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A Changing World | 2025

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Exploring the 2025 future scenarios

The project futures map provides you with two different but equally plausible futures. *Hive World* is a centralised, consumerist society where government and large corporations are expected to solve problems and trust in major brands is high. *Patchwork World*, on the other hand, is a decentralised 'do it yourself' society where government and large corporations have not met people's expectations. The *Overlap* section outlines the future factors which apply to both worlds and provide the core foundation for your design projects.

Overlap areas

Water in crisis
Water has been known as blue gold for many years now. Ancient aquifers have been drained across the world, weather patterns are capricious and mountain glaciers that supplied water to millions have mostly vanished due to climate change. Even the UK is affected, but is in a better situation than most due to its rainfall patterns.

Rainwater harvesting is standard practice wherever there is a surface that can catch rain; it's filtered, UV-treated, stored on site and used (extremely efficiently) for washing and cleaning. Surplus rainwater is sold to the water companies, who then treat it further to produce precious (and expensive) drinking water – much of which is traded on the international markets at sky-high prices via pipelines. The UK is the EU's 'swing water producer' which puts it in a strong position.

Household and business grey water is often recycled on site for toilets and gardening, although waterless toilets and drought-resistant gardens are starting to catch on – particularly in the drier south-east where water companies also pay for grey water but are starting to meter and charge heavily for black water. Products and their packaging are expected to require minimal water at all stages in their lifecycles – from production to use to recycling.

It can seem like feast or famine at times as heavy floods periodically threaten to overwhelm systems and then a few years of near-drought parch farmland and dry up reservoirs. Countries with irregular rainfall harvest dew and whatever moisture they can snatch from the air; the more affluent of these nations also use desalination plants powered by concentrated solar power.

Very expensive oil
Oil is a declining resource and even though it's less important as a fuel now to the developed world, it's expensive ($400 per barrel at 2008 prices).

Petrochemicals are still in high demand to make many plastics, fertilisers, pesticides and medicines. Plastic is valuable in 2025 and some plastic manufacturers have resorted to mining landfill

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sites and fishing plastic from the Pacific and Atlantic Gyres to get their feedstock. Products that used to rely on cheap petrochemicals have had to find alternatives; but successful substitution has been difficult. Attempts to use vegetable oils and extracts on a vast scale threatened to disrupt the world food market and had to be abandoned. More successful attempts involved going back to the drawing-board and redesigning products and processes from scratch from a systemic point of view.

Demographics
The UK now has a much older population. The average age is now 43 (compared to 39 in 2006) and the elderly outnumber the young - there are more over-60s than under-25s.
The trend for settling down and having families at a later age has continued and the average age now for a first-time mother is 33 years old (though this hides a still significant teenage pregnancy rate – and a rapid increase in 40+ year old first-time mothers who have taken advantage of egg-freezing technology to slow down their biological clocks). Almost 25 million people live on their own now out of a population of 65 million.

A growing number of UK cities now have no dominant ethnic majority – in Leicester, Birmingham and London the white Anglo-Saxon population is just one group among many.

Food harvests
Global food harvests oscillate wildly from year to year as unpredictable and unseasonal weather takes its toll. Warmer weather has led to much wider outbreaks of pests and fungi; the 2010 Ug99 stem rust disaster wiped out most of the global wheat crop and led to a renaissance for GM crops in the following years as farmers clamoured for new pest and drought resistant varieties.

There is a worldwide topsoil crisis – literally, a shortage of fertile soil – and myriad techniques from no-till agriculture to high-tech hydroponics and aeroponics are in use in the attempt to feed nearly 8 billion people. Any use of crops for industrial non-food purposes is highly controversial in most parts of the world and even the use of crop 'waste' is closely monitored as much of it is needed for compost to replenish tired soils. Chemical fertilisers are expensive and tend to be used only with precision – such as with hydroponic systems.

