

A man with glasses and a microphone, wearing a dark suit and shirt, is speaking and gesturing with his hands. He is holding a small black device in his right hand. The background is a blue, abstract digital pattern. A yellow badge in the top right corner reads "LISTED ON TOP 100 WIRED".

LISTED ON
TOP 100
WIRED

GERD LEONHARD

Futurist & Humanist | Keynote Speaker | Author
CEO The Futures Agency

CORE TOPICS 2020

NICE TO SEE YOU HERE!

I'm a Futurist and a **Humanist**. I share solid foresights and **practical wisdoms** with my audiences, and focus on actionable observations about the next 7-10 years in science and technology, business and commerce, society and culture.

I can address a wide range of industries and sectors such as **Technology, Artificial Intelligence (across all industries), Healthcare and Pharma, Banking and Insurance, Policy and Government, Learning and Education, Human Resources, Travel and Tourism, Transportation and Mobility**. My 2020 core topics are listed below, while my **other topics are here**. Every topic can be customised for each engagement and for each specific occasion.

Immersion, engagement and lasting impact is very important to me, therefore I employ my own **creative team** that is supporting my work with **custom-made animations, graphics and video**. And while I enjoy doing **large events with big stages**, I am equally happy to speak at smaller and more intimate events, with or without visuals. And if you are interested in booking 2 speakers as a package, debating with each other, please have a look at my new **duo-engagements**. **Contact us** anytime to discuss your specific needs!

CORE TOPICS 2020



HAPPINESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Does 'too much technology' (#toomuchmagictech) lead to unhappiness? Does too-much-tech prevent us from being open to true happiness? Technology is very good at giving us what we want but very bad at giving us what we need. Technology is not what we seek but how we seek.



A NEW RENAISSANCE

Gerd rediscovers the spirit of the Renaissance to offer you a new vision based on human genius and human values. Instead of a tech-dominated dystopia full of bots and 'thinking machines', Gerd suggests that the future can be one of liberated expression and human mastery.



FROM TRANSFORMATION TO HUMANISATION

I think we have reached peak 'digital transformation' - if you haven't heard about why you and your business need to 'go digital' or 'transform into a digital organisation' you may have lived under a rock during the past 5 years:)



THE 10 MEGASHIFTS: TRANSFORMING YOUR ORGANISATION

If you believe 'digital transformation' is what it's all about, think again. I propose 9 other Megashifts that are the result of gamechanging technological advances: Virtualisation, cognification, robotisation, automation, simulation....



TECHNOLOGY AND HUMANITY - DEFINING OUR FUTURE, TODAY

Sometimes it seems that technology is the only thing that will matter in the future. I beg to differ. Sure, data is the new oil and artificial intelligence maybe the new electricity, but this makes being human more important - not less.



10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE FUTURE, TODAY

In this fast-paced and provocative talk, I cut right to the chase - only my most important future observations make it into this presentation. Using current examples, I hypothesise that the future is no longer a timeframe: it's a mindset.



THE FUTURE OF WORK

Automation is everywhere, already! Machines and smart software will likely automate-away between 40-60% of all repetitive or algorithm-based tasks, in the next 20 years. Abundance will result from machines doing most of the work...



DIGITAL ETHICS / THE ETHICS OF TECHNOLOGY

Bertolt Brecht famously commented that humans tend to think 'dinner first, then morals'.

I observe that we've had many amazing digital feasts already - now it's time for Ethics and Humanity to top the menu.



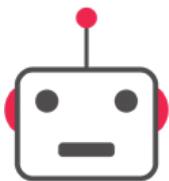
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE [AI] - THE NEXT 10 YEARS

Artificial Intelligence is a very confusing topic for many people, and one that has been greatly distorted in the media. I suggest to differ between IA (intelligent assistance), AI and AGI, and to look at the merits of each.



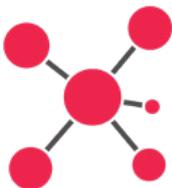
PRACTICAL WISDOM

Practical wisdom (Phronesis) is what I aspire to in my work. Practical wisdom is about a specific kind of knowledge, foresight and wisdom that ties directly into action and immediate human benefit. Aristotle puts it this way...



UNDERSTANDING THE FUTURE: GAME-CHANGERS & MEGASHIFTS

In this brand-new talk I share my observations and foresights on three sectors: science & technology, business & society, and mindset & philosophy; customized for every specific...



EXPONENTIAL CHANGE: BUSINESS AND SOCIETY

Successful businesses always maintain a constant conversation about the future: what lessons need to be operationalized today in order to avoid future irrelevance or worse, extinction? It is essential to understand that everything...

HAPPINESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

NEW 2020 speaking topic

I have spoken a lot about happiness in my talks since 2015, and it's an important chapter in my book *Technology vs Humanity*.

Trust isn't digital. Machines don't do relationships. Happiness is not a download, and it can't be automated or digitized. Yes, technology is great at giving us more or less hedonic pleasures such as free phone calls, access to unlimited music, TV Shows & films, networking opportunities for business or shopping online. Yet at the same time, unhappiness appears to be rising around the world (as are mental health issues and opioid addiction), and the power-users of social networks are said to be the highest suicide rate of any population segment. Is technology, done wrong, 'bicycles for the mind but bullets for the soul'?

Does 'too much technology' (#toomuchmagictech) lead to unhappiness? Does too-much-tech prevent us from being open to true happiness? If so, how will we balance technology and our need for real happiness? As big tech offers its hedonistic pleasure traps, how can we protect and pursue those deeper forms of happiness (eudaemonia) that involve what I call the ANDRORITHMS such as empathy, compassion, and consciousness? And what about digital well-being?

Technology is very good at giving us what we want but very bad at giving us what we need. Technology is not what we seek but how we seek. We will not find real happiness on a screen or in VR, or in the cloud.



BOOKING INQUIRY

A NEW RENAISSANCE

NEW 2020 speaking topic

The first Renaissance was a European movement away from feudal dogma to human artistry and independent thought, led by polymaths such as Leonardo da Vinci. Today, the new dogmas – Technology, Data and Connectivity – are endangering human agency, threatening to literally reprogram us. Something must and can be done. Based on almost two decades of global experiences and insights as a Futurist, Gerd now outlines his vision of a new human renaissance – essentially an embrace of human sovereignty over medieval dogma – and how we can reassert the human being over its artificial substitution and replacement. For this bold new talk, Gerd rediscovers the spirit of the Renaissance to offer you a new vision based on human genius and human values. Instead of a tech-dominated dystopia full of bots and 'thinking machines', Gerd suggests that the future can be one of liberated expression and human mastery.



BOOKING INQUIRY

UNDERSTANDING THE MEGASHIFTS

TRANSFORMING YOUR ORGANISATION

The top 20 global technology brands and digital platforms are growing exponentially while many incumbent enterprises and former household-name-brands are forced to 'pivot' and dramatically reinvent themselves, or face sudden disintermediation and irrelevance. Witness the media industry, or recently, the incumbent car industry giants in Europe. In this eye-opening session, Gerd looks at how to evolve into a future-ready organisation based on understanding and exploiting The Megashifts, a key meme first presented in Gerd's recent book [Technology vs. Humanity](#).

The **Megashifts** include digitisation, automation, datafication, virtualisation, robotisation, and others (for a total of 11), and understanding them is the ticket to future success. The Megashifts are fuelled by a multitude of game-changers such as The Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, deep learning and robotics, new human-machine interfaces (such as voice-control and intelligent bots). In this riveting talk, Gerd depicts the key trends, reveals the likely minefields and identifies the key opportunities, dishing up a mixture of future-shock and awesomeness to stimulate some serious thinking. Watch this related video. Download the free Megashifts chapter from my book 'Technology vs. Humanity', [here](#).



BOOKING INQUIRY

HUMANITY AND TECHNOLOGY

WE ARE DEFINING OUR FUTURE, TODAY!

Scientific break-throughs, exponential technological progress, economic growth and jobs often dominate the discussions when we ponder the future. However, as the world is going rapidly digital, I believe it is our humanity that needs the most attention, and it is our humanity that will make all the difference in a world dominated by algorithms and smart machines. Our future is to become more human, not less, and the biggest danger today is not that machines will eliminate us, but that we **become too much like them!**

Consider how quickly the world is changing: data is now really the new oil, artificial intelligence is becoming the new electricity, and the Internet of Things could well be the world's new nervous system. Digital giants and social media platforms have replaced banks and energy conglomerates as the most powerful companies in the world. Algorithms, AI and bots are gearing up to run the show in every industry. What will happen to humans when machines become truly intelligent? What about privacy, secrets, mystery, serendipity, emotions, intuition, imagination, consciousness, and...free will?

This talk expands on the core themes explored in my recent book, [Technology vs. Humanity](#).



BOOKING INQUIRY

THE FUTURE OF WORK

THE AUTOMATION OF EVERYTHING, THE RISE OF SMART MACHINES AND AI: WHAT IS THE FUTURE IMPACT ON JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT?

