

Seizing Our Destiny

Written by David Brunnen

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The Sunday breakfast review - 'Seizing Our Destiny', published by ICF



Market analysts, by definition, take a very sectorised view of the way economies function. In daily outputs fueling the financial news and informing political economists they are oft fascinated (or terrified) by the extraordinary lightness of being digital.

As I stir sticky syrup into this autumnal breakfast bowl of warm porridge it loses viscosity and starts to flow – much like the digitally-enabled warming and loosening up of sector behaviour. New markets appear and others are absorbed with increasing rapidity. Ideas, functions and data, are integrated into new formats, devices and applications. In every sector the treacle that slows us - everyday hassle that gets in the way of life and work - is being eliminated.

There are no tradeable stocks and shares for cities or towns so we are fed metrics on the health of whole industries and an occasional take on the fortunes of regions – particularly where these are characterised by a single industry. It is the economics of the firm that dominate analytical effort.

But if we set aside the prevailing 'top down' sector perspectives of how economies function and ditch our addictions to departmentalised silos, we are forced to recognise that we all live at a local level. Viewed through the prism of locality, it is from within your local environment – the city, the community, and the eco-system - that that we are enabled to live and work. Or maybe, against the odds, we just scrape by in places that were once great but have lost their way.

In '[Seizing our Destiny](#)', Robert Bell and fellow co-founders of the Intelligent Community Forum profile seven places that have committed themselves to embracing change - seven cities that recognise that in order to thrive in the digital economy they must '*turn legacy into opportunity*'.

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