TECH2503-18 Community Media Production

Lecture Eight: The Great Disruption

Introduction - D Ream Things Can Only Get Better
https://youtu.be/XTWm0s7ZwDY

1   Global Instability

"If we cannot end the worldwide combustion of carbon, we can at least build our resilience and the ability to withstand and bounce back from what Paul Gilding has called 'the great disruption' that will follow from such dramatic climate change. 'We are entering,' he writes, 'a period of economic stagnation, geopolitical instability, and ecological chaos, during which we will need to both cope with all of that and begin the process of reinventing the global economic and political model under which we operate" (Fisher, 2016, p. 106).

1.1   Global Economic Inequality

"The UK saw $1.5tn (£1.2tn) wiped off its wealth during 2016 after the Brexit vote sent the pound tumbling and the stock market into reverse, according to a survey by Credit Suisse. A fall in values at the top-end of the property market also contributed to about 400,000 Britons losing their status as dollar millionaires and one of the biggest drops in wealth among the major economies. But the UK remained third for the number of ultra-high-net-worth individuals, who own more than £50m in assets, behind the US and China. And the UK's top 1% of richest people also continued to own 24% of the nation's wealth, the report said. Across the globe, the richest 1% own more wealth than the rest of the world put together, continuing the dominance seen in last year's report. A recovering in the global stock markets in recent weeks is also likely to reverse some of the losses suffered by pension savers and wealthy individuals."
https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/nov/22/brexit-vote-uk-household-wealth-credit-suisse

1.2   Sea Ice

"The Arctic is experiencing extraordinarily hot sea surface and air temperatures, which are stopping ice forming and could lead to record lows of sea ice at the north pole next year, according to scientists. Danish and US researchers monitoring satellites and Arctic weather stations are surprised and alarmed by air temperatures peaking at what they say is an unheard-of 20C higher than normal for the time of year. In addition, sea temperatures averaging nearly 4C higher than usual in October and November. "It's been about 20C warmer than normal over most of the Arctic Ocean, along with cold anomalies of about the same magnitude over north-central Asia. This is unprecedented for November," said research professor Jennifer Francis of Rutgers university. Temperatures have been only a few degrees above freezing when -25C should be expected, according to Francis. "These temperatures are literally off the charts for where they should be at this time of year. It is pretty shocking. The Arctic has been breaking records all year. It is exciting but also scary," she said."
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/nov/22/extraordinarily-hot-arctic-temperatures-alarm-scientists

1.3   Things Can Only Get Better

One narrative constantly assures us that things have never been so good as they are now, and are just getting better all the time. Computers and communication technologies have never been so powerful. A vast amount of information is at our fingertips via the World Wide web. Air travel to any corner of the planet is easy and quick. Tools, appliances and technologies that expand our reach and capacities are more accessible and of higher quality than they have ever been before. At least in first world countries, plentiful high quality food, much of it sourced from around the world and flown fresh to anywhere within days, allows us to enjoy any food we like, regardless of the local season. It seems as if the great acceleration of technological innovations and industrial and agricultural outputs that emerged from the reconstruction of western civilisation following the disaster of the Second World War has achieved an unstoppable momentum. http://tasmaniantimes.com/index.php/article/the-final-acceleration-just-waiting-for-the-great-disruption

2   Resilient Development

"The real innovations we need to pursue in order to become more resilient in the face of the coming disruption have **more to do with how we live, what we value, and how we relate to each other and to the other species with whom we** share this planet" (Fisher, 2016, p. 106).