Automation is everywhere, already: from electronic bridge-tolls to connected cars with dash-cams and self-parking capabilities, to digital wallets and mobile payment platforms, to networked medical devices and quantified-self applications, to sensor networks for traffic control and robotic nurses for the elderly – and this is only the beginning. The next 5 years will bring rapid advancements in all areas of AI, robotics and the Internet of Things, and almost all of them will bring more automation to every sector of our society (and I am sure this will **not always be a good thing**, either). I believe that in the near future we need to focus on human-only jobs and non-routine tasks that only humans can undertake, focusing on creativity, design, tacit pattern recognition, negotiation and other ‘soft skills’, on right-brain capabilities or on emotional context (EQ). However, unemployment is very likely to soar, regardless, as ever smarter and cheaper machines increasingly automate all routines. So will we see the rise of a minimum guaranteed income (i.e. get paid without working) in some developed countries such as Switzerland? The very concept of work and ‘earning a living’ will need to be reimagined, and soon. **The end of routine is not the end of human work!**



BOOKING INQUIRY

EXPONENTIAL CHANGE

THE TOTAL TRANSFORMATION OF BUSINESS AND SOCIETY

Successful businesses always maintain a constant **conversation** about the future: what lessons need to be operationalized today in order to avoid future irrelevance or worse, extinction? For one thing, it is essential to understand that everything that can be digitized, automated or virtualised, will be. Cognification, automation, disintermediation and robotization and 7 other **Megashifts** are now taking place across all industries, globally, not just in B2C sectors like media, content and marketing. **Digital transformation** – going from an industrial society to a digitally-native world – is certain to be the #1 challenge-opportunity in the next 5-7 years. How can people and their organisations become better at understanding the new challenges and opportunities, and move faster to develop the mindset and implement the transformations that are required? How will a company prosper in a world that is quickly becoming hyper-connected and interdependent? What skills and mindsets will we need, and what should remain human even if it is inefficient? Watch **this** excerpt from a recent keynote on digital transformation, or **this complete talk**.



BOOKING INQUIRY

FROM TRANSFORMATION TO HUMANISATION CULTURE STILL EATS TECHNOLOGY FOR BREAKFAST!

We have reached peak 'digital transformation' – if you haven't heard about why you and your business need to 'go digital' or 'transform into a digital organisation' you just may have lived under a rock during the past 5 years:)

But now that this initial "transform or die" hype is winding down we are entering an era where it is no longer just about upgrading your IT-systems or investigating new business models. Now it is all about making sense, staging experiences, and creating tangible human benefits.

We must therefore TRANSCEND TECHNOLOGY so that we can focus on what really matters: human flourishing and (customer) happiness. We must invest as much in humanity as we invest in technology. Today's unique opportunity is to re-humanize technology so that it serves a deeper purpose.

When humans are treated like algorithms the loss of trust is pre-programmed – and losing trust is something no organisation can afford. If you don't want to end up like some of the global social media platforms who are now facing a jaw-dropping loss of trust, regulation and anti-trust legislation, put the HUMAN back into the centre of everything you do, and the future will be yours!

 [BOOKING INQUIRY](#)

DIGITAL ETHICS THE ETHICS OF EXPONENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS

Science fiction is increasingly becoming science fact. Witness the dramatic technological advances in robotics, artificial intelligence, human genome manipulation, autonomous vehicles and quantum computing. I reckon that in 10 years technology will be almost limitlessly powerful! It is for these reasons that I believe that the ethical and humane use of technology can no longer be an afterthought, but that it is in fact an existential challenge. If we define ethics as "knowing the difference between having the right or the power to do something, and doing the right thing", who, then will decide what is right, and who will be "**mission control for humanity**"? Technology is morally neutral until we use it (hat-tip to William Gibson) – and we will use it absolutely everywhere in the near future. Do we need a '**Digital Ethics Council**'?

 [BOOKING INQUIRY](#)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

THE NEXT 10 YEARS

AI has become a global buzz-phrase that hogs our attention everywhere – yet the very idea of AI is being frequently misinterpreted, misunderstood and misrepresented. Hopefully this presentation can clear up this confusion! From a nonacademic perspective I explain the differences between what I call IA (intelligent assistance), AI and AGI (artificial general intelligence), and what each of them could mean for our near-future. I depict what is real and what's not so real (yet), and where things are going in the next 5-7 years. Examples are usually drawn specifically from a client's domain or industry.

This talk also includes some elements from the Technology vs. Humanity talk, as outlined above, and often addresses the impact of AI on work, education and jobs, as well. Be sure to watch my popular 2018 film: [we need to talk about AI](#). Visit my [AI playlist](#) on Youtube.



