



## Pushing Pseudoscience over the Edge of the World

"Wise and Inventive Screen@gers" - Be wise, be inventive, be media literate.

May 9th, 2019 - Day 4

Andrei Sapera

### **Goals & Objectives**

- Build upon the concepts introduced by Andreea & Ovidiu
- Continue the conversation around "digital literacy" in the realm of science & pseudoscience
- Share some of my experience and thoughts
- Add a "pop science" dimension to your digital identity
- Look into a few definitions, basic notions and concepts related to our main topics
- Learn while testing your knowledge (Kahoot!)
- Absorb new information and find some inspiration
- Have fun!

#### **Rules for today!**

- Pick a nickname for the day! (Kahoot time!)
- Feel free to interrupt me anytime
- Raise your hand & Ask me anything! (There's no such thing as a silly question)
- Ask a friend!
- Keep your phones close, but try not to drain the battery too quickly!
- Focus! Focus! Focus!
- You will have fun!

### Agenda!

1. Welcome to my World 2. Science! 3. Pseudoscience? 4. Science vs. Pseudoscience! 5. Preparing for the Future(s) 6. Quizzes & RPG exercise 7, Food for thought & Conclusions



# "What a fine day for Science!" - Energizer (5 min)



### Part 1: Welcome to my World!



### Who am I?

#### Short Bio:

- Born in 1988, Tulcea
- Grew up with Lego, Cartoon Network, piano & classical music, dinosaurs, Sci-Fi books and films;
- 1999 2003: Music School
- 2003 2007: "Spiru Haret" High-school, Tulcea
- 2007 2010: BSc in Business & International Affairs, Bucharest, Ro
- 2010 2012: MSc x 2 in Geopolitics & Political Economy (Ro & Norway)
- 2012 2015: Market Research, Nielsen, Bucharest, Ro
- 2015 2017: "Space Economy 2.0", ESA/ESTEC, Netherlands
- 2018: International Space University SSP18, Delft, NL









European Astronaut Centre, Cologne SES, Luxembourg

### May the Force be with you always!



## ESA/ESTEC, Netherlands







European Space Agency

www.esa.int

## → ESA'S FLEET ACROSS THE SPECTRUM Thanks to cutting edge technology, astronomy is today unveiling, a new universe around us. With ESA's fleet of spacecraft, science can explore the full spectrum of light, see into the hidden infrared universe, visit the untamed and violent universe, chart our galaxy and even look back at the dawn of time.

Striving to observe the first light



Looking back at the dawn of time\*

www.esa.int

Surveying a billion stars.

Expanding the frontiers of the visible Universe

> **WINEUS** Seeing deeply into the hot and violent Universe.

eesa

Seeking out the extremes of the Universe

European Space Agency

### Advanced Concepts Team, ESA/ESTEC

**ACTA FUTURA 10** 

now online, check all of its visionary papers.

The special issue of Acta Futura on Space Architecture is

#### **ESA** PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

#### ACT

#### Overview

- The team
- Who we are
- Who we were
- Join the team

#### - Research

- Advanced Materials
- Artificial Intelligence
- Bio-Engineering
- Biomimetics
- Earth System Science
- Energy Systems
- Fundamental Physics
- Habitats
- Informatics
- Management Science
- Mission Analysis
- Propulsion

#### ESA > Our Activities > Preparing for the Future > ACT

Search here

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#### Related Links



Kelvin's competition platform



GTOC portal



Black Hole Shadows

#### Archive





## <sup>°</sup>ESTEC Open Day 2016 (3 min)



## <sup>°</sup>Who am I? I'm still trying to figure it out...



### What I am/am NOT

What I am:

- (Currently) independent researcher in the emerging field of "space economics" / ExoEconomics: "Space exploration through economic development"
- Dreamer, space enthusiast, multi/interdisciplinary explorer; What I am NOT:
  - Educator, teacher, certified trainer, science communicator;

#### Warning!

Don't take everything I say for a fact; I may be wrong sometimes too; Question everything!

### 17 years of SpaceX (3 min)



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### Part 2: Science!







# Unmasking the imposter

- Stop running, find the courage in you to face your fears, confront the unknown and debunk the mystery.
- Behind every ghost,
  monster or terrifying
  creature, there's a much
  simpler, more reasonable
  explanation.



### Brief history of Science (2 min)



#### Definitions

Science\* (from the Latin word *scientia*, meaning "knowledge") is a systematic enterprise that builds and organizes knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions about the universe.

