

10 March 2021

# Key takeaways

# 17th European Trend Day

Future Meetups: How We'll Get Together From Now On

Summary: Maria Schmeiser, GDI

«We have too much  
information and too little  
direction.»

**David Bosshart**  
**Author, Speaker, Executive Advisor, GDI**

# David Bossart, GDI

Many of the developments that gathered pace during the pandemic were already under way before it. While there are more and more of us on the planet, we are increasingly **distancing ourselves from each other**. This way of being "alone together" is new: we may be with more and more people, but our encounters are less and less meaningful.

The **pandemic is primarily an infodemic**, in which we have too much information and too little direction. So much is happening all around us that we are becoming disoriented. We are local beings and the increasing use of technology is enabling us to retreat back to our caves again. From the safety of Zoom windows we look out into the world. Our souls, however, are becoming global.

Surveillance and imitation of others' behaviour, rather than innovation and differentiation, are on the rise. The **social recession** is far deeper than the economic one. Without ideas, we are all dead.



«Loneliness is not only the lack of contact with friends and family, it is the feeling of being disconnected.»

**Noreena Hertz**  
**Economist and Author of «The Lonely Century»**

# Noreena Hertz, Economist and Author

Today, we are in the midst of a **loneliness crisis**. The pandemic has made it worse, but it has also made us more conscious of the problem. Loneliness is not just the lack of contact with friends and family, it is the feeling of being disconnected.

Even before the pandemic, people were doing less together, and more and more of us were living alone. Our cities are designed for cars, not people. Important public infrastructure, like libraries or parks, have received less and less public funding since the financial crisis. And they *are* important, because only through interactions with others can we learn the basics of democracy.

**A loneliness economy is emerging.** Today, for example, you can rent friends for a few hours. Tips for preventing loneliness include eating together, even with your colleagues, when you can. Be more present when you meet friends, and support local shops and businesses. They are important places in which to meet people.



«The distribution of space  
is what is going  
to boost the economy  
after Covid-19.»

**Damiano Cerrone**  
Consultant, DEMOS Helsinki

# Damiano Cerrone, Demos Helsinki

After each economic transition, we design a new city, so it's important to have strategies for just and fair urban development. Smart cities are not a solution, as the withdrawal of big tech companies from smart-city projects demonstrates. The optimisation of cities often leads to an unfair distribution of space between people and infrastructure. **Distribution of space** is what is going to boost the economy after Covid-19. Because the economy only works if everyone is a part of it.

## **Equality and mobility are the keys to success.**

European cities are losing their diversity of offers, functions, services and facilities, yet it is diversity that creates value. More companies need to initiate projects whose key aim is to enhance the beauty of cities, rather than boost the company's bottom line. Success is its own reward in a revitalised city. We need more encounters to create innovation, identity and community. That is why Nordic cities are so successful. The communities in them are very strong and residents can easily take an active role in city planning.



«There is a connection  
between students' networks  
and learning success.»

**Christoph Stadtfeld**  
**Associate Professor for Social Networks, ETH Zürich**



# Christoph Stadtfeld, ETH Zürich

For students, the number of social interactions they have influences how well they get through their studies. The most important social processes occur in the first month at school or college. Most friendships and study relationships are based on regular interactions.

There is a connection between **students' networks and learning success**. The most successful students are often those who are embedded in groups. During the pandemic, there was less interaction and collaboration between students, and their mental health was adversely affected as a result. Symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress and loneliness all increased.

Social **relationships are highly relevant to our well-being**, health and success. They are often formed in casual interactions. Digital media offer various ways of maintaining social interaction during the pandemic.



«Women, in particular, use  
social media to do good.»

**Tino Krause**  
**Country Director DACH, Facebook**

# Tino Krause, Facebook

The need for exchange has intensified during the pandemic, illustrated by the increase in the number of Facebook users: 50 per cent more messages were sent, and voice messages and video calls doubled.

