ERP Horizon Scanning Project: Strategic Foresight, Expert Judgement and Decision Making

26th April 2017
Work in prediction is growing

The signal and the noise (Nate Silver)

Superforecasting
(Philip Tetlock & Dan Gardner)
ERP undertook horizon scanning

• Two workshops:
  • 41 attendees from a variety of backgrounds
  • 4 different exercises
  • harvested over 550 ideas

• Outputs structured and condensed:
  • reduced to 35 themes
  • developed into a survey

• Questionnaire circulated within energy sector:
  • 74 responses
  • 12,950 data points
Findings subject to ranges in views

• General confidence that the energy system actors will be able to manage any future disruptive change.

• But, data is subject to substantial variability.

• Some variability is along age lines, e.g. <25yr-olds are:
  • more certain that drivers of change are occurring over shorter timeframes (<30 yrs)
  • more willing to foresee reasonable likelihood of disruption (i.e. actor not being able to cope with change to energy sector)
Most futures studies see variability

- First study in 1975 (technical estimates):
  - Experts used different methods to calculate estimates
  - True value lay outside the ranges of all experts
  - Experts were generally over confident

- Same results seen in many studies in many disciplines
  - e.g. Review of energy scenarios (Will McDowell, UCL)

- **Conclusions:**
  - Averaging expert opinions does not converge on the truth
    - Whole groups can be biased
  - Level of technical skill does not predict ones ability to make good judgements
    - The same expert will not always be reliable
    - No clear relationship between confidence and accuracy
But can variability be reduced?

“How you think matters more than what you think”

- Philip Tetlock

• More analysis does not necessarily mean better foresight/decisions

• Need better methods to turn foresight into outputs

• Training required for assessing technical estimates & predictions
Decision Framing & Uncertainty Network Workshop:
What do Decision Makers want from the Analytical Community?
ROYAL GEOGRAPHY SOCIETY | LONDON SW7 2AR | 5-6 JULY 2017

WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2017 & THURSDAY 6 JULY 2017

- Participatory Simulations: explore decision making under risk and uncertainty
- Panel Session: what decision makers want from analysts
- Simulation feedback
- Open Forum: areas for future research and collaboration