

The 100 Year Plan

George Oates & Alex Chan
Flickr.org

12 November 2024



Welcome.

Imagine if we could place ourselves 100 years from now and still have access to photos shared by millions of people on Flickr...

We're working on it.

[See our programs](#)



[Learn more about us](#)



Astronaut Sally Ride on the Flight Deck from NASA on the Commons [↗](#)

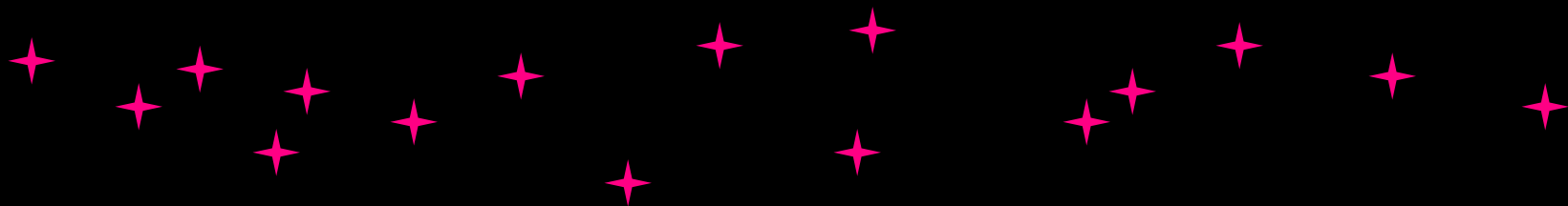
**Our purpose is
to keep Flickr pictures
visible for 100 years.**



1. Why 100 years?



Ad-hoc tactics



Contemporary strategy



Strong directive



***Forever* is too abstract.
Adding constraints to
focus our thinking.**



**2. What are we
learning from the
100-year plan?**



**Tech churn is inevitable
&
Design for next team**



2a. Tech churn is inevitable

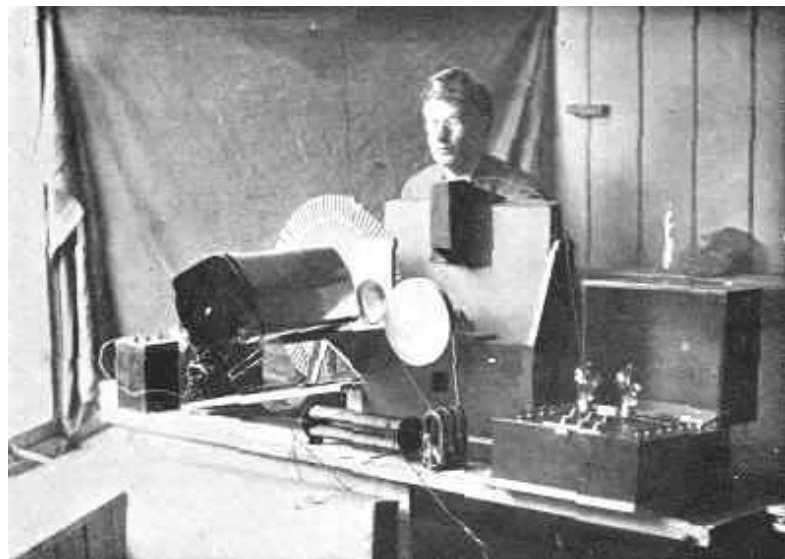
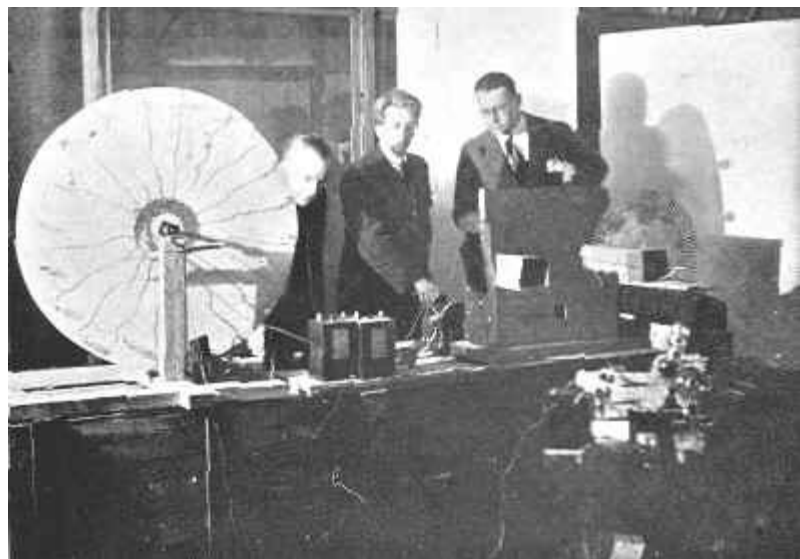


