

agora

My Life My Business My World

Exploring the outer reach of technology and
personal development

The Tanque Verde Ranch, Tucson ~ Arizona, 3-5 October 2019

Public program

Thursday 3 October 2019	
18:00 – onwards	Registration of participants, welcome drinks
19:30-21:30	<p>Outdoor Barbeque Welcome dinner</p> <p><i>Who do you think you are? Our quest for identity in a global world</i></p> <p>The evening is an opportunity to fellow participants to get to know one another and for an interactive discussion on how each of us defines her/his identity, why identity is assuming an even greater importance in our global world, and how we can address one crucial challenge of our times: Managing the right trade-off or mix between the need for endorsing and leveraging diversity in a global world and the increased quest for – and even anxiety about - identity that globalization generates.</p> <p><i>Without forgetting to enjoy the traditional Southwest Barbeque.</i></p>
Friday 4 October 2019	
09:00 - 10:00	<p><i>Coming now to your life and your business: The Ubiquitous AI</i></p> <p>AI is already prevalent in our daily lives, business activities, interactions with others – more often than not in many ways that we don't even suspect. This is however just the beginning as the accelerating expansion of AI applications to a number of domains and activities is changing almost everything. What about AI being used for faster and more accurate medical diagnosis, or for programmable robots that will cook your food? There are of course examples of quite a number of positive or benign applications that we have come to expect from AI developments. However, these developments are also – and most crucially – focused on creating machines and robots, capable of human-like intelligent activity and behavior and even being more capable than humans at performing some autonomous tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In that respect, what are the next AI developments we should envision and prepare for in the next three to five years? ✓ How to ensure that these developments don't lead to the creation of "monsters", in other words, generating tools and capabilities that would prove to be hugely detrimental to society, or providing new and huge powers and benefits that would remain in the hands of a minority of companies or individuals? ✓ What should be the guidelines of an ethics for AI?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Whose role and responsibility should it be to define and implement these guidelines or rules?
10:00 – 10:30	Networking break
10:30 – 11:30	<p><i>The years of living dangerously: A new era of Geopolitical and economic risks</i></p> <p>We not only have entered a new era of great power confrontation but also of tremendous stress on the global economic and trade system. Many of the basic premises and assumptions that have shaped the environment and rules under which every company and most governments around the world had been operating have become obsolete or have been turned upside down. As the rivalry between the US and China is not only economic, technological and strategic, but takes an increasing ideological tonality, as trade is being weaponized and protectionist practices and policies spread, and as populist, nationalist forces assert themselves and claim for legitimacy, companies, countries or even individuals can all of the sudden become collateral casualties of crises or confrontations in which they play no role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Will this new global paradigm prove to be transitory or are we there for the long haul? ✓ What are the two or three most “sensitive hot spots” that could trigger a chain reaction of events getting out of control? ✓ Are there winners or losers that could be identified in this new context?
11:45 – 12:45	<p><i>You are what you eat... And it goes even beyond that</i></p> <p>Can you imagine that already in 1826 Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, presumably the first gastronomic book author, wrote: “Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are”, but it is much later that the notion that food controls health became a popularly accepted one. However, make no mistake: the issue here is not about counting calories or about some new miracle weight-loss recipe but to take food seriously as a key element to help our body, brain and soul develop their potential, to help fight quite a number of avoidable diseases and to improve our psychological well-being and mental health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What are the Dos and Don’ts in our eating habits? ✓ What are the body mechanisms that make the food we eat impact so directly not only on our physical but also on our mental health?
13:00 – 14:30	<p>Luncheon</p> <p><i>Please help me to get the truth. Which way through the fake news and social media distortions?</i></p> <p>We all know about some famous examples of fake news and deceptions on social media, whether it is the manipulations and interferences during the US presidential campaign in 2016, or how fake news propagated by Facebook helped ignite and spread the murderous anti-Rohingya riots in Myanmar. Beyond some spectacular examples – and we may never know the real impact of fake news on the outcome of the US 2016 presidential election – the flow of distorted</p>