The UK grows a much wider spectrum of crops in 2025 than it did in 2008 – sunflowers and olives now grow alongside traditional fruit and veg – but due to increased flooding it suffers from erratic harvests like the rest of the world. However the UK does not suffer food shortages – its prominence in the European water market means that it can always afford to keep its reserves full – and therefore it has a more liberal attitude towards non-food crops being grown locally as long as they benefit UK consumers directly and are not too water-hungry.

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Climate change

Climate change feels like an urgent problem. The impacts are being felt worldwide, and even though global emissions were said to have 'turned a corner' by 2020, weather systems feel alarmingly out of control and the effects to date on the water and food systems are serious (see notes on water and food). The Arctic polar icecap melted entirely in the summer of 2019 and accelerated the rate of warming considerably due to the change in the Earth's albedo. Massive geo-engineering projects are being discussed at the UN as a way to buy some time and mitigate a dangerous release of methane from the melting Siberian permafrost.

A global cultural shift

By 2025 it's clear that China and India have displaced 'the West' as the main centre of influence of the world. New products are designed primarily with their vast markets in mind, and the concerns and values of the 'average' middleclass Chinese and Indian drive most innovation now. The water crisis bites particularly hard in both of these countries which can no longer rely on the monsoon or Himalayan glaciers, and ingenious water-saving or water-harvesting products are always in demand.

Resource scarcity

Most resources are in high demand worldwide. Many minerals have 'peaked' – mercury, lead, gallium, selenium, platinum, rock phosphate - and mining of old landfill sites is common to extract the tonnes of useful 'rubbish' thrown away in the 80s and 90s. Plastic is valuable and even paper has become significantly more expensive since 2008, particularly if you want to use virgin pulp.

Most new products are designed so that they can be easily dissembled at the end of their lives and completely recycled in a closed loop. Nearly all are designed to be durable and repairable; sometimes modular systems are used to facilitate the rare products that require frequent upgrades.

The concept of non-essential packaging has had to undergo a major rethink.

The end of wilderness

People crave the sight of 'untouched nature' and wilderness tourism is big business even though it's an open secret that almost no truly wild places exist anywhere on the planet in 2025. In reality most 'wilderness areas' are carefully managed and monitored. Scotland contains one of the few listed 'wilderness areas' in western Europe and tourism there is booming despite the long journey required.

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Hive World

A centralised, consumerist society where the government and large corporations are expected to solve problems. Trust in major brands is high.

Energy availability, systems & mix

The UK has a centralised electricity system fed mainly by a new generation of nuclear power stations, the Severn Barrage, offshore wind turbines and several controversial coal-fired power stations that are in the process of being fitted with carbon-capture-and-storage systems subsidised by the public purse. Electricity is relatively affordable and plentiful – but there is some anxiety about the steadily rising price of uranium and what this will mean for energy prices in a few years time.

Gas is still important for heating and cooking, and prices are now very high. A huge government drive to insulate existing homes and buildings in 2015-2018 helped drive demand down, but no-one is sure what to replace it with in the long term. A growing number of people can't afford their gas central heating and have switched to electrical heaters during cold spells.

Electrical energy efficiency was a big concern during the years of 'the switchover' (away from oil and gas, 2009-2018) but has slackened since 2020 when some spare capacity was added to the national grid and an affordable means of large scale electricity storage was introduced (using molten salt); product designers in 2025 concentrate much more on minimising water and resource use when doing life-cycle analysis.

Transport

Levels of mobility and congestion have not changed much since 2008. Ground transport is mainly powered by electricity – cars are electric hybrids that get the equivalent of 150 mpg; a pilot driverless car system is being planned for Bristol. Trains are electric and the Mag-lev route that's being laid from Edinburgh to Paris via London, Manchester and Birmingham is being eagerly awaited.

Flying remains controversial and has become more expensive since 2008 even though a low-carbon fuel has been developed – it relies on a form of biofuel produced by genetically modified algae and is blamed for diverting precious water away from global food production. This particular biofuel sells at a hefty premium, keeping fares high. Most people in the UK can only afford one flight a year at most and far-flung holidays are a real treat – although overland travel to Europe and North Africa is common.

