

## **Social credit system put to use in China**

China said it will begin applying its so-called social credit system to flights and trains and stop people who have committed misdeeds from taking such transport for up to a year.

*Source: Reuters*

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## **Person from the future**



Name:

Age:

Story:

## **Genetic discrimination**

Door will open to genetic discrimination if act protecting Canadians is overturned, genomics expert says. Canada's Genetic Non-Discrimination Act is being challenged by the province of Quebec.

*Source: CBC*

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## **Minister for loneliness in UK**

The U.K. has appointed a minister of loneliness to tackle what Prime Minister Theresa May calls a "sad reality of modern life" for many U.K. citizens.

*Source: NPR*

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## **Machine-readable laws**

New Zealand explores machine-readable laws to transform government. Legislation-as-code might be the key to kick-starting digital reform.

*Source: apolitical*

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## **Decrease in children's motor skills**

Children are increasingly finding it hard to hold pens and pencils because of an excessive use of technology, senior paediatric doctors have warned. An overuse of touchscreen phones and tablets is preventing children's finger muscles from developing sufficiently to enable them to hold a pencil correctly, they say.

*Source: Guardian*

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## **Free genetic testing**

Estonia has launched the first stage of a national state-sponsored genetic testing and information service, which will seek to help residents minimize their risk of illness based on their DNA.

*Source: Futurism*

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## **Rage room**

A leisure activity, where you break and smash things in a room for fun and to alleviate stress and anger. Available now also in Finland.

*Source: Vihahuone*

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## **Malnutrition of the elderly**

More than 1 million older people are at risk of “withering away in their own homes” as a result of malnutrition caused by social isolation and cuts to public services, a cross-party group of peers and MPs claims.

*Source: BBC*

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## **Salad vending machines**

A vending machine that serves fresh salads, restocked daily, with kale, spinach, quinoa, and other vegetables, grains, and fruit layered neatly in glass jars.

*Source: FastCo*

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## Telegram Open Network

The popular encrypted messaging app Telegram will launch its own Blockchain platform and cryptocurrency, Telegram Open Network (TON).

TON would aid those under oppressive governments, since they would be able to transfer money natively through the messaging app. This could serve to break the state's control over citizens' money.

*Source: Cointelegraph*

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## **Sustainable Lego pieces**

The first Lego pieces made from plant-based plastic sourced from sugar cane will go on sale this year, the company has announced. The 85-year-old Danish toymaker said production has begun on a range of Lego botanical elements or pieces such as leaves, bushes and trees, made entirely from plant-based plastic.

*Source: Guardian*

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## **Plastic free aisle**

A plastic-free aisle was launched in Amsterdam by environmental campaign group A Plastic Planet and Dutch supermarket Ekoplaza. The aisle enables shoppers to choose from 700 everyday products that are free from plastic packaging.

*Source: Guardian*

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## **Ad-supported self-driving vehicles**

Thousands of Uber and Lyft cars will be outfitted with video-ad screens that cannot be turned off and that can be only “near” muted. The ad company Vugo has contracts with about 3,500 New York City black-car drivers to install the screens.

*Source: NY Post*

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## **Shopping centre for recycled goods**

In Sweden a shopping centre is dedicated entirely to repaired and up-cycled goods.

*Source: WEF*

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## **Community fridge**

A fridge on the street, where people and businesses can leave spare edible food and people who want or need food can take it.

*Source: People's Fridge*

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## **Weakening of the Gulf Stream**

The Atlantic meridional overturning circulation —a system of ocean currents in the North Atlantic— has weakened by 15 per cent since the mid-twentieth century.

*Source: Nature*

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## **Antibiotic-resistant superbugs in chicken**

Chickens for sale in Britain's supermarkets are showing record levels of superbugs resistant to some of the strongest antibiotics. The results are concerning because resistance to antibiotics among livestock can easily affect resistance among humans, rendering vital medicines ineffective against serious diseases.

*Source: Guardian*

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## **Pet cloning**

Barbra Streisand had her (now dead) dog named Samantha cloned — not once, but into two (living) dogs. Viagen Pets out of Texas charges about \$50,000 per cloned animal.

*Source: BigThink*

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## **Leather bags and jackets from human skin**

A fashion design student is currently working on a collection of leather bags and jackets made from the late Alexander McQueen's skin by using McQueen's DNA to grow human skin in a lab.

*Source: Quartz*

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## **Facial recognition based surveillance in China**

China, unburdened by concerns about privacy or civil rights, is integrating private cameras and security cameras into a nationwide surveillance system.

*Source: WP*

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## Using AI to read minds

Machine learning has previously been used to study brain scans and generate visualizations of what a person is thinking when referring to simple, binary images like black and white letters. But the scientists from Kamitani labs developed new techniques of "decoding" thoughts using deep neural networks, which allows the decoding of more sophisticated images.

