

# Succesfull prediction of the future

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Sometimes there are moments that do not know how to proceed as a columnist. Normally from the comfort of the ivory tower you can comment on the world around you. The recipe is quite simple: you take a subject from the real world, make it all a big 'bigger' and thus show the absurdity of seeing what is happening in the world. That is all fine, until the moment that the outside world behaves so absurd that the exaggeration is not credible but grotesque. Then as a columnist you would actually have to switch to a different style, but unfortunately the 'textbook columnist' says not much about it. Article 7.1.6.13 of the Code of Conduct provides a suggestion to change subject, preferably to safe topics mostly related to sociability such as Saint Nicholas. Say a figurative flight response. But if you do not want to, if you want to fight for your case, then you are all alone. To our regret, we have to admit that we do not immediately have an answer. We humbly had to acknowledge the reality. As a columnist than just a guilty silence remains.

To have a moment to recall, the year did not start so well. A year ago we were still on a mountain in France waiting for the end of the world but that did not come. Hindsight is predictable, so far all the predictions for the end of the world did not come true. It then took quite some effort to get back home. That did not so much had to do with those friendly men in white coats who were very committed to our mental health, but especially to the availability of suitable transport. Thanks to the new high-speed line between Amsterdam and Brussels with a bit of luck the trip did not take three but twelve hours, unless of course you had the misfortune that the train broke down halfway and was towed back to the starting point where you had to wait for a new possibility. Then you had to book again and since there were quite a few trains dropped out everything was packed. So by the time we could book, the entire train service was canceled. As we already wrote then, this for us was the first signal that the world had become crazy and not us (although the men in white coats had done quite a lot to convince us the contrary).

After that it did not become much better. Earthquakes in the Dutch province of Groningen resulting in people running in the streets in panic according Fokke and Sukke<sup>1</sup>. The asset management standard (ISO55000) which was delayed because there was no good definition of the word 'asset' in it. And the railways which had some issues. In the Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela dozens were killed when a high speed train took a curve with too high a speed. In the town of Wetteren in Belgium a freight train derailed after it drove too fast, and in a bizarre set of circumstances one person was killed because of toxic gases from the sewer invaded his house where these gases could not come out because windows and doors were shut on the advice of the fire brigade. In the Belgian Voerstreek a train derailed on an overpass and cars fell down<sup>2</sup> (it was a freight train loaded with cars). And of course the Dutch Fyra. It's obviously a debacle of the first order that a project of billions which was already delayed for several years, was put out of service after just nine weeks of usage. But the more information came out, the more it became clear how absurd it was. Research showed that there were numerous technical problems and, moreover, that no two trains were the same. How you manage this as an asset manager is a mystery, for a main portion the value is in standardization. However the trains were well accepted by the customer and put into service, while the backup facility (the Benelux train) was already deleted. We do not know what exactly went wrong in this process, but it is absurd. It we would have predicted this in advance no one would have believed us. The latest news is incidentally even more absurd. The Dutch railway services 'NS' have proposed to drive with regular trains on the

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<sup>1</sup> [http://fokkesukkearchief.nl/image/Fokke-en-Sukke-zijn-nuchtere-groningers-120213\(3477\).png](http://fokkesukkearchief.nl/image/Fokke-en-Sukke-zijn-nuchtere-groningers-120213(3477).png)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.telegraaf.nl/buitenland/21935726/\\_trein\\_ontspoord\\_in\\_belgie\\_.html](http://www.telegraaf.nl/buitenland/21935726/_trein_ontspoord_in_belgie_.html)

high speed track, which takes longer than the old Benelux train did<sup>3</sup>. And the government seems to agree with it too.

Back to the writing of this column. We have already indicated that we did not want to quit the subject, as the manual for columnists advised. We therefore had to deal with the world. After a thorough problem analysis we came to the conclusion that the root cause of the problem was in the fact that we were greeted by the absurdity of the world. We could not credibly overpass this in a short time. If we would have had a little more time to respond, than it should be fine. We lately have invested all our time in the development of our new product: FutureMessUp.

After some encouraging initial tests with pleasantly absurd though strangely correct predictions for the short term (such as tomorrow afternoon temperatures are expected between 12:00 and 18:00), we have stretched the period in which we could do predictions. First, a few weeks (outcome: buck (the 'zwarte Piet' or black Pete according to the Dutch tradition) sees green with anger, it will be a stormy Saint Nicholas), then a few months (medical breakthrough: most people in 2014 become a year older than in 2013). The predictions proved eerily accurate. We also took a look forward for years: the Eiffel Tower is expected to be demolished in 2021 because lack of spare parts. Therefore, it is now time for the real work, the prediction for 2014. Below is a selection of the results:

- The Netherlands wins the World Cup Final against Belgium in a thrilling stadium
- There will become a European legislation that makes it mandatory to report accidents beforehand to make better healthcare possible to the emergency cases of force majeure
- North Korea in the person of Kim Jung Un wins the Nobel Prize for Peace
- On the moon there is a threat for starvation due to the lack of rain
- The NSA is transformed into free backup service for lost data

As you can read, extremely absurd predictions. However, some things are so absurd that we could not write a column on it, even if we already start writing right now. We therefore felt it necessary to make a contingency tool called RealityCorrector. We can thus change a future development which is too absurd. We put the reality back into the loft.

So in terms of columns it promises to be a good year. If the world behaves crazy, you can be sure that we had made the correct prediction in a column afterwards. But if the world is still behaving normally (against expectations), it is because we have intervened due to a looming excess of absurdity. Also, we will keep you informed of the impending doom which we have protected the columnists of this world. In any case we wish you all the best for 2014.



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*Ype Wijnia and John de Croon are partner at AssetResolutions BV, a company they co-founded. In turn, they give their vision on an aspect of asset management in a column. The columns are published on the website of AssetResolutions, <http://www.assetresolutions.nl/en/column>*

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.treinreiziger.nl/internationaal/treinen/toekomst/trein\\_amsterdam\\_-\\_brussel-145348](http://www.treinreiziger.nl/internationaal/treinen/toekomst/trein_amsterdam_-_brussel-145348)