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The Newsletter of the Institute of Inventors and Innovators

III – A non-profit organization. A home for inventors. Run by inventors. Supporting inventors.

III – South Africa Business Award Winner – MEA Markets 2019

<https://www.mea-markets.com/latest-issues/>

- ❖ **Eureka!MEET and face-to-face Pitch it to the Panel™** sessions have been put on hold as you know **but we will let you know** as soon as they start up again. We are processing membership applications and PITTP bookings as usual, so be sure to reserve your PITTP seat – feel free to communicate, telephone or email – we are open!



Main ideas in this issue:

- ❖ 'Everything that can be invented has been invented.'
- ❖ An amazing competition **The Liveability Challenge**.
- ❖ Corona product solutions - disinfecting booths to no-sew facemasks
- ❖ The Hunu foldable coffee cup
- ❖ One thing you *must* do when you have an idea for a Product,

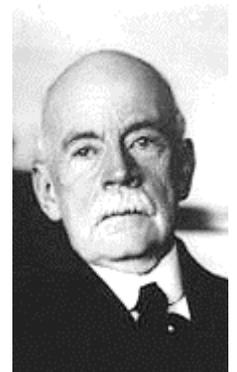
What else is there left to Invent?



In **1889**, Charles H. Duell was the **Commissioner of US patent office** declared that the patent office would soon shrink in size, and eventually close, because

“Everything that can be invented has been invented.”

While there is no direct evidence that Mr. Duell made that curious statement - the [1899 edition of Punch Magazine](#) reports that it was said by a patent office clerk - it's very likely that the clerk was just quoting his boss. In 1899 clerks didn't have opinions!



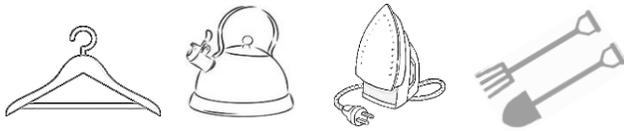
THE COMING CENTURY.
SCENE—Office of a Publisher. Enter a Genius.
Genius. I want to see the manager of the book department.
Boy. Oh, there isn't one, Sir.
Genius. Well, who looks after the pictures?
Boy. That's done by machinery, Sir.
Genius. Isn't there a clerk who can examine patents.
Boy. Quite unnecessary, Sir. Everything that can be invented has been invented.
Genius. Well, I want to leave a novel, a picture, and an idea.
Boy. You must be rather old-fashioned, Sir. All sorts of work is done, nowadays, by mental photography.

Anyway, we don't agree that there is nothing more to be invented or improved or discovered. Perhaps it comes down to a definition of what an invention is? Maybe it's because we expect any new invention to be extraordinary or amazingly advanced beyond what's now possible to be called an 'invention', but that's not the case.

Granted, there are extraordinary ideas and many prior advances that were revolutionary and remarkable in their time, but an invention need not be revolutionary or even unique to be useful, significant and/or noteworthy (and patentable). When you consider this further you will see that many fine and new inventions are usually derivatives of their predecessors in some way and that most

innovation is the result of joining forces with previous thinkers and creating something new (see our article in the June issue of Eureka!NEWS where there is an article about The Diffusion of Ideas).

Think of these every-day utility items. How many versions can you think of, both old and new? No Google



search is needed to note the different developments, features, uses, designs, materials and more involved. No. **Without doubt, there is a never-ending need for creativity, original thought, innovation and invention.**

Further, nothing is so basic nor so great that it cannot be made better or improved upon. Times change. People change, demands change ... and so much more. Very often, the more one studies something, (a painting is a good example) the more about the object becomes apparent. Previously undiscovered nuances make themselves known by constant study. Regardless of how much is known, there is more to learn and understand and develop, and it is this knowledge that can lead to relevant innovation.

Invention infers original thought (etc.) and innovation infers difference and improvement somehow, yet these concepts are inescapably intertwined, they form a circular body, one relying on the other. What was an invention may lead to innovation which in turn could lead to further invention.

As an in-basket case study, take the simple bicycle bell as an example. This bicycle bell on the left is the one you'd see on Postman Pat's bike and while they are still around, they're outdated, though with few changes, still serve the bicycle manufacturers for the everyday 'utility' bike.



It was designed by **John Richard Dediccoat**, a British inventor, in the late 19th century. His vision — a simple rounded piece of metal with a small lever that would yield a simple "ding" — has endured for more than a century; but the changes, improvements and innovations that have happened around bicycle design, has meant that the simple bicycle bell design has also been turned upside down.

