vision and execution this trend offers, as we've seen with China, Singapore, and the UAE, to varying degrees, is almost incredibly difficult for elected populist leaders to match. And, as we see trends including the **Bi-Polar and Multi-Polar World**, **Belt and Road Initiatives**, and others such as the **Innovation Cold War** and **Standards Shadow War** unfurl there's no getting away from the fact that elected leaders will need to find a way to match this trends advantages without jeopardising their democracies.

EXPLORE:

- Alliances and partnerships
- Cultural exchanges, education initiatives, and the promotion of democratic values
- Progressive investments
- Supply chain diversification



PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGNS

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

The internet and the rise of powerful social media platforms and news networks opened up a new front in the propaganda wars that the governments of certain countries have been using to their advantage to undermine the culture and values of other sovereign nations, sow dissent, and spread disinformation and misinformation.

An example of both unethical behaviour and an attempt to subversively extend their own ideologies, influence, and values over other cultures propaganda campaigns are now form the linchpin of some countries political strategies.

IMPACT

Propaganda campaigns that seek to sow dissent and exploit and heighten societal divisions at the expense of people's well-being are both dishonourable and deplorable. They are also unfortunately not just common practice but business as usual for many authoritarian governments including China and Russia whose subversive propaganda campaigns encompass and target almost every country, every platform, and every topic.

While these campaigns have many objectives, from discrediting and undermining democracy and the social fabric and values of foreign states, to furthering the aggressors own commercial interests, ultimately all the campaigns have similar objectives: Promote the aggressors agendas, ideals, ideologies, and values, and sow dissent and distrust.

As a result many of these campaigns prey on and heighten societal bullying, dissension, distrust, paranoia, and suspicion, and in the worst examples lead to violence and death that spans the globe. They also create an increasingly divided and polarised world with the consequences thereof.

EXAMPLES

Sometimes dubbed Foreign Influence Campaigns, and seen as a form of Psychological Operations or Disinformation Warfare, propaganda campaigns present real danger with real consequences that leave damage in their wake - and countries have gone to war for less. Furthermore, aggressors are now exporting their so called playbooks to other foreign powers.

Like the secret wars of old almost all governments undertaking these activities work hard to ensure they have plausible deniability by using third party "Troll factories" to manage and run the campaigns on their behalf at arms length. And it's an effective tactic that hobbles many of their targets from taking direct retaliatory action against them.

From running "Cheerleader" campaigns for leaders favoured by Russian "interests" in Africa in order to sway local elections, to undermining Western COVID-19 vaccines and vaccination programs, to trying to undermine the US elections, and running Chinese CPC propaganda campaigns, there are thousands of examples.

ACT NOW

Propaganda campaigns today are so well organised and orchestrated, and their impact so damaging and widespread, that one has to wonder at what point their targets will be justified in taking unilateral direct action against the aggressors that conduct them - in whatever form that takes. Because at the moment it very much looks like they are getting away with literal "societal murder."

EXPLORE:

- Detect, Deflect, Dismantle, and Destroy (D4) initiatives
- Education initiatives
- Emerging technologies and technology roadmaps
- Impact assessments
- Social Trends
- Unilateral global accords and coordinated global action
- User authentication initiatives



SOFT POWER PLAYS

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Soft power plays are in the playbooks of every government in the world and are used to co-opt rather than coerce people into favouring one group or one way of thinking over another. It's also been very effective so far at helping individual groups and governments further their own agendas both at home and on the international stage.

Seen by many as a more effective and favourable way of exerting influence than by using outright commercial or military means we are now entering an age that will be defined by soft power plays.

IMPACT

There has always been, and will always be, an interplay between Hard Power and Soft Power plays. But where hard power relies on having the commercial means and often a strong military in order to coerce people soft power leans heavily on using other less costly and more peaceful means to weaken opponents positions and create like-minded alliances. And, faced with America's hard power superiority many governments and institutions, especially China and Russia, have created soft power playbooks which are, arguably, the envy of many countries.

While the actual impact of soft power is hard to quantify because many of its benefits are diffuse and soft, as well as the fact that the "goodwill" might not be honoured, research shows that it has a statistically important impact with its impact on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) being worth an extra 0.66% increase in FDI for every 1% increase in the number of countries a cultural institution covers - which can quickly add up to billions in extra GDP. Elsewhere, soft powers greatest impact can be seen in creating and strengthening alliances which then benefit particular governments or institutions.

EXAMPLES

One of the most thoroughly documented examples of the impact of soft power comes from the UK government who estimate that in terms of foreign investment it equated to an additional £197 Billion in foreign investment, in both economic and tourism terms, and the addition of an extra 3,200 international students in 2016. However, when it comes to these figures it's also important to note that the country's Cultural Ranking and its political influence within the world also plays a crucial role - more so than the sum of its hard power "potential." The research also showed evidence of soft power on a states economic success and global influence.

