

**Institute for Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation** 

# **Economics and Political Economics in the Age of Knowledge**

→ THESES

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### **PURPOSE**

In the attached paper we have stated a series of hypotheses which can serve as stepping stones to discuss about ideas on the "Economics in the Age of Knowledge.

It is the attempt to raise and to discuss some of the questions and issues linked to the transition from the Industry Age to the Age of Knowledge, without the presumption to give all the answers. Today finding the right questions is more important than ever. This paper is merely the start of a debate which will hopefully allow us to better understand how the world will look like, once we will be fully immersed in the Age of Knowledge.

At the end of the attached paper you will find a series of questions which we believe are relevant for the topic. We believe that there will be no simple answer, and that most may well have several answers.

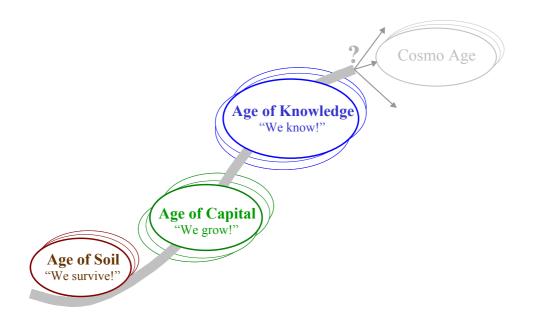
### THE AGE OF KNOWLEDGE

For ages, the development of the economy was following the development of the society. Economy was the particular part of society dealing with the creation and distribution of material goods.

As long as this was based on soil and its products, the relation was clear: the economy was at the service of the society. After the transition from soil-based economy to the capital-based industrial economy this relationship began to change. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the amounts of capital produced by big companies began to equalize the budgets of entire countries. The globalization brought another push towards the primacy of the economy over the society and the "New Economy" was the culminating point in this respect. But one could tell that since the days when the daily traded sums of money have been much larger than all the goods and services produced, the industrial economy was in its end stage. From there on the descent began. All we can see at present are just consequences of this madness and are mere retirement battles.

On the other side the growth of the industrial economy was accompanied by the creation of huge amount of information. Information and knowledge became on of the key "raw materials" of the economy, and talents started to play an increasing critical role.

We are entering the "Age of Knowledge".



The "Age of Soil" was dominated by the problem of physical survival: food, shelter, safety and security have been the main economic objectives at this age. The "Age of Capital", was characterized by the extensive use of technology. Growth became the main objective of the economy. And finally the "Age of Knowledge" is beginning. Now the main objective is "to know".

The next stage can be the "Cosmo-Age.

Nobody who "knows" can go back to the innocent stage of "ignorance". As soon as we know, we are becoming part of what we know. It is obviously up to us what we do with the knowledge, but we cannot hide away anymore and just blame others.

The expected development could be depicted as follows:

	Agro-Age	Industrial-Age	Knowledge-Age			Cosmo-Age
	Soil	Raw Materials Capital	Digital	Molecular	Quantum	Astro
Society	Patriarchal	Macho	Economism	Co-existence	Partnership	Clans
Science	Emerging	Specialization	Growth	Converging	United Field Theory	New Dimensions
Technology	Mechanics	Electro	Digital	Converging: Nano, Bio, Info, Digital Neuro, Quantum	Bio-Electronics Quantum-Physics	Space-Gates
Basis For Business	Trade Handicraft Barter	Transportation Communication	Globalization	Real & Virtual	Multidimensional	Multidimensional Trade
Model for Organization	Religion	Military	Science R&D organization	Nature	Convergence	Cosmology "Parallel Universes"
Government	Kingdom	Dictatorship Democracy	New forms of Democracy e.g. e-voting	Gerontocracy Sophocracy	Selective Democracy	Imperial Aristocracy

<sup>→</sup> The presented development is mere speculation from the "molecular" age on!

Knowledge always brings responsibility. As soon as we know something, we cannot avoid having responsibility, or at least co-responsibility, for what we know. This is why many people prefer to stay in ignorance.

We can see an explosion of information and knowledge, leading to a permanent technological revolution. The emerging technologies will dominate the next stage of the human development.

The virtual world, based on the Internet and its followers, <sup>1</sup> will become the world that belongs to everybody who can access it. It has the potential to become the globally common-shared "reality".

Capital and knowledge are global by nature, they are highly volatile and tend to stay were the best conditions are. But they can disappear overnight if the conditions have become unfavorable for them.