When you are a serious biker (and there are many around!) you may invest anything from R25, 000 to R190, 000 in your magnificent machine and while there are no standard rules or by-laws for having or not having a bike bell, it just makes sense to have something to help a rider navigate heavily trafficked city streets or multi-use pathways ... or anywhere where a bell can be effective at providing advanced notice of your presence so that people can move ot of your way. But, no-one wants to put a cheap mass-produced ding bell on a R160, 000 carbon fibre road bike!

Enter two examples of innovation and design that meet customer 'needs', are luxurious, expensive (?) yet utilitarian enough to suit the upper-end market – the Spurcycle bell and the Oi bell, the latter having been designed by Australian bike accessories company Knog.

These two products serve the same market but are fierce competitors. Nothing wrong with that. The Spurcycle bell has a distinct dome shape, is made of premium nickel brass and stainless steel and has a long polite ring that reverberates some 30 metres or so. The Oi-bell is significantly more discreet in design. It is a bell that doesn't look or sound anything like a bike bell with its 'glockenspiel' ding. It's a sleek bit of titanium that wraps around the handlebar like a bracelet.

Which one would you buy? Personal choice of course, given that you own the right bike, but bells are still utilitarian products (remember that as an inventor) so it seems in this instance that function trumps design. Opinion has it that the Spurcycle does the job better.



The Spurcycle bell



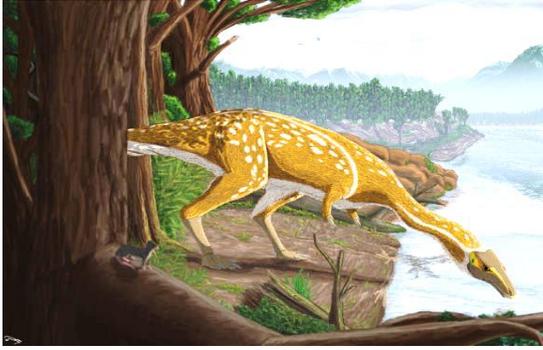
Oi bell



Invention and innovation are alive and vibrant and ever-testing. Thank heavens.

In case you missed it... they found a new dinosaur in Australia.

In 2015 Paleontologists in Australia found a fossilized vertebra from an elaphrosaurine theropod dinosaur that walked the Earth in the Cretaceous period 110 million years ago; and it has taken these past five years or so to put the pieces of this puzzle together. It is the first elaphrosaur known from the Australian continent, though its cousins are known in Africa, Asia, and Argentina.



"Elaphrosaurs were strange looking dinosaurs — they ran low to the ground on two legs, with a slender body, long neck, stubby arms, and a delicate toothless skull," said Dr. Tim Ziegler, collection manager of vertebrate paleontology at Museums Victoria.

"New discoveries like this elaphrosaur fossil overturn past ideas, and help to interpret discoveries yet to come." Dr. Ziegler said. And the point of this insert, besides the interesting development? Well, it just **shows that inventors should always seek 'more' and should not be satisfied with the status quo.** For the scientifically-minded go here: <http://www.sci-news.com/> and fall in love with the internet all over again.



IFIA invited all innovators to take part in the \$1-million-prize Temasek Foundation Liveability Challenge

There are basically three categories:

1. Urban Food Production – where 'urban farming' offers opportunities to improve food security in cities and maximise technological solutions that will lead to sustainable urban food production.
2. Circular Packaging – Where innovative and multi-use packaging solutions replace or reduce packaging waste made from plastic, glass, virgin/hard-to-recycle paper, or aluminum.
3. Decarbonisation – where solutions will enable cities to capture and use carbon in a productive, sustainable way, for example how long can captured CO2 be sequestered and kept out of the air?

The deadline for the 2020 competition was end April 2020 and unfortunately we picked up the event too late to tell you about it in time ... BUT ... please go the link below where you will get full details about this exciting competition.

[The Liveability Challenge official website](#)

We can't find any reference just yet for the **2021** challenge, but this is one of those areas of invention that will never lose its impact or global need. Any inventive or innovative work you do will take time anyway and it can be used in all sorts of places - so start thinking and plotting and inventing now!



