

Kitchen Stories: ICT & imagined eating practices in 2050

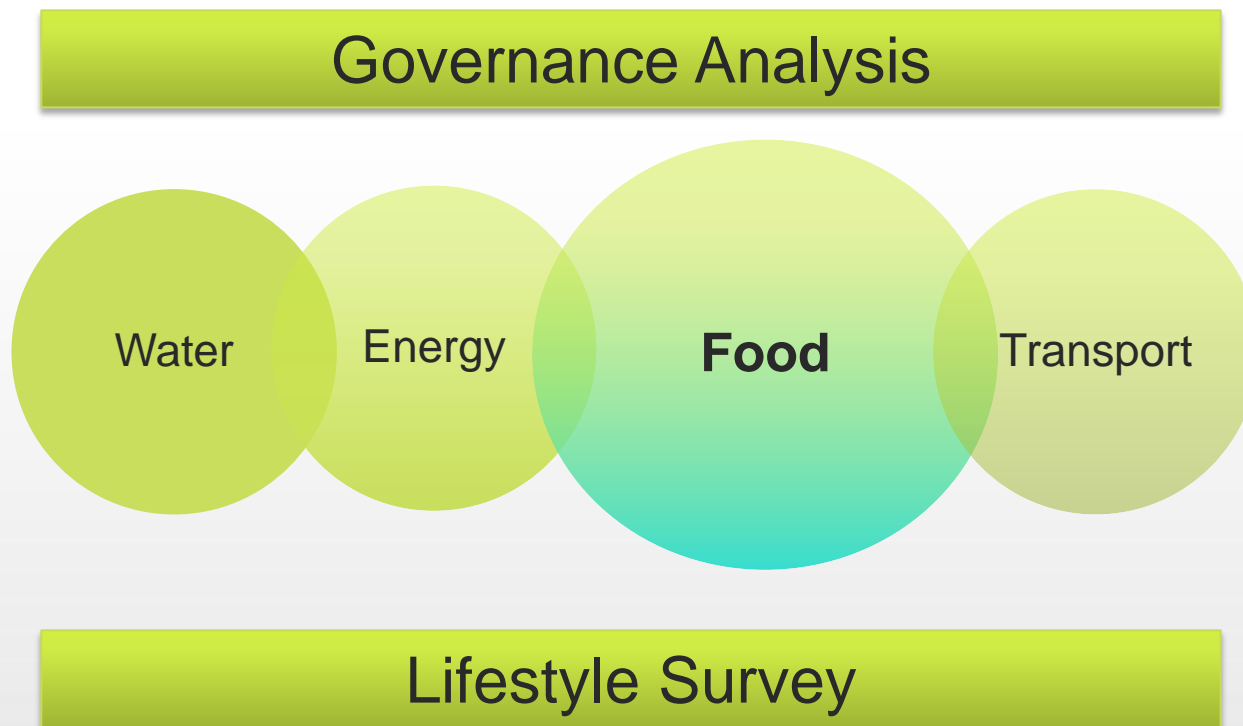
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Urban Food Futures Symposium
Oxford Internet Institute

CONSENSUS Funded by EPA (STRIVE)

Consensus Research

- Consensus: **C**onsumption, **E**nvironment, **S**ustainability
- TCD & NUIG, All-Ireland focus, multi-disciplinary project