The key question is whether we will always be as much focused on growth as we are now? When will we have enough of "more of the same"?

### THESIS 1

The Sustainability Principle will replace the Growth Principle and will be applied to the environment, to the society and the economy.

Greed and fear will be replaced by entrepreneurship and innovation. The main executive drivers today are status and power. They will be replaced by ownership, responsibility and achievement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For example the "Grid" The Grid promises to fundamentally change the way we think about and use computing. This infrastructure will connect and how they will be programmed.

Entrepreneurship is a human ability to generate and visualize an opportunity, to take ownership of an opportunity, to attract and to organize the necessary resources and finally to get new things done.

Innovation is any change that creates new value. Entrepreneurship is the engine of implementation of the changes that create value.

With the upcoming of the hybrid organizations (real and virtual) the role of entrepreneurship and innovation will be even more important, and more people will be able to engage in the creation of new value.

The value creation will be seen again in an integral way as value for the economy, for the society and for the mankind.

New talents will emerge in the hybrid world and new organizational concepts will be developed.

A first big step is the change of the focus from the shareholder to the stakeholder. but the fundamental change will come when sustainability will become more important than growth. This will imply that we will finally have understood the world as a system, of which we are part. We will have freed ourselves form pure linear thinking and reductionist methodology.

Our world is not a linear system which can grow forever. It is not a big clock on which you can predict exactly what will happen in the near future and long term. We need to start thinking in options, being well aware that we are a part of the system we are looking at.

The cost advantages offered by the production in cheap labor countries will have to be passed on to the consumers. This will lead towards a better economic balance and will, at least partially, equilibrate the loss of jobs in developed countries. Life will become cheaper and the wage levels will come closer together.

### Already today, we are entering into the first part of the Knowledge Age named "Digital", based on the information and communication technology.

And we can already see the next step emerging; it is the "Molecular" time. Behind the "Molecular", the "Quantum" time is already looming. We can also anticipate that the next stage will be the "Cosmo-Age", but this is mere speculation at this point in time.

We know already today that the changes ahead of us require the ability to exit the context and the ability to ask "smart questions". It is not enough to look for solutions; we need to find smart and creative solutions. <sup>2</sup> Just simple solutions will not do it anymore.

We live in a global multi-cultural world, with many different world views. In a near future, we will have a world with four major political and cultural centers linked through economic globalization, but with distinct models of the corporate culture based on its cultural roots:<sup>3</sup>

North America			
European Union			
The Pacific Rim (China, Japan, Korea)			
The Indian Subcontinent			

Mario Raich, Corporate Culture in the Age of Globalization, Age of Knowledge, 23.08.2003, <a href="https://www.learnita.com">www.learnita.com</a>.

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You can find an interesting approach in "Smart Questions", by G. Nadler and W.J. Gordon, Jossey- Bass, 2004.

But we may have only three centers, if in Asia the "Pacific Rim" will create a common market with the "Indian Subcontinent". This means that in future Asia will be driving the globalization.

The future development of the society and the economy will be much more driven by new players, i.e. the emerging countries and the women.

### **SOCIETY AND ECONOMY**

The new turbulence we are experiencing today may well be a strong indication that the "winds" of the industrial economy may soon be over. We already tend to drive in circles. We encounter problems to keep the initial direction and we are loosing momentum. However, there is the story about a powerful, yet mostly unknown, jet stream of the "Knowledge-based Economy", way above us.

### We need to change our perception of the economy, to build a different way of management, to step out of the old habits, rules and routines.

The Greed & Fear Principle applied to the information and knowledge could create an enormous bubble. It may be fatal at the end. To avoid the creation and implosion of this "bubble", and to have a long sustainable growth, the development needs to be driven by the creation of value based on all key stakeholder expectations, not just based on financial growth and shareholder value only! This would require the application of the Sustainability Principle.

The new raw material in the Age of Knowledge will be - "information and knowledge" – a "raw material" which we can replicate as much as we want. **The more information and knowledge we share or use, the more we get!** It is following the law of the increasing returns, if we do not limit it by regulations. This "raw material" is often also the outcome of the business activity as well. Therefore we have to consider knowledge management in different places of the value creation.