BOOKING INQUIRY

THE TOP 10 THINGS YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT THE FUTURE

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO CAN HEAR IT COMING!

In this fast-paced talk, I cut to the chase. Only my most important future-observations make it into this presentation. Culled from my firehose-like-mix of recent reads, news, reports, research, videos and films, and influenced by the many brilliant people I meet and speak to, this constantly updated keynote lays out the top-10 things I find most relevant for our immediate future. This talk is highly customisable and can cover almost any desired segment within business, society, technology and humanity.



BOOKING INQUIRY

PRACTICAL WISDOM

Practical wisdom (Phronesis) is what I aspire to in all my work. Practical wisdom is about a specific kind of knowledge, foresight and wisdom that ties directly into action and immediate human benefit. Aristotle put it this way: "Practical wisdom is not concerned with the universals alone, but must also be acquainted with the particulars: it is bound up with action, and action concerns the particulars".

In this spirit, this impactful presentation features my [key memes and statements](#) such as 'gradually, then suddenly is the new normal' (exponential and combinatorial thinking), 'technology is not what we seek but how we seek' (human-centric progress), or 'societies are driven by their technology but defined by their humanity' (the importance of digital ethics). In each scene of this talk, I set forth a key realization and provide examples on what that means for business and society. A very powerful talk!



BOOKING INQUIRY

UNDERSTANDING THE FUTURE

9 GAME-CHANGERS, 11 MEGASHIFTS AND 6 FUTURE-PRINCIPLES

In this brand-new talk I share my observations and foresights on three sectors: science & technology, business & society, and mindset & philosophy; customized for every specific client and their industry.

Science and technology: We are confronted with 9 game-changers: data, cloud, AI, quantum computing, the Internet of Things, blockchain technologies, 3D printing, augmented and virtual reality and genetic engineering (biotechnology)

Business and society: the game-changers above result in 11 Megashifts that impact how we live, across the board: digitization, datafication, personalization, cognification, augmentation, robotisation, automation, disintermediation, platformization, virtualization and simulation (see www.megashifts.digital for details)

Mindset and philosophy: In response, we need to adopt a future-ready mindset and philosophy based on the understanding that the future is exponential, convergent, combinatorial, circular, holistic and human-centric (the 6 future principles)

"You have to think about the future while doing the present so that the present is going in the right direction"

 BOOKING INQUIRY





AVAILABLE PRESENTATION FORMATS

- A keynote with customized visuals (30-60 minutes plus q&a / panel)
- A keynote without visuals (often combined with a q&a session, or a panel discussion)
- A shorter keynote (with/without slides, 15-30 minutes) plus an interview session, fireside-chat or **conversation** (20-40 minutes)
- A conversation with Gerd (no presentation), hosted by a journalist
- Remote presentations via video or telepresence (**example**)

GERD'S FEES ARE FLEXIBLE, BASED ON THESE VARIABLES:

- Choice of current core topics with some basic customizations (lowest fee)
- Current topics, but with substantial customization i.e. more domain-specific content which requires more research and preparation
- An entirely new topic or subject matter, researched and designed for a specific client (higher costs)
- An existing topic digitally delivered as pre-recorded presentation and subsequent remote video discussion (low cost)
- A live video-presentation from Gerd's studio in Zürich (lowest cost)

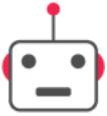
BEYOND KEYNOTES...

Beyond keynotes and presentations, Gerd also offers bespoke 'futurizing' sessions, workshops, seminars, as well as executive board and CXO future-coaching. Gerd is also a film-maker and heads up all **StoriesFromTheFuture.tv** projects. He is available for participation in fire-side chats, talk-shows, public debates and TV shows, and enjoys moderating events, as well. Gerd presents both in English as well as in German language.



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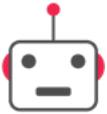
OTHER TOPICS AND THEMES COVERED BY GERD



**DISRUPTION TO CONSTRUCTION:
FUTURIZING YOUR BUSINESS**

WATCH VIDEO

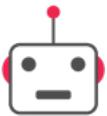
READ MORE



**THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION,
LEARNING AND TRAINING**

WATCH VIDEO

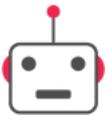
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HOW TO FUTURIZE YOUR BUSINESS

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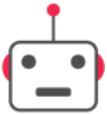
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PHILOSOPHY TOPICS

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SOCIETY TOPICS

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HUMANITY FUTURES

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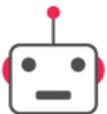
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