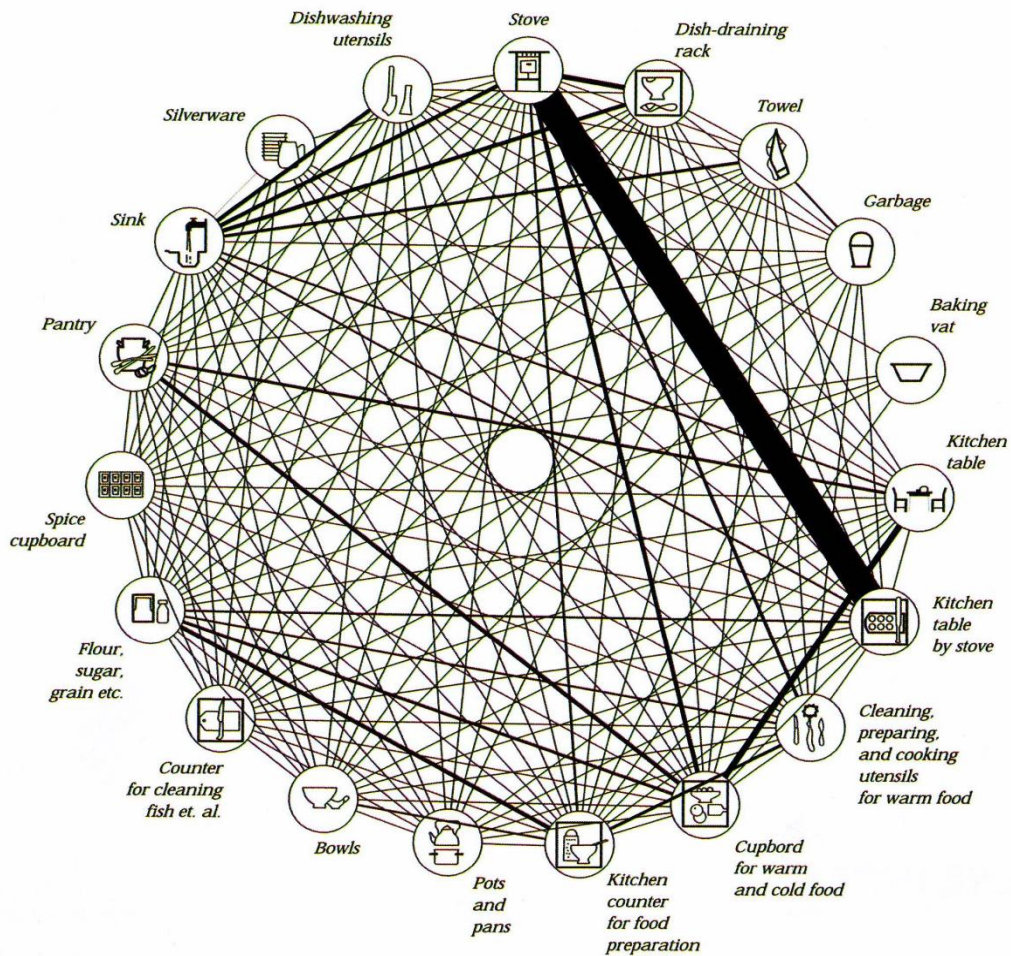
Why Kitchen Stories?

- Household as key site of everyday consumption
- Kitchen as key site of eating within the household
- Eating central household practice - linked to: production, purchase, storage, preparation and waste disposal

Why 2050?

- Kitchens of the Future: past and present
- Participatory backcasting: CONSENSUS approach

Kitchen Stories: Early research



**A housewife's travels between various places in the kitchen during a five-week period.
Drawn up by Sweden's Home Research Institute (H.R.I.) 1950.**