2.1   Measuring What Matters
Towards a Relevant and Effective Framework for Sustainable Development Indicators
"Indicators form the back-bone of the SDG framework of the 2030 Global Sustainable Development Agenda. The indicator framework is expected to be the management tool to help countries develop implementation strategies and allocate resources accordingly. For each of the 169 targets, indicators based on measureable outcomes need to be defined. The UN system initiated a process in March 2015 to define what should be measured and how. This process will conclude in March 2016 to provide a set of indicators that can help track, monitor and guide global and regional development priorities over the next 15 years. Member states will need to define national indicators and prioritise those depending on national contexts. The national indicators will respond to national priorities but will need to be in sync with and complementary to the global reporting framework." http://deliver2030.org/?p=6644

> **Can we develop a 'resilience' audit for Leicester?**

2.2   Freedom to Act
"The biggest challenge with this lies in the widespread embrace of what Isaiah Berlin called 'negative' liberty, the idea that freedom involves having the fewest constraints on an individual's free will. Negative liberty works fine in areas in which there remain plenty of land, ample resources, and benign conditions, but when catastrophe strikes or when nowhere near enough resources exist to meet everyone's needs, we must consider some form of what Berlin called 'positive' liberty, the notion that our freedom as individuals depends upon our ability to cooperate and collaborate with others in order to achieve something that we cannot do alone" (Fisher, 2016, p. 106).

2.3   Upheavals & Disruptions
"The coming environmental disruptions, and the economic and political upheavals that will follow demand that we apply that same way of thinking and working to our private lives as well as our public ones. And this will require innovations at a scale commensurate with that of the challenges we face. Tweaking existing systems or drawing out the time required to make needed changes, often for reasons of not wanting to disrupt our economy or the lives of people, misses the urgency of our situation and will only make the disruption, when it occurs, all the more sever. Instead, we need paradigm shifts in how we inhabit the planet and co-exist with the other species upon whom we depend for our existence. And those paradigm shifts need to happen quickly and get accepted broadly if we have any hope of avoiding endgame events like a collapse of global ecosystems and with it, the collapse of the global economy and life as we have known it" (Fisher, 2016, p. 107).

2.4   Leave no One Behind
"Training health providers in communication skills and social inclusion: A training provided to front-line health providers focused on improving their communication skills so that they could increase their support to under-supported women. The training focused on making health providers aware of the social factors that caused vulnerability or led to social exclusion, and encouraged them to probe the reasons why they were rude to, or neglectful of, some but not all clients. The training gave providers methods to control their own frustrations, recognise people who looked as though they suffered from neglect, poor support or abuse, and ideas about how to work with communities to ensure that these women and girls were supported within the community."
http://deliver2030.org/?cat=5

3   Paradigm Shifting
"For truly paradigm-shifting innovation, we need other ideas of knowledge as well" (Fisher, 2016, p. 107).

"The design process involves a systematic and highly rigorous method of developing and critiquing ideas in an iterative process that can produce results that have both practical value and radical implications" (Fisher, 2016, p. 107).

"While the design process and design thinking underlies all of this work, most designers have seen those methods not as ends in themselves, applicable to a wide range of human phenomena, but only as a means to the end of producing tangible outcomes, such as a building, a project, or a website. In doing so, the design community frequently misses the larger value of what it has to offer: a set of skills attuned to producing paradigm shifting innovation, which the world now needs more than ever" (Fisher, 2016, p. 107).

3.1 Design in All

"Design, in terms of the definition that the political scientist Herbert Simon gave it as 'courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones,' underlies everything we do. Because we have created every aspect of the designed world we inhabit, so too can we construct it answer and take action to change what exists into what we would prefer" (Fisher, 2016, p. 107).

"The design community could – and should – lead that process, since one of the reasons why so much of the world has become so dysfunctional and unsustainable lies in the fact that many of those charged with designing systems, policies, and regulations have had little or no education in the design process" (Fisher, 2016, p. 108).

"Even those designers who continue to practice in traditional ways must recognise, as physicians have begun to do, that we have a duty to attend to everything that has been designed, whether thought of an act or not" (Fisher, 2016, p. 108).

