

Future Salon Startup Guidelines

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1. What is a Future Salon?

A Future Salon is a monthly discussion group where people get together for educational, fun, and challenging presentations, discussions, and dialogue on important trends and innovations in **science, technology, business, and social change**. The meta-theme for our Salon is a multidisciplinary inquiry into accelerating change, and the implications, issues, and challenges that rapid ongoing change creates.

The importance of being an open-minded, broadly-interested and informed lifelong learner is one of the personal implications of accelerating change that we seek to internalize, and that we expect Salon leaders to model. From our perspective, Future Salons serve three main purposes:

- A. **Education** about interesting, practical, and useful trends and tools in our rapidly changing world
- B. **Networking** among a multidisciplinary community of positive, practical and passionate change leaders
- C. **Socializing** among future oriented people, forming a regular, supportive, and fun community.

Future Salon taglines:

“Boldly creating a world that works for all.”

“Making a rapidly changing world more **fascinating, manageable, profitable, and positive-sum** for all of us.”

The bolded words relate to the major educational/professional development functions of the Salons:

Fascinating: a place to find relevant information about the present and future, presented in an engaging way

Manageable: to promote skills, tools, and strategies for managing our personal and professional lives

Profitable: to advocate behaviors and choices that grow our material and nonmaterial “wealth”

Positive-sum: to advocate behaviors that help us choose positive-sum social actions and outcomes.

Some of our best-received Salon meetings have been dubbed “mini-conferences,” as they can bring breadth and diversity of viewpoint, promote debate and discussion, and provide updates on important new advances, and demos on practical skills and tools. All Salons have social time afterward, where attendees, moderators and sometimes the Salon speakers go out to eat together and make personal connections.

Some Salons also have social discussion time for a half hour or more before as well, which may be hosted with refreshments (e.g., Bay Area Future Salon, which is hosted at SAP Labs).

2. What is the Acceleration Studies Foundation (ASF)?

The [Acceleration Studies Foundation](#), or ASF, was incorporated in April 2003 as a nonprofit with an educational mission to improve the way individuals and organizations look at the future by examining accelerating change in technology and society.

The organization is based in Los Angeles, CA and is run by John Smart (President), Bridget Agabra (Project Manager), Jerry Paffendorf (Community Director), a Board of Directors, and Brian Hill (Future Salon Network Director). John runs the Los Angeles Future Salon, Jerry runs the online Second Life Future Salon, and Mark Finnern, an ASF board director, runs the Bay Area Future Salon in northern California.

3. What is the ASF’s Relation to the Future Salons?

The ASF is the umbrella organization that runs and oversees the Future Salons Network (FSN), under their educational nonprofit mission. Brian Hill is the Future Salon Network Director at present. Salons are presently all volunteer run. Salon leaders have access to generic accelerating.org email accounts, if desired (i.e. sdmoderator@accelerating.org or lamoderator@accelerating.org).

Because the ASF is an educational nonprofit, our Salons must meet the IRS guidelines for educational activities that meet our exempt purpose. That is why we are publishing these Future Salon guidelines, which are a work in progress, and are continually improved by feedback from Salon leaders and attendees. Salons that don’t follow ASF’s rules as expressed in this document may be asked to leave the Future Salon

Network. In such case, Salon leaders will be required to change the name of their group to something that does not have the phrase “Future Salon” in the title. “Future Salon” is an ASF brand by operational and first-use-based trademark claim since Jan 2001, two years before our incorporation.

ASF seeks to keep the Salons entirely free for public attendance (no donation requested) for the foreseeable future, to maximize public accessibility and our charitable educational purpose. We may work with local Salon leaders to run special events, separate from the Salons, that have an admission price or requested admission price. We also reserve the right in the future to ask Salon leaders to inform their community of ASF fund drives on occasion (once or twice a year). At present ASF does most of its fundraising by direct appeals to foundations, sponsors, and our community at large, with Salon leaders periodically requesting the ASF for small budgets to cover operating expenses.

With special request and subject to ASF approval, local Salon leaders may do voluntary (donation based) fundraising within their group once or twice a year to collect funds for their local Salon’s use (to purchase equipment, fund speakers, etc.), but such local fundraising is not expected, nor do we wish Salon attendees to feel like they are constantly being asked for financial assistance. We seek to preserve the culture of the Salon as a low-risk, free-access place for individuals to explore future-oriented dialogs.

4. Who Runs the Future Salons?

The Future Salons each have their own volunteer moderators. ASF staff may provide helpful ideas and suggestions, but local moderators set their own agendas and make their own decisions. Thus each Salon has its own unique character, in addition to a set of values shared with the other Salons. Ideal moderators are good communicators and discussion facilitators who have their own considered and balanced perspectives on a range of futures topics. They should also be interested in recruiting speakers with diverse viewpoints on a range of future-important topics in science, technology, business, social change, and personal development.

We ask that each Salon start with and maintain **at least two designated moderators** at any time, either one main and one (or more) deputy moderator, or at least two equivalently responsible co-moderators. These moderators, and their designees, form the executive committees for their own Salons, and decide among themselves how to handle such Salon management responsibilities as choosing topics, inviting speakers, marketing the event, maintaining a mailing list, securing meeting times and locations, and moderating the event itself.

