

**weak signals-**  
what ?  
Where?  
and  
How?

...Let's talk about little strange things in life that could have meaning for the future...

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what ?

## A weak signal is

Something strange, new, amazing, crazy  
that exist today and might foretell about  
fothcoming changes – or then not.



what ?

Pioneer of weak signals study is Igor Ansoff  
(starting from 1970's):

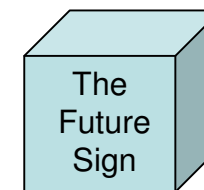
*“weak signals are warnings (external or internal), events and developments that are still too incomplete to permit an accurate estimation of their impact and/or to determine their complete responses”*

A new theory of weak signals:

E.Hiltunen, *The future sign and three dimensions of it*, Futures, available online, 2007 ,and

Osmo Kuusi and Elina Hiltunen, *The Signification Process of the Future Sign*, FFRC eBooks 4/2007. Finland Futures Research Centre, Turku School of Economics. 24 p. ISBN 978-951-564-510-4.

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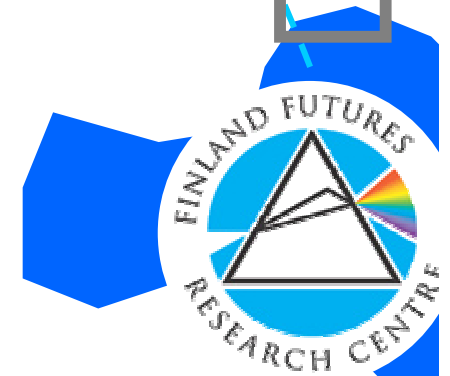


what ?

# A weak signal test

1. Makes your colleagues to laugh
2. You collagues are opposing it:no way, it will never happen
3. Makes people to wonder
4. No one has heard about it before
5. It is wanted that no-one talks about it anymore (a tabu)

1-5 ticks and it **is** a weak signal!



where ?

# International study for Futurists about good sources for weak signals

number of order	A good source for weak signals
1	scientist/researchers
2	futurists
3	colleagues
4	academic and scientific journals
5	reports of research institutes
6	consultants in other area than futures
7	popular science and economic magazines
8	television/ radio
9	educational and scientific books
10	Internet: companies' or organizations' web pages
11	ordinary people (e.g. observing them)
12	media people
13	Internet: electric journals
13	Internet: homepages of individual people/consultants
15	email newsletters
16	science fiction movies, books etc.
17	government and other public sector reports
17	Internet: discussion groups
19	Internet: blogs
20	marginal/underground press
21	periodicals
22	local newspapers
23	Internet: electric databases
24	government officials
25	email lists
26	movies
27	artists
28	market research studies
29	politicians
29	annual reports of companies
31	family/friends
32	patents
33	doctoral dissertations
34	proposals for laws
35	other source?
36	art exhibitions

N=118

Read more here:

Elina Hiltunen, Where Do Future Oriented People Find Weak Signals?

FFRC eBook 2/2007. Finland Futures Research Centre,

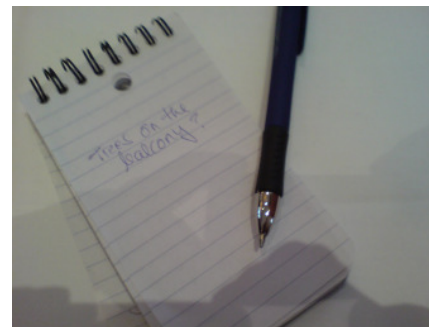
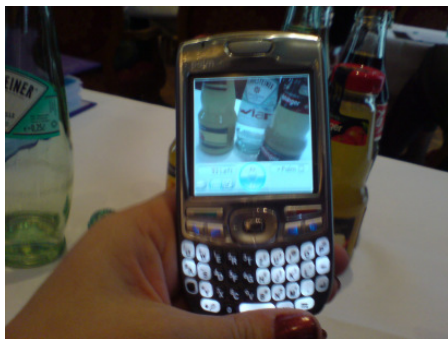
Turku School of Economics. 40 s. ISBN 978-951-304-432-7, available online

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# Where Do I (as a weak signal enthusiast) find them?

- Surfing in the Internet
- Blogs, blogs and blogs
- Keeping my eyes and ears open, mobilephone with camera in the other hand and a notebook in the other
- → reporting about weak signals



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Google Reader (1000+) - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Refresh Print Stop Home Search Friends

Address <http://www.google.com/reader/view/#stream/feed%2Fhttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.textually.org%2Findex.rdf> Go Links del.icio.us TAG

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- Putting people first (47)
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- textually.org (74)
- TreeHugger (783)
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Another halloween costume for the mobile minded. Available from [buycostumes.com](http://buycostumes.com).