*Source: CNBC*

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## Artificial nerves

Researchers have created a new type of artificial nerve that can sense touch, process information, and communicate with other nerves much like those in our own bodies do. Future versions could add sensors to track changes in texture, position, and different types of pressure, leading to potentially dramatic improvements in how people with artificial limbs—and someday robots—sense and interact with their environments.

*Source: Science*

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## **Banning cars from downtown**

Madrid announced that, starting in November, all non-resident vehicles will be barred from a zone that covers the entirety of Madrid's center. The only vehicles that will be allowed in this zone are cars that belong to residents who live there, zero-emissions delivery vehicles, taxis, and public transit.

*Source: Citylab*

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## **Anti-tourism marches**

A wave of anti-tourism protests has taken place in some of Europe's most popular destinations.

*Source: Guardian*

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## **Papua New Guinea to unplug Facebook for one month**

Papua New Guinea will have access to Facebook temporarily turned off for a month in order to study the platforms impact on the propagation of fake news and misinformation.

*Source: Futures centre*

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## **Instagram to show time spend in the app**

Instagram has confirmed the release of a new “Usage Insights” tool, which will allow users to see how much time they spend on the social media app. The launch of this tool marks Instagram as the latest company looking at how users are engaging, with Google and Facebook already exploring this concept.

*Source: Futures centre*

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## **Nanoclay for turning desert into farmland**

Norwegian scientist Kristian Morten Olesen has patented a process to mix nano-particles of clay with water and bind them to sand particles to condition desert soil - he has been working on Liquid Nanoclay (LNC) since 2005. In trials, LNC saved consumption of water by more than 50%.

*Source: BBC*

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## **Walmart patents robot bees**

Bee populations are dwindling at an alarming rate. Walmart has filed a patent for autonomous, robot bees which would act as pollinators in agriculture.

*Source: Futurism*

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## **Peer-to-peer library**

A group of garbage collectors from Ankara has accidentally created a peer-to-peer public library that has become extremely popular among the people of the city. Over a number of months, the state-employed garbage men collected discarded books in a small library for themselves and their families. But as more people heard about the project, citizens started to donate their used books and the library was opened to the public.

*Source: Scenario magazine*

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## **Vystopia**

An Australian psychotherapist has put a name on the existential crisis that she claims to be suffered by many vegans. Vystopia, she calls the condition which is, in brief, a sense of unreality, anger, and anxiety caused by the systematic cruelty to animals in modern society. Vegans are surrounded by people who eat animals, wear animals, cover furniture with animals, and (mostly) don't listen to the vegans' objections. The cure, according to the therapist, is "a world where animals are not abused"

*Source: Scenario magazine*

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## **Senior crime on the rise in Japan**

Elderly in Japan are getting arrested on purpose because they want to go to prison. Lonely seniors are shoplifting in search of the community and stability of jail.

*Source: Bloomberg*

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## **Lahti to reward residents for cutting emissions**

The south-central Finnish city of Lahti expects at least 1,300 residents to begin using a mobile app that will calculate their transport emissions. It will also offer prizes for lowering them, including bus tickets and shared car use.

*Source: YLE*

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## **Double punishment for ghetto crime in Denmark**

The Danish government plans to double the penalties for crimes committed in deprived "ghetto" areas, where immigrant numbers are above-average. It is part of a drive to have "no more ghettos by 2030", Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said.

*Source: BBC*

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## **Brits seeking other citizenships**

As the UK's divorce from the European Union creeps closer, the rise of applications for new citizenship have grown exponentially. Germany has been a preferred sanctuary, with a 162% jump in UK citizens acquiring citizenship in Deutschland last year.

*Source: Quartz*

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## **Internet addiction therapy**

The number of net addicts in Finland is on the rise, the youngest treated are in primary school.

*Source: YLE*

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## **Ad as pregnancy test**

IKEA and Swedish design agency Åkestam Holst have created an advert that acts as a pregnancy test, revealing a special offer when it detects a positive result in a woman's urine.

*Source: Dezeen*

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## **Polyamorous marriage**

A so-called "throuple" in Colombia have been hailed as having the first legal union between three men in the world. The paperwork by a supportive lawyer formalises their union, but it is not a full marriage certificate.

*Source: BBC*

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## Local currency in Sysmä

Sysmäcoin is developed to strengthen the vitality of Sysmä municipality. Especially for small municipalities it is extremely important that county's own products and services are used.

*Source: Sysmäraha*

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## **Millennials are dressing more like their parents**

Millennials are ditching fast-fashion retailers and flocking to thrift stores. The resale market in the US has outperformed the overall retail market in the past five years and is now worth \$20 billion, according to research firm IBISWorld. Brands are responding by bringing back archive collections and embracing vintage styles.

*Source: BusinessInsider*

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## **Toyota e-palette**

Car company Toyota has unveiled an autonomous, fully electric concept vehicle that could function as a communal taxi, delivery truck or mobile shop, depending on the time of day. The company aims to create a network of the pod-like vehicles, overhauling current mobility systems by offering a service that accommodates the needs of passengers, businesses and logistics operations.