Many countries have begun to study the development of the Knowledge-based Economy, because they realize that it is the key for a successful future. The best source for this development is the OECD study "Science and Technology Scoreboard".4

### THESIS 2

The key drivers of the Age of Knowledge are:

- Knowledge creation (Science and R&D); knowledge sharing (publishing, education, events, access) and knowledge application
- Digital technology and information and communication infrastructure
- Intellectual property rights (IPR) and the "right to copy". IPR based "currency".
- Continuous education of the working people
- Feminine and masculine talents
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Hybrid approaches (real and virtual)

There is no simple recipe for success. It is absolutely necessary to tackle a number of areas simultaneously. It is not enough to concentrate on education and R&D without ensuring the necessary level of talents and entrepreneurship. <sup>5</sup> But we probably have to look at the coming development with new eyes. Today, the economy has become the dominant factor in our life. We can talk about

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Published in 2001 at <a href="www.oecd.org./sti">www.oecd.org./sti</a>; STI Scoreboard 2001: "Towards a Knowledge-based Economy". Are OECD countries becoming more knowledge-based? Are they embracing the information economy? To what extent are innovation, science, technology and economies becoming global? What are the new growth industries and occupations?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Once we will understand the Age of Knowledge better, we will certainly review the indicators. Today we use them as a first proxy.

"Economism", a new way to perceive the world. "Economism" sees everything in terms of monetary value and looks at the society as a servant for economy. In the future, the economy will again be in the right place. It will be at the service of the society. This is why we prefer to talk about the "Economics in the Age of Knowledge", rather than about the "Knowledge Economy".

### "KNOWLEDGE" AND "ECONOMY"

Let us quickly look at the meaning of the words "knowledge" and "economy" before we can have a look at the entrepreneurship in the Age of Knowledge.

### Knowledge<sup>6</sup>

We would be better off if we could either use the word "knowledges" or had a specific word for each of the different concepts behind the singular word "knowledge."

To begin with, we have to differentiate between two kinds of knowledge: actual and obsolete knowledge. Depending on the context, however, obsolete knowledge can still be very "actual".

Actual knowledge is either tacit (it is in people's head) or explicit, usually accessible as data or information. Tacit knowledge can be unconscious, (we do not know what we know), or conscious. Conscious knowledge is the one we can access if we wish to. Explicit knowledge is either hidden (not everybody sees it, or "knows") or public (it is visible and accessible). A part of public knowledge is protected as "intellectual property".

Obsolete knowledge is outdated, false, not applicable, or not understandable. If we change the context, knowledge may become information, just data or even pure signs again!

In broad terms, knowledge is what helps us understand the world around us and enables us to act upon it.

Tacit knowledge resides in people's brain; independently from their gender. Therefore in the Age of Knowledge, for the first time in human history, we will have a real chance for partnership between genders.

The meaning of knowledge depends always highly from the context in which it is situated. In today's emerging and ever changing it is often difficult to pinpoint the exact meaning.

## Economy is the organized human activity that creates measurable visible and accepted value to secure survival; to secure sustainable life and to secure growth and development.

We all are in search of a meaningful activity that yields visible and accepted value. We all strive for safety and security. On top of it we are driven either by greed or fear and more than ever we are influenced by the balance between ignorance and knowledge. It is time to look again at the sustainable development instead of the permanent "more of the same".

Leaders are driven by five human motivators: Acceptance by others; Ownership and Responsibility; Achievement; Status and Power.<sup>7</sup>

The industrial economy is based on capital and technology allowing standardized repetition. The extensive use of information technology has led to the creation of an immense amount of data and information. The rapid developments of the

<sup>7</sup> You will find a more detailed presentation of this model in: Mario Raich, "Do you have the culture you deserve?" in the virtual magazine "Age of Knowledge", Saturday 28, April 2001, at www.learnita.com

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> For a more detailed discussion look at: Mario Raich, "Knowledge is not always Knowledge" in the virtual magazine "Age of Knowledge", Friday, June 22, 2001 at www.learnita.com

economy and the globalization have led to the creation of an increasing amount of knowledge with shorter life span.

### THESIS 3

The "Age of Knowledge" is based on information, knowledge, the new technology and radically different perspectives of the role of economy in the society.