**What will technology
look like in 100 years?**



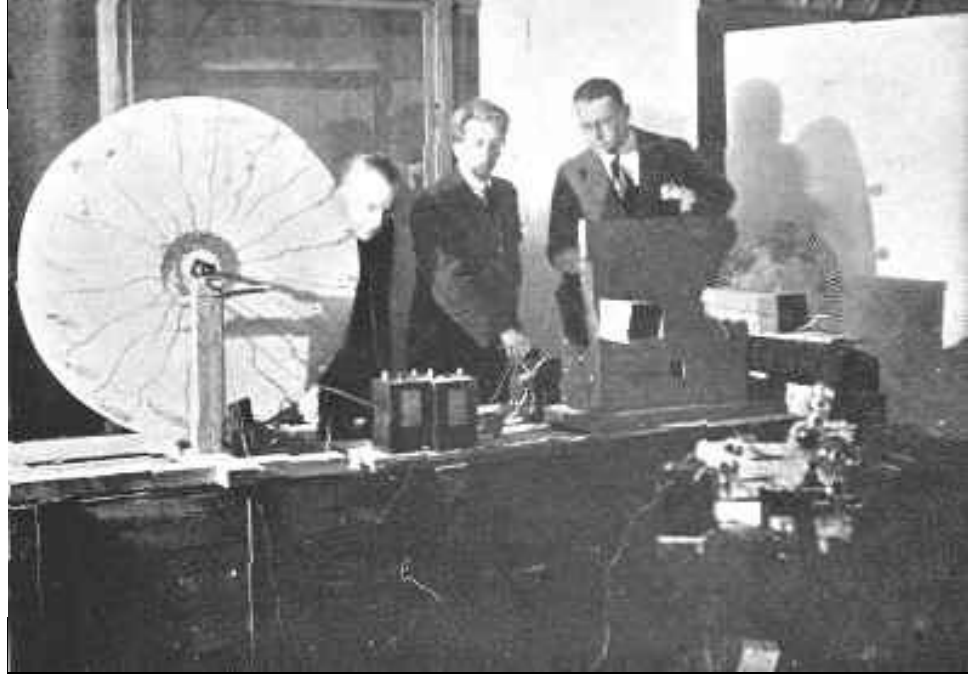
What will
technology look
like in 100 years?





What did technology look like 100 years ago?

