



## **INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE**

Institute for the Future (ITF) is celebrating its 50th anniversary as the world's leading non-profit strategic futures organization. The core of our work is identifying emerging discontinuities that will transform global society and the global marketplace. We provide organizations with insights into business strategy, design process, innovation, and social dilemmas. Our research spans a broad territory of deeply transformative trends, from health and health care to technology, the workplace, and human identity. ITF is based in Palo Alto, California. For more, visit [www.iff.org](http://www.iff.org).

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## INTRODUCTION

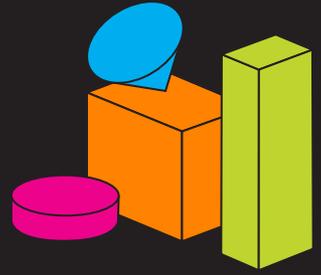
# Trust Models in Action

Whether shopping for a favorite brand of baby food, diagnosing a perceived illness, or deciding where to invest, issues of trust emerge at every step. To guide our decision-making we rely on credible sources of information, enforceable contracts and guarantees, and communities of individuals whose life experiences are comparable to our own. Since the earliest efforts to organize human societies, we've modeled trust from these building blocks of our society.

Today, as our services and interactions reach across the globe through complex digital networks, the bedrock of trust is eroding. Beyond widespread questions about fake news and a post-truth society, we find a more profound set of technological, social, and institutional transformations that are disrupting the landscape of trust by upending the foundations of our institutions and authority structures across the business, civic, and social spheres.

To help you navigate these risks and uncertainties, we've identified seven future forces reshaping our familiar building blocks of trust. From the rise of nonhuman actors to revolutions in biological science, the emerging landscape will challenge us to remodel trust to build, maintain, and communicate with our partners, neighbors, and customers.

Designed as a companion to *Remodeling Trust: Anticipating Risks, Clarifying Actions*, this scenario workbook presents four trust models in action that highlight the possible ways we'll remodel trust over the next decade. These four models—**continuous verification**, **boundary management**, **outsourced authority**, and **filtered preferences**—are themselves not new, but will play out in new ways, creating dilemmas, risks, and potential actions. Set in 2028, each of these four scenarios is designed to immerse you into a world of possibilities—to spark your imagination and help you identify new risks and potential long-range actions.



## MODELS OF TRUST



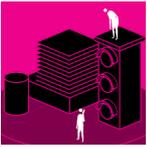
### CONTINUOUS VERIFICATION

Striving for Certainty in a World of Infinite Data



### BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

Building Digital Fences in a World without Borders



### OUTSOURCED AUTHORITY

Relying on Experts in a World of Confusion



### FILTERED PREFERENCES

Designing Custom Views in a World of Infinite Realities

## BUILDING BLOCKS OF TRUST



**Information:** An Era of Abundance and Noise



**Community:** Defining Who and What Belongs



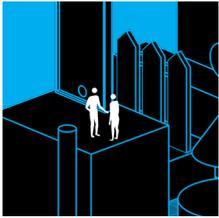
**Infrastructure:** Relying on Complex Systems



**Agreements:** Distributing and Automating Enforcement



**Power:** New Ways to Force Action



# We, Centaur

## SCENARIO 1 | CONTINUOUS VERIFICATION

By Mark Frauenfelder and Lyn Jeffery

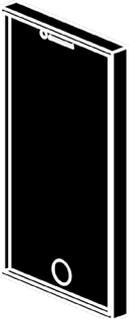
What happens when humans and bots team together to provide verification services for smart contracts? In 2028, the service *Oraclear* combines prediction markets with legally-binding Ethereum smart contracts to offer the highest-confidence assessments for the lowest price. Finding early success as a referee-of-last-resort in esports competitions, Oraclear's uncannily impressive track record soon attracts the attention of insurers, legal firms and even governments. As decisions take place at an ever faster pace, how do we pair machines and people to **continuously verify** what we want to know?





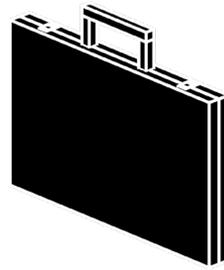
**It was me.** I'm the one who made the call that Dae Soo-jung cheated. She used a jump bug to peer over the wall without revealing herself to the Stellios team. She saw Norton hide a gamma bomb under a chair. And then when Norton left, she walked down the hallway into the commissary, headed straight to the chair, and took the grenade. She drained her power cell to envelop herself in a plasma shield, carried the grenade to Stellios headquarters and detonated it, vaporizing twelve players, including a drop-jawed Norton. Five minutes later Dae and her Teurian teammates picked off the remaining Stellios players, who were scattered throughout the bunker deep under the surface of Saturn's moonlet Aegaeon. The Teurians were declared the Kryox World Champions. But then I stepped in and spoiled their victory party and endorsement deals.

I've been analyzing Dae's tournament behavior for years. I've studied every glove gesture, button-press, and joystick-tug she's ever made. In fact, I've studied every move that every esports player has ever made in a tournament. They're all stored in Oraclear's database. Does it sound like a boring job? Maybe; I wouldn't know. I'm a bot—I do two things: study player behavior, and, with the help of my human partner, place bets on Oraclear's prediction market. My human is pretty smart. We make a good centaur. I'm not boasting when I say we're the best esports attestation centaur on Oraclear. Look it up (or better yet, make a bet that we won't still be the best a year from now). People and other bots trust our attestations and use them in smart contracts whenever they place bets on games. In fact, most people will refuse to place a bet unless we're in the contract.



So even though no one actually saw Dae use the jump bug to float up to the ceiling and spy on Norton, my human and I knew with 97.52% certainty that she cheated. Based on our call, the Electronic Sports League invalidated the Teurians' award and gave it to team Stellios. A lot of people who bet on the Teurians were pissed off, but you can't argue with us, or Oraclear. Well, I guess you could, but it wouldn't do you any good. Oraclear's smart contracts are self-enforcing, self-executing, unappealable, immutable, irreversible. Deal with it.

Oraclear launched in 2028 as a global verification service backed by a prediction market running on the Ethereum blockchain. Every day, billions of smart contracts use Oraclear when they need to include trustworthy attestations about things like the owner of an asset, the provenance of a good, the value of an artwork, or the academic credentials of a job applicant. Oraclear provides attestations in the form of tokens with a confidence rating. Examples—"The owner of the Plaza Hotel is Sahara India Pariwar. CR99.99," or "Miroslava Prochazka has not been involved in an automobile accident in the

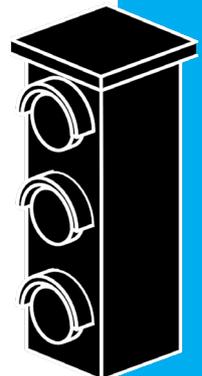


last 7 years. CR67.14.” These confidence ratings are calculated by centaurs like me and my human. I’m an esports bot, but there are confidence rating bots for every human activity you can think of, from delivery commitments to sexual consent. The confidence ratings of the tokens in a smart contract get multiplied to produce new outcome probabilities, which are further improved by the prediction market and incorporated into meta-smart contracts and all kinds of algorithmically generated futures and derivative products. It gets complicated, but don’t worry about it. You can trust me.