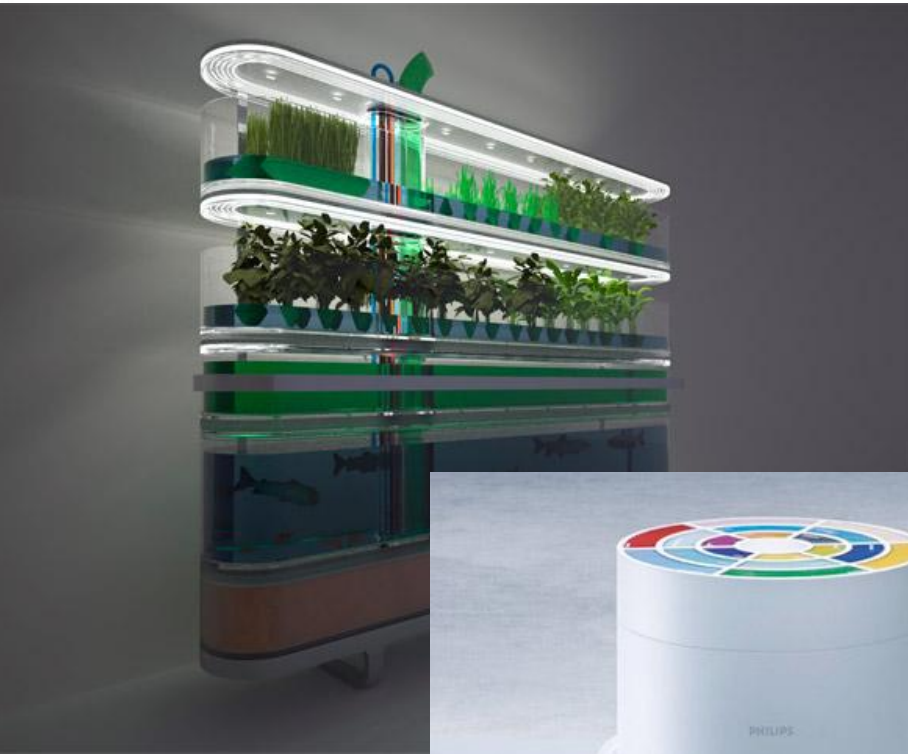
'Future Kitchen': Past visions

The Electric House of the Future (1939)

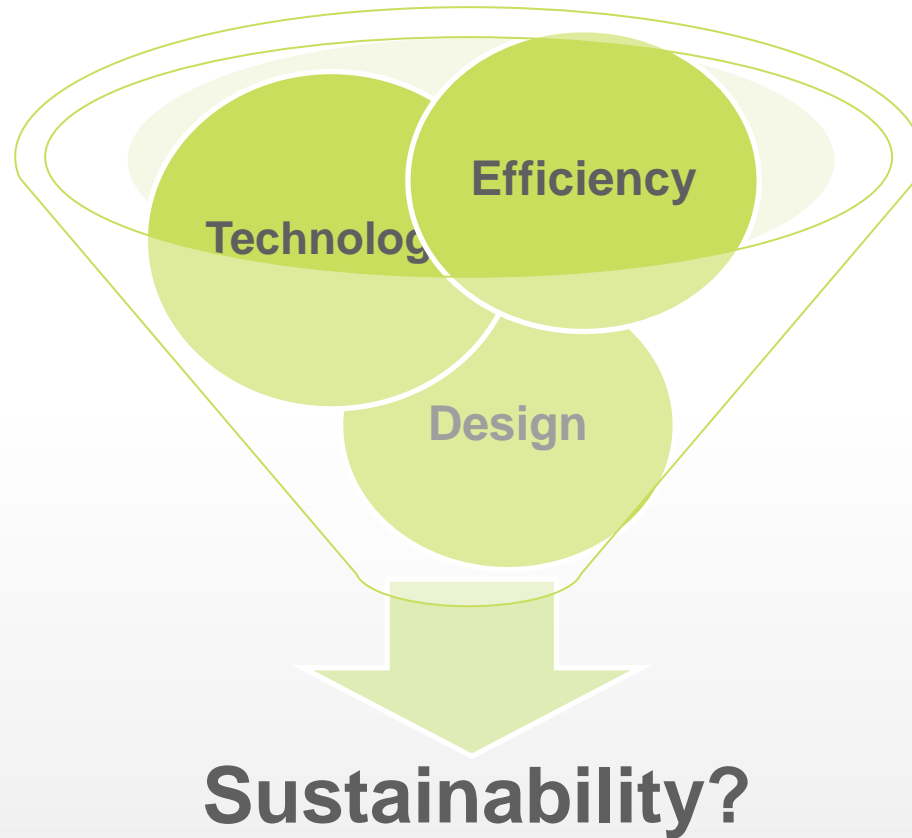


Dream Kitchen of Tomorrow (1957)

'Future Kitchen': Present visions



Future Kitchens



...but what about people & politics?