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Cellphones recycled into Jewellery » Oct 29, 2007 (4 days ago)  
by emily



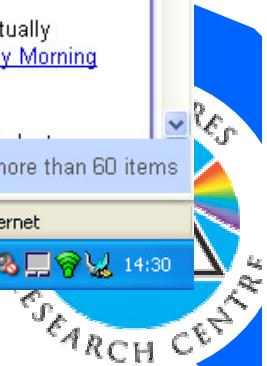
Don't be surprised if the next mobile phone you buy is eventually handed back to you as your wedding ring writes [The Sydney Morning Herald](#).

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start 6 M Mi... 8 I. 2 W Sk... 6 M Wi... Int... 2 A. Re... FI 14:30

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Petri Nieminen **YRITTÄJÄN PÄIVÄKIRJA** Tekijöitä ja johtajia

Ahti Terhemaa **Tiedän tarkasti, että kunt** ennallaan

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# Heikot Signaalit

## Todellinen iPod nano

**Elina Hiltunen** 7.11.2007 klo 13:26

Ihan todellisen nano iPodin komponenttien kimpussa hääriilevät nyt tutkijat Yhdysvalloissa. BBC tiedeuutisten mukaan tutkijat ovat onnistuneet valmistamaan todellisen...

[Kommentoi](#) [heikko signaali](#), [hs-tek](#), [nano](#), [nanotuubi](#)

1 Suosittele

## Hologrammi korvaa mallit

**Elina Hiltunen** 7.11.2007 klo 09:33

Huippumalleileilla on niin kiusallisen kova palkka, että jos jostain kannattaa muotishowssa kustannuksia napsaista on se tietenkin mallien käyttö. Yhdysvaltalainen Target järjesti...

2 Suosittele

### Profiili: Elina Hiltunen



Tämä on blogi heikoista signaaleista ja tulevaisuudesta. Blogisti on tulevaisuuden tutkija Tulevaisuuden tutkimuskeskuksessa ja tekee parhaillaan väitöskirjaansa heikoista signaaleista. Tämä blogi on jatkoa aiemmalle blogilleni: [www.future.vuodatus.net](http://www.future.vuodatus.net). Kyseisestä paikasta löytyy mm. blogistin kokoamaa tietoa tulevaisuuden ennakoinnista. Blogisti käy myös ahkerasti luennoimassa tulevaisuudesta ja heikoista signaaleista- joten kutsut puhumaan näistä aiheista ovat tervetulleita

This is a blog about weak signals and future. The Writer of this blog is doing her doctoral thesis on this

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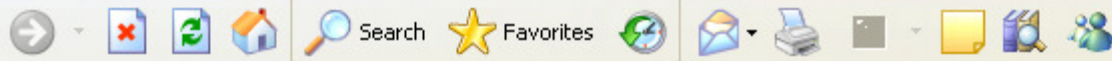
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# Weak Signals (the Future Today)

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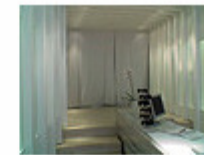
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# Use of weak signals

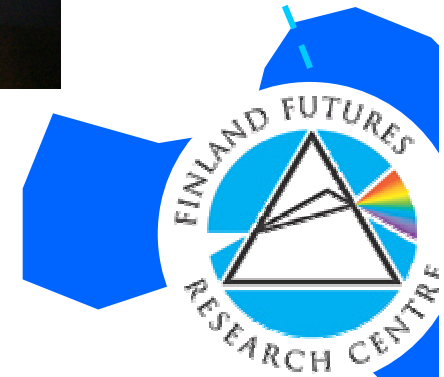
- Anticipating the future (pattern management, sensemaking)
- Innovating and creating the future (breaking our mental models) → new tool for that: the Futures Windows
- Another new tool under development "Image Signal Wall". It utilizes the possibilities of images of weak signals and web 2.0. The outcome is information about emerging trends, changes in social moods etc.



# A tool: the Futures Window Shows images of weak signals



Elina Hiltunen, The Futures Window – A Medium for Presenting Visual Weak Signals to Trigger Employees' Futures Thinking in Organizations, *HSE Publications*, working paper- w-423, 2007, available online  
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# More information

- Elina Hiltunen, Was It a Wild Card or just our Blindness to Gradual Change?, *Journal of Future Studies*, Nov. 2006, 11 (2), 61-74.
- Elina, Hiltunen, The Future Sign and Its Three Dimensions, *Futures, In Press, Accepted Manuscript, Available online 1 September 2007*
- Osmo Kuusi and Elina Hiltunen, The Signification Process of the Future Sign, FFRC eBooks 4/2007. Finland Futures Research Centre, Turku School of Economics. 24 p. ISBN 978-951-564-510-4. *(available online)*
- Elina Hiltunen, Where Do Future Oriented People Find Weak Signals? FFRC eBook 2/2007. Finland Futures Research Centre, Turku School of Economics. 40 s. ISBN 978-951-564-452-7. *(available online)*
- Elina Hiltunen, The Futures Window – A Medium for Presenting Visual Weak Signals to Trigger Employees' Futures Thinking in Organizations, *HSE Publications*, working paper- w-423, 2007 *(available online)*

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