Two million Swiss people joined Facebook groups during the pandemic – for example, to help neighbours. Women, in particular, use social media to do good: 64 per cent of all fundraising campaigns in Germany are started on Facebook by women. **Video commerce and discovery commerce** will digitalise TV shopping.



«E-racing will eventually  
beat Formula One into  
second place on the sports  
and economic podium.»

**Monisha Kaltenborn**  
**CEO, Racing Unleashed**

# Monisha Kaltenborn, Racing Unleashed

Motorsport at the highest level is not accessible to most people. Racing Unleashed opens up **access to motorsport for all** with its e-sports platform. The importance of e-sports events as international sporting competitions is indisputable. Fortnite is a pioneer in this field. The final of the 2019 Fortnite World Cup was watched by more than 2.3 million people. By comparison, the well-established US Open drew an audience of 2.75 million.

E-racing is not far off surpassing Formula One's audience figures and will eventually beat it into second place on the sports and economic podium. But it is not an either-or – the two **worlds are complementary**.



«When it comes to festivals,  
VR is not as good as  
reality, but it's pretty good  
and a good alternative.»

**Salar Shahna**  
President, World XR Forum

# Salar Shahna, World XR Forum

The pandemic has ushered us into a completely virtual world. Virtual reality (VR) allows us to experience **physicality during the pandemic**. Soon, there will also be virtual Olympic Games. Parties and concerts in the virtual world are not a replacement for real concerts, but the experience is nevertheless a good alternative. Education and teaching are also increasingly taking place virtually. Learning through experience becomes possible in a new way. A school class can virtually go to the Moon while learning about the Apollo landing.

A VR meeting is more enjoyable than one on Zoom, because people's voices are reproduced depending on their location in the room. VR is now much more sophisticated and detailed than augmented reality (AR) and holograms. One negative effect of VR's success is that tech companies are increasingly using our data to improve their products. Also, people are fed up that they can't use VR on their smartphones. Once Apple solves this, we will see VR really break through.



«We will explore new  
models for museums:  
interaction, immersion,  
participation.»

Sarah Kenderdine

Professor for Digital Museology, École polytechnique fédérale  
de Lausanne (EPFL)



# Sarah Kenderdine, EPFL

VR machines are prostheses for our senses. We will **explore new models for museums**: interaction, immersion, participation. Intangible cultural heritage, such as rites and dances, can also be experienced with VR.

We should create interfaces between the physical and virtual worlds that promote **social exchange**. In most museums, only a fraction of the collection is on display. The large number of objects that are not on display can be made accessible to interested people through digitalisation.

The **future of experimental museology** rests on three pillars: storage (data can be stored and accessed in increasingly space-efficient ways); access from anywhere (a museum visit is possible digitally or virtually, from anywhere in the world, without destroying precious cultural sites through mass tourism); and computational museology (a framework that transforms the evaluation and experience of artefacts).



«Work does not equal  
office.»

**Fredrik Carlström**  
**Founder and Creative Director, Another Structure**

# Fredrik Carlström, Another Structure

The office has not changed much since the 19th century. And even when we talk about the **office of the future**, it's mostly just versions of an office. But work does not equal office. Many real-estate developers have not been innovative enough in recent years. Today, it is not enough to rent four walls to someone. Instead of optimising rental income, property-owners should offer a platform of services, which will, in turn, increase the value of a property. Satisfied clients are willing to pay more.

Rather than determining how people should work, we should ask ourselves how we can **create the best conditions for innovation** – and then build structures to do so. With rents falling during the pandemic, more artists can move back to the cities, because they can afford to do so again.



«Overusing Zoom is exactly  
what we needed.»

**Camilla Pang**  
Author

# Camilla Pang, Author

When you're autistic, **humans are even more confusing** than you'd think. Women, in particular, often disguise their autism. Autism symptoms have mostly been described by men.

Life can be exhausting. I needed a system to survive. My book, "Understanding Humans", helped me with that. Overusing Zoom was exactly what we needed. It highlighted the limitations of technology. Zoom taught us how important life is beyond the algorithms. It's about giving someone faith that they can do something.