Photo: Radio Rentals Ltd



**What will technology
look like in 100 years?**



**If you look far enough
into the future, there
are pockets of certainty**



**All technology will
eventually be replaced**

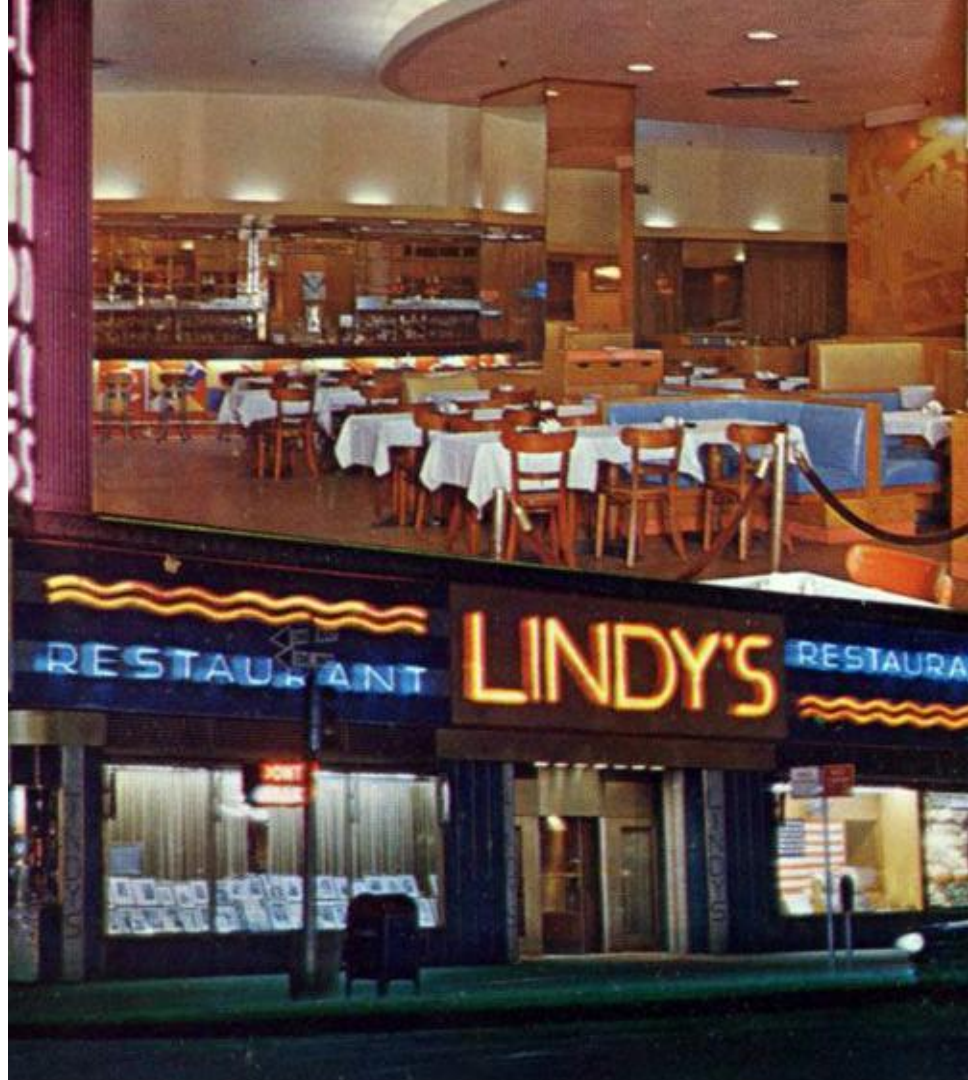


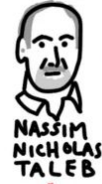
**If we know our tech is
going to be replaced,
how does that affect
our decisions?**



