

## #1 JOEL BARKER and SCOTT ERICKSON talk with YOU

### Thread 1: EXPLORING THE FUTURE --- 2006

#### Author

**Joel Barker**

Joined: 01 Sep 2005  
Posts: 4

#### Message

Posted: Mon Jan 02, 2006 8:03 pm    Post subject: EXPLORING THE FUTURE --- 2006

Hello to all of you,

As we begin this new year, we have some important decisions to make about the future. Regardless of whether you are a leader in your organization, in the community, in the government, the future calls for a new pattern of thinking.

I wrote an article in Extensor , a publication in the UK, "[EXPLORING THE FUTURE: A NEW PATTERN OF THINKING FOR LEADERS](#)" that provides a reference point for leaders in the 21st Century.

If you have already visited the online FIVE REGIONS OF THE FUTURE exhibit at the Knowledge Gallery here at the Global Dialogue Center, I hope you will.

Happy New Year!

Joel

Joel A. Barker  
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### Thread 2: Special Perspective to Share

## Author

**Joel Barker**

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## Message

Posted: Wed Nov 02, 2005 8:21 pm Post subject: Special Perspective to Share

Recently, I was honored to receive a review of FIVE REGIONS OF THE FUTURE by Edward Cornish, founding president of the [World Future Society](#) and editor of THE FUTURIST. I thought I would share it with you:

Racing Toward a Super-Tech Future?  
By Edward Cornish

Super Tech or Human Tech? In choosing technology, we cast our votes for the world's future.

The world today is moving rapidly toward a global high-tech civilization, but is that the way we want to go?

Maybe not, suggest futurists Joel A. Barker and Scott W. Erickson. At the very least we should think carefully about it, and their new book, Five Regions of the Future, offers a useful a way to go about this task of weighing our technological options.

Barker and Erickson propose that we think of technologies as ecologies--complex systems in which tools and techniques interact with each other in ways that are both mutualistic and competitive. In other words, choosing any given technology means that we are favoring the development of complementary technologies while thwarting the development of others.

So by choosing a particular technology we are, so to speak, voting for a certain kind of world. The automobile, for example, has radically reshaped not only the technologies we use, but also the global economy, world politics, and social relations. Among the countless effects of the automobile are today's concerns about soaring gasoline prices and the rise of Arab terrorism.

Today, we are choosing "Super Tech" technologies, and therefore a world dominated by Super Tech, but we could choose among four other technological ecologies (or "TechnEcologies"), which Barker and Erickson call Limits Tech, Local Tech, Nature Tech, and Human Tech.

Much of Five Regions of the Future is devoted to describing these five technological ecologies, but they may be summarized in five brief scenarios for potential developments in the decades ahead.

[Read FULL REVIEW](#)

Your thoughts?

Joel Barker

## Thread 3: INNOVATION --- What YOU can learn from biological ecosystems

### Author

**Joel Barker**

Joined: 01 Sep 2005  
Posts: 4

### Message

Posted: Sat Oct 01, 2005 9:10 pm    Post subject: INNOVATION --- What YOU can learn from biological ecosystems

Dear friends,

Recently, I spoke with senior executive editor of Optimize Magazine, Patricia Brown, about innovation. We talked about what CIOs can learn about its parallels to biological ecosystems. These parallels can apply to all organizations and industries, so I thought I would share them with all of you too.

Joel Barker

Q: Why should we rethink technology now?

JAB: Five Regions of the Future presents a new premise for technology. We should view technology not based on its origins, which is what we do today, but based on its applications. I believe technologies, which can vary from superconducting cable to stem cells to fusion power, are beginning to cluster in technological ecosystems. Certain technologies interact well with each other, while others may function ineffectively or inappropriately together. For the first time in history, we have substantially competing technological ecosystems.

These systems are now beginning to become self-organizing, mainly due to computer technology which allows the patterning, processing, and control of the mechanisms of information.

Q: What can we all learn about innovation and future technologies from your observations?

