

Futures Terminology

(Cook, Inayatullah, Burgman, Sutherland and Wintle, 2014;
*Miller, 2018)

*Anticipatory Assumptions	The elements that make up the different frames that people use when consciously imagining the future.
Backcasting	A tool for visualizing obstacles in achieving a goal and the steps needed to overcome those obstacles.
Black Swans	Unknown unknowns that can have large impacts on a system. At the farthest reaches of probability.
Community of Practice	A group of people who share knowledge about a particular field.
Delphi	An expert elicitation process to increase the accuracy of expert estimates through confidential voting over several rounds where participants can adapt their views based on the views of others.
Driver Analysis	A tool for reviewing and assessing the most influential system drivers.
Emerging Issues Analysis	A tool to anticipate future developments by making connections between seemingly unrelated events.
Forecasting	Predicting future conditions based on past trends.
*Futures Literacy	Is a human capability that consists of the ability to use anticipation for different ends, in different ways, and in different contexts. People become more futures literate as they gain a better understanding of the diversity of anticipatory assumptions.
Futures Research and Studies	The academic discipline that includes strategic foresight.
Futures Triangle	A tool to consider plausible futures based on past, present and future drivers and trends.
Futures Wheel	A structured brainstorming tool exploring the primary, secondary and tertiary impacts of a trend or event.
Futurist	An expert in future studies.
Horizon Scanning	A tool for collecting and organizing a wide array of information to identify emerging social issues.
Issue-Centered Scanning	A tool for collecting and organizing a wide array of information to understand and track previously identified issues.
Issue Tree	A tool to establish the logical sequence with which to address a question.
Modeling	Using mathematical concepts to describe a system, study the effects of different components, and make predictions about system behavior.
Scenario Analysis/Planning	Used interchangeably with scenario planning or to describe the data analysis phase of a scenario planning exercise. A tool encompassing many different approaches to creating alternative visions of the future based on key uncertainties and trends.
Simulation	Using a model to imitate the operation of a system over time to explore the effects of alternative conditions or actions.
Strategic Foresight	A structured process for exploring alternative future states.
Visioning	A tool to envisage the most desirable future and commitment to create that future.
Weak Signals	The first indication of an impending change (related to medium and strong signals)