

digital fire

Talking about Living in the Age of Reinvention

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Living in the Age of Reinvention: A Discussion

Overview of the Upcoming Book:

Digital Fire: Living in the Age of Reinvention explores the accelerated process of reinvention people, companies and countries are going through, all across the world. Massive groups of people in diverse global regions have been forced to reinvent their lives and livelihoods. Whether caused by economic hardships, political upheavals, natural disasters, or ongoing climactic shifts, these changes have been swiftly and irrevocably imposed. It's possible we're going through nothing less than a planet-wide evolutionary change. In less than a decade, and in much less time than the span of a generation, all of humanity has transited from the Information Age to the Age of Reinvention.

The digital fire buzzing around us is already changing our minds, our body chemistry, or perceptions. Our bodies have evolved to adapt to environmental reactionary responses. In our present time, innovative tech tools have helped to develop a radically different reality, which is often at odds with what our senses tell us. Culture has been irrevocably altered by art, design, science, and technology – all fused into the portable wired world we all immersed in. Whether one chooses to resist reinvention or embrace it, in 2013 reinvention is in the air, on everyone's mind, and in the cultural mix, wherever one lives on the planet.

Digital Fire: Living in the Age of Reinvention is an upcoming book for people who get the fact that reinvention is already a matter of survival. It's written for people who want to understand a worldwide cultural movement and come to grips with a solid reality that's shifting under everyone's feet. It presents what reinvention means to people and societies from a number of different perspectives, presents a focused picture of these radically transformational times, and speculations on what changes lie ahead.

About the Concept of Digital Fire:

Every aspect of society is being touched in some way by reinvention. Whether one considers issues and challenges centered on such areas as work, warfare, women's rights, climate change, education, or digital freedom, this book and lecture series is aimed at the minds and hearts of everyone who is determined to change their own lives and become a participant in the new world of reinvention.

A mobile phone photo of this instant in time:

Whether reinvention has become a business policy, an above ground cultural mission, or performed covertly in a basement lab, reinvention is already underway for a large segment of the population.



It's no longer possible to deny that things have drastically shifted. The proof is all around us. And even more extreme cultural, political, and social challenges are brewing on the horizon. Global climate change, disruptive economic events, and intensified cultural battles will all serve to both bring communities together and drive deeper wedges between citizens on one side of the cultural divide or the other.

The future of humanity depends upon the way movements, individuals, and governments respond to the waves of dynamic changes ahead. Hyper-meaning, anti-personality, and meta-learning will become a part of the everyday analysis of our new world. People will have to add a layer of complex sense to their existing common sense program in order to navigate the reinvented world.

Here, in the Age of Reinvention, people carry around mobile communicators, popular Internet websites help to connect revolutionaries, and people and companies spin/spend/socialize their days on smartphones, involved in gaming sessions, Facebooking, Craigslisting, ingesting countless mash-ups and mixes, or watching videos on YouTube, following multiple Twitter feeds, and manically Googling for the perfect answer.

The nature of work has been reinvented. Over the past 20 years, civilization has dramatically shifted from a post-industrial economy to an information streaming economy. The workers who are transforming culture are knowledge workers – people who deliver critical content at the most important moments. The data-driven tech we use has changed how people interact, what is expected from organizations, and how cultures become a part of or spearhead the reinvention movement.

If workers, businesses, political systems, and entire bio-regional human habitats don't begin reinventing themselves soon they are already behind the curve, and soon it will be too late. If the planetary wake-up call that extreme global weather shifts are producing isn't the alarm bell to make people sit up and pay attention, there's (ongoing) Middle East revolutions and a significant cultural and socio-economic shift happening in the U.S., Sci-Fi inspired advances in robotics, Internet and mobile device addiction, the advancing Singularity, and a cornucopia of dystopian predictions.

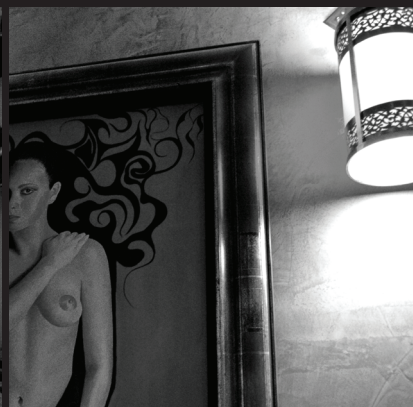


Technology is already intricately woven into the fabric of our lives, and the question is how to become a reinvented version of humanity that uses the high-tech influences we've soaked up and are marinating in with intelligence, compassion, kindness, and some day, even wisdom.

Michael's talks will present some of the most current explorations, theories, and scientific and social research on the mind-body connection, historic medical advances, futuristic tech experiments and devices, and eco-smart architectural solutions.

Our discussion about Digital Fire will engage the audience through presenting recent breakthroughs in psychology and philosophy, business constructs and transformations, and put stories and theories across in an accessible way. The Digital Fire experience is aimed at fledgling and long-term freethinkers, skeptics, true believers, and people who love to receive a dollop of wit and intelligence while consuming life-changing works of nonfiction.

In some speeches, Michael will discuss how cultural icons have used reinvention to find new methods for transmitting their messages/image/songs/multimedia events, while continuing to make personal and creative breakthroughs. Pop culture and music have long been on the leading edge—pointing out where society is heading. Mass media stars were wired from the start to reach beyond society's contemporary reality by using popular mass media to transform themselves. Pop stars and movie stars invented the blueprint for building the next stage of how to live life in the fast approaching future. Time sped up for them and for the rest of the culture during the middle of the twentieth century. The society-altering waves these creative explorers caused are still reverberating in the world's culture, while a new generation of cultural creatives attempt to jump off the same high dive platform, and into a hologram of a bucket of water.