*Source: Dezeen*

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## **Etch economy**

A startup called ETCH offers currently a blockchain based payroll system, where wage flows flows automatically into the Etch wallet as you work. It plans to expand the idea of money as a stream to all transactions.

*Source: Etch*

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## **Decreasing price of artificial meat**

The price of in-vitro meat i.e. artificial meat has plummeted and might soon be affordable to restaurants.

*Source: YLE*

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## Ransomware attack on Atlanta

The effects of the "SamSam" ransomware attack against Atlanta's government were much worse than it seemed at first glance. More than a third of Atlanta's 424 necessary programs were knocked offline or partly disabled, and close to 30 percent of those affected apps were "mission critical" -- that is, vital elements like the court system and police.

*Source: Engadget*

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## **Platform for "ugly produce"**

Subscription service for getting fruits and vegetables that would otherwise be thrown to waste because they aren't perfect enough for grocery store standards.

*Source: ImperfectProduce*

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## **China is building a rain-making network**

China is testing cutting-edge defence technology to develop a powerful yet relatively low-cost weather modification system to bring substantially more rain to the Tibetan plateau, Asia's biggest freshwater reserve. The system involves an enormous network of fuel-burning chambers installed high up on the Tibetan mountains.

*Source: SCMP*

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## **E.Coli for carbon capture and recycling**

Scientists at the University of Dundee have discovered that E. coli bacteria could hold the key to an efficient method of capturing and storing or recycling carbon dioxide.

*Source: Synbiobeta*

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## **e-commerce with drone delivery**

Chinese e-commerce giant JD.com is investing in drones to bring online shopping to a 600m-strong rural population in China.

*Source: Economist*

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Story:

## **Inclusion rider**

An “inclusion rider” is a clause that an actor can insist be inserted in their contract that requires cast and crew on a film to meet a certain level of diversity.

*Source: Guardian*

## **Instructions**

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## **Person from the future**



Name:

Age:

Story:



## **Robot strippers**

Pale white robot strippers with CCTV cameras for heads gyrated around poles to Justin Timberlake at a Consumer Electronics Show-related party at a Las Vegas strip club on Monday night.

*Source: TheDailyBeast*

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## **Replika chatbot**

The chatbot uses a neural network to hold an ongoing, one-on-one conversation with its user, and over time, learn how to speak like them.

*Source: Wired*

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## Teeth sensor

Scientists have developed a tiny sensor for teeth. The sensor was able to detect what the person was consuming by picking up on nutrients.

*Source: Science*

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## **Public emergency phones**

New publicly available emergency phones are being installed in Kymenlaakso in case of mobile phone networks go down.

*Source: YLE*

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## **Cryptocurrency-based Buddhist community**

A group of Buddhist programmers have created the world's first cryptocurrency-based spiritual community. Members pay a monthly fee to access content and features, but this can be earned back in the form of Karma Tokens, by meditating or teaching online. These tokens can then be spent on courses, donations or monthly fees.

*Source: Futures centre*

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## **Japanese agencies rent out family members**

In Japan, agencies that rent out family members are on the rise, as demand for the service increases. One such agency, Family Romance, has a database of approximately twelve hundred freelance actors, ranging from infants to the elderly, and prides itself on its ability to cater to any situation including weddings, family dinners or longer term commitments.

*Source: Futures centre*

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Story:

## Sweden's "Be prepared for war" leaflet

The Swedish government has begun sending a 20-page pamphlet to all of the country's 4.8 million households, for the first time in more than a half a century. The leaflet details what to do in the event of war, including how to secure food, what warning signals mean and where to find bomb shelters.

*Source: Futures centre*

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## **On-demand fashion platform**

Nineteenth Amendment, a new on-demand fashion platform, is bucking the trend of fast fashion.

Rather than bulk producing large volumes of clothes in the hope they sell out, they let designers sell their clothes before they are produced, so designers know exactly how much to make.

*Source: Futures centre*

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Story:



## Running out of sand

Over-exploitation of global supplies of sand is damaging the environment, endangering communities, causing shortages and promoting violent conflict. Skyrocketing demand, combined with unfettered mining to meet it, is creating the perfect recipe for shortages. Plentiful evidence strongly suggests that sand is becoming increasingly scarce in many regions.

*Source: Smithsonian*

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## **Actors are writing wills to control their CGI selves**

Hollywood stars can now be recreated so perfectly through technology that actors are drawing up wills to control how their digital selves perform long after their death, the Oscar-winning British special effects team behind the film Gravity has said.

*Source: Telegraph*

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## Selfie ban

From 2018, Russian soldiers are no longer allowed to share selfies on social media while in service. The Russian ministry of defence explains that the pictures may accidentally reveal Russian military secrets. And indeed, journalists have more than once found Russian troops located in the Ukraine as well as Syria at times when the Russians denied being there, because of pictures shared by soldiers.

*Source: Scenario magazine*

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