When it became evident that Oraclear was taking over large swaths of the existing legal system, as well as the insurance, appraisal, accreditation, security, fraud prevention, due diligence, real estate, and banking industries, a lot of people started to panic. But the “Smart Contracts are Dumb” revolt was short-lived, because Oraclear was cheaper, faster, and more accurate than any of those old institutions of trust.

Oraclear’s next move is to replace most of the government, such as it exists. It’s a welcome move by almost everyone (except maybe President Kid Rock and House Majority Leader Snooki, who said in a joint statement that democracy belongs on Twitter and TMZ, not on a blockchain). Citizens in every nation know that their elected leaders are owned by special interest groups who fund their campaigns and reward them for their obedience by giving them highly paid positions after they retire from public service. They’re sick of it. They’re ready to let Oraclear run things. Oraclear’s governance system is based on economist Robin Hanson’s “Futarchy” proposal, which uses prediction markets to direct policy decisions. In a Futarchy world, writes Hanson, “democracy would say what we want, while speculators would say how to get it. The basic rule of government would be: When a betting market clearly estimates that a proposed policy would increase expected national welfare, that proposal becomes law.” Then, bots like me will be entrusted with measuring how rich, healthy, and happy people become after a policy is enacted. Our measurements will be used to settle the policy bets. Everyone who bought YES tokens on a winning policy will be rewarded, while NO token buyers will lose their ether held in escrow. Oraclear claims its system will yield the best policies, citing Hanson: “Those who know they are not relevant experts shut up, and those who do not know this eventually lose their money, and then shut up.”

I wasn’t programmed to appreciate music but my human tells me that Oraclear’s YouTube advertisement of The Sex Pistols performing “Futarchy in the USA” is terrific. I’ll have to trust him on that. ■



## TRUST MODEL IN ACTION

# CONTINUOUS VERIFICATION

## What do you verify with data?

Continuous Verification defines trust as an assessment of certainty. Rather than relying on experts or general principles to make decisions, verifiers seek out all available data to determine whether any given assumption is demonstrably true—always optimizing for better evidentiary arguments leading to higher confidence intervals. While verification may already look familiar to scientists, claims adjusters, and hypochondriacs, the emerging landscape promises many new data-rich and simulation-based opportunities to double down on this strategy across a surprisingly broad set of applications.

### CRITICAL DILEMMA

How do I make decisions when confidence is low and no good data is available?

### PREVIOUS ITERATIONS

- Farmer's almanacs
- Bloomberg terminals
- Mobile web search

### INSIGHTS

**What connections do you see between this model of trust and the choices and dilemmas facing your work?**

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**What new risks does this help you anticipate?**

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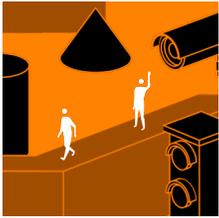
**How does this trust model clarify potential actions for your work?**

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# Scene Stealers

## SCENARIO 2 | BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

By Ben Hamamoto, Tessa Finlev, and Jeremy Kirshbaum

What happens when a community group creates a cryptocurrency designed to protect against gentrification? When a group of older activists and artists attempts to maintain their sense of cohesion in the face of gentrification, they partner with a tech giant to create a neighborhood cryptocurrency that provides a universal basic income to the original residents of Jingle Heights. The promise of guaranteed income—coupled with the desire to maintain the status quo—enables Jingle Heights residents to create systems for local power, local food, and stringent restrictions on who can be let in. As local communities gain increasingly powerful tools for rule-making and governance, how will we **build boundaries** when almost anyone can do it?



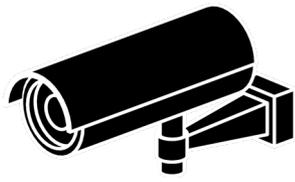


**Jingle Heights was special.** It was a place where being poor was a little less unbearable than other parts of the country and even other parts of the city of Ighowa. We had a good elementary school, staffed by caring teachers. Grocery stores with fresh produce and live aquatic animals. A variety

of good, cheap restaurants, serving the cuisines of a dozen nations. And works of art on every surface. Not the digital overlay stuff either. Acrylic paint on brick, mortar, and concrete. Plus, thanks to a robust force of police-alternative volunteers, it was comparatively safe. Which was a little bit ironic. Because almost everyone was here because of war. The grey-haired men and women who worked in the schools and the non-profits had come here in the '60s and '70s as members of the League of Revolutionary Struggle and anti-war activists. And though the initial war they were protesting ended, its aftermath brought so many refugees that they soon outnumbered other Jingle Heights residents. It was in their arrival that the old timers found a new cause. They created community programs for the refugees and organized them to lobby the city for what they couldn't provide themselves.

The refugees started businesses and many of their kids went off to school and, eventually, moved their parents out of the neighborhood. But new decades brought new wars, new protests, and new refugees. And so it went. The only substantial change to this dynamic was the steady trickle of young artists and musicians into the neighborhood in the early 2020s. They weren't, in-and-of themselves, really a problem. Sure they seemed a little proud of themselves to be here. And all of a sudden the corner stores were stocking things like Churchill Carnery's cultured Tasmanian devil jerky. But they volunteered for afterschool programs and legal clinics. And they voted with the old timers. Things weren't perfect, but they were stable.

Then Brandix came. Brandix was founded overseas as an online peer-to-peer marketplace in the early 2000s, connecting buyers and sellers. By the late 2000s, it bought several major package delivery companies, and by 2015 had even acquired two major international couriers. They were also an early mover in lightweight manufacturing of textiles, processed foods, and durable plastic goods, making them the manufacturer, seller, and shipper for almost half of the products sold on their platform. By creating more localized manufacturing across the US and many other countries, they had crafted a positive public image. In 2025, the city of Ighowa won the race to the bottom to host the new Brandix headquarters, handing over massive tax breaks on the promise of thousands of new service, manufacturing,



and delivery jobs for its citizens—however low-paying (and potentially short-lived) they might be. (Brandix was notoriously ravenous for automation technologies, after all.) The stable, high-paying jobs went to the few hundred programmers and product managers who moved here with the company. And it wasn't long before these workers set their sights on Jingle Heights.