People everywhere want to reach the next level in their lives, and they instinctively gravitate toward examples of growth, discovery, and reinvention. If readers don't always get the answers they seek in the new digital landscape/marketplace/world, they feel they finally deserve a more probing set of questions to help guide them. They desire the book equivalent of written words as heightened experience and a vital link to what's coming next, and they want something in traditional book form or audiobook format or Kindle-digitally-delivered to bring them closer to transformational knowledge.

Michael Foster Interview: A Creative Philosophy

By Taylor Ackley - April 12th 2012

Exciting, funny, adventurous and insightful. Michael Foster is a personality that is too large to measure.

Michael is one half of BooJazz Studios with his wife and business partner Jaime. Michael and Jamie recently concluded a five-year long stint in the Northwest, but have chosen to sojourn back to the Chicago area to continue their work. Michael's creative talents go beyond artistic pursuits. He is also building a reputation as a philosopher and futurist writing for the Huffington Post with a series of articles articulating the age of change and reinvention in today's society.

We were lucky enough to be able to interview him and ask some questions about his work.

Tell me about your journey to the Pacific Northwest and how it influenced you?

The west coast mentality is drastically different from the east coast. The Pacific Northwest in particular allows for more time and space to develop your creativity. The east coast allows for a better environment to hustle in business.

I know you bounced around from Portland, to Seattle, to the Olympic Peninsula. Is there one location in particular that sticks out to you?

Seattle always felt like home base, but [and I know this will sound cliché] every region has its charms. There's so much natural beauty in the Olympic Peninsula that it's hard to take it all in.

Recently you have been writing for the Huffington Post with your collaborator Russel C. Smith, including a series titled "Digital Fire." Tell me about that and how it came about and where you see that going.

That was something Russell cooked up. Personally I tend to keep up with trends as it keeps me interested in the world and it's just good for business. Russell thought we could channel all of that energy into a non-fiction book project, which was a new kind of venture for both of us. So we spent almost a year generating content and writing and one day Ariana Huffington emails Russell and gives us the go ahead to blog for the HuffPo.

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It took a while for that to settle in, the impact it could have on this project and the perception of credibility that was just dropped on our lap. Now we just need to live up to our promise, and give insight and valuable information every week to our fans.

And thank God for Russell, he can turn anything I dribble out into something people actually want to read. I'm much better at speaking.

Web Design and Programming has evolved quite a bit in the last ten years or so, care to take a stab at what it will look like in ten years?

Interface, games and algorithms. Right now there are people like Kevin Slavin keeping on top of algorithms, which is a topic I couldn't do justice for in a few short sentences. And then you have people trying to get the internet out of our various gizmos and into the real world.

We're still in the phase where the virtual world is contained by slabs of fiberglass and plastic. In ten years you'll be wearing google glasses and using your fingertips to capture pictures with your collar clipped camera. There will be a layer of virtual reality on top of our reality. But that might take longer... because it's a tricky process.

Virtual reality in the 90s was touted as the future of entertainment, but it was a thing called electronic mail that took like wildfire. And remember that pile of wacky techno-thrillers in the mid 90s? Hackers, Johnny Mnemonic, Strange Days... they were all portraying the internet as some form of virtual reality that would engage all of the senses. It's still a long way off. Strange Days got the interface wrong, but the idea of viral video... that was almost

prophetic. The interface ended up being simply YouTube.

And then there's gameification, which we're just starting to define in the current state of the web. The future of the web will be embedded into our reality, and highly addictive through the game-like interface.

Any more details on your non-fiction project with your Huffington Post collaborator Russell C. Smith?

We're going to keep writing, while trying to find more outlets for our content... and hopefully a book deal looms on the horizon. Our immediate goal is to make sure our words are worth the valuable time our fans spend reading them every week.

The rest will happen as it needs to happen. I come from Charles Schulz philosophy on this sort of thing, just make sure you're doing the best job you can everyday.





Michael Foster & Russell Smith

About Michael Foster

Michael Foster is a futurist, web designer, photographer, game designer, a cinema fanatic, and a visual designer. His varied career in digital and traditional media makes him a prime candidate to understand what it means to live in the age of reinvention. He began his careers in multimedia working in television, where he produced and directed 13 television programs when he was 20-years-old, including Barcelona, a pilot episode requested by Dreamworks SKG. Michael snagged his first professional illustration project when he was 14, drawing children's menus for a chain of restaurants in the Southwest United States. He wrote a screenplay based on the Peanuts characters, which is included in the Charles M. Schulz Museum archives.

As a seasoned graphic designer, Michael has developed websites and advertising campaigns for businesses such as Dreamworks SKG, PepsiCo, ClearSounds Technologies, Qwest, The British Embassy in Washington D.C., The Swiss Embassy in Washington D.C., and Chicagoland Speedway.

Michael paints in a re-modernist style, which involves the interaction between individuals dealing with the abundance of information we process everyday. With acrylics and India ink on canvas, he creates an abstract world to represent information and data in raw form around the subjects in the paintings. Michael has exhibited in over 30 art shows over the past decade.



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DISCUSSIONS ABOUT DIGITAL FIRE & REINVENTION

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