

SEVEN WAYS TO FIX THE WORLD

by Christopher Barnatt

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Human civilization faces more challenges than ever before. Unless urgent action is taken, there will soon be biting shortages of energy, food and fresh water. Climate change also demands our attention, while conventional economic decision making and mass consumerism are leading us to ruin. The time has therefore come to fix the world.

This book is for everybody who wants to help shape a better future. Its chapters cover the interrelated topics of more local living, low energy lifestyles, dematerialization, design for repair, crowdsourcing, more women in authority, and the death of economics. Within a decade, all of these will be common cultural or business practice. *Seven Ways to Fix the World* therefore provides you with the opportunity to understand the rising agendas of tomorrow, and to help make a difference by getting ahead of the curve.

Seven Ways to Fix the World is the sequel to Christopher Barnatt's January 2012 book *25 Things You Need to Know About the Future*, which was reviewed by *New Scientist* as "a worthwhile read for anyone curious to know what may await us".

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher Barnatt is a professional futurist and Associate Professor of Computing & Future Studies in Nottingham University Business School. He is the author of seven previous books, and runs the websites ExplainingTheFuture.com and ExplainingComputers.com.

In the past year Christopher has made media contributions to Sky News, ABC News, 17 BBC local radio stations, Talk Radio Europe, Radio 101 Zagreg Croatia, *The Little Atoms Radio Show*, *Business Traveller*, *Stuff*, *Your Choice*, *Internet Evolution*, *Epicurious*, *Mechanical Engineering*, *CIR Magazine*, *Multimedia Information and Technology*, the Greenbelt Festival, and 3D Printer.net. You can follow him at twitter.com/chrisbarnatt.

PLEASE SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR A SUMMARY OF THE SEVEN WAYS TO FIX THE WORLD!

**Christopher Barnatt is available for interview and to write features.
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SEVEN WAYS TO FIX THE WORLD

1. MORE LOCAL LIVING

Within a decade or so, the looming spectre of 'Peak Oil' will make it impossible to trade globally in most foods and many basic goods. We therefore need to start preparing for a world focused on localization rather than globalization. This may involve vertical farming and other forms of urban agriculture, as well as the use of 3D printing and synthetic biology to help us manufacture things more locally.

2. LOW ENERGY LIFESTYLES

The 'net energy' output of all alternative energy sources is far lower than that of petroleum. This means that while wind, wave and solar technologies may be able to power the world of tomorrow, they will not be able to fuel a clone of today. With this 'net energy time bomb' now ticking, we therefore need to start investing in low-power devices, as well as learning to live in new, more energy efficient ways.

3. DEMATERIALIZATION

'Peak everything' may be with us sometime next decade. Our civilization therefore has an urgent requirement to become less materialistic. In part we may do this by further transitioning to digital products, and by reducing manufacturing waste. Far more fundamentally, we will also need to question the wisdom of mass consumerism in order to develop a 'gentler mode of capitalism'.

4. DESIGN FOR REPAIR

Today, far too many things get thrown away only a few months or years after they have been purchased. In part, this is because so many products cannot be repaired. To help fix the world, we therefore need to return to a bygone age in which designers and manufacturers sell us items that we can maintain and evolve for long periods.

5. CROWDSOURCING

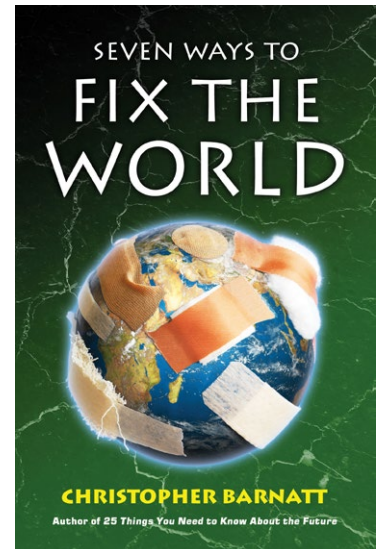
The Internet offers the opportunity to pool our collective intelligence, and to solve problems in new ways. Already 'open source' computer software, cars, prosthetics and robots are being created by online 'crowdsourcing' communities. To fix the world, we need to promote this non-profit trend.

6. MORE WOMEN IN AUTHORITY

Women are vastly underrepresented in humanity's decision making mechanisms. This is despite evidence that companies with more women in senior positions are more likely to succeed. Testosterone-fuelled risk taking may even have caused the credit crunch. The community building and social skills at which most women excel are also soon likely to eclipse head-on competition. Businesses and governments therefore need to start capitalizing on the talent of the entire human gene pool.

7. THE DEATH OF ECONOMICS

Economics has somehow obtained a stranglehold on our common sense, with the pursuit of constant economic growth now putting at risk the health of the planetary ecosystem that keeps us alive. Economic principles also regularly trample many other human values, lead to exploitation, and ignore the requirements of future generations. We therefore need to stop relying on traditional economic logic as the primary decision making mechanism of human civilization.



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