	<p>realities and fake news, distilled insidiously by dubious outfits and individuals using social media platform, is having a deleterious impact on the way our political and social systems function. And this is even more worrisome as surveys show that a very significant percentage of teens and students in different countries cannot distinguish between fake and real news and thus have their perceptions and opinions distorted at the very moment in their lives when many of these opinions and perceptions are being formed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are we able to measure the real negative impact of fake news on our lives and social communities? ✓ Are we equipped to detect fake from real news? Are there some basic tools or methods that we can use in our approach to news? ✓ What can we do to ensure that the fight against fake news will not be a losing battle? ✓ How to draw the line between control of social media contents and censorship? ✓ Could the new tough laws in Germany and France obliging social media platforms to eliminate fake news within 24 hours of their detection lest they would incur very severe fines work and should they be emulated?
14:45 – 15:45	<p><i>Blockchain as the mother of all disruptors?</i></p> <p>Blockchain is still at a very early development stage as a technology but its potential as a powerful disruptor is already very well perceived- even by the businesses and individuals who don't yet have a clear idea of the workings of this technology and of the tremendous scope of its potential applications. Blockchain eliminates the need for third party intermediaries and gives control to organizations and individuals on their information and transactions, thus generating time and cost savings for users – theoretically in conditions of absolute privacy. The first application of the technology has been the distribution channel for the cryptocurrency bitcoin, but many other potential applications have already emerged, especially as a new public blockchain network- the Ethereum – now exists allowing the building of online platforms for a huge number of utilizations in many different industries and business activities from financial trading and insurance, to gaming, digital healthcare, electronic voting, to ensuring critical infrastructure security etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ How will blockchain technology be relevant to whatever is my business? ✓ How could blockchain possibly have an impact on the way I live my life and relate to society? ✓ Is there any possibility that blockchain might after all be “oversold” as a technology?
15:45 – 16:15	<p><i>Networking break</i></p>
16:15 – 17:15	<p><i>Crispr/Gene editing: The Genie is out of the bottle. How are we going to rein it AND leverage it?</i></p> <p>When Chinese scientist He Jiankui revealed in November 2018 that he had “engineered” the birth of the world’s first gene-edited babies, the condemnation</p>

	<p>was almost universal. These unprecedented gene edits will enter the human gene pool, with uncertain consequences. We have taken a massive step into the uncharted territory of gene editing, perhaps to be followed by a Russian geneticist who is planning to edit a gene associated with deafness for five deaf couples. The “genie is out of the bottle” leaving scientists and society to grapple with the crucial issue of whether to ban, or severely discourage through huge penalties, rogue human gene editing. Two international commissions – set up by the World Health Organization and the National Academies of Sciences – have been created to make recommendations on the medical and ethical application of germline editing. But by the time these reports come out, will it be too late?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What does the discovery of CRISPR-Cas9 as a revolutionary gene editing tool means for the healthcare and biotech industry? ✓ Is an international moratorium on new experiments on gene-edited babies warranted or should we continue a dialogue until there is an international consensus on what is permissible in this domain? ✓ Is the concept of “designer babies” a science-fiction fantasy or a genuine medical possibility? ✓ Does the era of genome editing change the way we conceive of life and the accepted notion of what is a human being?
17:30-18:30	<p><i>The anxious entrepreneur: Keeping your mental balance</i></p> <p>We all know about entrepreneurs’ success stories. The other side of the coin in many cases is the unrelenting pressure and the sleepless nights. Quasi-permanent anxiety or even depression is a situation many entrepreneurs – as successful as they may be – have to deal with; and in many cases without even being able to acknowledge it or speak about it. Some surveys show that entrepreneurs are more likely to suffer from mental health problems compared to the population at large.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Of course we all know about the importance of good sleep or even good diet . But what kind of mental discipline can help and how to acquire/achieve it? ✓ What kind of adjustments in business practices/strategies might help? ✓ How important is it to understand the importance of the environment you are in and to realize what changes or adaptations to make?
19:30 – 21:30	<p><i>Meet the Chef and discover local tastes AND... Relax while taking in the view...</i></p>
<p>Saturday 05 October 2019</p>	
08:00 – 9:30	<p><i>Ride, Hike or just golf cart into the wild for Breakfast AND... Some food for thought</i></p>
10:15 – 11:15	<p><i>5G : What a new era of – almost - endless technological capabilities could mean for us?</i></p>