International freight remains strong and is a necessary way of moving food around from countries with good harvests to those with poor supplies. Airships have made a comeback and are mainly used for this.

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Desire for perfection

Consumer culture and celebrity-driven fashion remains strong and most products still sell an ideal to customers. Brands are generally trusted to do the right thing and consumers focus on looking and feeling younger and more attractive. There has been a blurring between personal care and medicine – especially since accurate personal genetic profiling became cheaply available in 2020. This has driven a switch to services – for example you can buy into a 'L'Oreal / Bupa lifestyle' – morning visits to a spa clinic (saving your own water use) to keep you perfectly monitored, coiffed and polished with the latest products, tailored to your personal genome/diet profile/health risks etc.
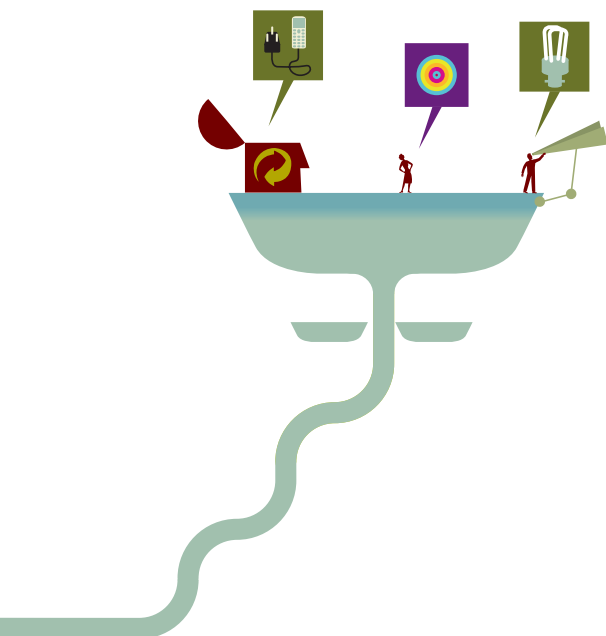
If you're on a budget, there are 'no-frills' versions of these services available, and some products can still be bought to take home.

Technology

Multinational corporations and state-backed labs generate most of the innovation. Digital paper is a commonplace technology - it's used for newspapers and books and has started to spread into other applications. Nanotechnology is also widespread, mostly in the use of bio-mimetic stay-clean surfaces that minimise the need for cleaning surfaces, and dyeless colour, but also used in countless cosmetics and medicines that claim to fight the march of time.

Personal genetic profiling and metabolomics has led to a boom in personalised medicine and a belief that radically extended life expectancies are in reach for the rich.

Synthetic biology is another area that grabs attention in the media as labs create novel lifeforms that promise to sequester carbon or excrete useful polymers. The first lab-grown meat steaks have gone on sale and been declared a success. Biohackers are the feared bogeymen of the day.

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The internet

The web has spilled over into the physical world – everything has a web address, and everything and everyone is trackable and traceable and always being monitored by some kind of system. Being offline is unthinkable - even foetuses have a continuous online presence accessible to the health service and their parents. Some people live in a type of 'augmented reality' that overlays information onto their world (via contact lenses or glasses and in some cases ear inserts) and blurs out elements they don't wish to see. Transparency levels are extremely high – product ingredients can be instantaneously traced back to their origin – which boosts trust in the major brands that can afford to maintain exhaustive, accurate inventories.

The internet itself has been gradually tamed since the start of the 21st Century and by 2025 a great deal of it is firmly in the control of a handful of governments and large corporations. An international drive to stamp out illegal file-sharing from 2008-2013 has been largely successful, but at the expense of many collaborative peer-to-peer sites that were shut down because they could not police the sharing of copyrighted information. Most people in the UK never venture outside the 'walled garden' to blacklisted sites, except those with black-market business to do and the odd rebellious teenager with sufficient skills to evade the security settings.