We can see three basic enablers for all business activities:

- 1. Money and capital, visible in a company primarily as cash flow
- 2. Information and communication, visible in a company mainly as knowledge and know-how
- 3. Talent and ability to understand and to apply information and knowledge The transition from the Industrial to the Age of Knowledge is a "bumpy" road, with many "ups and downs." It is linked to the loss of traditional values such as "life-long loyalty." The new values are stakeholder-driven. Increasingly, the unique competitive edge of a company is represented by the hearts and minds of the people. By "people", we mean all key stakeholders, not just the employees. The upcoming economy is therefore more about the "ownership of the soul" of the key stakeholders than about legal contracts.

The fuzziness and uncertainty in the economy demands much more cooperation and collaboration within the companies and between them. It is more than ever about trust, common ground and open communication.

### **THESIS 4**

In the Age of Knowledge, cooperation will be the "corporate glue and the corporate lubricant" that will hold everything aligned with the purpose of the organization, that allows the implementation of the corporate strategies and the value creation for the key stakeholder.

Cooperation is also the enabler for information, knowledge sharing and exchange necessary for the success in the highly competitive markets.

The corporate governance is increasingly much more about the "control" of hearts and minds than about corporate policies. The big issues are how to measure this and how to report it.

## In the Age of Knowledge entrepreneurship will be applied for the creation, search, distribution, enhancement and application of knowledge.

This will lead for example to the creation of businesses focusing on R&D only, to virtual laboratories, to virtual R&D and new forms of education.

But entrepreneurship itself will be transformed, because we will much better understand what entrepreneurship is, what makes a successful entrepreneur, and how to develop entrepreneurs. We will also know better how to leverage the entrepreneurial skills of our people. The business opportunities will be available in form of recipes, delivered by special machines: the "entrebots". They will put together different elements necessary to create a successful new business. For example, they will put together: customer expectations + technology + key players + available finance + scenario analysis and business case for a specific segment. They may also put together existing solutions, linked by new technology to create a new opportunity.

We will also see more entrepreneurship within the corporations. This means that managers, especially the highly paid top managers, will have to take responsibility for the up-side and the downside with financial consequences.

### THESIS 5

In the Age of Knowledge we may see as well the appearance of the "peripheral production" close to the customer and the user based on the brand and the recipe ownership.

The brand and recipe "owner" collects orders and sends them together with the recipe to local producers. In addition, the brand and recipe "owner" controls the quality as well.

This avoids the shipping of goods around the word, allows a production of goods close to the customer and user and a maximal customization.

### WILL WE NEED NEW KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONS?

The purpose of each company, independent of size, industry, development stage, age, etc. is to develop, to produce and to sell products, services or experiences for a defined market with defined conditions. This has to happen in a way that real value is created for all key stakeholders. This is the only way a company can fulfill its social and economic mission and have a chance for a sustainable development.

Different kinds of organizational devices or engines have been used during the human history. At present, we call such a device or engine: an organization, a firm, a company, a corporation, etc. We have a large variety of them ranging from a handicraft shop, a farm, a shop, a family company, mutuality, a state-owned company, a MNC to a global company.

### THESIS 6

### There will certainly be new forms of organization in the Age of Knowledge.

The organizations of the Age of Knowledge will be more based on forms derived from mutuality, network marketing, virtual networks and virtual franchises. An example may be the SME Network where most of the internal services (CD, HRM; Finances, IT, Technology, TR&D, IPR, Corporate Ventures, Corporate Entrepreneurship, e-Business); the R&D (Research, Development, Design, Scouting, Exploration, Corporate Innovation, New Product and Services Development, Market Intelligence) and the external representation (PR, Marketing, Brand-Management, Co-opetition, External Communication, Lobbying) will be centralized as a common service for the whole network.

But we still have to see the impact the virtual reality will have on the organizations.

Every system tends to become bureaucratic. **Bureaucracy is the entropy of organization.** Bureaucracy can become self-sustainable, i.e. it exists for the sake of existence. It is a parasite it does not create any value but usually destroys a great amount of value. Entrepreneurship is the antidote for bureaucracy! <sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, we will see a "virtual bureaucracy" developing in the virtual space.

### THE VALUE CREATION WILL ALSO BE AFFECTED!

The value created in the market place has only a temporary value, which is meaningful only as long as the specific context in which it was created persists.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> The government is the biggest user and abuser of the value created (use of tax money!!!), therefore every time it has tried to influence the value creation it was a failure and every time the government was directly involved in the value creation it was a disaster. The most recent big example: Soviet Union! Today: all kinds of subventions (e.g. agriculture and fishing).