Cultural exchanges between Africa and China are examples of soft power, as are the hosting of high profile international events such as the COP, G7, G20, Olympics, and World Government summits which all boost a country's soft power benefits and status - as we have seen with Japan and the UAE. It should also come as no surprise that America is generally the world's top soft power player but since President Trump's term France, Germany, Japan, and the UK are all very close seconds.

ACT NOW

Soft power is subtle and requires effort, focus, and resources to do well. It's also greater than the sum of its parts with far reaching benefits and is as old as human society itself. Therefore governments and institutions alike would do well to prioritise it and develop well thought out scalable soft power strategies.

EXPLORE:

- Cultural exchanges and summits
- Cultural Ranking initiatives
- International community contributions
- International polling



SPLINTERNETS

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

When Sir Tim Berners-Lee created the internet he highlighted its democratising potential and ability to be a force for good. But today those founding principles seem idealistic. In part this is because the internet's business model is mostly based on organisations profiting from people's personal information, but on the other the concept of a foreign managed and democratic free space that allows people to come together and voice their opinions is in opposition to the authoritarian governments of the world who see it as a threat to their authority, so have taken steps to control and "splinter" it.

Data sources: Economist, Guardian, Nesta, SCMP, and various.

IMPACT

Historically the internet was been one large amorphous distributed standardised system that spanned the world and openly let everyone participate and collaborate with others.

However, as different governments disagree with America's oversized influence over the development of future internet standards, and as others see this open world as a threat to their political authority and national security, some governments are now developing what many call "state controlled" internet alternatives. The result of which is a system which is increasingly fragmented and divided along commercial, information, political, nationalistic, and technological lines.

This state control also makes it easier to identify and quash dissent, limit freedoms, and exert authoritarian control, as well as shut down communications, and enforce information sovereignty policies. The upshot being that internet freedoms are in continual decline, and that collaborating and communicating between different systems is becoming an increasingly complex and costly affair.

EXAMPLES

While China and Russia have been rapidly increasing their internet oversight and begun the work to separate their state controlled internets from the rest of the system, they are by no means alone with countries including Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen following suit.

In China's case the so called Great Firewall of China is arguably the world's most successful and significant splinternet, then in 2019 Russia successfully executed its plan to disconnect the entire country from the global internet - in part to test its defences in the event of an all out cyber war but also to stress test its own splinternet. But the story doesn't end there - as China seeks to dominate global standards in everything from 5G and Artificial Intelligence to energy they are now exporting their splinternet "processes, systems, and technologies" to other interested countries as part of their Trillion dollar Belt and Road initiative.

Moving closer to home even democratic governments are taking a more active role in controlling and filtering their own internets, with the resulting debates ...

ACT NOW

While there are an increasing number of splinternets the consequences of this "digital authoritarianism" stretch far beyond the borders and populations of the individual countries, with ramifications for global business, culture, and society. Furthermore, even the countries that aren't actively pursuing this kind of policy are exploring new ways to keep certain foreign nationals off of certain internet properties.

EXPLORE:

- Emerging technologies and technology roadmaps
- Future of Communications and Government
- Policy and regulation reform
- Strengthening global standards boards and embracing open standards
- Unilateral global accords and coordinated global action



TWIPLOMACY

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Twiplomacy is the use of social media, with an obvious emphasis on Twitter, by the heads of state, leaders of inter-governmental organisations, and their diplomats, to contact diplomatic outreach and public diplomacy.

While the trend has its benefits, such as allowing leaders to communicate their opinions and policies directly to the global audience instantly without being filtered, if not managed carefully this trend can also affect foreign policy, swing stock markets, fuel societal divisions, and have all manner of unintended consequences.

Data sources: BBC, Twiplomacy, and various.

IMPACT

First coined in 2011 today on average over 90% of governments and government organisations engage in Twiplomacy in one form or another, and while most of the conversations and interactions are benign there have been far too many occasions where Twiplomacy has descended into an outright war of words between different leaders and groups.

When it comes to impact though perhaps one of the greatest benefits of the trend is the fact that it lets leaders engage with alternative and younger audiences in new ways and helps them highlight causes, initiatives, or policies that might otherwise have been lost in the overall noise of mainstream media.

But, despite this, make no mistake about this trend - it is only as beneficial and as trustworthy as the people using it, and as it grows in popularity we all need to be mindful of the fact that it also provides governments everywhere with the opportunity to push their own agendas, spread disinformation and misinformation, and sow division and discord at speed and scale.