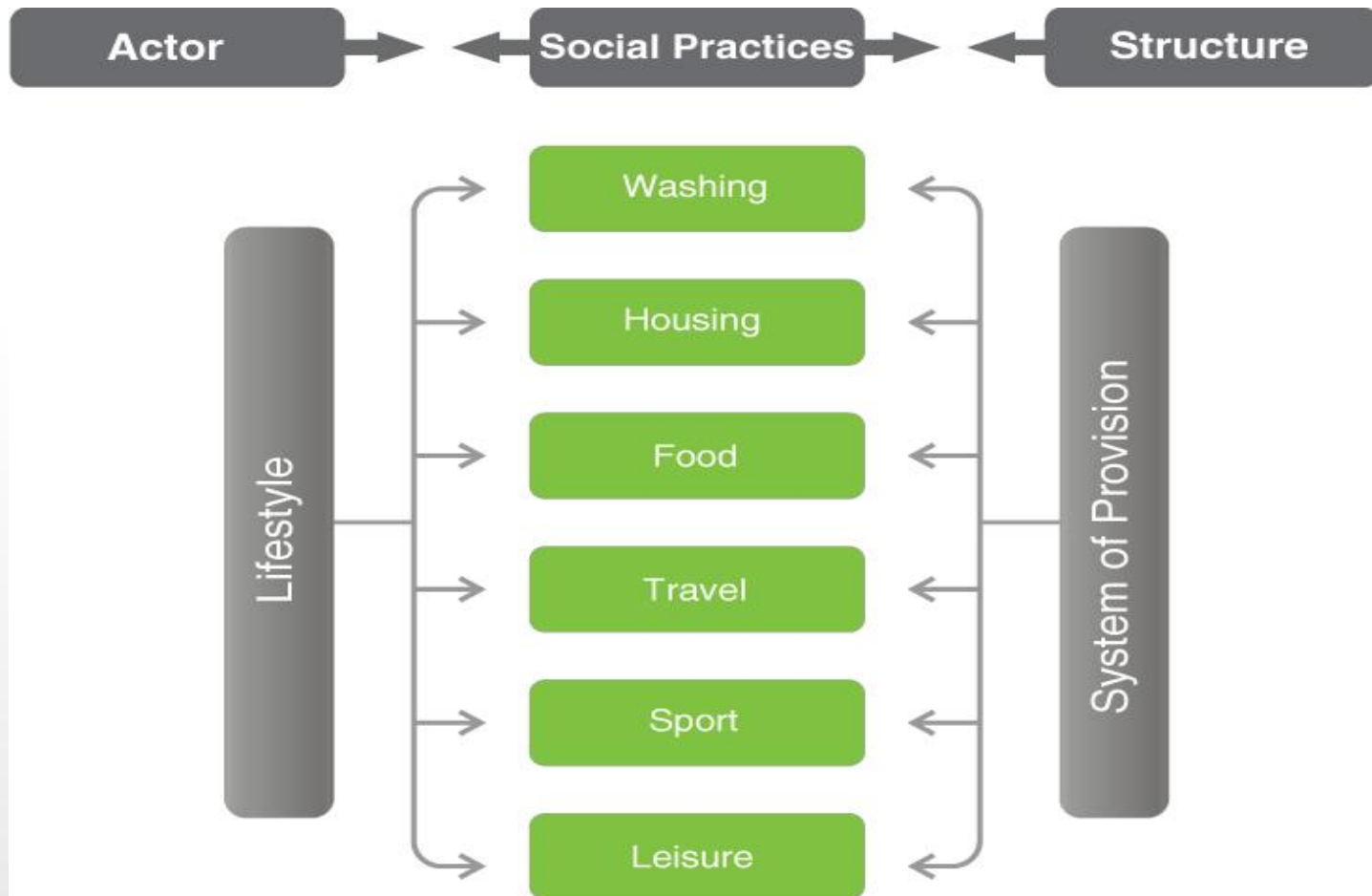
The Future: 2050

How might the **needs** of eating be delivered more sustainably in 2050?