Look for tech that
has been around
for a long time

Photo: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

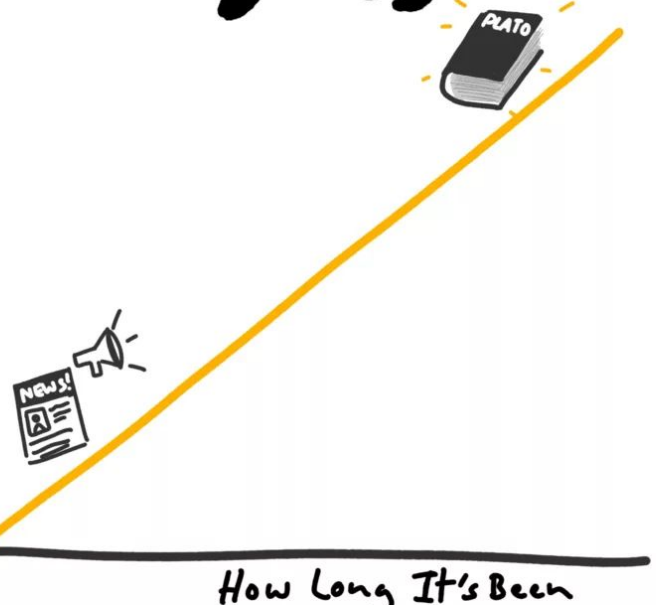




NASSIM
NICHOLAS
TALEB

THE Lindy Effect

VALUE
&
EXPECTED
LIFETIME



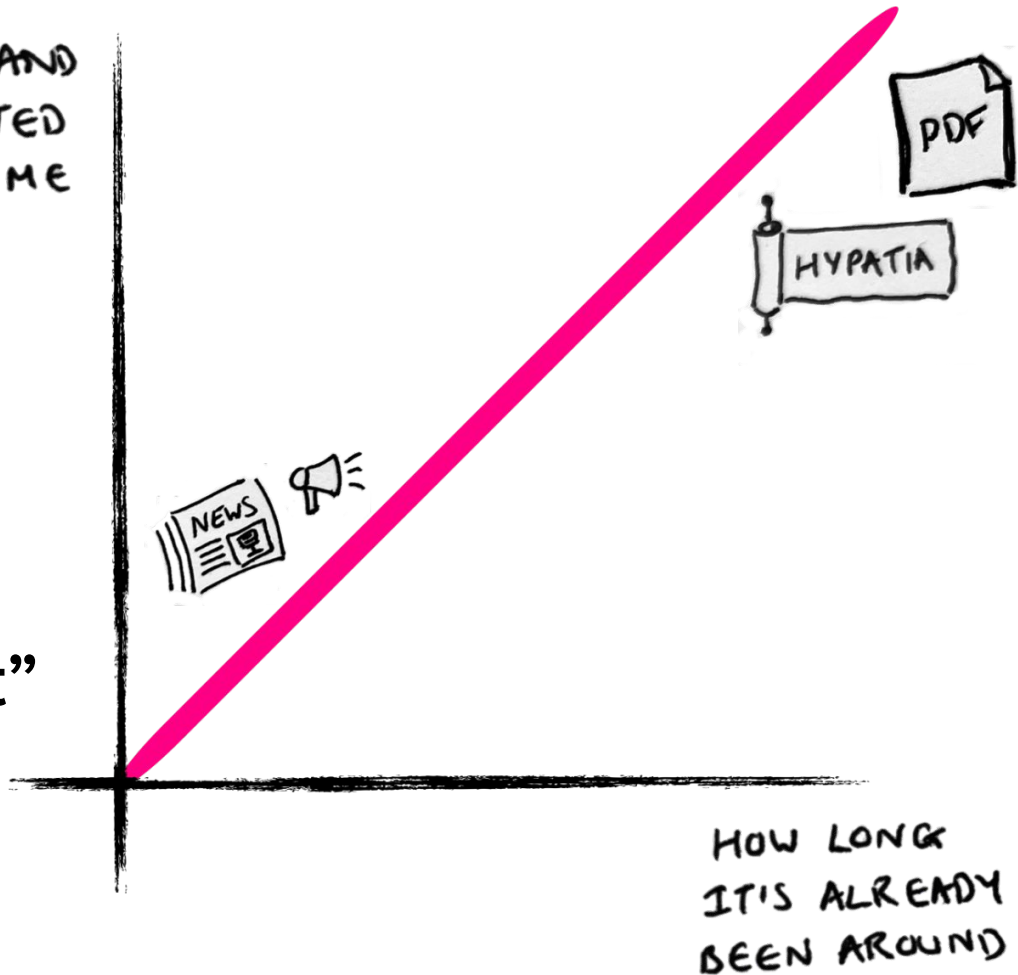
How Long It's Been
AROUND.

sketchy ideas

VALUE AND
EXPECTED
LIFETIME

If it's been here a
while, it's probably
here to stay

Aka "The Lindy Effect"