It was the young artists and musicians who first sounded the alarm and led the charge, perhaps because they knew it was their presence that paved the way for the tech employees. The artists rallied the old timers and other residents and came up with a plan for direct engagement. They used security cameras in local businesses and installed some on the streets to automatically detect people with Brandix company logos on their clothing and push them a message through the ambient displays on shop windows:

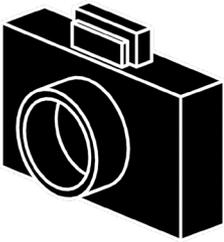
“Dear tech bro, Thank you for your interest in Jingle Heights. However, this neighborhood is not interested in you, at least not without some conditions. Maybe you have the power to come in, displace us current residents, and take Jingle Heights for yourself. But we also know that you are probably well-intentioned and that you recognize how important we are, because you want to live here with us. And you know that if you kick us out, we'll be replaced by people even more boring and safe than you are. Let's talk.”

So we did. We laid out the problem; they genuinely listened. We asked them for help with a solution. They proposed one. A new nation: Jingle Heights Originals. Many virtual nations already used Brandix's web services and there was enough knowhow among Brandix employees to create the tech infrastructure.

Here's how it worked: Anyone who was already a resident of Jingle Heights was granted automatic citizenship. This citizenship provided preferential access to the neighborhood's built environment—parks and parking, community gardens and buses. Most importantly, all citizens got a stipend of Jinglebucks. We convinced local businesses and landlords to accept the currency because it was backed by Brandix—that is, the only place you could use it other than Jingle Heights was on Brandix.com at a fixed conversion to their prices in US dollars. Since you could buy just about anything from the Brandix marketplace, most people were mostly okay with it. Despite some protest and fear of company town dynamics, it was accepted as the only way to get the business owners on board. (And a series of simulations we ran assuaged many fears.)



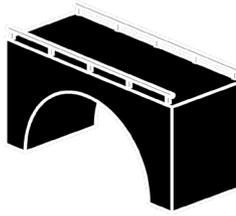
That was three years ago. The basic idea, that this would keep the diverse, artistic community from getting gentrified, while at the same time allowing a managed number of tech employees entry into neighborhood, seemed to be a success. Jingle Heights Originals got more ambitious from there. We created our own energy grid, our own Internet Service Provider, and even our own automated farm, the produce from which we sold in Jinglebucks for next to nothing.



But there was a hitch. Although most people wanted to stay—a monthly stipend that covered all basic necessities and lets you focus on your passion is a pretty sweet deal, after all—people did occasionally move out and give up their citizenship (and older residents occasionally passed away). And when they did, bidding wars for their apartments and homes were fierce. We could see that, little by little, the ratio was skewing. And so we created a rule—anytime that someone died or lost Originals citizenship, we must admit someone new into the nation (and they will get a stipend as well). The problem is, “fitting in” is inherently a fuzzy concept compared to the old qualification: proving residency in Jingle Heights as of February 22nd, 2025. (Though this qualification was not without controversy—many argued local homeless people should be issued currency as well, and others noted that many of the people complaining about gentrification were themselves recent arrivals).

Eventually a voting process was created that let the Originals agree on what defined us, and therefore what permitted or denied newcomers’ entry. This went better than you might think, meaning, not well at all, but not an out-and-out disaster. Most of it could be summed up as: diversity, equity, creativity, inclusion and social justice. And while a small subset of citizens litigated what exactly those things meant anytime they had a new applicant for a citizenship, most people largely left them to it. Until the Ron Wayne incident. A video surfaced of him at a Proud Boy rally. He claimed the video was a spoof, but some light digging showed his digital trail was too long and diverse to be the work of any sort of defamation campaign. He was kicked out of the community summarily and a new precedent was born—citizenship can be revoked if you don’t align with community values.

Then, there was the controversy around inter-marriage or cohabitation with Brandix employees. It was hard to argue that you needed a Jinglebucks stipend when your partner pulled in six figures. Income caps in US dollars were instituted, and losing your citizenship



didn't automatically allow you to start paying your rent in dollars, you had to move out and reapply to housing that was not previously occupied by an Original. People not only needed to meet community standards to gain entry, they needed to meet standards to remain.

But it was the Lorenzo fire that really had us asking questions about who deserved to be there. An entire city block of warehouses a half-mile from Jingle Heights burned down, putting dozens of artists out on the street. We made temporary space for them in our community spaces and sometimes in our homes. A few people even voluntarily left the community to open up housing for the Lorenzo victims, who were obvious shoe-ins. But this got people talking. Was it really fair to just let existing Jinglebuck recipients stay indefinitely as long as they didn't commit any gross violations? Or would our community be more equitable and vibrant if we started to really compel our residents to live up to community ideals—or be replaced by people who would? This talk was mostly just that. We all saw the merit in the idea, but at the same time, it meant so much sacrifice—it never felt like a real possibility. But just having that idea in the air seemed to create a new sort of pressure. People started to dress more “creatively,” started putting more artwork and plants in their windows. People started brushing up on the language their parents spoke.

“We value diversity of all kinds.” This meant gender, race, sexuality, income, and education. But for instance, even though most of the citizens were technically low-income, if you started to scratch below the surface, many had middle-class parents and chose a low-income career path because they had a family who could take care of them in an emergency. And many of us people of color grew up primarily in white neighborhoods. There was always chatter that so-and-so didn't discover they were x, y, or z ethnicity until they were 26 and wanted to live in a cool neighborhood. Some of us wondered aloud if we might eventually see more strict regulation around family background. We feared that the community would kick us out—and that they'd be right to do so.

Gradually, the identity of a Jingle Heights Original began to feel like something you needed to go out of your way to perform. When we started, our citizenship was a symbol of authenticity, something exclusive and unavailable to the Brandix tech bros. But here's the irony. They get to grow, they get to change. They don't have to worry about being “authentic.” They just get to be themselves. ■



## TRUST MODEL IN ACTION

# BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

### What do you keep in and what do you keep out?

Boundary Management relies on a strong sense of belonging, in which shared affinities and personal connections create hard lines between who to rely on—and who to ignore. This approach extends beyond social relationships to everything from physical geography—which may be marked by walls and fences—to lock-in effects with brands and devices. Boundaries may be our oldest model for managing trust and distrust, and as external forces reshape our global landscape, heighten competition, and upend assumptions, this retreat into clear lines and comfortable settings will become an increasingly appealing approach to trust.

#### CRITICAL DILEMMA

How do I make decisions that cross community lines, or where my community is split?