**Pseudoscience**\* consists of statements, beliefs, or practices that are claimed to be both scientific and factual, but are incompatible with the <u>scientific</u> <u>method</u>. (*pseudo* + *scientia*)

The expression **junk science**\* is used to describe scientific <u>data</u>, <u>research</u>, or <u>analysis</u> considered by the person using the phrase to be spurious or fraudulent. The concept is often invoked in political and legal contexts where facts and scientific results have a great amount of weight in making a determination.

\* Source: Wikipedia (always check the source!)

#### Definitions

**Fringe science**\* is an inquiry in an established field of study which departs significantly from mainstream theories in that field and is considered to be questionable by the mainstream.

Fringe science may be either a questionable application of a scientific approach to a field of study or an approach whose status as scientific is widely questioned.

**Paradigm shift**\* is a fundamental change in the basic <u>concepts</u> and <u>experimental</u> practices of a <u>scientific discipline</u>. Paradigm shifts arise when the dominant paradigm under which normal science operates is rendered incompatible with new phenomena, facilitating the adoption of a new theory or paradigm.

The Scientific Method\*: is an empirical method of acquiring knowledge that has

### Fringe Science

Some theories that were once rejected as fringe science, but were eventually accepted as mainstream science, are:

- Plate tectonics
- The existence of Troy
- Heliocentrism
- Norse colonization of the Americas
- The Big Bang theory
- Neanderthal-Homo Sapian hybridization (HSN, now substantiated by genetic evidence)



#### Paradigm Shifts

Some of the "classical cases" of paradigm shifts in science are:

- 1543 The transition in <u>cosmology</u> from a <u>Ptolemaic cosmology</u> (geocentric) to a <u>Copernican</u> one (heliocentric).
- 1687 The transition in mechanics from Aristotelian mechanics to classical mechanics.
- The transition in <u>optics</u> from <u>geometrical optics</u> to <u>physical optics</u> with <u>Augustin-Jean</u> <u>Fresnel</u>'s wave theory.
- 1859 The revolution in <u>evolution</u> from goal-directed change to <u>Charles Darwin</u>'s <u>natural</u> <u>selection</u>.
- 1905 The development of <u>quantum mechanics</u>, which replaced <u>classical mechanics</u> at microscopic scales.
- 1887 to 1905 The transition from the <u>luminiferous aether</u> present in <u>space</u> to <u>electromagnetic radiation</u> in <u>spacetime</u>.
- 1919 The transition between the worldview of <u>Newtonian gravity</u> and the <u>Einsteinian</u> <u>general relativity</u>.
  - 1965 The acceptance of <u>plate tectonics</u> as the explanation for large-scale geologic



## The World as 100 People over the last two centuries



#### **Basic Education**





#### Democracy



#### Vaccination against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus



#### **Child Mortality**



7.4 Billion

#### Data sources:

Extreme Poverty: Bourguignon & Morrison (2002) up to 1970 - World Bank 1981 and later (2015 is a projection). Democracy: Polity IV index (own calcluation of global population share) Vaccination: WHO (Global data are available for 1980 to 2015 - the DPT3 vaccination was licenced in 1949) Education: OECD for the period 1820 to 1960. IIASA for the time thereafter. Literacy: OECD for the period 1820 to 1990. UNESCO for 2004 and later.

Colonialism: Wimmer and Min (own calcluation of global population share) Child mortality: up to 1960 own caluclations based on Gapminder; World Bank thereafter

Continent: HYDE database

The world population increased 6.8-fold over these 2 centuries. 1.7 Billion 1.1 Bills

All these visualizations are from OurWorldInData.org an online publication that presents the empirical evidence on how the world is changing.

Our World in Data

#### Proof that science works!



Large Hadron Collider, CERN, Geneva

#### Proof that science works!



International Space Station

### Quiz time!

Instructions:

- Make sure you're connected to the wi-fi/mobile data ON
- Go to Kahoot.it
- Enter the pin code on the screen
- Use the nickname you chose earlier
- Read the question on the screen!
- Think fast, choose an answer on your phone!
- Short reaction time will earn you extra points!
- If you don't manage to connect, work with a buddy!




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- 10 questions
- 10 min

#### Part 3: Pseudoscience?



#### PSEUDOSCIENCE The Conspiracy Against Science

#### **Pseudoscience Intro**

#### Definitions



- Science is an enterprise that builds and organizes knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions about the world.
- <u>Pseudoscience</u> is a claim, belief or practice which is presented as scientific but lacks the valid scientific methodology or supporting evidence.