Climate change is unbelievably bad. In this passionate **call to action**, 16-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg explains why, in August 2018, she walked out of school and organized a strike to raise awareness of global warming, protesting outside the Swedish parliament and grabbing the world's attention. "The climate crisis has already been solved. We already have all the facts and solutions," Thunberg says. "All we have to do is to wake up and change."

https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate_change

Coronavirus: a “cabin” to disinfect clothes in the street

The fight against the Coronavirus has entered a new phase. To contain the spread of the Coronavirus a special ‘cabin’ has been created where a person just enters to disinfect and sanitize clothes, all of which goes towards protecting the safety of citizens. Where's your genie when you need him to produce these en masse for South Africa? In discussions maybe? Anyway, watch this.



<https://www.thepatent.news/2020/04/20/coronavirus-cabin-disinfect-clothes-street/>

All you need to do is enter the booth to be ‘run over’ by a jet of steam and sanitizing substances that presumably kill the virus and eliminate bacteria present on clothes. A passerby enters the cabin – very similar to a chemical bath – and within seconds is covered by a jet of sanitizing steam. The whole process takes around 40 seconds and

users can enter one after the other quickly.

The cabin operation for the Covid-Wash is very simple. Like most viruses, the coronavirus remains active on surfaces – including clothes, bank notes and smart phones – for a certain period of time. Researchers are trying to understand how long this period of time is, but so far they have not found any definite answers.

The general understanding is that the coronavirus remains ‘alive’ (and therefore dangerous) for some 48 hours but it seems too that in some circumstances it can remain active for up to 9 days. Much depends on the surface on which the virus is deposited, the environmental conditions and any external agents.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBziWP3FoEI>

Courtesy of the Airport Authority in Hong Kong, this short (1, 40) clip above shows how they are mitigating the effects of Corona on international travel at Hong Kong airport.

Smart disinfection tunnels and autonomous cleaning robots (deployed in toilets and washrooms) are equipped with ultra violet light and air/surface sterilizers. Airport waiting areas are being sprayed/coated with an invisible anti-microbial solution. Will other countries follow suit?



HUNU, the foldable coffee cup that fits in your pocket



A cup is a cup is a cup – except when it's a Hunu! This is a beautifully designed reusable cup that folds down small enough to fit in any pocket or bag. 165 million disposable cups are used for hot drinks every day around the world. Most of these end up in oceans and water reserves, generating a huge negative impact on the environment. New Yorkers Vince and Megan, invented this interesting alternative cup because they wanted one and thought others would want one too. The project is the subject of a crowd funding campaign on

Kickstarter, started in 2018 and is due to be shipped out next month ... 2 years later.

This portable cup with a modern design is made of silicone and bamboo from sustainably grown forests, folds up to 2cm, can fit in any pocket and is environmentally friendly. The design is the result of research developed in a London studio and also meets the desire to have a beautiful and modern gadget in hand. The body of the cup is made of food-grade silicone, certified by major American associations such as the FDA. The silicone is easy to



clean and guarantees a high standard of hygiene, moreover it is resistant to wear and tear, increasing the life of the cup. When opened, the capacity is 240 ml and it has an ideal height which fits under coffee machines commonly distributed in barista bars and such.

See what can happen when a 'tool' the cavemen had becomes a 21st century gadget. A cool invention indeed.



How to make face mask with socks or an 'old' T-shirt

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Evvr711b88>

What if you don't know how to sew and you need a face mask because none are available for some reason? Here are two simple and easy ways ... all you need is the internet, the will, 10 or so minutes to watch the videos, something to measure with an 'old' T-shirt and a pair of sharp scissors.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lybOKHT4cKQ&t=18s>

And here above is a good simple sock-face mask recipe!

There are many of these hanging around and available on the internet – some more complicated than others but these two examples are easy enough, and they work.

Make some to help those who can't raid dad's-don't-want-any-more-socks-for-Christmas-drawer!



PITP – Pitch it to the Panel™

Do you know what questions you have or even which ones you should ask about your idea?

Book for PITP™ and get expert advice on what to do next to move your project forward.

There'll be guidance, assistance and invaluable advice there to get you to your next step.

Members can book a PITP™ session by going to the website and booking online – www.iii.org.za

SECURE YOUR PITP™ PLACE – the next date will be announced soon.

"I presented to the panel in November and I am sorry I have taken this long to get back to you good people. My head remains bowed.

We enjoyed our encounter with the Panel and left a little stronger and better armed. We acted on the patent lady's advice and explored the websites that were recommended. I was not too surprised to see that similar thinking has been around for quite a while, mostly in the automotive industry and even one dating back to 1939. Since presenting I have disclosed my proposals to a large materials handling company after receiving a letter of assurance that I was prepared to accept in terms of protecting my work.

