

TRENDS SHAKER

Newsletter #49

The monthly newsletter for socio-cultural trends

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The metaverse, a virtual world that fires the imagination?

Tomorrow, a computer, an internet connection and a virtual reality headset will be all you need to join the metaverse. In this **immersive 3D world**, we'll be able to play, improve our mind and learn, but also meet people and buy things or participate in meetings in grandiose offices and experience something very similar to real-life meetings. To join this virtual world, each user will have to pick an avatar which will faithfully represent them or give them a dream appearance. In this world, we'll do what we like, free of the constraints of the real world. **For the moment, metaverses (there are several of them) are developed by video games** like Minecraft, Roblox or Fortnite.

Metaverse

[*metɔvɜːs*]

is a portmanteau word from “**meta**” and “**universe**” meaning “**beyond the universe**”.

Accessible without admission fees, the existing metaverses require a digital wallet which is used to log on but also to spend cryptocurrencies and carry NFTs¹.

In this way, you can enhance your avatar for a few dollars and even invest in real estate. But that's where prices climb fast: **in 2021, a plot in The Sandbox reached the record figure of 4.3 million dollars.** In these **parallel worlds which are governed by no laws, setting rules is already necessary**, particularly to put a stop to the harassment practices which are ubiquitous in the video games universe.

According to a report by the Anti-Defamation League published **in 2019, 65 % of players have already experienced “severe harassment”** (physical threats or sustained, regular harassment). Highly addictive, these “fool's paradises”, which make the most frequent users gradually lose the notion of space and time, also require safeguards if the return to reality is not to be a difficult one. **Steven Spielberg's film Ready player One alerts us to the dangers of these parallel worlds where virtual life has more value than the real one.**

At a time when the Gafam (headed by Facebook) are investing billions in the metaverses to take control over them, the challenge for these actors is to anticipate the standards which will win out: those of Meta (Facebook), Epic Games (creator of Fortnite) or outsiders from South Korea or China? Whatever happens, the digital world is already preparing for the development of metaverses.

That's why Meta and the Simplon school are going to launch in several French schools a “metaverse academy” after the 2022 summer holidays to train developers specialising in immersive technologies.

Keeping in mind that **digital today accounts for 4% of our CO₂ emissions** and that the large-scale development of metaverses calls for **a computing power one thousand times greater than now**, you wonder how we'll succeed in halving our greenhouse gas emissions ten years from now, in line with IPCC recommendations.

Sources:

En 2030, voilà à quoi notre journée de travail pourrait ressembler dans le métavers | Les métavers, ça sert à quoi en fait ? | Au fait, qui dirige le métavers ? | Le métavers, c'est pour les riches ? | Le métavers est-il éthique ? | Le métavers, et si c'était que du bullshit ? | Le métavers est-il bon pour notre santé mentale ? | Le métavers peut-il être écologique ? | Meta s'allie à Simplon pour créer une « académie du métavers » fin 2022

¹ NFTs (non-fungible tokens) are digital tokens which let you buy unique virtual objects (like clothes for your avatar) while securing the protocol via a blockchain.



The UK launches an “HPI” visa to attract top graduates

Source
<https://www.lepoint.fr>

With Brexit, many workers have left the UK. **To attract the best-qualified profiles**, the country has launched a **visa programme aimed at graduates of the 50 top schools in the world**. The very restricted list published by the British government includes **Harvard, MIT and Paris Sciences & Lettres (the only French university on the list)**. Baptised “HPI” (**H**igh **P**otential **I**ndividual), **this new visa opens the way to a two-year stay on British soil for individuals with a bachelor’s or master’s degree and three years for doctorate holders**. Applications for this visa, which costs 715 pounds sterling (or about 840 euros), cannot be submitted more than five years after the end of the studies. For their application to be accepted, candidates must also provide evidence of an adequate English level.

Before the pandemic, the idea of leaving Tokyo was almost inconceivable for businesses. **But in 2021, departures from Tokyo outnumbered arrivals for the first time**.

This is because **businesses have been rethinking their working habits and are starting to relocate their headquarters to the country**.

The Pasona group, leader of the Japanese human resources sector, announced that it was going to move its headquarters to Awaji island, in western Japan, and relocate 1200 employees by May 2024. While life on the island is less expensive, the company did not change the salary of the relocated employees. On the other hand, it had to overcome challenges in all areas, from connectivity to the number of available places in the schools and hospitals of this island of 130,000 inhabitants. It also bought plots of land to build apartments for its employees. Challenges that more and more Japanese businesses are now ready to meet.