Main pseudoscientific concepts #1
 Astronomy and Space sciences

- Ancient astronauts
- Astrology
- Creationist cosmologies
- Modern Flat Earth beliefs
- Moon Landing conspiracy theories



# Main pseudoscientific concepts #2 Earth Sciences

Bermuda Triangle
Climate change denial
Hollow Earth theory



# Main pseudoscientific concepts #3 Health & Medicine

- Acupuncture
- Alternative & fringe medicine
- Biorhythms
- Detoxification
- Homeopathy
- Faith healing
- Magnet therapy
- Reiki
- Crystal healing
- Cupping therapy
- And many, many more...



Main pseudoscientific concepts #4
 Social sciences: Psychology

- Brainwashing
- Hypnosis
- Parapsychology
- Psychoanalysis
- Psychokinesis
  - [...]



## Main pseudoscientific concepts #5 Other

- Paranormal subjects
- Ufology
- Crop circles
- Extra-sensory perception (telepathy, precognition, psychic abilities)
- Levitation
- Numerology
- Intelligent design
- Creation biology
- And many, many, many



#### Why do people believe weird things?



#### I want to believe!

## I WANT TO BELIEVE

### Kahoot! Quiz #2: Pseudoscience!

#### Pseudoscience

- 7 questions
- 5 min

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#### Part 4: Science vs. Pseudoscience!



#### Intro to the Scientific Method

The scientific method involves careful observation, applying rigorous skepticism about what is observed, given that cognitive assumptions can distort how one interprets the observation.

It involves formulating hypotheses, via induction, based on such observations; experimental and measurement-based testing of <u>deductions</u> drawn from the hypotheses; and refinement (or elimination) of the hypotheses based on the experimental findings. These are *principles* of the scientific method, as distinguished from a definitive series of steps applicable to all scientific enterprises

### Scientific Method - Main steps

A pragmatic scheme as a guideline for proceeding:

- 1. Define a question
- 2. Gather information and resources (observe)
- 3. Form an explanatory hypothesis
- 4. Test the hypothesis by performing an experiment and collecting data in a reproducible manner
- 5. Analyze the data
- 6. Interpret the data and draw conclusions that serve as a starting point for new hypothesis
- **7.** Publish results
- 8. Retest (frequently done by other scientists)



## <sup>°</sup>How does Science Work? (4 min)



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# The good thing about science is that it's true whether or not you believe in it.

Neil deGrasse Tyson

a quotefancy

## <sup>°</sup>Conspiracy theories!?



### Moon Landing conspiracy theories

Third-party evidence of Moon Landing:

- Imaging the landing sites
- Moon rocks
- Missions tracked by independent parties



#### Why is Pseudoscience dangerous?



#### **This Week In Pseudoscience**

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Coconut oil cures everything.



Eating fruit & veg will ward off the flu







Feb 30th 2014 🖉

Cannabis cures all forms of cancer.



Bill Gates is depopulating the earth through a eugenics program.



The government is poisoning us with chemtrails.



Clean drinking water eradicated every disease



r Having a child makes you automatically more knowledgeable than scientists and doctors.

#### Pseudoscience & your walle

- A well-informed consumer is a wise consumer.
- Do your research before you open your wallet!



#### EXACTLY HOW HOMEOPATHY WORKS:

#### It doesn't. It's a waste of money.

There is no evidence showing homeopathy works for any illness There are hardly any active ingredients in homeopathic products

There is no ultimate mechanism proven to make sugar pills work as medicine

And it does hurt to try. Instead of wasting your money, you could be donating to buy a vaccine for a child or send a girl to school for a year.

F I T N E S S **R E L O A D E D** . C O M

#### Some food for thought...

- Role of intuition
- Ideas that simply cannot be tested (yet)
- Fake news in science
- Harmless vs harmful pseudoscience
- MISinformation vs DISinformation
- Fake news & wishful thinking
- Opinion articles vs. Scientific studies





#### Knowledge is power.

#### France is bacon.



### Kahoot! Quiz #3: Science of Pseudoscience?

Science or Pseudoscience?

- 13 questions
- 7 min

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## Part 5: Preparing for the Future(s)!



#### Visions of the future

- What will the future look like?
- How can we prepare for it?
- Prospecting, projecting in the Age of Big Data Futurology/ Future(s) studies

Predicting the Future(s)?



