Our Tech Manifesto

1. Silicon Valley is founded and sustained on the idea that it is on the right side of history. But it now recognises that - like governments, banks, the media and so many more - it now finds itself on the wrong side of the trust deficit. There is still great confidence that it will generate the ideas and innovations that take humanity forward. But a series of high profile exposures, coupled with increasing awareness of the malign political impact that technology can have, now place the entire ecosystem on the back foot.

2. This creates a great opportunity for new business models to emerge that place social value more consistently and explicitly at their core. And for tech companies to engage other actors on genuinely collaborative problem solving, rather than simply disruption. This is therefore the right moment to be pitching a new coalition approach to education. Annex 1 is the short version of this.

3. Technology will find, without much help, the best ways to get educational content to future learners: there are a myriad of methods to do this, and the most effective ones will rise to the top. For a period this will be a mixture of commercial and philanthropic interventions. Governments will be among the beneficiaries, but struggle to do more than validate the best.

4. We are within a decade of being able to see a digital library of the world's most important knowledge, presented in accessible ways, free to the user. So as the next billion come on line, they will have better access to knowledge not just than than Einstein, but than Steve Jobs. This is more significant than any other moment ever in reducing the barriers to information, including the printing press.

5. For most people in the Tech world, the arguments over the need for more social and emotional learning are already won. Just look at the schools they are sending their kids to - problem solving, team working, critical thinking and creativity are prioritised over remembering things or passing classic exams.

6. But even so, beyond a handful of pioneer schools in expat communities and elite areas, the current systems won't change fast enough for the new job market - for tech businesses or those they will need to employ. We face a new digital divide, where only a small percentage of the global elite can educate their children in the right ways.

7. In the meantime, businesses will invest increasing amounts in companies that effectively re-train their employees for them, online and offline. Rather than fixing the symptoms of the education crisis, they will simply pay more for the treatments. They will see the education system itself as too bureaucratic, too hard to reform. They will select applicants despite, not because, of their education. And seek to re-wire them. The next generation of CEOs could/should be Chief Learning Officers.

8. Some governments have the vision and resource to adapt. They will tend to be smaller countries, more agile, with less bureaucratic/historical baggage, often with lots of coast line. Their citizens will be the global elite of the 2040s, filling the top international positions and dominating the global economy.

9. Meanwhile, elsewhere, parents and, increasingly, young people, are going to start to migrate to new content and new tools, as they see that they can achieve their educational objectives faster outside formal education. This will hit the university system first, and hardest. But we are within a decade of younger people dropping out of school in order to learn faster. Migrant and refugee communities could be among the trailblazers.

10. In this context, assessment and accreditation will become much more important. People will still need to validate their learning. Will a Google Degree become more valuable than a degree from Cambridge? Eventually this leads to greater equality of opportunity, but there will be a period of flux and complication. How do we ensure credibility and quality for education outcomes in the context of a free for all?

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