In Japan, businesses are leaving Tokyo for the country

Source
<https://www.courrierinternational.com>

In the United States, Google Maps is now indicating air quality

Source
<https://positivr.fr>

Google Maps has rolled out a **new functionality for displaying nearby air quality**. By clicking “Map details” then “Air quality”, users can view the recently measured air quality by means of a colour code.

Only available in the United States, this new service uses the data supplied by the **Environment Protection Agency and the PurpleAir network**, whose atmospheric sensors measure the quantity of pollutants present in the air.



Sun'Agri is installing solar panels in fields

Source

<https://business.lesechos.fr>



A subsidiary of the **Sun'R group, a developer of photovoltaic plants and green electricity retailer, Sun'Agri claims to be the world leader in "dynamic" solar sharing.** In concrete terms, the company **installs and controls mobile solar panels in wine-producing and tree-growing estates.** These tilting panels, installed 5.50 m above the ground, help to **protect plantations against intense heat or frost hazards, thus saving harvests.** Producing renewable energy without sacrificing land, **"the panel adjustment device always gives priority to the crops' need for light"** explains Antoine Nogier, group founder and president. The device therefore reacts in response to temperature and humidity, but also according to the plant being cultivated. To develop it, the business has invested nearly 20 million euros in research and set up almost a dozen experimental stations on small areas of 1000 square metres.

As part of the European mission **"Regenerating our ocean and waters by 2030"**, **Aix-Marseille University** organised an event on June 13-14 which featured a range of activities for understanding the damage caused by human action on waters. On this occasion, the university showcased its **Ocean Sciences Institute**, created in 2021. Grouping together **14 laboratories**, the Institute partners with Ifremer, CNRS, Collège de France and Ecole Centrale Marseille.

Its ultimate objective is to train a new generation of researchers and engineers, but also legal experts and managers to meet the huge challenges of the ocean environment.

To achieve this goal, several flagship projects have been launched with a focus on the three major objectives set by the EU: **the elimination of pollution, the decarbonisation of the blue economy and the restoration of marine ecosystems.**

Aix-Marseille University works alongside the EU to conserve the oceans

Source

<https://madeinmarseille.net>



Newtopia, the production company imagining a new world

Source:

<https://www.telerama.fr>

Long active in the fight against climate deregulation, the actress-producer **Marion Cotillard**, the director **Cyril Dion** and the founder of "On est prêt" (We're ready) **Magali Payen** announced from the Cannes Festival the creation of Newtopia. This **production company wants to produce stories which rethink the future.**

Far from apocalyptic Mad Maxes, Newtopia aims to **create works which imagine "a desirable, ecologically sustainable and socially fair future".**



Halfway between dystopias and utopias, several "newtopias" are already in production such as **Le géant Bakélite (The Bakelite Giant)**, a short by the freediver Julie Gautier, **Le grand vertige (Feeling Dizzy)**, the first full-length feature by Cyril Dion and **Françoise**, a mini-series inspired by the life of Françoise d'Eaubonne, the mother of ecofeminism.

Footprint: “Fanny Auger from Nature & Découvertes: how can a brand reconcile man with nature?”



In this episode of Footprint, Fanny Auger, director of Nature & Découvertes, **tells us the story of one of the first businesses to obtain the very demanding B Corps label.** Founded in 1990 by the creators of Pier Import, a couple of explorers very aware of the earth’s fragility, **Nature & Découvertes is a pioneer of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).** **The first French company to generate a sustainable development footprint in 1993 and a carbon footprint in 2007, the company, via its foundation, pays back 10% of its net profits to biodiversity protection and nature education projects.** Its commitments have led it to reinforce its audits with its suppliers and modify its internal organisation. **Today, the company is in the process of creating a shared governance, where each department includes a CSR ambassador.**

TECH / INNOVATIONS

Today, 30% of the French rail network is not electrified and 1200 power cars linking medium-sized and small towns still run on diesel. To decarbonise rail transport, Alstom launched as early as 2014 the design of a hydrogen train intended to replace locomotives and thermal railcars.

With a large-scale rollout in Germany this summer and in France by 2025, **the Coradia will prevent the emission of 700 tonnes of CO₂ per year compared with a diesel train.**

Its energy is produced by a high-power (430 kW) hydrogen cell powered by the oxygen in the air and by hydrogen stored at 350 bars on the train roof. This hydrogen cell is also supported by a 220 kWh battery partly powered by braking energy recovery, which supplies the electricity needed during acceleration peaks. As they only discharge water, regional hydrogen trains are much quieter than trains pulled by diesel locomotives. Between 25 and 30% more expensive than a diesel train, the Coradia nonetheless has much lower maintenance costs.