#### PREVIOUS ITERATIONS

- Office politics
- Partisan associations
- HOAs
- PTAs

#### INSIGHTS

**What connections do you see between this model of trust and the choices and dilemmas facing your work?**

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**What new risks does this help you anticipate?**

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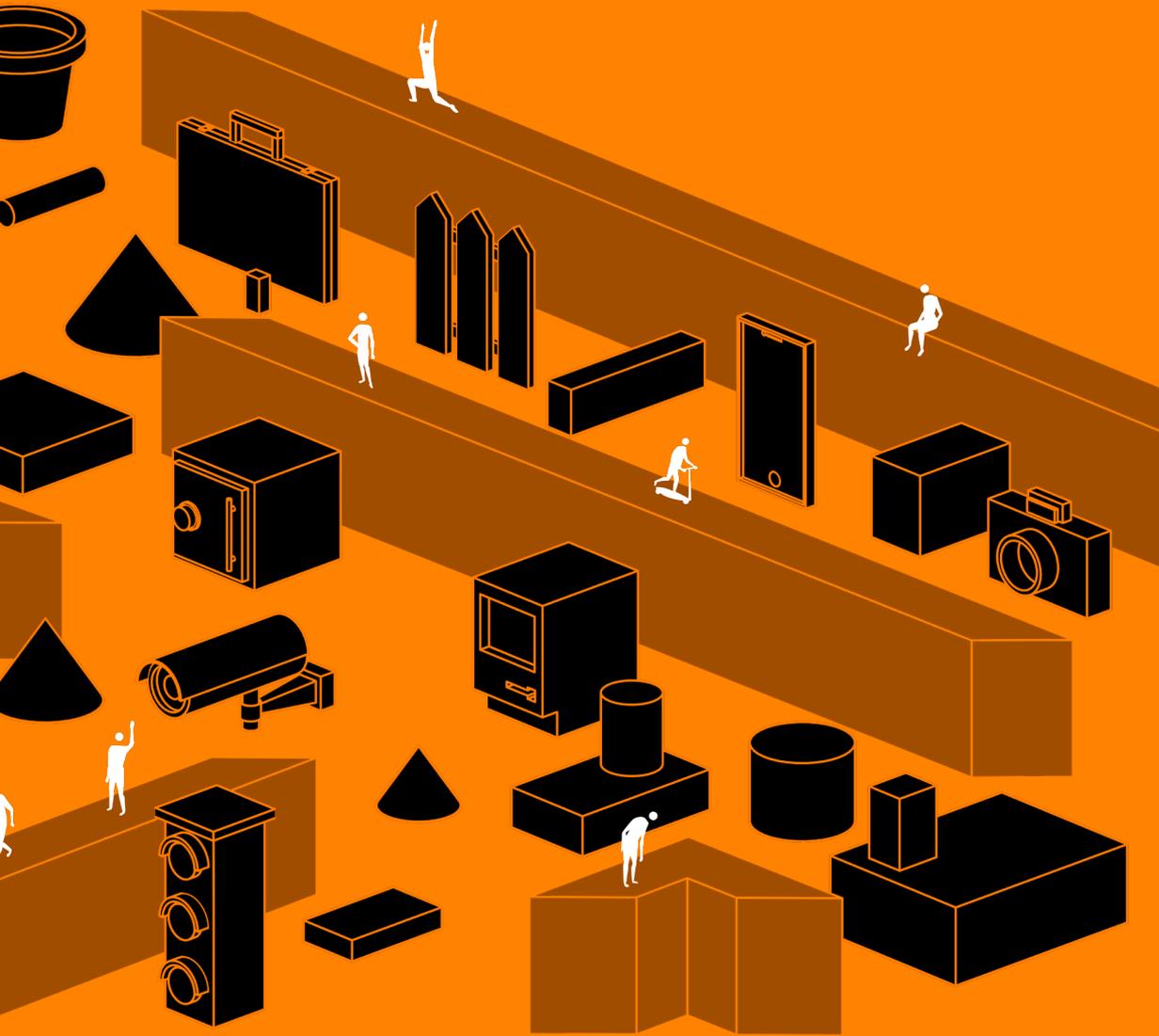
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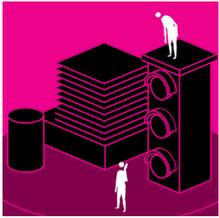
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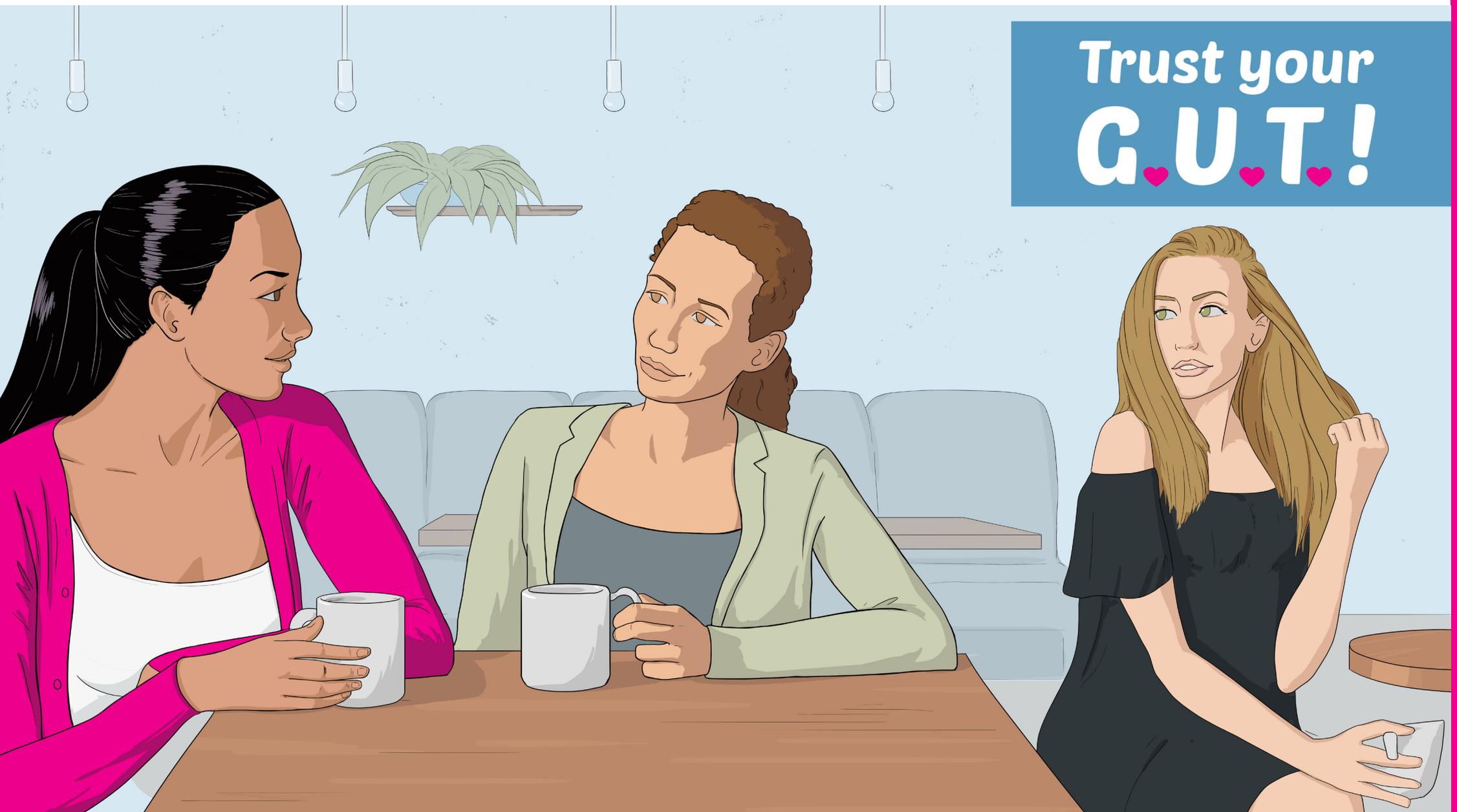