Economy, disposable income

Economic growth remains the main priority of the government. Society is consumerist and average disposable incomes are fairly high – although this conceals high levels of inequality – significant numbers of people struggle to get by and many old people are forced to work well past retirement age to supplement meagre pensions.

Where do people live?

Most people live in or very near to a city or large town. City centres are dense and gentrified and suburbs have grown and become denser. Planning laws have been strict and very little building on greenbelt land has been allowed; farming and the creation of new reservoirs has eaten into it instead. The social and community life of many rural areas has gradually withered away although a few managed to reinvent themselves as holiday or 'wilderness' destinations. In most cases young people moved to the city and never moved back.

In contrast, cities are lively, exciting and well-maintained with strong cultural scenes and are perceived to have something for everyone; the newest products and services are available in cities first, and for those with 'augmented reality' vision, city life offers a whole new stimulating dimension that the countryside can't compete with. Although many people crave 'wilderness', they tend to only want to experience it for a few days at a time. By 2025 the urban to rural ratio has risen to 91:9 (from a 2001 base of 81:19).

Ecosystems

So much emphasis was placed on carbon emissions and climate change that other ecosystem impacts have been neglected. Many fisheries have collapsed and only farmed fish is easily available – at a price. The single-minded collection of water, the urgent need for farmland and the intensification of industrial farming have crowded out most wild places. Most new homes have been built as high or medium density blocks without their own gardens, and many people who did have gardens have sold large chunks of them to property developers.

Biodiversity has suffered hugely as a result, many species are near collapse and some unexpected consequences of this are being noticed by 2025. Bees vanished almost entirely from the UK in 2015-16, causing terrible crop harvests and panic; the reason was never discovered and a hardier hybrid species had to be introduced from southern Europe. A plague of slugs hit the UK during a particularly wet spring in 2022 due to a shortage of birds and hedgehogs to eat them.

Local vs global

The world is a tightly interconnected network that focuses on getting water and food to wherever it's needed by using market mechanisms. International travel remains common for the middle classes and there is a great deal of migration in search of opportunity – mostly eastwards. International agreements are important and tightly binding for most countries.

UK response to climate change

The partial decarbonisation of the electricity and transport systems has resulted in a 20% decrease in carbon emissions since 2008.

Personal carbon quotas have been one of the other main tools used by the government to decarbonise the UK. From 2018 every UK citizen was issued with an ID card that also doubled as a carbon use card. All purchases require an ID number (encrypted in most people's debit and credit cards), and any embedded carbon in the lifecycle of the product bought is automatically calculated and subtracted from the monthly quota. Unused monthly carbon quotas roll over and any leftover annual quota at the end of the tax year results in a tax rebate. However any going over the annual quota results in an extra amount of tax to pay.

The system has numerous flaws but has worked better than expected – in fact during the first year the Treasury was taken by surprise by the number of people it owed a rebate to. It has succeeded in bringing UK carbon emissions down by a further 15% since it was introduced. A 70 – 80% cut in emissions by 2050 is now felt to be achievable

Some coastal areas have been abandoned to sea level rise after it became clear how much of the country was vulnerable and the government decided to use its resources to protect cities and prime

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farmland. Some Norfolk villages are in the process of being resettled and there is an ongoing battle in the courts about compensation. However these abandoned areas are not being left to nature but are being used to experiment with brine-tolerant crops and to farm GM algae for biofuel.

Home life & socialising

More than one in three people live on their own in 2025, usually in a one or two bedroom flat. Homes are a cherished private cocoon space in a busy, impersonal world. They are seen as an extension of the self and products that permit easy personalisation are popular. Few new build homes have individual gardens – which are frowned on as water-hungry - and few people feel like they have the time to garden anyway. Instead, government and commercial attention is lavished on public spaces – city squares, parks and streets. Sponsored public events such as branded food and music festivals in public spaces are common and help generate a sense of civic community.