In order to be able to purchase different "values" created by different people, a proxy for value was invented: the money or the capital.

Money and capital became a desirable value for many people, giving the owner a false feeling of value. Money became also a tradable "value" in itself. Today it is one of the widest traded "goods".

### THESIS 7

### We are moving away from the linear value creation to a systemic one.

It is easier to understand these changes when we are looking at it through the new value creation framework, which was developed for the Age of Knowledge. The value creation and the value created are the core part of this framework. We cannot manage an organization in the same way we have been doing so far.

We will have to analyze, re-model and even reinvent the corporate value creation process. The corporation is in its essence a value creation "engine". It is creating value for its key stakeholders. Society should always be considered as one of the key stakeholders.

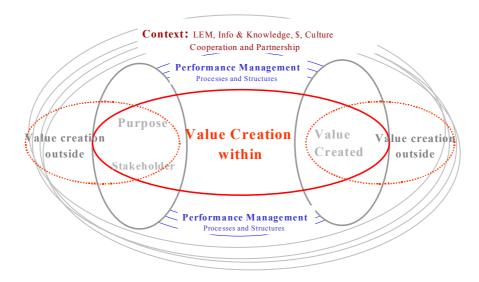
But this is not always easy; the value expected by one stakeholder may be in contradiction with the one expected by another one.

The value expected by the stakeholders may be changing as well. Corporate governance is the art to know the requirements, needs and expectations of the key stakeholders, to anticipate changes and to receive an optimal result for all of them. It is also the art to leverage all corporate resources: the tangible and the intangible ones.

But they way we organize our business today is not the only one. A creative look at an existing value creation, combined with potential opportunities and new technology may lead to new ways of how to create and to deliver the expected value.

The new value creation framework contains the following elements:

- Emerging (external and internal) context
- Purpose and key stakeholder. The stakeholder analysis leads to the definition of the expected value
- The value creation and the value created
- Strategic and operational processes, i.e. structure and organization, performance management and strategic initiatives <sup>9</sup>



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> For a detailed elaboration of this framework please see: M. Raich, Managing in the Knowledge-based Economy, 2000.

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The value created by the organization can be very different for the different key stakeholders. It can be: revenue, growth, profit, image, brand, market share, investment capabilities for the future. But it can also be things like: jobs (secure, interesting, challenging, etc.), tax income, innovations, reputation, etc.

The value creation within is a part of a "value creation cluster" on the market. Today, these clusters are becoming highly volatile. We can also see a shift from raw materials to "recipes", i.e. packaged know-how as input, and an increasing amount of knowledge as output of the value creation.<sup>10</sup>

We can think of the Value Creation Framework also in terms of a morphic field, as described by Sheldrake. It possesses very little energy of its own, but it is able to shape energy that comes from another source.<sup>11</sup>

A very important step has been made with the proposition of the "blended value" by Jed Emerson. <sup>12</sup> The blended value proposition puts forward the idea that companies and individuals create value on multiple levels -- economic value, social value, environmental value -- and that it's time we start figuring out how to evaluate and act on this. Or to think of it another way: The blended value proposition says that our portfolios should not only advance the financial aspect of our lives, but that they can and should advance every aspect of our lives. Our investments help create jobs, build communities, boost families, preserve the world for our children and do a multitude of other valuable things. Or they can help doing the opposite, as we have seen with Enron, Tyco, WorldCom and others. Before we choose to buy or sell, let us assess all the value, says Emerson. <sup>13</sup>

We have three categories of organizations in respect to value creation:

Those who are dealing with the **preparation of the necessary conditions** for the value creation (like education, lawyers, consultants, health industry), those dealing with the **redistribution of the value created** (government administration, trade, politicians) and finally those that **are actively involved in the value creation** (production, services, F&E). The government is involved in the creation of the necessary conditions of the value creation and in the distribution of the value created. It is also often involved in the value destruction, but in is not producing any real economical value, except it owns value producing companies.<sup>14</sup>

### **THESIS 8**

In the Age of Knowledge the core competencies will be:

- **Knowledge** creation, distribution, enhancement and application.
- Attraction, retention and motivation of talent
- Balancing, managing, achieving key stakeholder expectations
- Developing and sustaining cooperation
- Developing and leveraging the corporate culture
- Understanding technology development and application
- Building and entertaining technology development
- Managing the whole organization

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Can entrepreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship blossom within governmental bureaucracy? It can, but when it does it can be scary! It is usually more focused on value destruction, than value creation, i.e. more taxes, new taxes.