EXAMPLES

When it comes to highlighting some of the most notable examples of Twiplomacy gone right and gone wrong, including using it as a means to promote **Truth Decay**, there's a lot to choose from, not naming names.

From the Chinese governments use of it to speak out against foreign interference in its affairs and promote its own agendas via **Propaganda Campaigns**, right through to the United State's governments use of it to promote facemasks and social distancing during the global pandemic and fan the flames of the Capitol riots back in 2020, there's no shortage of material I could use.

ACT NOW

With Twiplomacy on the rise governments and leaders everywhere have a new mouthpiece that they can use to their advantage but it is important that communications are authentic, reliable, and trustworthy, otherwise this valuable channel risks becoming yet another one to #Block.

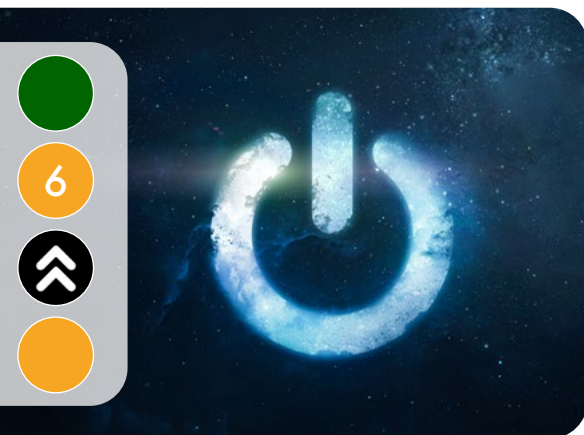
EXPLORE:

- Communications strategies
- Future of Communications, Government, Media and Entertainment, and Trust
- GRC reform
- Policy and regulation reform
- Social media policies



VIRTUAL NATIONS

2ND YEAR ON THE LIST



QUICK TAKE

Online communities have always promoted a neighbourhood like feeling but today many of them are so large their virtual populations far outnumber the populations of real countries, to become “virtual supranations.” There are two notable trends.

Firstly, digital technologies are letting real countries create E-Versions of themselves, and secondly, more traditional online community systems, empowered with new benefit systems and features, are now rivalling the power of sovereign governments.

IMPACT

At no point in history have private individuals been able to influence or steer the behaviours of billions of people with such voracity and speed. And, if it was not for government oversight, as well as those individuals and organisations own ethics and governance boards, we might have already seen a more dramatic shift in the global power base. A shift that would be exacerbated if virtual nations sought official recognition, or opted to give their communities access to benefits that could include everything from education to healthcare to tax relief.

The impact of these virtual nations, and their leaders ability to alter global behaviours has caught the eye of the US military with an increasing number of governments, from China to India, Europe to the US, increasingly seeing them as a threat to their own economic power, security, sovereignty, and stability. And acting accordingly.

The ability of these nations to change the world order was put in sharp focus, for example, when Facebook tried to launch Libra which could have changed the states control of money, as well as the global financial system, overnight.

EXAMPLES

With the so called populations of virtual nations ranging from the hundreds of thousands to billions it doesn't take a giant leap to see how, whether it is by accident or design, the individuals or organisations overseeing them could use their positions for better or worse, whether it's ISIS, on the one hand, or Facebook on the other.

Unsurprisingly there are an increasing number of examples, from Estonia which is becoming an E-Country complete with E-Visas and E-Citizenships with their associated benefits, to Asgardia, the very real virtual “Space Nation.”

Then there's Facebook with its 3 Billion users which could decide to offer almost all manner of “virtual nation perks” to its community, including the introduction of it's own currency, like Libra and Diem, which would have had greater market-moving power than any bank.

And then by no means least there's Alibaba and Ant Financial whose behaviour, influence, and power recently caught the eye of the Chinese government who subsequently torpedoed their IPO and allegedly temporarily “disappeared” Jack Ma.

ACT NOW

It is almost inevitable that we will one day see a sovereign virtual nation emerge. It's also likely that not a single traditional sovereign nation will be happy about it, and that almost all of them will see it as a very real threat to their own economies, security, and sovereignty.

However, that said though, depending on the spending power of these virtual nations they may very well find themselves with numerous allies.

EXPLORE:

- Blacklist, censorship, embargo, and sanctions strategies
- Citizenship as a Service
- Future of Communications, Government, the Workforce, and the Workplace
- GRC reform
- New government frameworks, laws, policies, and tax reforms

Notes:

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An astronaut in a white spacesuit is floating in space, with Earth's clouds visible below and a starry galaxy in the background. The astronaut's helmet reflects the Earth. The text "THIS IS NOT THE END . EXPLORE MORE ." is overlaid on the top left.

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