People living on their own cook from scratch so rarely now that new one-bed flats come with 'pocket-kitchens' to save space - little more than a discreet microwave and a mini-fridge. Luxury apartments come with a concierge chef and kitchen to serve the whole building. Eating out is extremely common - restaurant and pub chains are trusted to provide good quality food and minimise waste and some even offer diet management services. Takeaways are also popular despite high profile public health campaigns against chips and the demonisation of kebab houses and 'greasy-spoons' by the media as a main cause of obesity.

Families are small and children get a lot of attention – their parents and teachers know what they've been up to as it's so easy to trace their movements online. Children deemed at risk of anti-social behaviour are routinely tracked by social services. Teenagers find this stifling and are always looking for ways to circumvent the system.

Underage drinking levels have dropped since ID cards were introduced, but recreational drug use has increased since 2008, particularly since the advent of 'blackout' clubs. These tap into nostalgia for the pre-web, information-light era. An ID scan is required to enter, but inside the club itself wireless and surveillance tech is jammed, disabling augmented realities and forcing clubbers to interact the old-fashioned way.

At the other extreme are clubs that cater exclusively for users of augmented reality. Clubbers can adjust light and music levels to their individual preference and switch between visual channels for the projections on the otherwise blank walls. Many people set their basic personal profiles to 'visible' so you can tell at a distance who's single, who isn't, who has an open channel etc.
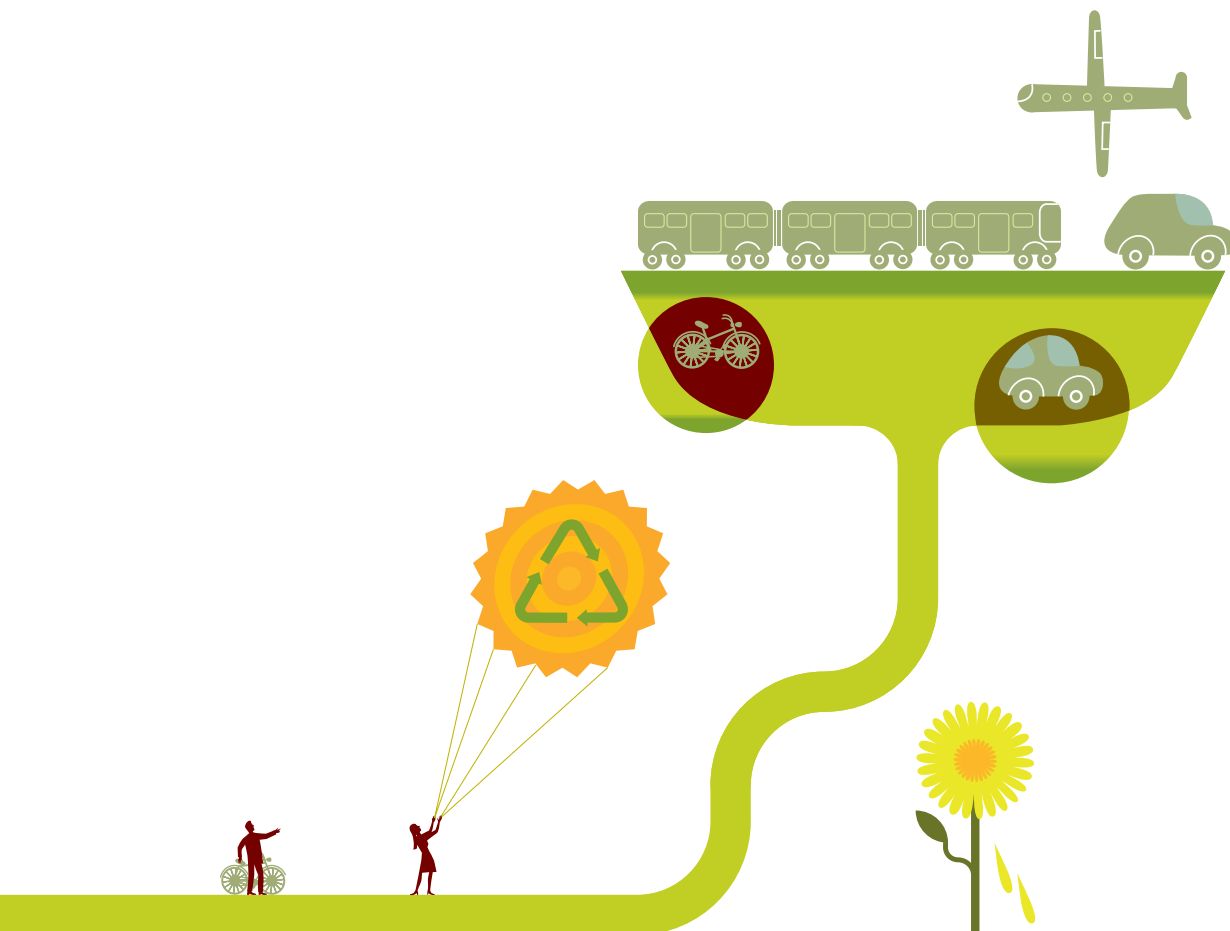
Groups of friends on augmented reality stay in near constant contact with each other over 'back channels' even when actually meeting together in person sub-conversations will be happening