3.2 Designers for All

"A growing number of designers – especially those just entering the design fields – have started from a public-health version of the discipline, variously called public-interest, social-impact, or humanitarian design. While this work struggles, as public health did at first, to gain a level of compensation commensurate with the value of what it creates, public-interest design has also begun to have enough complete projects to measure their impact and to show the return on the investment they have brought" (Fisher, 2016, p. 108).

3.3 Jacob's Well: Holistic Community Development Process

"The mission of Jacob's Well is to promote sustainable water and natural resource use to build strong communities and promote economic growth in the resource challenged regions of the world." Currently, Jacob's Well is focused on the drought region of northwest Brazil—specifically the state of Ceara`. The Brazilian state of Ceara is facing a dire and extreme water shortage. Being first hand witnesses to the effects of this crisis, prompted Barry and Kari Aho, along with a dedicated Board of Directors, and partners in Brazil (Jacobs Well Brazil, led by Renato and Michele Cassula), to establish Jacob's Well, a community development organization to target clean water initiatives." http://jacobswellmissions.org/the-community-development-process/

3.4 Design with All

"Let's call the third type of practice innovation: design with all" (Fisher, 2016, p. 108).

"Those few who manage to survive an educational system generally hostile to creativity, and hold on to their imaginative abilities, do have an advantage in an era in which innovation has become ever more important, but that does not mean that others have nothing to contribute" (Fisher, 2016, p. 108).

3.5 What is DfA

Design for All is design for human diversity, social inclusion and equality. This holistic and innovative approach constitutes a creative and ethical challenge for all planners, designers, entrepreneurs, administrators and political leaders. Design for All aims to enable all people to have equal opportunities to participate in every aspect of society. To achieve this, the built environment, everyday objects, services, culture and information – in short, everything that is designed and made by people to be used by people – must be accessible, convenient for everyone in society to use and responsive to evolving human diversity. The practice of Design for All makes conscious use of the analysis of human needs and aspirations and requires the involvement of end users at every stage in the design process. From The EIDD Stockholm Declaration©, 2004 http://dfaeurope.eu/what-is-dfa/

4 Ingenuity & Creativity

"As we reduce our use of non-renewable resources, we also need to cultivate one of our greatest untapped renewable resources: human ingenuity and creativity. Design and the arts generally attract many creative people, but this community also has an important role to play in helping others re-discover the imagination that almost all of us have as a youth" (Fisher, 2016, p. 108).

4.1 How Strangers Unlock Our Creativity

Want to be more creative? Start by saying "hi" to a stranger. The benefits of having longstanding, deep connections — both personally and professionally — are obvious: People who care can better offer understanding, trust, and support. But if we want to have more groundbreaking ideas, it's important to interact with people we don't already know well, says John Daly, professor of Management at the McCombs School of Business and Liddell Centennial Professor of Communication. Daly differentiates between "strong ties" with people we see routinely or know intimately, such as family, friends, and immediate coworkers, and "weak ties" with people we know more vaguely, such as loose acquaintances or people we pass in the office hallway. http://www.texasenterprise.utexas.edu/2015/05/13/workplace/how-strangers-unlock-our-creativity

4.2 Empowerment

"Design practice in the future will involve not imposing ideas, but instead empowering other people and facilitating their co-creation of the products and environments we need and can sustain" (Fisher, 2016, p. 109).

"All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves."
http://ruraldiksha.nic.in/

4.3 How Should We Live?

"How should we live in the future, knowing that we cannot continue to live as we have in the past, consuming so many resources, creating so much environmental damage, and generating so many inequities? The question of how should we live gets answered, consciously or not, by every architect, with every design" (Fisher, 2016, p. 109).