	<p>5G networks are now going live. The first generation of 5G smartphones is already on the market and about 20 or more network operators around the world are rolling out 5G by the end of 2019 or beginning of 2020. 5G technology will serve consumers as well as businesses and is expected to bring IoT applications to a completely new levels given the superior – faster and more reliable with higher bandwidth - connectivity it provides. But beyond IoT and the expanded and faster capabilities that 5G will bring to our smartphones, the technology impact will be felt in the development of autonomous cars, remote surgeries and health monitoring, new Augmented Reality devices and a number of other domains affecting our personal lives, businesses and societies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Beyond the hype accompanying every new technology, will 5G actually prove to be the “technological tsunami” we are being promised? ✓ How can we ensure that 5G will mean more for us than being able to stream whole movies in a few seconds and that we will be capable of using it to improve our lives and enhance our business capabilities?
11:30 – 12:30	<p><i>The US-China Tech war: The winners and the losers</i></p> <p>The US and China are now engaged in a battle for technological supremacy – with tremendous business, economic and strategic stakes involved. Artificial intelligence and Deep Learning, advanced robotics, new materials, 5G are among the technologies that will define the commanding heights of the 21st century economy. While the US still had a clear technological leadership position ten years ago, the picture has become blurred with China now a leader in some domains and the US still leading in other domains. The prospect of a Tech cold war is now an acute one as the Trump administration is engaged in a full-fledged containment policy to slow down or even thwart Beijing’s plans to achieve a prominent position in some key technologically strategic areas. With Washington having drastically tightened regulations on technology transfer and export controls on Chinese investments in the US and on US investments in companies which may have a direct or indirect relationship with companies linked even loosely to the Chinese government, there is today a significant risk for even non-US or non-Chinese companies to become the collateral casualties of this situation, with their technology plans severely disrupted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As China accelerates its technological drive to achieve self-sufficiency in critical domains such as semiconductors, what could a potential technological division of the world between a US and a China center mean? ✓ Who – countries, companies ?- could end up being the winners or the losers in such a situation?
12:45 – 14:15	Luncheon
14:45 – 15:45	<p><i>Emotional intelligence: The secret behind success</i></p> <p>It has now been more than 20 years that Daniel Goleman has published his book “<i>Emotional intelligence, why it can matter more than IQ</i>” which attracted</p>

	<p>worldwide attention as it showed how the ability to understand and manage emotions – one’s and others’ emotions -significantly increases our chances of success. So, while knowledge-based education is still generally seen as a conditions for success, there is now also an emphasis on so-called “soft and transversal” skills that can make us practical and pragmatic, able to adapt to new situations and environments and to lead successfully. It is not anymore only IQ but also EQ that counts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As emotions are our guide to take action but anger or anxiety are not necessarily our best guides. How can we learn to flow with our emotions through awareness to focus and maximize our energy? ✓ What are the qualities we need to nurture to manage our own emotions and – may be even more importantly - to identify and understand other people’s emotions.
15:45– 16:15	Networking break
16:15 – 17:30	<p><i>Learning to think the unthinkable...And to act upon it</i></p> <p>Think about Brexit, or Trump’s election, or even Hong Kong demonstrations against the extradition law. So many established assumptions have proved wrong in the last few years in the economic, political, business or geopolitical domains that it has now become crucial to train our brain and learn that in this “new normal” almost nothing is “unthinkable” and that - as much unpalatable as some possible events or developments might be - they may nevertheless happen with significant implications for us, whatever our activity or the region of the world we live in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What new thinking techniques - or mindset - can help us confront the unthinkable?
17:15 – 18:00	<i>Connecting the dots: A few things to take back home</i>
18:30 – 21:00	<i>Until the next time... A drink, or more, southwest snacks and future plans</i>