I'll keep you posted. Thanks again." **Terry Scanlon (84 years) PITP November 2019**

Do you know someone who may be interested in becoming a member of the III? Please forward this newsletter to them then let us know so we can send them an invitation join us!

When you have an IDEA for a new PRODUCT, you must first situate it in the market. Is it new? Is it novel? Does it have a point of difference? The only way to tell this is by doing research. This is not an optional step and will tell you a lot about your idea and, at the outset whether or not it is worth developing, rethinking and/or spending money on.

Stop reading for a moment and think of a product you use daily.

A frying pan? A walking stick? A portable reading light? Anything. Now imagine you want to see what is 'out there' in this category. Search **Google Images** using a general search term to start, then drill down, refine your search terms (again and again) until you see everything there is to be found there.

**Amazing new
Lipstick that
helps you
lose weight.**



If you do this search with your own product idea make sure you make notes in your inventor's journal. What comparable products did you see? What did you learn about the category in general? Do you need to rethink your strategy? Rethink your invention? Re-design it? If there are many other 'similar' products already there, don't despair – your idea is good, the product is already on the market – people are buying it.

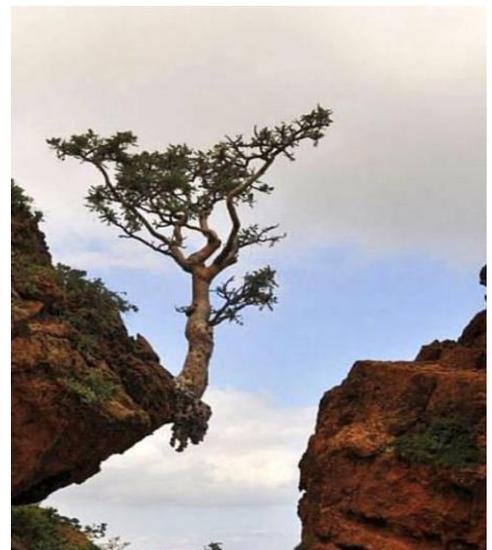
So. How is yours different? Compare and Contrast, learn, refine and don't ignore it or give up, just keep at it. Keep working your idea until you have exhausted all your options. Only then stop, and start again with something new.

Google Image search is just a first step but it's an important one for several reasons. Once completed, and you are quite sure there is nothing more to be done in connection with your product idea, then in the first instance you will have saved yourself from wasted time, effort and money. These are all precious resources for anyone, but particularly for inventors. But the best outcome is that you will have matured as an inventor. And the next time, who knows what lands you will conquer?



Hang in there ... lockdown been a difficult, irritating, surprising upsetting and levelling experience and as the days go by, while we get used to some things, other stuff hits and it seems we have to start again. And not always at GO but in the middle of a game where the rules are unclear on a board that unfolds as we go along. The thing is to keep busy doing useful things which will include rethinking the 'how' of most things. **Going into lockdown was one thing ... coming out of lockdown quite another.** What will people 100 years from now be saying about us? How

might you make sure that you're remembered for resilience during this disturbing time? Would you be remembered for leaning into the disruption with bold new ideas, leadership and determination for your life, including all in your circle you care for? This surely is a time for re-invention. And as you continue to explore the 'new now', pause for a second and think about how surprising life can be. As a wag said recently – anyone who went for a job interview in 2015, and answered the question "Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?" got it wrong!



THE NEXT Eureka!NEWS will be out by 5 July ... look out for it. Greetings to you all.

In July we'll feature Bootstrapping ... and other stuff.

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As you know the III are members of IFIA - the International Federation of Inventors Associations.

The international community is vibrant and very active and IFIA is there every step of the way.

www.ifia.com



WITH COVID-19 HOWEVER, THE WORLD HAS CHANGED!

IFIA has temporarily closed their offices, but members can stay in touch with IFIA by email.

IFIA WISHES EVERYONE GOOD HEALTH.

Got something on your mind? Contact us on info@iii.org.za



Go here for some tomfoolery, why don't you?

https://www.instagram.com/p/B_kmpllo8-L/



<https://www.thepatent.news/>

'I see you are an inventor.'

'Yes.'

'An ideas person?'

'Yes.'

'Well, you know the rules, you're allowed access to only one website during this phase.'

'Yes, I know.'

'So you've chosen the one you want.'

'Yes.'

'Are you sure?'

'Yes. Very sure.'

'Okay, walk through, collect your pass and proceed to the left entrance. You're lucky, you've been allocated the one you wanted.'

'Yes, I see that. Thank you.'