4.4 The Psychological Roots of Resource Over-Consumption

"This order [i.e. capitalism] is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which today determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with the economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt." --Max Weber, 1905

Humans have an innate need for status and for novelty in their lives. Unfortunately, the modern world has adopted very energy- and resource-intensive ways of meeting those needs. Other ways are going to have to be found as part of the move to a more sustainable world. Most people associate the word "sustainability" with changes to the supply side of our modern way of life such as using energy from solar flows rather than fossil fuels, recycling, green tech and greater efficiency. http://www.esdaw.eu/the-psychological-roots-of-resource-over-consumption.html

4.5 Responsibilities & Relationships

"That architect[s] offer a vision of our relationships and responsibilities as human beings to each other and to the world around us. Such seemingly practical decisions arise out of what clients value: How much they think they need in order to thrive, what sense of responsibility they have toward their neighbours or to passer-by, and what obligations they feel toward future generations or to other species" (Fisher, 2016, p. 109).

http://www.visitleicester.info/welcome-to-leicester/connecting-leicester/regeneration/
https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies/planning-and-development/
http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/building-work-set-start-leicester-council-new/story-29226614-detail/story.html
http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/26-million-ploughed-regenerating-leicester-run/story-25807938-detail/story.html

5 Seeking Community

"Such decisions may seem like matters of taste or personal preference, but they also embody a broader view about individual agency, civil society, and the common good. Should we live in ways that emphasise our individuality and alienation from others, or in ways that reflect a degree of humanity and that seek community with others" (Fisher, 2016, p. 109).

5.1 The Need for Answers

We have entered an era in which new answers to the questions of how to live, and no profession seems better suited to providing it than architecture. This question has attracted renewed attention among philosophers, especially those

in a pragmatic bent and those who have returned to the virtue ethics of the ancient Greeks and Roman philosophers, whose answers to the question have a lot to offer us today" (Fisher, 2016, p. 109).

5.2   Pragmatics of Architecture
"Pragmatism, one of the greatest contributions America has made to philosophy, asks us to judge things according to their consequences: something is good if it leads, overall, to better results. That may seem obvious, but it also seems striking how many Americans, who may think of ourselves as pragmatic, have ignored that advice of pragmatism, given the negative consequences that our fossil-fuelled, highly wasteful, and overly consumptive lifestyles have had on natural and human ecosystems. Ours has become a short-term, self-centred for of pragmatism, so neglectful of the long-term, overall results of our actions that it has become self-destructive. A truly pragmatic civilisation would look – and act – very differently from the one that we have created over the last century or more" (Fisher, 2016, p. 110).

5.3   Consequences & Practice
"Pragmatism also urges us not just to talk about our beliefs, but also to live them, for how else can we assess their consequences without putting them in practice" (Fisher, 2016, p. 110).

5.4   Climate Pragmatism
"Pragmatism requires that we look historically beyond the immediate situation, for the results of our decisions, since only then can we understand their full effects" (Fisher, 2016, p. 110).

"Pragmatism inverts this, arguing that we need to start from the largest-possible context and the longest-term consequences in judging the best course of action at the smallest-scale and in the short term" (Fisher, 2016, p. 110).

 "A new climate strategy should take a page from one of America's greatest home-grown traditions – pragmatism which values pluralism over universalism, flexibility over rigidity, and practical results over utopian ideals. Where the UNFCCC imagined it could motivate nations to cooperatively enforce top-down emissions reductions   with   mathematical precision, US policymakers should acknowledge that today's global, social, and ecological systems are too messy, open, and complicated to be governed in this way. Whereas the UNFCCC attempted to create new systems of global governance, a pragmatic approach would   build upon established, successful institutions and proven approaches. Where the old climate policy regime tried to discipline a wildly diverse set of policies under a single global treaty, the new era   must allow these policies and measures to stand - and evolve - independently and according to their own logic and merits. And where the old regime required   that   everyone band together around the same core motivation and goals, policy-makers today are likely to make the most progress to the degree that they refrain from centrally justifying energy innovation, resilience to extreme weather, and pollution reduction as "climate policy."" http://thebreakthrough.org/blog/Climate_Pragmatism_web.pdf
http://thebreakthrough.org/blog/2011/07/climate_pragmatism_innovation.shtml

5.5   Shifting Perspectives
"As every architect knows from experience, the answers to almost every problem lies, at least in part, as a larger scale, and that ability of designers to move back and forth among spatial and temporal scales has value not only in the creation of our physical environment, but also in the redesign of the larger systems that have become so dysfunctional and damaging to the planet and, ultimately, to human civilisation" (Fisher, 2016, p. 110).