The hydrogen train is being rolled out across Europe

Source

<https://planete.lesechos.fr>

© Unsplash - Marko Mucimic

Towards a sustainable food supply?

Sources

www.lepoint.fr

www.lesechos.fr

<https://www.bluewin.ch>

What will the agriculture of the future look like? What shall we be eating tomorrow? Researchers, but also entrepreneurs and citizens, are taking an increasingly close interest in these questions. As an example, Gourmey has created a foie gras designed from cells taken from an egg to avoid the widely-criticised force-feeding of fowl. Innovafeed feeds trout with insects to build a more sustainable food system.

Paris-Saclay University has created a chair dedicated to the “Cooking of the future” in order to develop innovations combining gastronomic pleasure, nutritional health and eco-responsible cooking.

Supported by the Les Mousquetaires-Agromousquetaires-Intermarché consortium, researchers are working for example on reducing additives in biscuits for children. **In Switzerland, citizens are also taking an interest in these questions, as shown by the brand-new “Citizen’s Assembly for a Swiss food policy” which is looking into a more sustainable food system.**

E-health: **Sanofi** creates a digital accelerator in Paris

Source

<https://www.usine-digitale.fr>

To take its place among the leaders in **digital health**, the pharmaceutical group has just launched its **“first digital accelerator”** in Paris. This accelerator, which aims to **transform the practice of medicine through AI** brings together 75 people, which should rise to 300 two years from now. As a first step, they will be in charge of responding to the unattended needs of patients suffering from atopic dermatitis (inflammation of the skin) in France, Italy and Spain, via a platform currently under development.

The accelerator will be supported by an **“accelerator academy”** dedicated to employee upskilling and by the international organisation **Women in Tech** in order to fill the deficit of women in the digital sector.

©Unsplash - Valeria Smirnova

Amazon launches its drone delivery service at Lockeford, Californiae

Source

<https://www.futura-sciences.com>

©Unsplash - Gautier Salles

After three years of delay, Amazon's drone delivery service baptised Prime Air is at last operational. After building more than two dozen prototypes, Amazon finally settled upon **MK27-2, a hexagonally shaped drone bristling with sensors, which can make unmanned trips and avoid static and mobile obstacles in the air and on the ground.** This will actually mean that the drone will descend into the customer's garden to release the package. Apartment delivery is not yet announced and the service is limited to the town of Lockeford in California for the time being. The system could come into general use, but **its rollout in France remains unlikely without a major change in regulations.**

STUDIES OF THE MONTH

How the “grandes écoles” are adapting to the climate challenge

Sources

<https://azickia.org> • <https://business-cool.com> • <https://www-novethic-fr.cdn.ampproject.org>

The climate has become an increasingly pressing issue for students. At **Polytechnique** for example, **during the latest diploma award ceremony, students spoke out to warn about the climate emergency and called for reduced energy consumption.** And they are not the only ones to want change.

69% In 2020, 69% of French students wanted to receive more training in environmental challenges as part of their course.

However, the same proportion heard very little about this topic during their lessons. The latest classification of the “grandes écoles” and universities most engaged in the ecological and social transition, carried out by Les Echos Start and Change Now, could well lead educational institutions to reconsider their stance. **To attract talents, universities and “grandes écoles” now have to offer training aligned with the realities**

of ecological and societal changes.

On this basis, the **“Ecole des Mines”** has **completely revised its teaching programme to address climate change from every angle: industrial, environmental, economic and social.**

For its part, the ESCP Business School is offering a compulsory master 1 course on planetary limits and another on energy-climate challenges and how to get an understanding of them as a decision-maker in a business. The school also decided to make its Energy, Business, Climate & Geopolitics course free of access to share research on climate-related topics with as many people as possible. With this end in mind, Matthieu Dardaillon, president and co-founder of Ticket for Change, created **the collective “Grandes Écoles de la Transition”, whose objective is to create a meta-school to unite the existing actors while giving greater clarity to the training offering.**



The psychological distress of young people has never been as marked

Sources

<https://www.lemonde.fr>
<https://www-axa-com>

Severe depressions, generalised anxiety disorder, development of psychoses, suicidal thoughts, etc., the wave of student psychological distress has not receded since the start of Covid. **“We’re dealing with young people suffering from multiple trauma, who are developing during a period in which terrorist attacks, Covid and war in Europe have followed in quick succession, and who are coping with the climate crisis”**, points out Delphine Guérin, doctor and director of Picardie-Jules-Verne University. **AToday, the university health services are overwhelmed**, despite

the introduction of the counselling cheque and the hiring of 80 student counsellors; two measures which have not been very effective partly because of the low salary paid to participating counsellors. For Rachel Bocher, head of the psychiatry department at Nantes University Hospital, **“a major mental health plan” needs to be set up to cope with the extent of the distress**. In France and across the world, experts are calling for a more global approach to mental health, which is becoming a true quality of life barometer.