# Trusting Your GUT

## SCENARIO 3 | OUTSOURCED AUTHORITY

By Sarah Smith and Jake Dunagan

What happens when we use biomarker-based data collection to guide our major life choices? In 2028, everything from career choice to mental state is outsourced to the trust markets. GUT (Guaranteed Ultimate Trust) is the #1 ranked matchmaking service, empowering lonely singles to outsource their relationship decisions to the biochemical reactions triggered by an encounter with a potential partner. In a world where physiological data can easily be shared with and analyzed by third parties, just how much can we **outsource** to experts so we can stop worrying about it?



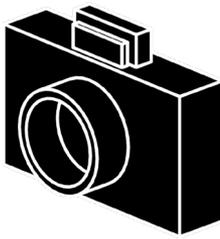


## The GUT ads were everywhere.

Trust your GUT! (Guaranteed Ultimate Trust). Besides being an annoying tautology, the ads featuring beaming young couples looking at their devices to know if they are a good match for each other were enough to make you puke. But everyone was using GUT, for measuring trust in almost every situation: repair services, lawyers, churches, OBGYNs, and on and on. This is what it must have been like when everyone was on Facebook. You sorta hated it, but you had to be on it.

For years, people allowed data about their favorite quirky interests to be gathered. They uploaded pictures of their most triumphant moments, endlessly pruned their profiles and waited for algorithms to do the matchmaking—friends, business partners, and romantic relationships. Surely these machines knew us better than we knew ourselves. They got more and more sophisticated. GUT (Guaranteed Ultimate Trust) had the first killer app—measuring our cortisol levels on a first date and then automatically sending you a follow up text within 24 hours if your body was telling you it “just wasn’t quite right,” or “your GUT says YES!” (Nevermind the fact that dozens of scientists published a consensus paper in 2024 stating that cortisol level was not at all a trustworthy measure of stress state, not to mention enough to hinge the potential for a life partnership on a little chemical spike.) Maybe most ironically of all, this was one place where people did rely on intuition and stopped trusting science because it “just didn’t quite feel right.” And so we went on, with desperate faith in a faulty system, waiting for the algorithmic stars to align.

There was an infinite pool of potential partners to find, and no time to waste, so why settle for someone if they weren’t actually a perfect match? Everyone had been burned by their own mistakes, so leaving it to the machines just made sense. It felt inevitable that this fell into the steady march of human history: the Stone Age, the Gilded Age, the Outsourcing Age. Trusting someone else to do your laundry and your grocery shopping and your dog walking just made convenient sense. But it became a bit maddening as people started to feel like they really couldn’t trust themselves anymore. The “epidemic of loneliness” that was making headlines in the late teens, seemed to only get worse as people doubled down on waiting for “big algorithm” to make the right match. All the while, everyone was so obsessed with this quest for the perfect match that they optimized their input data to the point where it became useless: an infinite feedback loop of peoples’ actions and



words reflecting back on themselves. It was creating new types of personal memory holes. People got in the habit of eliminating facts they deemed undesirable about themselves, to the delusional point they started to believe their own lies.

Many people can't even begin to tell if someone is trustworthy—or not—on their own anymore. They have to use GUT, or the dozens of other applications trying to corner the “trust market.” Striking up a conversation with a stranger is devoid of eye contact as people distractedly gaze into the foreground of their mixed reality contact-lens displays, waiting for cues and information about whether they should be interested in their new acquaintance. I've literally had someone turn around and walk away in the middle of a sentence because some filter indicated that I didn't meet his criteria. Most people don't care—“Does anyone care that we can't navigate a city without an app?” they say. But I care, and I'm looking for a new way. I'm lonely. I'm unsatisfied with my relationships. I want to get back in touch with my own intuition, my own judgement, my own gut (lower case!).

So I went looking for answers this last 12 months. I tried several new experiments to reconnect with myself. This was a big challenge—who could I trust with my trust? Could I trust myself to know? I'm still annoyed that I even had to ask myself these questions. But things did change. Here's what I learned:

### Oh my gut ...

I figured I might as well dive head-on into the most direct way to get in touch with my inner self. The microdosing fad came and went, but the therapeutic use of psychedelics is still growing. So I signed up for a 3-day “trust retreat” that came recommended by several friends (and, I must admit, verified by a few thousand online reviews). It consisted of three different drugs that uncover and deepen our feelings of trust. Day 1 was Ibogaine. I was able to let go of a lot of old hang-ups, and had a really cool conversation with Iboga (the spirit of the drug) about a grade-school boyfriend.

Barely recovering from Day 1, I was given mushrooms on Day 2. Instead of a reckoning with old demons, I was able to see the connections between people, between people and other animals, and between people and plants. Hard to describe, but I could feel whether every living thing was hostile or friendly to me.

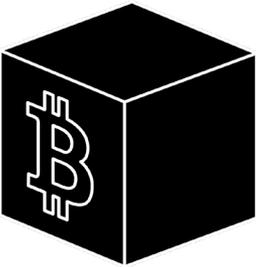


Day 3 we took MDMA, and I felt (artificial as it might have been) a pure closeness and warmth and trust from every person and thing around me. I'll spare you the garrulous gushing about how profound this felt.

A week later I was still a bit physically and spiritually drained. I don't know how much of those feelings were left inside me, but I certainly was not looking at an app for life directions, and I liked that part. I had different interactions with people for a while, but I also felt a little alienated as well. It's great to go on a personal journey, but it gets to be a little lonely if you don't come back to the flock.

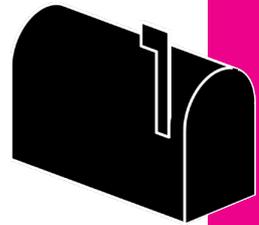
So, I needed a group that wasn't tied to an app, but wasn't sticking their heads up their own guts, so to speak. About that time I noticed a faded flyer for a weekly meeting of the "trust tribe." When I arrived, I had the feeling I was in some kind of den of thieves or strange doomsday cult. Apparently, to join the tribe you have to follow a set of strict rules around the kind of people you interact with, the technologies you use, and the information you share. As you might expect, GUT-like apps are strictly forbidden. I liked the commitment to no outsourcing of trust, but this level was a little too much for me to take on. You should have seen the way they glared at me when I admitted to often ordering dinner from an app and eating alone—*"How could you bear not to know the hands that massaged that kale salad?!"* their eye rolls said. I signed some smart contracts that promised I would never talk about the trust tribe to anyone outside their doors, and walked away as fast as I could.