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on private channels that comment on or diverge from the public conversation. This kind of multi-layered communication is particularly strong among teenagers and schools fight a constant battle to block these channels and hold the attention of their charges. The more progressive schools and businesses are trying to figure out how to co-opt these channels to stimulate creative teamwork.

Shopping

Personalised products are popular and nearly everything claims to be able to be tailored to personal genetic profiles and preferences, from cereals to bed-linen. Services are a growth industry as a host of desirables such as clean fashionable clothes and nutritious meals are re-imagined as services you simply sign up to. Those provided by trusted brands tend to do well, especially if they don't dent carbon quotas and mean you don't have to use your own water at home. People have adjusted to the idea of providing personal and genetic information to large corporations and the government, and the privacy fears of the first decade of the 21st Century now seem quaint, especially as anyone's dna can be lifted and profiled now quite easily without their knowledge.

'Boring' staple products such as toilet roll, dried pasta etc tend to be bought on subscription online from supermarkets and delivered weekly. Physical shopping is now all about experience and the sensual aspects of products that can't be replicated virtually.

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Patchwork World

A decentralised 'do it yourself' society where government and large corporations have not met people's expectations.

Energy availability, systems & mix

The UK has a decentralised, distributed electricity system; after the 2009-12 energy shock and blackouts a quiet revolution took hold and well over a million homes and businesses now sport solar panels and mini-wind turbines. They sell any surplus energy they generate back to the grid and as a result their owners tend to be near-fanatical about energy efficiency.

Most councils have built combined heat and power (CHP) plants for their local areas that can burn any fuel from gas to woodchips. Electricity is quite expensive for those who don't generate their own, and the connection of the North African solar farm link to the grid (part of a 'water for energy' deal) is being eagerly awaited in the hope it will bring prices down.

Heating is similarly decentralised – many people use solar thermal panels and heat energy from the local CHP plant. Gas has been very expensive since it 'peaked' in 2015 and it's used as little as possible.

Transport

Levels of mobility and congestion have decreased over the last 17 years. Car ownership has declined significantly since 2008 and most people belong to car clubs that give them access to a variety of highly efficient hybrid vehicles depending on their needs. However due to the cost of driving most journeys are made by public transport or by bike. Bike hire racks are commonplace throughout cities and towns, supplemented in some places by racks of electric mini-cars and scooters for those who can't or won't cycle.