Future Kitchens: Sustainability

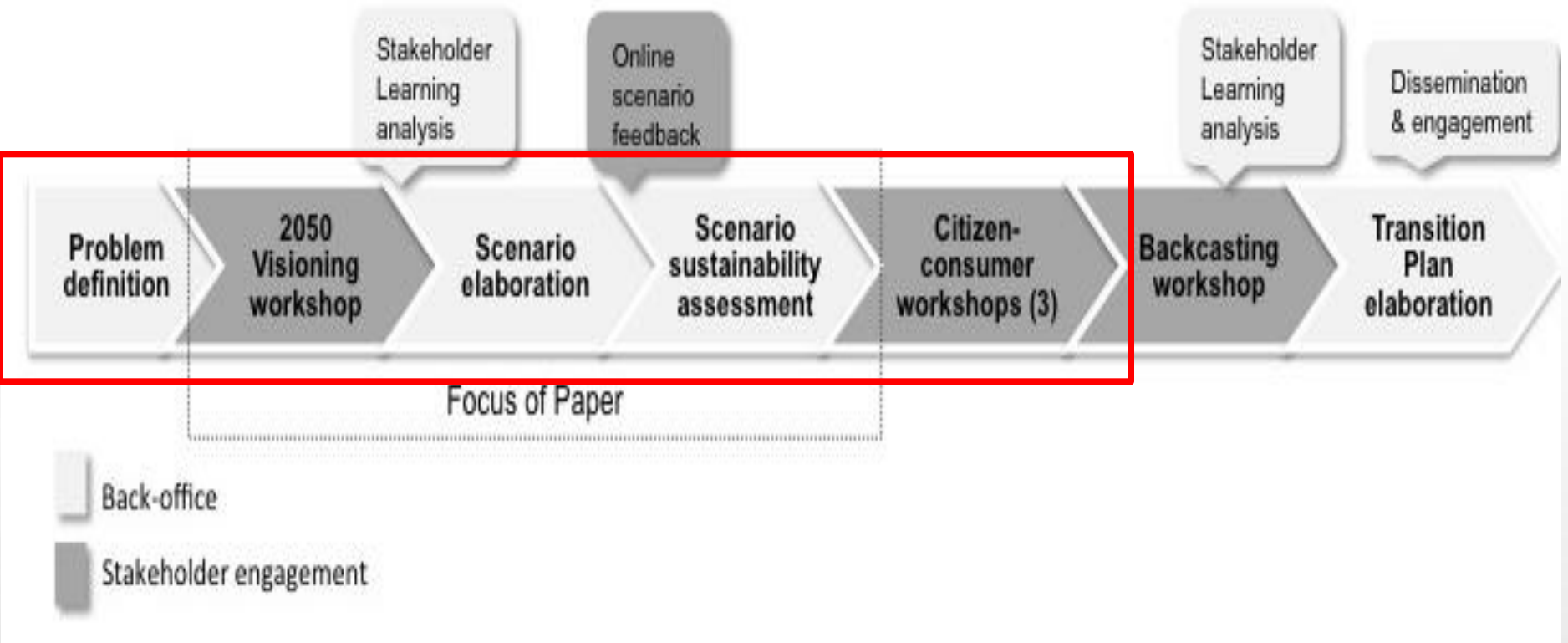
- “The kitchen will come to **embody** a move towards **sustainable living** and be a measure of how people adapt to changes in society.” Ikea Dream Kitchen (2010)
- “**Scarcity** is on the consumer agenda as the major factor driving the depiction of the future kitchen. Water and land scarcity, climate change and urbanisation will make **excessive lifestyles extinct** not only out of necessity, but a **collective outlook** on living within means.” The Future Laboratory (2010)

Social Practices Model



Modified from:
Spaargaren,
2004

Participatory Backcasting



Problem Orientation

Trends	Shopping	Cooking	Wasting
Visibility	Invisibility of carbon/water footprint of food	Invisibility of energy used	Invisibility of amounts / impacts
Awareness	Low awareness of how and where food is produced	Low awareness of energy efficient cooking methods	Low awareness of problem / amount of food waste
Norms & habits	Differentiated – supermarkets; convenience foods	Differentiated – slow vs fast food	Differentiated - composting; responses to food deterioration
Access & Information	Cost of 'sustainable' food	Energy efficient appliances & cooking methods - limited	Limited information and infrastructure for efficient use and composting methods

Visioning Workshop: Smart Kitchen

Technological Change HIGH	Organisational Change MEDIUM	Lifestyle Change LOW
Intelligent devices - Smart fridge - Food phone - Crop sharing app - Food safety kit	Subsidies for smart kitchens (and devices)	Green fast food
Hydroponic living wall	Incentives for home-food production	Micro crop sharing
'Safe' GM	GM Safety Authority	Heightened trust in GM
Food waste converter – bio-fuel	Information and advice on food waste reduction	Food waste is minimised



Visioning Workshop

Technology innovations were primarily discussed in terms of information and convenience devices, to connect people (online communities, retailers, etc.) and to enhance efficiency (closed loop kitchens).