#### Moore's Law & Exponential technologies

Moore's law is the observation that the number of transistors in a dense integrated circuit doubles about every two years.



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#### Rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), intelligent machines and Internet of Things (IoT)





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### Boston Dynamics - Uptown Spot (1 min)


## Boston Dynamics - Handle Robot (1 min)





#### Tech 📕 Chart of the Day

#### **Probability Robots Will Take Your Job In Next 20** Years, 1=Certain



#### **BUSINESS INSIDER**

The Future of Employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation?

## A future full of opportunities!



#### By X PRIZE Foundation and Singularity University Chairman Peter H. Diamandis

And Best-Selling Author and Award-Winning Science Journalist Steven Kotler

"Brilliant must-read book" - Ray Kurzweil

"Proof that we can meet any grand challenge" - Sir Richard Branson

## <sup>°</sup>SpaceX - Falcon Heavy & Starman (2 min)





#### Recommended Sites

Quantcast Rank | 680 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019.

The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

365 - eBizMBA Rank | 19,500,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 3



nature.com

POPULAR

SCIENCE

#### 8 | ScientificAmerican

2,735 - eBizMBA Rank | 3,300,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 2,525 - Compete Rank | \*1,063\* - Quantcast Rank | 4,618 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

#### 9 | Nature

2,873 - eBizMBA Rank | 3,100,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 2,423 - Compete Rank | 3,268 - Quantcast Rank | 2,928 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

#### 10 | PopSci

3,388 - eBizMBA Rank | 2,800,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 3,470 - Compete Rank | 1.063 - Quantcast Rank | 5.632 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

#### 11 | SmithsonianMag

3,575 - eBizMBA Rank | 2,500,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 2,518 - Compete Rank | 741 - Quantcast Rank | 7,466 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

#### 12 | TreeHugger

3,733 - eBizMBA Rank | 2,200,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 4,592 - Compete Rank | 1,099 - Quantcast Rank | 5,509 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

#### 13 NewScientist

5,350 - eBizMBA Rank | 1,100,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 7,087 - Compete Rank | 1,624 - Quantcast Rank | 7,339 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

#### 14 | ScienceMag

7,637 - eBizMBA Rank | 900,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 6,442 - Compete Rank | 4,827 - Quantcast Rank | 11,643 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA



#### Quantcast Rank | 1,313 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

1 HowStuffWorks



#### 3 Discoverv

1,505 - eBizMBA Rank | 6,500,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 8 Quantcast Rank | 2,132 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA



#### 4 | LiveScience

1,575 - eBizMBA Rank | 5,250,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 7 1.049 - Quantcast Rank | 2.902 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA



#### 5 | ScienceDaily

1,769 - eBizMBA Rank | 5,000,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 1 496 - Quantcast Rank | 3,206 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

#### ScienceDirect

#### 6 | ScienceDirect

2,403 - eBizMBA Rank | 3,900,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 1 3,775 - Quantcast Rank | 1,790 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019. The Most Popular Science Websites | eBizMBA

#### 7 | Space



2,576 - eBizMBA Rank | 3,500,000 - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 1,576 - Compete Rank | 616 - Quantcast Rank | 5,535 - Alexa Rank | Last Updated: January 1, 2019.

nthsonian







## Recommended YouTube Channels

- Kurzgesagt—In a Nutshell
- <u>3Blue1Brown</u>
- <u>Physics Videos by Eugene Khutoryansky</u>
- <u>acapellascience</u>
- <u>The Science Asylum</u>
- <u>minutephysics</u>
- <u>TED-Ed</u>

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- <u>PBS Space Time</u>
- <u>PBS Infinite Series</u>

- Lectures by Walter Lewin. They will make you ♥ Physics.
- <u>SciShow Space</u>
- <u>Vsauce</u>
- <u>Vsauce2</u>
- Vsauce3
- <u>Veritasium</u>
- <u>CrashCourse</u>
- <u>Numberphile</u>
- <u>SciShow</u>

## Online Courses / MOOCs

#### The Best MOOC Platforms of 2018

Rank	Site	Score
1	Coursera	8.8
2	edX	7.4
3	FutureLearn	6.4
4	Cognitive Class	5.6
5	iversity	3.4
6	Udacity	0.4