A: The first rule of innovation is to get outside your box or ecosystem. Leave the paradigm you know, and go to alternative paradigms. Go to places that have metaphorical similarities, but in fact are quite different. Look to see how they're solving problems so you can learn something about solving your own. Think about why we innovate. We initiate the innovation process primarily to solve problems.

My second recommendation is to learn from the biological ecosystems model. In an ecosystem, from its center to the edges, most of us would expect to see the highest rate of breakthrough innovation near the center, where competition is fiercest. We have been taught that competition is Darwinian—it rewards the fittest. However, this notion is wrong. Mother Nature innovates most radically at the edge of one ecosystem, where it bumps up against another ecosystem. We call this space "the verge."

Q: What are the benefits of going to "the verge?"

A: When you go to the verge, you bump into things you ordinarily wouldn't collide with. In this space we see the highest rate of paradigm shifts and innovation. Conversely, in the center of an ecosystem where competition is highest, breakthrough ideas generally fail. The only thing you can do safely in the center is incrementally innovate.

Take a look at Apple Computer. It went to the verge and created a breakthrough innovation. The computer industry bumped up against the music industry to create the iPod.

The edge of an ecosystem is also the safest place to try radical innovation. If Apple had failed with the iPod, it would not have hurt its computer business.

Q: What else can we learn from nature?

A: The biological term "mutualism" is the most powerful relationship in nature. It says you are different than I am; but together we are going to form a partnership to combine our differences to allow us to solve problems neither of us can solve alone. You could be the great mutualizer in your organization, but too often, I don't think we see our roles that way. The key will be the combination of the differences; that combination is what's going to open the lock to the problem.

See article at [Microsoft Executive Circle](#)

## Thread 4: A personal perspective on Five Regions

### What is your favorite REGION OF THE FUTURE?

SUPER TECH - BIG is beautiful!	<input type="radio"/>	0%	[ 0 ]
LIMITS TECH - Efficiency is beautiful!	<input type="radio"/>	18%	[ 2 ]
LOCAL TECH - Small and local is beautiful!	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	45%	[ 5 ]
NATURE TECH - Nature is beautiful!	<input type="radio"/>	18%	[ 2 ]
HUMAN TECH - We are beautiful!	<input type="radio"/>	18%	[ 2 ]

Total Votes : 11

### Author

**Joel Barker**

Joined: 01 Sep 2005

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## Message

Posted: Thu Sep 01, 2005 8:18 pm Post subject: A personal perspective on Five Regions

### Welcome to all of you that stop by!

I'm looking forward to having an opportunity to talk with you and begin this very important conversation. To get us started, I wanted to share a few thoughts with you about the FIVE REGIONS OF THE FUTURE to get you thinking.

First, I strongly encourage you to visit the FIVE REGIONS exhibit at the [Knowledge Gallery](#). It provides a great introductory summary of the Five Regions to help set the stage for our dialogue. *Go see it, if you haven't ----then come back so we can talk.*

### WHAT IS FIVE REGIONS OF THE FUTURE Book ABOUT?

This book is about choice. There are five regions of the future, each shaped by its own technologies. Which region do you want to live in? Which region do you want your children to live in? These choices will shape the next 100 years.

### CURRENT REALITIES TO CONSIDER:

- ➡ We live in times where waves of the future keep rolling in on us and we can feel overwhelmed by the options.
- ➡ Technology seduces us with wonderful promises
- ➡ We can all think back just 10 years and see that what was impossible then, we are doing easily today.
  - o Internet
  - o Cell phone cameras
  - o Hybrid cars
  - o Stem cell treatments
- ➡ Technology is beginning to run our lives, but we should be running technology.
- ➡ In a sense, we are at a technology turning point much like we were at the end of the 1700's and the early 1900's. But at those times, we didn't know enough about the long term effects of technology, so we let the technology determine our future.
- ➡ It is time to examine our technologies, take inventory, and then decide for ourselves where we want to go with our technology.

**In the Knowledge Gallery, you had an introduction to each of the FIVE REGIONS, here's a question for you? (SEE THE POLL)**

I'll be looking for your comments!

Joel