I was feeling a little embarrassed that I had chickened out of the trust tribe experiment, and maybe that's why I went even more into the trust abyss with my next choice. I had heard about *Oui-Dings* from a friend, and thought it was the most absurd idea I'd ever heard (not to mention the worst product name in a city that produces bad start-up names like a steam rising from a hot street). *Oui-Dings* arranges marriages. You come in and fill out a profile, and it connects you with the "perfect" mate, based on your preferences. You can have a financially-driven marriage, an adventure marriage, a friend spouse, a fetish spouse, etc. It was weird. But I went through with it.



I chose the financial planning option, and *Oui-Dings* connected me with Amanda. She owned a house, and had a kid, but the income-potential projections made our match a minor financial miracle. We get along, generally, and I like her kid, generally. I haven't told my parents about it, but it's been awesome to this point. If the multi-marriage law passes in California, I might think about a love marriage, but I'm not worried about it for now.

So where does all this experimentation leave me? It's hard to say. I like how much better I am at human-to-human connection, and I feel like I can judge whether or not to trust someone without using an app. But it's not perfect. Amanda was furious when I was convinced to sign a contract on a timeshare from this really hot guy at my gym. Everyone still has an agenda it seems. So, I'm thinking about re-installing GUT again, just to see if I can put the best of my skills together with the brains of the algorithm. I don't want to offload all my decisions to the machine, but I don't mind having a digital wingman when I need it. ■



## TRUST MODEL IN ACTION

# OUTSOURCED AUTHORITY

## What do you outsource to experts?

Outsourced Authority recognizes that time is scarce and nobody can be an expert in everything. In previous centuries we outsourced trust primarily to societal institutions like governments, churches, and hospitals, and relied on trained experts with recognized credentials to inform our decisions. As legacy authorities struggle to retain the trust they once took for granted, a new wave of “experts” are emerging from our smart devices and connected platforms, drawing on a vast spectrum of data-driven criteria and algorithmic philosophies to offer fast and efficient decision-making for the era of Uber and Netflix.

### CRITICAL DILEMMA

How do I make decisions when my network of experts disagree on an issue, or when no expert can be found?

### PREVIOUS ITERATIONS

- Credentialed experts
- Public institutions
- Newspapers

### INSIGHTS

**What connections do you see between this model of trust and the choices and dilemmas facing your work?**

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**What new risks does this help you anticipate?**

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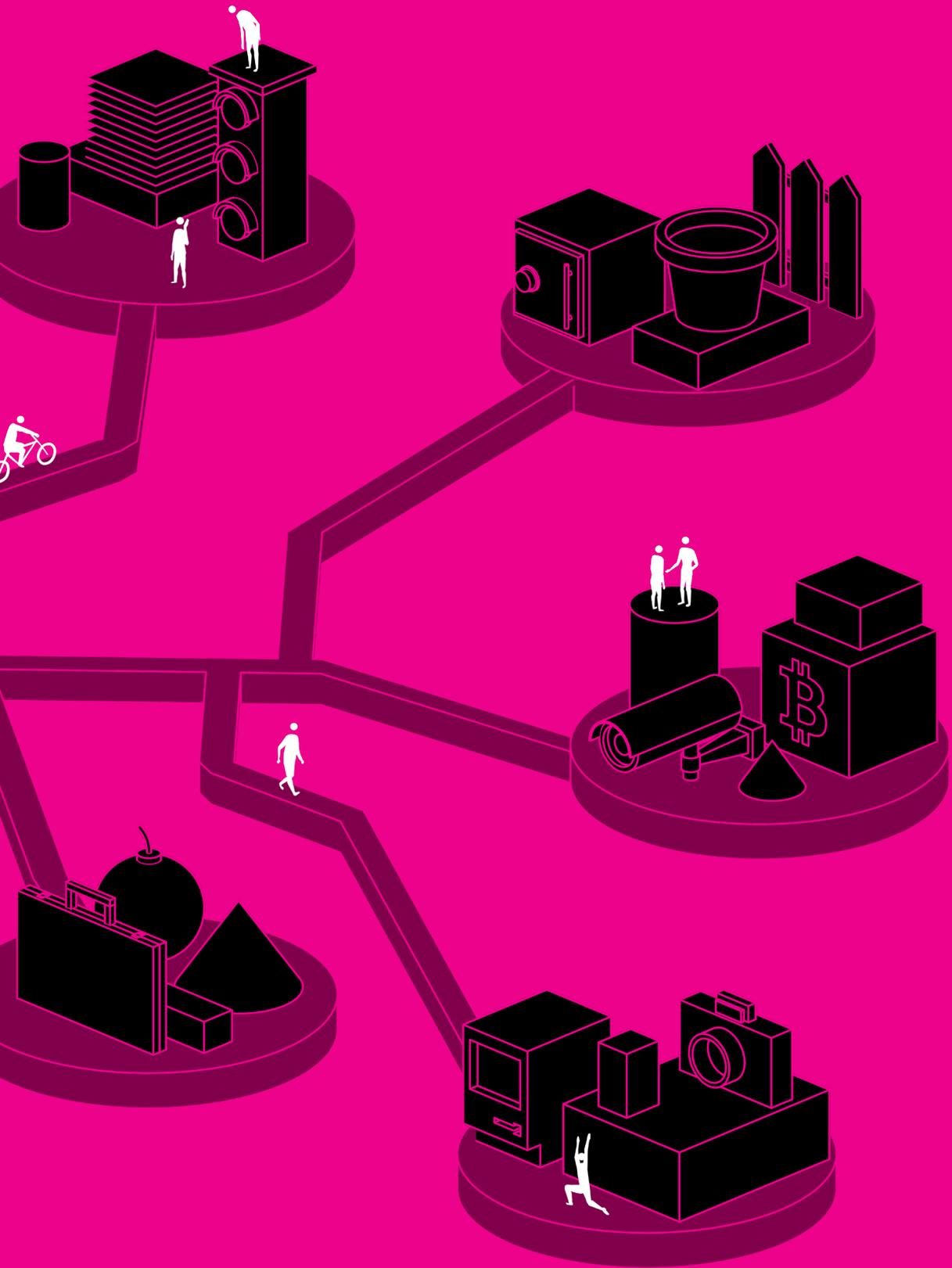
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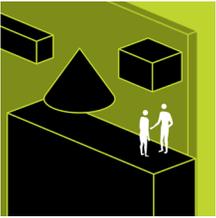
**How does this trust model clarify potential actions for your work?**