"The concept known as the law of the instrument, Maslow's hammer (or gavel), or a golden hammer[a] is an over-reliance on a familiar tool; as Abraham Maslow said in 1966, "I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail.""https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_the_instrument

5.6   Innovation
"Innovation, like creativity generally, often arises from re-interpreting and re-imagining something that already exists seeing new potentials in old ideas" (Fisher, 2016, p. 110).

5.7   Empathy
"The one, truly infinite resource we all have available to us is our mind and heart, what we might call today: our rational and emotional intelligence as well as our creative and empathetic imagination" (Fisher, 2016, p. 111).
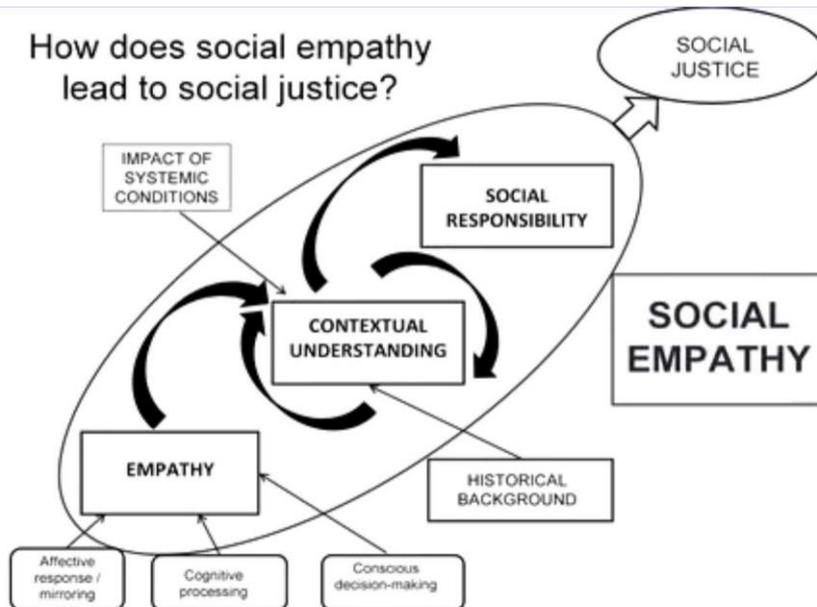
"'Dr. Segal's current research is on social empathy, the application of empathic insights into creating better social welfare policies and programs. She has begun work on creating a compendium of methods to teach social empathy and an instrument to measure people's inclination towards social empathy. The goal is to develop the instrument to use it as a future tool to gauge the effectiveness of the teaching methods.'"
http://cultureofempathy.com/references/Experts/Elizabeth-Segal.htm

5.8   Imagination
"As Socrates demonstrated in his life, the more we recognise the infinite resource of human knowledge and imagination, the fewer possessions we should need or want" (Fisher, 2016, p. 111).

5.9   Addressing Over-Consumption
"Pragmatically we know that we cannot continue to consume resources at the rate we have over the last century, and so the design opportunity before us involves showing clients and communities the consequences of this behaviour and engaging them in a creative – or a Socratic – process of imagining a different kind of life" (Fisher, 2016, p. 111).

5.10   Life Balance
"Socrates also knew that the less we spend on private life, the more important the public realm becomes" (Fisher, 2016, p. 111).

"As Socrates showed, the less we need, the less we need to earn, and the more time we will have to really live, with our health and the planet's health better off as a result" (Fisher, 2016, p. 111).