The traditional airline industry was crushed by high fuel prices and has almost disappeared. Airship companies are starting to move into the market, but international travel is now mainly by high-speed rail. Only the very rich (and their employees) can afford to fly on a regular basis - and they prefer to use their own customised planes now that the sky is their exclusive playground. The skies over West London are criss-crossed by private jets and helicopters as the global elite go about their business.

Desire for perfection

Popular culture is experimental and has a strong 'do it yourself' tinge. Thousands more subcultures and niches have sprung up since 2008 as people have located like-minded groups on the internet. Brands can't keep up with many of them and a thriving grey-market has emerged to supply the

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hundreds of thousands – perhaps even millions – who long to stop ageing and want to enhance their looks, intelligence and health to a level that is 'better than well'. Amputees are no longer regarded with pity, but almost with envy in some quarters as they get to upgrade themselves every year with sophisticated, high performance electronic limbs. A couple of cases of radical personal modification have recently hit the headlines.

There is a strong counter-trend that emphasises simplicity and closeness to nature and acceptance of processes such as ageing. Adherents of this lifestyle tend to buy (or even grow) their own ingredients and mix their own simple products using shared recipes; some have started selling them to each other.

Technology

Open source developments in technology (such as the BioBricks approach to synthetic biology) and an avalanche of 'tinkering' in Asia have led to surprising levels of innovation despite years of stagnant R&D spend by major companies. The fab@home community has just released instructions for building a powerful digital fabricator that is making manufacturers nervous - even though it would cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to build, people often self-organise into groups to pool money for a shared objective.

The internet

The internet has branched in thousands of different directions since 2008 and there are a bewildering array of 'webs within webs' catering for different cultures, tastes, and levels of technological sophistication. There is a semi-immersive set of worlds for business meetings, with language translation facilities and virtual secretaries; a larger set of fully immersive worlds for socialising and thrill-seekers; an incredibly powerful supergrid that connects science facilities and centres of learning and allows them to swap, process and navigate phenomenal amounts of data; a vast children's web of surreal worlds (many built by children themselves) with thousands of creative toys and tools; and tens of millions of customised, community-built worlds and sites dedicated to every quirk and interest imaginable.

English is no longer the dominant language online, but the speed and sophistication of translation services has lowered language barriers significantly. Not all communities are online however. Some have turned away from the virtual and 'retro' physical meetings are coming back into fashion in some quarters.

Large areas of the internet are outside the control or influence of governments or large corporations. Organised crime networks run some of the more lucrative immersive worlds and there is growing anxiety about their influence over society. Parents worry about the near-impossible task of shielding their children from the darker aspects of the internet; however the rich social and educational side

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of the web and its fertile soil for creativity is recognised and celebrated.

Economy, disposable income

Many people have opted out of 9-5 work lives – especially if they generate surplus power and sell surplus water and have low living costs as a result. There is a greater emphasis on part-time work, creativity and self-realisation. Economic growth is sluggish but fewer people seem to mind these days. Disposable income is lower in this world, but people tend to self-organise in groups online to raise capital for shared materials and objectives.

Where do people live?

As more power devolved to the regions and travel became more expensive, local councils wrested more planning control from central government and set about responding to local concerns. Affordable homes were demanded in many rural towns and villages and nearly 3 million low-density homes ended up being built over the fourteen year period from 2011-2025, most with individual gardens and on greenbelt land.

As the cost of fuel and energy rose, some councils made the controversial decision to turn over local greenbelt land to grow biofuels for local drivers and the generation of electricity for local homes and businesses. By 2020 a significant number of people decided that they preferred the quality of life in these redeveloped rural areas and as the ability to work and socialise online improved an unexpected migration occurred from the cities to small rural towns. In 2025 the urban to rural ratio is 65:35 (compared to a 2001 base of 81:19).

Ecosystems

A crowded world and the increase in sprawl have taken a toll on nature. There have been some high profile casualties – Song thrushes are very close to extinction and the vast flocks of starlings that used to be common in the West Country have inexplicably vanished - but pockets of biodiversity survive in surprising places.