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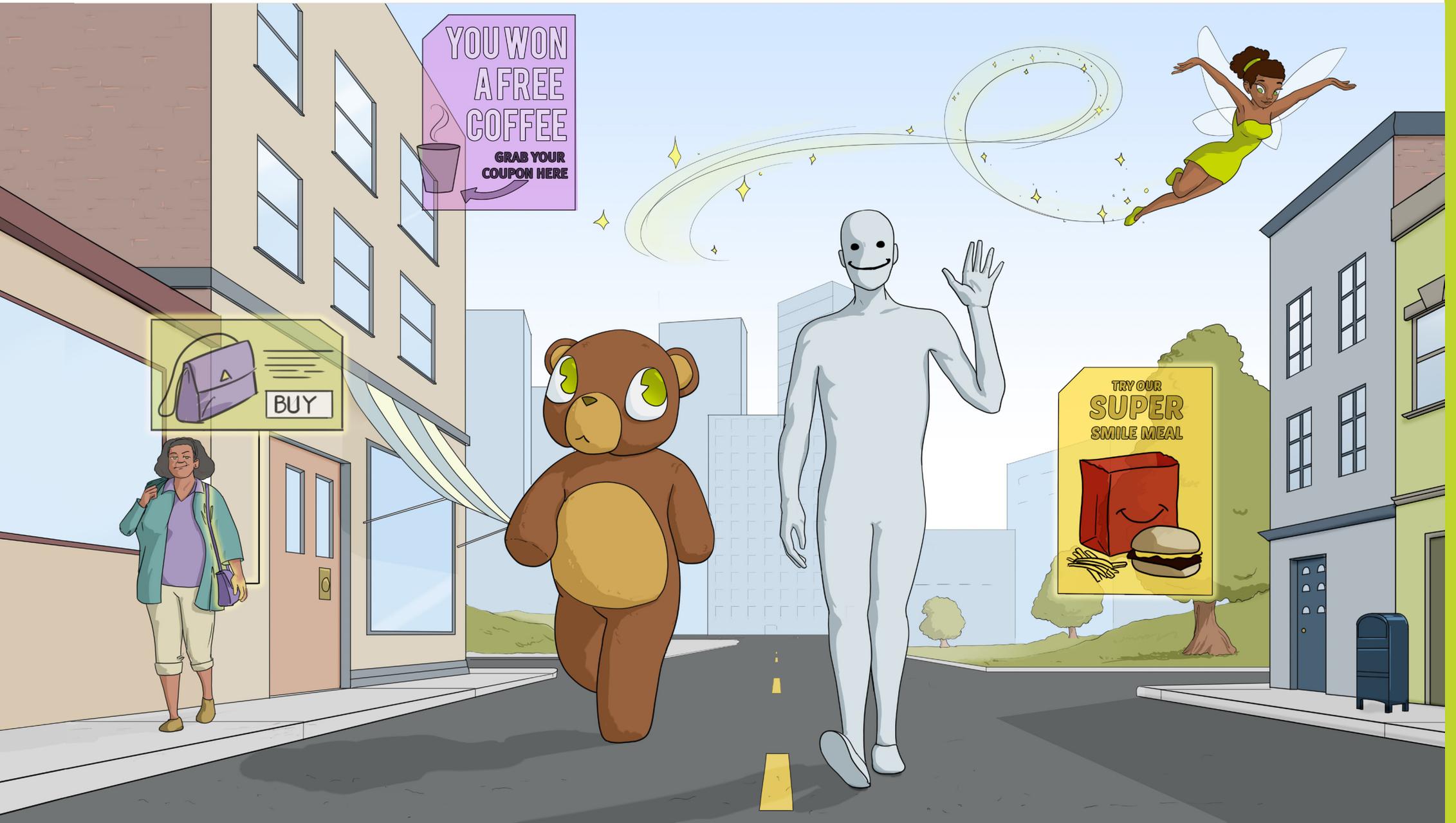


# Do You Know Who I Am?

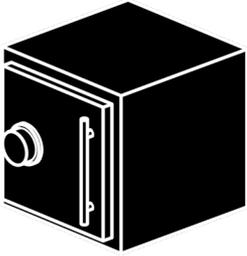
## SCENARIO 4 | FILTERED PREFERENCES

By Jamais Cascio and Jane McGonigal

What happens when we get ad blockers for the physical world? In 2028, augmented reality glasses have become a fixture of everyday life, creating a new marketplace of attention that offers everything from ad-blocking on the subway to paid product-placement. While these ubiquitous filtering services provide innumerable capabilities for coercion and manipulation, other benefits are less expected—such as the ability to block oneself from others' view to retain some level of anonymity in a hyper-connected world. What will privacy look like in a world in which anything and everything can be **filtered** out?



**No? Good.** Yeah, we have filters for your augs that will protect you from having to see something unpleasant or someone you don't like. But that's just technology-enabled fear, not power. Real power comes from flipping the script. With those same tools, I can block myself so that you don't get to see me.



Hey, look at that, I'm the Invisible Man. (Assuming I'm a man, that is. Remember: you don't know who I am.)

Filters started as a way to block out annoyances, like crying babies or intrusive ads. Turns out that a *lot* of stuff is annoying, and nobody wants to have to enter every item on their filter lists. That's just tedious, and you always end up missing somebody or something that really bugs you, and they stand out as just really freaking irritating in the middle of your serene digital world. So you get a filter subscription to block out the everyday idiots, and you can then add the stuff that's just for you.

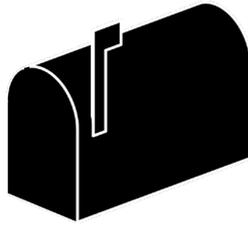
Sometimes the filter comes built-in to the aug gear, the glasses or whatever, and sometimes you pay extra to get a really well curated one. Amazon sells a pretty popular filter, so does Disney. On top of that, you might add more block lists that match your social or cultural preferences.

You want filters approved by the Pope? You got it. Or by the ACLU? Boom. How about a live copy of the Great Firewall? Hey, it's your money. And speaking of money, there are even filters you can get where *they* pay *you* to use them. You just have to watch their ads in place of the offensive or annoying or frustratingly wrong stuff you want to block out. If you'd rather watch commercials for laundry detergent instead of seeing posters and billboards for the next political campaign, that's on you, I guess. At least you're not doing it for free.

(Remember when people had to watch ads without getting paid to do it? Suckers.)

But here's the thing about *all* of those filter subscriptions: they pay attention when you add your own items to them. And if something—or someone—is added to enough different kinds of filters by enough different sources, then they start to show up in all of them. “This guy is just a numpty, nobody likes him, make him go away.”

So I just started to add myself. To every filter list I could. And made new subscription IDs to do some solo-crowdsourcing. And eventually I started showing up on filters without having to do anything.



After a while, I learned that I'm not the only one doing it. There are thousands of us around the world. We even have a newsletter, if you can believe it. We'll add you and you add us, and pretty soon, to 90% of the people you run into, you're just a generic human-form or a clown or a walking billboard for soap.