#### Recommended documentary shows/series

- Planet Earth (2006) & Planet Earth II (2016)
- Our Planet (2019)
- Blue Planet (2001) & Blue Planet II (2017)
- Cosmos (1980) & Cosmos (2014)
- Life (2009)
- Human Planet (2011)
- Frozen Planet (2011)
- One Strange Rock (2018)
- Mars (2016)
- When we left Earth: The NASA Missions (2008)
- Prophets of Science Fiction (2011)
- James Cameron's story of Science Fiction
   (2018)

## planet earth



#### Recommended documentary films

- The Farthest (2017)
- For all Mankind (1989)
- Hubble 3D (2010)
- Terra (2015)
- Chasing Ice (2012)
- Chasing Coral (2017)
- Before the Flood (2016)
- Jane (2017)
- Mars: Inside SpaceX (2018)
- Apollo 11 (2019)



#### Recommended documentary shows



#### Recommended documentary shows

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## Wanderers (4 min) / Carl Sagan



## Part 6: Final Quizzes & RPG Exercise!





## Kahoot! Quiz #4: Catch the Pseudoscience!

Catch the Pseudoscience!

- 12 questions
- 10 min

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## Kahoot! Quiz #5: More Space!



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- 20 questions
- 15 min

#### Kahoot! Quiz #6: General Knowledge: Science

General Knoledge: Science

- 8 questions
- 8 min

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# The Most Astounding Fact / Neil deGrasse Tyson (4 min)



## Group exercise!

- Start counting from 1 to 4 and split into 4 groups

## Question A: Is the Earth flat?

- Team 1: Yes (Pro arguments)
- Team 2: No (Cons)

## Question B: Are we alone in the Universe?

- Team 3: Yes (arguments)
- Team 4: No (arguments)
  - Send your group representatives: DEBATE TIME!

## Part 7: Food for thought & Conclusions





## Love is in the air?

## Wrong. Nitrogen, Oxygen and Carbon Dioxide are in the air.

## I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING

### Richard Feynman - Beauty (5 min)



#### The post-modern life

- Big Data / A flood of data
- Unlimited information at your fingertips
- The illusion of knowledge
- Fact vs Fiction: a blurry line in the age of Internet
- So many options! I'm tired & confused...



# How to train your (dragon) brain!? Digital Literacy & Scientific Literacy in the Age of Big Data

 Acquire a Critical/Sceptical/ Scientific Mindset

- Develop a scientific language and interpretation skills
   Fact-check! Fact-check
- Check your sources!
- Fact-check again!





## "USE THE FORCE, HARRY"

-Gandalf



#### Advice & Tips for your (professional) future

- AI & the learning process
- Unlearning & New learning skills
- You can never stop learning!
- Embrace change! And get used to it!
- Doubt, scepticism & the scientific method: Apply them in your daily lives, on your brain's innerworkings
- Intuition vs. Emotional traps: "It feels right, so it must be true"
- Role of emotional intelligence
- Inconvenient & Uncomfortable "truths"
- Pick your sources wisely: transferring trust and authority to other trustworthy people/sources.

#### Why is Philosophy Important? - Philosophy of Science! CLAIMS TO KNOW NOTHING

## JON SNOW KNOWS NOTHING

# DON'T BE JON SNOW



#### \*Insert Inspirational/Philosophical Quote here\*

Having a philosophical quote in your bio doesn't automatically mean that you're a deep individual

CLASSICAL ART MEMES



#### Head up in the sky / Feet on the ground

- Be ambitious & Dream big set the bar high!
- Keep learning, searching, exploring.
- Don't be afraid to speak your mind!
- Listen to everyone, but draw your own conclusions!
- Always check the source(s) & make fact-checking a habit!
- Get out of your comfort zone and face your fears!
- Work smarter, not harder!
- Stay in school & do your homework!
- Enjoy your youth!

#### Choose your Science Communicators wisely!




#### Read & watch Detective Stories!



# Bonus / If there's time left...



### Karl Popper, Science and Pseudoscience (9 min)

## karl popper, ENCE A PSEUDOSCIENCE





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## "First Man" (2018) - Moon Landing scene (5 min)



#### **United Launch Alliance - CisLunar:**

## A Vision for a Self-Sustaining Space Economy (2 min)



#### <sup>°</sup>ULA CisLunar-1000 (7 min)



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## Timelapse of the Future: A Journey to the End of Time (30 min)

#### TIMELAPSE OF THE FUTURE

#### Kahoot! Quiz #7: Science Review: Earth & Space

#### Earth & Space

- 20 questions
- 20 min

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- Bonus



#### Space Economy 2.0 - Posters Space Economy of the 2040s - Presentation



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