Even though large amounts of greenbelt land have been lost to farming and new houses, a continuing UK obsession with gardening (nearly all new houses have been built with gardens) and the prohibitive costs of many pesticides has provided a lifebelt for many species that would otherwise have been lost. A long-term trend for wildlife friendly gardens and allotments has saved many bird and insect species and helped hedgehogs and bumblebees to hang on. Many homes, community centres and even business premises have partially green roofs and walls to assist with rainwater harvesting and insulation and these also shelter birds and insects, leading to birdsong in unexpected places such as busy town centres.

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Local vs global

The world remains interconnected virtually via the web, but physical connections are looser and the world is getting larger again as few can afford to travel long distance. Many people are more focused now on their local communities and international agreements are getting harder to broker and maintain. A shared reliance on each other for water and energy is the main glue that keeps trading blocs together.

UK response to climate change

The renewables-based electricity system, the diminished use of oil as fuel and the collapse of mass-market flying has led to a 40% reduction in UK carbon emissions since 2008. However it is a little difficult to see where any further reductions are going to come from. A patchwork of community-based initiatives are in place, with varying degrees of success, but there is no system to restrain the very rich and resentment is growing against those who tear across the sky in their private planes, especially when it is discovered that the richest 1% are responsible for 10% of the country's emissions.

Concern is mounting about the huge amount of new houses that have been built on floodplains and near vulnerable coastal areas. A devastating storm surge in 2024 killed 200 people and made 20,000 people homeless in East Anglia, and a further 500,000 unable to insure or sell their homes. In 2025 many of the 20,000 are still in tortuous limbo in a vast caravan park; it's simply too dangerous for them to return to their homes, but their insurance companies refuse to pay up. They have recently been labelled as 'Internally Displaced People' by the UN, much to the UK government's chagrin.

Home life & socialising

Although higher numbers of people live alone in 2025 compared to 2008, this masks a significant social counter-shift. Many people now live nearer to their extended families than they used to - often in the same neighbourhoods. Grandparents and cousins help out with childcare. Flexible housing is becoming popular as people become rooted in one area but have changing needs throughout their lives. Pre-fabricated modular units that can be attached to existing homes to add extra rooms or features suit young families – and when children grow up and leave home these units can be traded back to help pay off the mortgage quicker.

Groups of friends also tend to live near each other and people who decide not to have children tap into extended friend and mutual interest networks for company. Particular interests and sub-cultures are dominant in different areas of cities, towns and villages, causing strong variations in local character. A few villages are almost entirely offline by choice, while others nearby might be near the frontiers of technological change and have a bigger virtual than physical footprint.

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A huge amount of socialising happens in virtual worlds, particularly among young teenagers escaping adult supervision. However physical socialising remains important and pubs, bars and restaurants with a deft touch do well. Many choose to appeal to a specific cultural niche.

Shopping

As people's disposable incomes declined in 2008-2012 groups of friends created pools of expensive but little used household goods (such as drills, lawnmowers etc) to share with each other. The concept took off as communities discovered a way to maintain a reasonable standard of living through unsure economic times, and by 2025 many areas have sophisticated online lending systems for just about anything, backed up by reputation points for users and small fees paid to lenders for each use.

Similarly, many keen gardeners grow their own vegetables in their gardens and sell their surplus produce locally via neighbourhood services that match up supply and demand at local markets and grocers.

Local shops and businesses have made a comeback by being close to people's homes and targeting local needs and desires very closely. Supermarkets struggled to cope with the sudden drop in car use during the extended energy shock and only the most agile and customer-focused ones survived. The weekly shop is almost entirely virtual now.

Locally relevant brands have risen in importance compared to global brands. Peer-to-peer retail and banking are strong. More people are buying direct from designers and getting individual products made at their local CNC shop. Mass manufactured goods tend to compete on quality rather than price, but there is still a significant niche for grey-market, cheaply produced goods of dubious (non-transparent) origin.