<sup>11</sup> Sheldrake Rupert, Seven Experiments That Could Change the World: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Revolutionary Science. NY: Riverhead, 1995

<sup>12</sup> See: http://www.blendedvalue.org

A new world order. Jed Emerson's capitalist utopia. Can social value reward investors, companies? October 29, 2002: By Jon Gertner, Money magazine Staff Writer. <a href="http://money.cnn.com/2002/10/28/pf/investing/emerson/">http://money.cnn.com/2002/10/28/pf/investing/emerson/</a>.
 Another main distortion of the system that will disappear are subventions. In this way the governments want to become market players. But every

Another main distortion of the system that will disappear are subventions. In this way the governments want to become market players. But every time the government becomes entrepreneur it is a disaster. Too many political ambitions and aspirations are at stake and not enough entrepreneurial experience. And again, the government is not doing it with its "own" money, but with the taxpayer's money.

- Applying entrepreneurship to information and knowledge
- Integrating innovation into the business

### SUMMARY

We can foresee many fundamental changes in the society and in the economy due the transition into the Age of Knowledge.

We will see many changes due to this transition:

- New ways of work. Repositioning work. Less followers, more own initiative.
- New forms of education. Away from teaching toward learning.
- New ways of financing and new definitions of value.
- New ways of remuneration and recognition: money = having; status = being; experience = becoming.
- New way to create value. New values: becoming = experience, learning.
- We will see the creation of closed "value circuits" with virtual value units; the real growth will be the value growth and not just linear growth of everything.

The most fundamental change will be the replacement of the "more of the same" approach by the sustainability principle. This will weaken the "fear and greed" driven momentum and stabilize the development of the society and the economy. Entrepreneurship and initiative will be one of the characteristics of the new culture.

But we will see the role of entrepreneurship changing and changes in the entrepreneurial approach itself as well.

We will see the appearance of entrebots helping in the creation and search of entrepreneurial opportunities and in the organization of resources.

Virtual platforms based on the new Internet and the Grid will change the way we are achieving results and are creating value. Entrepreneurship will become explicitly, what it always was implicitly, the most important part of the economy.

We need to further explore the possibilities of the Age of Knowledge. Today, we have still far more questions on the Age of Knowledge than answers. There is still a lot of speculation. This exploration could lead us to new ways and new possibilities to avoid the cyclical destruction of value through the "roulette-capitalism" based on greed and fear. We need to reinforce the back-bone of the economy, the SME's, developing new forms and organizations for the SME's.

It is about time to put the economy at the service of the society. Now that the industrial society and economy is being replaced by the knowledge society and economy, we have a unique opportunity for a new beginning.

### **ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

To understand the Age of Knowledge it is necessary to raise and analyze several fundamental issues and questions. Please select those questions which you would like to answer. We will create a new paper based on the answers we will get from the experts participating in this work. All participants of this exploration will be invited to a workshop where this paper will be presented and discussed.

- What will be the drivers of the economics in the Age of Knowledge?
- Will we still be driven by the paradigm of "more of the same" based on the principle of "greed and fear"? Or could it be that the Age of Knowledge will allow us to build on sustainability instead?
- What will be the role of the economy in the society?
- Do you agree that the industrial age is coming to an end?
- Would you agree to say that the next stage of development is the age of knowledge?
- Do you have a view on what the basic paradigms of the new economics will be?
- What will be the influence of the virtual reality?
- What will be considered as work?
- What will be the role of learning? Will we have new forms of learning?
- What will management be like? What model will be used as the basis for management?
- How will information and knowledge create value?
- What will be defined as value and how value will be created?
- What will be the form and role of the corporate culture?
- Will people management be different?
- Will we see a recipe-based economy with peripheral production?
- Will we see new ways to finance economic enterprises?
- What is the new way to structure and organize companies?
- Will we see the change from a "Copyright" on published material to "Right to copy" in order to enhance the knowledge
- Will also need a new approach to Intellectual Property Rights? Will we have a protection already for the elaborated idea, for the concept and for the R&D assignment?
- Will we see new financial instruments based on Intellectual Property Rights?
- Will we have new forms of government?
- Will we see other important changes?
- → Please feel free to add new questions you would like to answer.