

The Curious Manifesto

May 10, 2009

We're two college students writing code because we want to save the world. Technology and globalization have changed the game for our generation. This is our answer to those forces: this is our manifesto.

Setting the Stage

Umair Haque of the Havas Media Lab describes the tumultuous challenges we are about to face. From *The DNA of the Green Corporation*—

“Why do I think business today needs deep change to its very DNA? Because it’s a moral imperative? Sure: but, more powerfully, because it’s a strategic imperative. Yesterday’s sources of advantage...are failing. It’s only by rethinking their DNA that companies can realize new sources of advantage built for the 21st century — new sources of advantage built on new paths to value creation, like getting green.

“Conversely, think about it this way. Even if we invent magical new green technologies, without new principles of management, we’ll just end up where we are today in the very near future: history will repeat itself. Making green itself sustainable means putting it not just into technology — but into our DNA.”

How do we fit into the rethinking of DNA?

Who are we? We’re just kids: 20 year olds with a stamp on a diploma backing us up. But we’ve been raised in a radically new world. We’re the generation that has grown up with computers, with the Internet. We’re more connected than ever, not just with our immediate friends, but with the entire world. We see the issues facing humanity from a higher perspective than any previous generation.

With the massive amount of information at our fingertips, our generation will be challenged to do more than just Get Things Done. Instead, we will be rewarded for finding new patterns, posing elegant solutions, and better connecting with other human beings. Daniel Pink in *A Whole New Mind* calls these skills: Design, Play, Empathy, Symphony, Story, and Meaning. Our challenge, then, is to apply our new perspective and approach problems with a 21st century skill set.

Umair takes this thinking a step further in *A Manifesto for the Next Industrial Revolution*—

“Growth is in the DNA. So how do we begin rethinking economic growth? With the understanding that technology alone isn’t enough — and in fact, it’s not the harder part of sustainable growth.

“...The fundamental question new DNA must answer is this: how do we organize and manage resources so they’re not depleted, crushed, strip-mined, and slashed-and-burned?”

“It is players who can answer that question—players who can renew yesterday’s rusting DNA—who will be able redraw the boundaries of value creation in the 21st century.

“Organize something. Why does Google insist that its goal is to “organize the world’s information”? Because it’s figured out one of the deepest secrets hidden at the heart of 21st century economics: markets, networks, and communities can organize economic activities radically more efficiently than firms.”

Microsoft Gave Us a Chance to Get Involved

For the past few years, Microsoft has hosted the Imagine Cup competition for students to “imagine a world where technology helps solve the toughest problems facing us today.” This was our chance to engage the world using the tools we know best.

MDG Actors is our first hi-tech composition. It is as much programming as it is storytelling, empathy, and design. It leverages the power of emerging web technology to provide an interactive, playful experience. Its goal is inspiration, and it provides the jumping off points for turning that inspiration into action. By itself, our website won’t overturn the “rusting DNA” our generation faces, but we hope it at least provides the same glimmer of the future for you as it does for us. It is one of our first steps in organizing our new world for a brighter tomorrow.

Here’s to getting excited and making things,

Team Curious