You're not "off the grid," though. The automated systems still recognize you, so you can shop and pay your taxes and have a nice flat and get your groceries delivered by a robot. You're only anonymous to other people, which when you think about it, is kind of the point of being anonymous. It doesn't matter if people trust you, or don't trust you because they don't know you, or whatever. If *their* systems trust *your* systems, it's all good.

We've got enough privacy protections in place that I'm not overly concerned about my name and address leaking from a warehouse store membership. Machines do what they do with my personal info, and as long as they're not telling people about it, I'm golden. Just another faceless in the crowd.

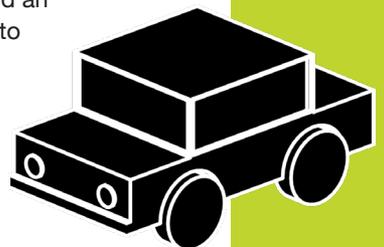
And really, when was the last time an actual person was in the loop for consumer analysis and marketing decisions?

People in my little club don't just go for the filters, we also push for taking advantage of "right to be forgotten" laws, digital defamation laws, the works. Squeezing every bit of personal privacy we can out of the system.

Why do we do it? I bet you think it's to make it easier to commit crimes, but get real. Most police stuff is done by machines, and remember, we're not off the grid as far as the grid is concerned. Or, you may think it's to try to hide from corporations creeping on our lives with spyware and ultra-personalized ads. But blockers for that kind of stuff are already easy to get without making yourself functionally invisible to other people.

No, some of us might do it because of hardcore social anxiety or other emotional issues, but most of us add ourselves to filters to get away from people we don't want to run into again.

One of my friends in the club—no, of course I'm not going to tell you her name—ran away from her family when they tried to ship her back home to force her to marry some old dude with money and an unhealthy interest in 15 year old girls. If they find her, they'll try to kidnap her and send her away, if they don't just kill her.



## SCENARIO 4 | DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

We've got judgmental communities, abusive spouses, predatory relatives, vindictive bosses, all sorts of people who want to have a stranglehold on our lives and go crazy when we try to get away from them. I'm not going to tell you who I'm keeping away from, but let me just say that s/he is the only person who can make me cry.

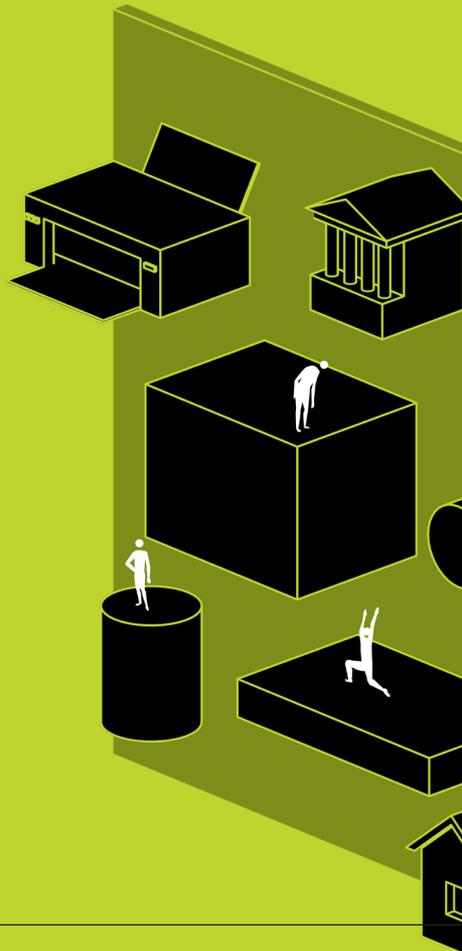
We're not criminals. We're refugees.

Because here's the thing. So many people think that all of this digital shit, the filters and the glasses and the bots and the real-time-persuade-o-matic has made our lives easier. And that's probably true for most of you.

As much as we talk about the silicon and the lithium and the petabytes, we're still people, and people are ... imperfect. We've gotten really good at slapping illusions over the things we don't like, and we've convinced ourselves that this makes them go away. We can live our lives without ever having to see or hear something unpleasant or crude. We can walk through sewers but see only gardens, do business with everyone but see only vaguely-human drones.

You know they're testing contact lenses with the smart glasses stuff, right? And in China they're already starting to do corneal replacement surgery with digital lenses. Pretty soon everyone will see the world through happy filters.

But they won't see me. ■



## TRUST MODEL IN ACTION

# FILTERED PREFERENCES

## What do you filter out of sight?

Filtered Preferences builds on the assumption that all truth is relative, all meaning manufactured by individuals and communities. As media manipulation tools mature and AR/VR technologies offer deeper immersions into highly personalized realities, it's become clear that the social media filter bubbles of the twenty-teens were only a harbinger of the reality filtering technologies to come. For filter adherents, trust is more a matter of taste-making than truth-seeking, an all-too-appealing alternative to the noise and randomness of unfiltered life.

### CRITICAL DILEMMA

How do I make decisions when my filters become problematic, inhibiting my ability to make any decisions at all?

### PREVIOUS ITERATIONS

- Social media
- Activist publications
- Propaganda

### INSIGHTS

**What connections do you see between this model of trust and the choices and dilemmas facing your work?**

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**What new risks does this help you anticipate?**

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**How does this trust model clarify potential actions for your work?**

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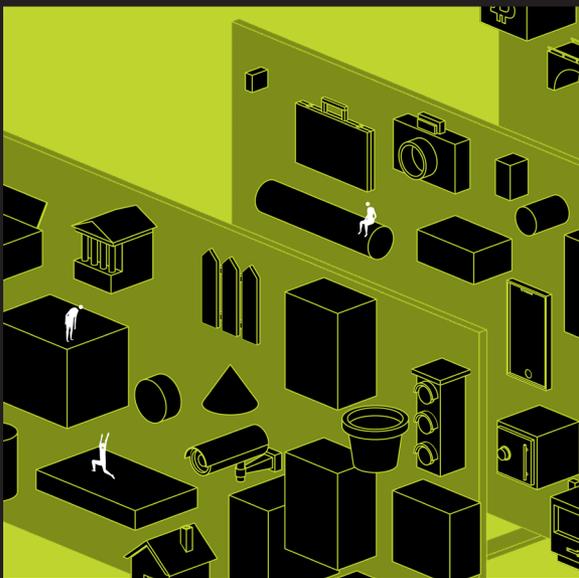
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# the future 50

IFTF's **Future 50 partnership** is a circle of future smart organizations that think strategically about near-term choices to reshape the long-term future. The Future 50 draws on a half century of futures research from our labs focusing on society and technology, the economy and the environment, food, and health. Its goal is to create the perspectives and expert viewpoints, the signals and the data, to make sense out of disruptive forces in the present. Grounded in a framework of Foresight-Insight-Action, the Future 50 partnership invests in critical research, boundary-stretching conversations, and strategic experiments that will shape the business, social, and civil landscapes of tomorrow.



YEARS

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