Citizen-Consumer Workshops

- **‘GM technologies’** Most foods can be grown locally without heavy resource inputs reducing food miles and continuing diversity in diets **6 red**
- **‘Buy exactly the quantity of food you need’** Responsive supermarkets linked to food phone app & intelligent fridge **5 red 1 green**
- **‘ICT tool’** in the living wall facilitates a **crop surplus exchange system** between households of neighbouring streets **5 red**
- **‘Technological kit for food safety’** **4 red, 2 green**
- **‘Intelligent fridge’** content check, menu suggestions, linked to food phone app **3 red**

ICT Ambivalence

- **Inevitability**

- The tech aspect is very realistic, everyone has smart phone and it's only going to continue that way. Very realistic of 2050 (Green, Elaine)

- **Business as usual**

- It doesn't ask fundamental questions about lifestyles. Really just continuing on the way we are, not asking anything more profound than that. Maybe it's more realistic though (Dynamic, John)

- **ICT and communities**

- It's too individualist and 'robotic' (Dynamic, James)
- The intelligent fridge is a good idea – so if it says it on your fridge, or if there was a community sharing system (Elaine, Green)

ICT Concerns

- **Sensuality vs technology**

- Food is about the senses we don't need too much technology (Dynamic, Laura)

- **De-Skilling**

- Didn't like techno orientation ... if there's a flaw in the tech we wouldn't know what to do. Removing skill and emphasis on tech aspect, making us lazy or headless (Green, Carol)

- **Data protection**

- They have data on your usage. You'd be shocked at how willing people are to give out information (Green, Brenda)
- People are going to increasingly be concerned about what are you going to do about that information (Green, Tara)

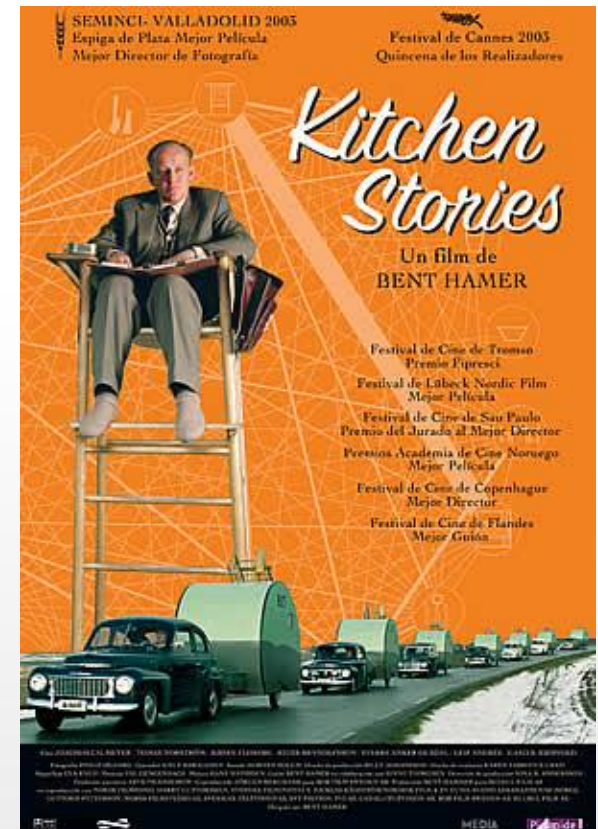
Conclusion

Urgent need to address 'Perfect Storm' (Sir John Beddington)

- The role of ICT
 - Technology is an ambivalent dimension of the social process and like education, law, the military...it is involved in **social struggles** which determine what it is and what it will become...necessary to develop a **democratic technical politics**' (Feenberg, 1990: 33(1), 36)
 - **Division of moral labour** in which industrial actors and scientists can focus on the **progress of science and technology**, while other actors, such as NGOs, are expected to take care of broader considerations, such as **ethical and social issues**. (Shelley-Egan, 2010: 4(2), 183)
- Challenge:
 - ...to translate innovative spaces and scenarios into "specific, actionable policy and design outcomes" Worldwatch Institute Report (2011)

Thanks to

- Jessica Pape, Ruth Doyle, Visioning and Citizen-Consumer workshop participants, EPA STRIVE Programme



References

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- Spaargaren, G. (2004) Political Consumerism for Sustainable Consumption Practices; the changing roles and commitments of citizen-consumers. Paper for the seminar Science, Technology and Society, Brasilia, Brasil, 9-11 December 2004.
- The Future Laboratory (2010) The Future of Kitchens, London