5.11   Accommodation
"Francis Bacon imagined the first research community in his utopian novel, The New Atlantis. As in modern research universities, the idea of a life devoted to discovery and to understanding how the world actually works has become a goal of many of our best and brightest, and the driving force of our economy" (Fisher, 2016, p. 112).

6   What do we Do?
"The question, though, has become: What do we do with this knowledge? Bacon, like Aristotle before him, imagines us using our discoveries to accommodate ourselves to nature, not to command and control it as we have done since then" (Fisher, 2016, p. 112).

6.1   Continual Activity

"Knowing what we now know about dramatic disruptions that have begun to occur across the globe, it seems almost inevitable that we will have to take the second path, a more humble and resilient one in which life becomes, as Aristotle envisioned, a continual activity of increasing our knowledge and an on-going process of learning that, as Descartes observed, we would do better to change our own desires rather than the order of the world" (Fisher, 2016, p. 112).

6.2   Design Solutions

"At its best, design involves a process of eliminating the inessential in order to reach solutions that take no more space or require no more money than absolutely necessary to achieve the desired end" (Fisher, 2016, p. 113).

6.3   Personal Responsibility

"This does not suggest that we must all live mean and nasty lives. While the Cynics showed that personal freedom and responsibility comes from liberating ourselves from excess consumption and pointless status symbols, the Epicureans showed how moderating our desires also brings pleasure and happiness. We can, in this view, still taste the good things in life – not just good food, but also the pleasures of authentic relationships, useful work, and meaningful activities" (Fisher, 2016, p. 113).

6.4   Open Imagination

"As we enter our own disruption, the lessons of the Stoics and their sense of how to live have direct relevance. The stoics urged us to focus on what we can control and not disturb ourselves with what we cannot; we can, they said, control our interpretations of situations and how we react to them, but not the situations themselves. As we find ourselves forced to examine how we live in the face of disruption, our resilience will depend not upon denying that the natural environment has changed as the least Stoic among us continue to d, but upon accepting the planet's changing ecosystems and controlling our reactions – and opening our imagination – to these changes" (Fisher, 2016, p. 113).

6.5   Playful Responses

"We often view a Stoic as someone dour and cold, but properly understood, Stoicism offers us a way of finding happiness, however severe the constraints, and a way of being playful within them, despite – or because of – those restrictions" (Fisher, 2016, p. 114).

7   Tipping Points

"We now know about punctuated equilibrium – that the evolution of species as well as changes in environmental conditions reach what Malcolm Gladwell calls 'tipping points' that bring sudden breaks from the past – and we have to assume that the coming disruption will happen in the same way, not gradually, but rapidly and without much warning" (Fisher, 2016, p. 114).

Donald Trump's Rallies Seem to Have Reached a Tipping Point

Donald Trump's rallies seem to have reached a tipping point, after the Republican frontrunner's announcement that he would be cancelling an event in Chicago saw the rally devolve into violence. Protesters and supporters came to blows as police worked to clear the room at the Chicago Pavilion.
https://youtu.be/Oaz2_QM1TdQ

7.1   Warning Signs

"Ponzi schemes fail when their perpetrators run out of people to exploit and resources to consume and that time has come for us, as it now takes considerably more than one Earth to meet the current needs of humanity. Ponzi schemes also fall quickly and without warning, as Bernard Madoff's financial pyramid scheme showed. Some people raised questions about Madoff's business, but it had become so big and its failure so inconceivable that most investors ignored the warning signs – as most of us so heavily invested in our planetary Ponzi scheme continue to do. Better to ignore the alarms and dismiss those sounding them than to admit that time's up and the games over" (Fisher, 2016, p. 115).

Roxy Music - More Than This
https://youtu.be/kOnde5c7OG8

References:

Fisher, T. (2016). Getting Ready for the Great Disruption. In S. A. Moore (Ed.), *Pragmatic Sustainability - Dispositions for Critical Adaptation* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.