HRx YOUTH

The Obama Foundation is launching a grant of 100 M\$ for future high-ranking civil servants

Sources

<https://afriquinfos.com>
<https://www.obama.org>

Airbnb’s CEO Brian Chesky has donated ten million dollars to the Obama Foundation to finance scholarships for students intending to work in public service. Baptised **The Voyager Scholarship**, this grant **offers students financial aid of 50,000 dollars to alleviate the burden of university debt, but also a stipend of 10,000 dollars to finance a summer trip and a network of mentors to support them**. Because **“travel inspires curiosity and co-operation”**, declared Brian Chesky, scholarship holders will also receive an Airbnb credit for the sum of 2000 dollars per year for 10 years after graduation. Initially, the scholarship will be awarded to 100 students of American nationality or permanent residents who are beginning a four-year cycle in an American university.



Remote-working between friends or colleagues is more stimulating

Sources

<https://start.lesechos.fr>
<https://start.lesechos.fr/travailler-mieux>

During the confinement, in order to avoid social isolation and finding themselves face to face with their screen, some chose to leave for the country to remote-work between friends. **This form of remote working helped them to interact with friends, stay in contact with the real world and be more fulfilled, but also be more productive**. The **Naboo start-up** understood this perfectly. Created in 2021, **Naboo offers employees and managers the possibility to get close to nature in one of 150 France-wide “villas” for remote-working together**. Situated close to the Paris region (Perche, Normandy, Burgundy, etc.), these large-sized houses are **accessible by train and adapted for collaborative work**: broadband wifi haut, work stations, separate bedrooms, communal spaces, etc. Today, **Naboo is supporting twenty or so businesses for a total of a thousand employees**, and ultimately plans to be able to “mix” the remote workers of several businesses together.



TRENDS SHAKER

Live #2

LISTEN, LISTEN AGAIN AND
SHARE THE BROADCAST!



“Entrepreneurship, the new grail for young people?”

Recorded on June 15 at the Viva Technology show, the second **Trends Shaker Live** – the broadcast devised by **ENGIE and So good** – focussed on a **new mass trend with young people: entrepreneurship**.

“A whole generation wants to get involved”

says **Alain Asquin**, national coordinator for student entrepreneurship. And for these young people looking to create a business, “it’s really a personal quest”, adds **Perle Perriet**, founder of She Can Code, a start-up which organises computer code learning workshops for teenagers between 13 and 18. Driven by the urge to change the world and therefore facing complex challenges, **these young people need to be trained, but also supported by businesses**. At the **Mines Paris school**, “**entrepreneurship is no longer an option for a few dozen students, it’s now part of the course**”, points out **Valérie Archambault**, deputy research director in charge of industrial partnerships. “This trend responds to the expectations of students, but also of businesses who are asking us to train entrepreneur engineers”, she explains. But attracting young people into businesses, and especially holding on to them, is a big challenge. Because young people are more committed to projects than to businesses. That’s why **at ENGIE, “there are intrapreneurship programmes which enable employees to develop projects in the same way as start-ups”**, says **Stéphane Quéré**, director of ecosystems and expertise within ENGIE Research & Innovation.

#3

WE’LL BE MEETING UP AFTER THE SUMMER HOLIDAY

for the third Trends Shaker Live, which will attempt to understand **why gender stereotypes still persist in the world of work**.



ENGIE is committed to promoting positive-impact entrepreneurship, including through various **partnerships** with Pépité France, Mines Paris, the Junior-Entrepreneurs movement and Intrapreneurs4good with BNP Paribas.

TRENDS SHAKER

Live #2

3 questions to **Stéphane Quéré**, director of ecosystems and expertise within ENGIE Research & Innovation.

You work within the Research & Innovation department. How do these two worlds meet and collaborate within ENGIE?