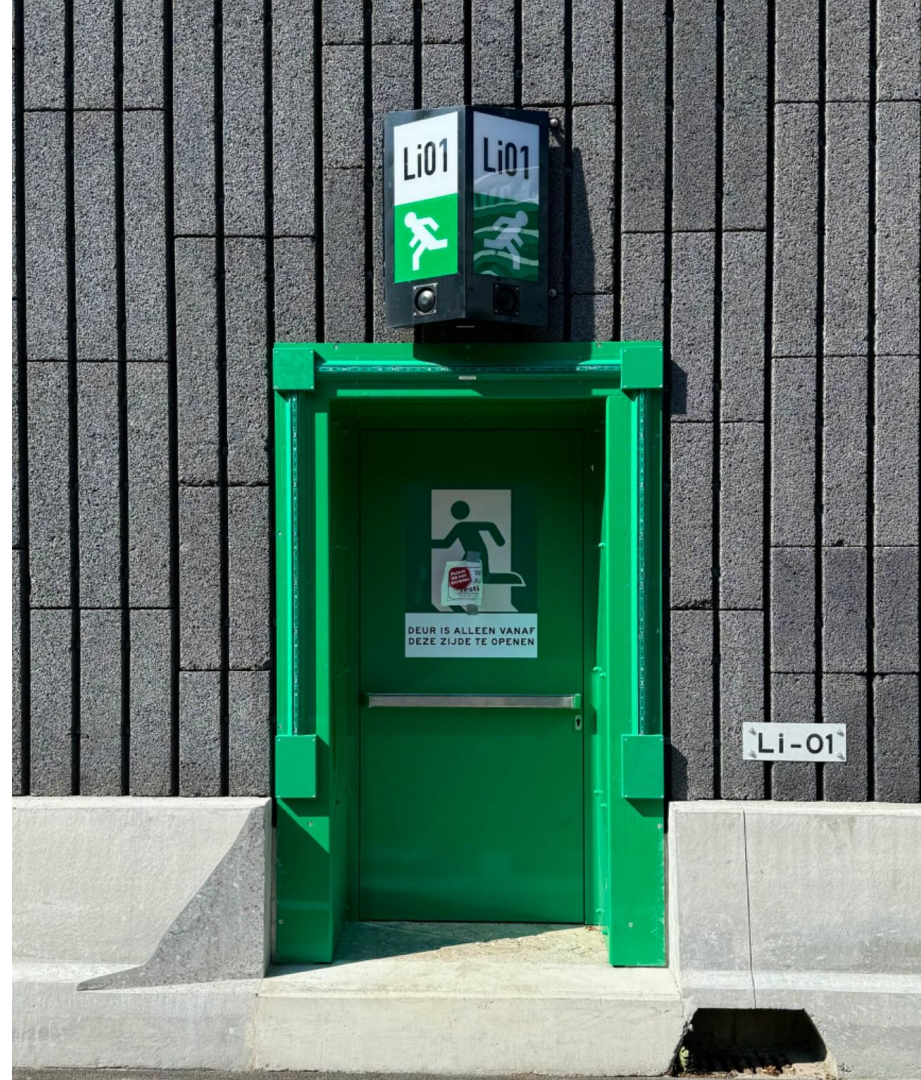
Look for tech that offers lots of alternative paths

Photo: [Nationaal Archief](#), Flickr Commons



Work out your exit route ahead of time

Photo: [Ennomien](#), Wikimedia Commons



Look for tech that has plenty of other big users

Photo: [Provincial Archives of Alberta](#), Flickr Commons



**Distinguish between
uncertain “what”
and uncertain “when”**



2b. Design for the next team



**Who will be working at
the Foundation
in 100 years?**

They are our audience.



- **What are we here to do?**
- **Do we have enough?**
- **Do we have too much?**
- **Should we stop?**





governance
in waves

set feature
across people

Keeper of the Fabric



Long Now Foundation 
@longnow

Follow



Organizations that want to last need to preserve institutional knowledge. Everywhere from cathedrals to hunter-gatherer tribes to modern cities we find key figures who are "Keepers of the Fabric," living memories of how institutions function in times of maintenance and crisis.



Alexander Rose | The Keeper of the Fabric

Long Now Foundation's Executive Director, Alexander Rose, reveals a pattern within long-lived organizations: a key figure who keeps crucial information and facilitates conversations between generations.



**What kind of
information do we
want to keep *about
ourselves?***



- **Rituals, annotations**
- **Programmed refreshment**
- **Day-to-day caretaking**
- **Nurturing the network**



NEW PROJECT for 2025

A Digital Daybook



3. Putting this into practice



Data Lifeboat

Photo: [Southern Methodist University Library](#), Flickr Commons



- Not trying to save all of Flickr



- Not trying to save all of Flickr
- Leaning on stable formats like HTML and JPEG



- Not trying to save all of Flickr
- Leaning on stable formats like HTML and JPEG
- Telling the future about what's being saved in a “README”



Thank you!

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