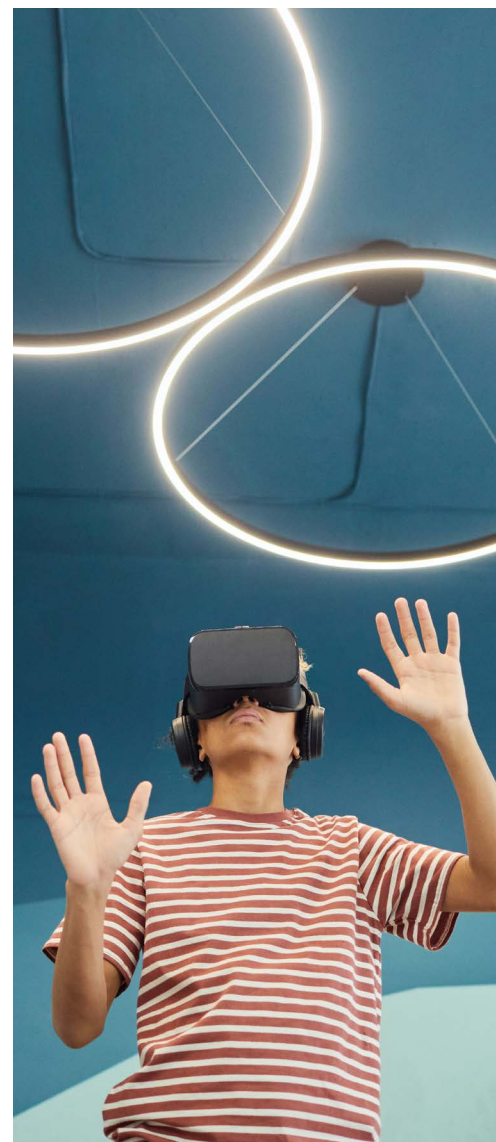
If there are two worlds, they function very well together at ENGIE. **Our research centres bring together leading-edge experts who collaborate with start-ups, both to test the developed technologies which are ready to be put on the market and to meet a technical need of an operational entity.** Our four main research laboratories – sited at Paris, Lyon, Belgium and Singapore – are very open to start-ups and a range of partners.

You are director of ecosystems and expertise at ENGIE, can you explain your tasks to us?

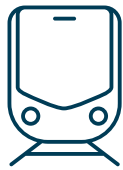
We have several tasks. **Internally, we promote and drive the innovation culture in the group.** One of the outcomes is the **Innovation Trophies which enable any employee to propose an innovative project which can afterwards be developed via our incubation programme.** This year, we have had more than 400 projects sponsored by nearly 2000 people. **We also encourage collaboration between start-ups and group employees through partnerships with incubators and European programmes.** We also make calls for projects at the request of an operational entity to go out and find the start-up which can meet a particular technical need. **Thanks to this proximity between start-ups and group employees, we are reinforcing innovation culture.** We also have a role as promoter of all innovative initiatives, particularly via collaboration with start-ups, whether we're talking about those working within a commercial venture or those we're investing in. That's the reason why start-ups come to see us to develop their technologies with us. Lastly, we have a **role of expertise in talents.** At a time when the energy transition has become the hot topic in most businesses and many start-ups, **our task is to identify the talents who are working on this topic, attract them into our ecosystem and hold on to them.**

Has acting in an ecosystem to innovate and grow become indispensable?

Yes, because creativity is not a solitary exercise. **To have ideas and enrich them, you need to interact with others.** And what counts is interacting with people who are different, that's how you move forward.



DID YOU KNOW?



Germany is launching train tickets at a single price of 9 €

<https://www.lemonde.fr>

Faced with the steep rise in oil prices and the need to reduce its dependence on Russian hydrocarbons, **Germany has launched the “9-euro ticket” for public transport, covering both urban networks and regional trains.** The measure, which will cost the taxpayer 2.5 billion euros, will run for three months.



Faguo launches trainers made of recycled tennis balls

<https://positivr.fr>

Alder. This is the name of Faguo’s new trainer, whose sole is made of recycled tennis balls and rubber. To reduce the environmental impact of this new model, the Portuguese brand recovers used balls from the tennis clubs located close to its manufacturing workshops. **Up to three pairs of soles can be made from just one ball.**



A French business introduces time off for miscarriage

<https://www.ladn.eu>

Critizr, a small-and medium-sized business specialising in customer relations, **is offering its entire workforce five days leave to cope with perinatal bereavement.** An initiative which follows on from the draft law proposed by the deputy Paula Forteza, who is campaigning for better medical care to recover from this traumatising experience.