Having at least two designated leaders, ideally (but not always possible) with different and complementary skillsets and backgrounds (e.g., technical/humanist, older/younger, male/female, left/right political leanings, etc.) is a great way to keep each Future Salon appropriately broad, balanced, and accessible in perspective, and is an important way to ensure help meetings to appeal to a wider range of interests than would otherwise be the case.

Our recommendation for potential moderators who wish to start a Salon is to find a co-moderator who is a complement to, not a mirror image of, your views and background. Such complementarity can be particularly important for moderators who have unique or minority opinions. If there is one main moderator, it is advisable that the co-moderator or moderators have a chance to also moderate occasionally, either by running particular aspects of each meeting or by substituting for the main moderator on a periodic basis. If you desire help finding a co-moderator, contact us and we will do our best to suggest possible candidates.

5. What Topics do Future Salons Address?

As noted above, Salon discussions touch on trends and innovations in science, technology, business, policy, society, and personal development, with an emphasis on the effect of accelerating technological change on the future of each of these domains. The Salons seek a critical and scientifically informed perspective, and balance between education, analysis, informed forecasting, and prescriptions for action. We want to provide attendees with relevant, well-supported and documented information to support a baseline forecast for important topics. We also want to create a safe place for informed extrapolation,

scenario consideration, and speculation with regard to the various alternative futures, as well as articulation of the generic baseline expectation/trend extrapolation future, if one exists.

Past topics include (but are not limited to): Accelerating Change, Artificial Intelligence, Art, Astronomy, Astrophysics, Biology, Business Intelligence, Collective Intelligence, Computing, Creativity, Cryonics, Digital Democracy, Digital Identity, Economics, Education, Email Marketing, Energy, Entertainment, Entrepreneurship, Ethics and Philosophy, Evolution, Evolutionary Computation, Futurism, Globalization, Health Care, Human Consciousness, Human-Machine Interaction, Intelligence Amplification, Innovation, Internet, Investing, Language and Memes, Learning Disorders, Life Extension, Music, Nanotechnology, Policy Analysis, Privacy, Quantum Mechanics, Retirement, Robotics, Spirituality, Stem Cell Research, Telework, Terrorism and Security, Transparency, Video Games, Virtual Reality, War Policy.

6. Applying to Start a Future Salon

Future Salon applications are informal at this stage. Simply email us, telling us details about your public profile and public interests, what city you'd like to have your Salon, whether you can meet on a monthly basis, whether you will have anyone else (co-moderators) to help you run the Salon, and where you are thinking of meeting (see later in this guidebook for some meeting location ideas). Decisions about whether you will be approved or not are the responsibility of ASF management (the Executive Director, the Salon Network Director, or others on the ASF board or delegates of ASF). We will notify you as promptly as we can and may ask for additional information, and perhaps a phone conversation or two beforehand.

Since Future Salons stress acceleration-awareness and building longer-term as well as shorter-term foresight, we periodically discuss a number of rather speculative topics, including general artificial intelligence, human-machine interface, the 'technological singularity', and other topics. Given the unconventionality and speculative nature of these topics, it is particularly important for us that Salon leaders display the following qualities: verbal fluency, strong critical thinking skills and judgment, and a certain level of conventionality and professionalism.

It should be mentioned that utopian thinkers, and those who promote particular religious faiths in their public presentations, or individuals with a number of unconventional personal projects and agendas are generally at odds with the Future Salon mission. For example, Future Salons strive to promote critical thinking and scientific naturalism, not religious faith. Having a particular religious faith is of course a matter of personal choice and not relevant to Salon leader selection, but the use of the Future Salon as a platform for *promoting* religious faith of any variety would not be consistent with our mission. On the other hand, the promotion of scientific naturalism, as long as it is not *intolerant* of each individual's personal choice of faith, is consistent with the mission. In addition, ideal Future Salon leaders exhibit curiosity and interest in foresight development, and an interest in engaging with conventional science, technology, business, and social change groups in the course of operation of the Salon.

7. Dealing with Advocacy, Branding, Controversial Topics, and Extraordinary Claims

Advocacy. As a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit, if the ASF advocates a particular position or viewpoint, it must present a "sufficiently fair and balanced exposition of the pertinent facts." A nonprofit charitable or educational organization may advocate social or civic change or present positions on controversial issues, intending to mold opinion or to create favorable public sentiment, as long as it seeks to be fair and balanced in the process. Unlike World Future Society chapters, which strive to be nonpartisan and nonpolitic, ASF Future Salons have traditionally expressed a number of advocacy positions, which tend to be focused around the topics in our mission. (See <http://www.accelerating.org/about.html>).

Specifically, we seek to strongly advocate at least the following: being multidisciplinary, being informed, being critical and scientific (the [Skeptics Society](#) is one of several model organizations for us). We advocate the importance of advancing good futures research, including **futures studies** (possible change), **development studies** (irreversible change), **acceleration studies** (irreversible, accelerating change), and **foresight skills and tools** like technology roadmapping (e.g., the curves at the beginning of Ray Kurzweil's books), forecasting, scenario development, and prediction markets. We seek to help such skills develop and

be incorporated into existing and independent undergraduate and graduate programs. We advocate the importance of recognizing, understanding, and intelligently adapting to accelerating change, and of taking an optimistic, practical, passionate, empowered attitude to the future.

We don't, for example, advocate "belief" in the technological singularity (the imminent development of human-surpassing artificial intelligence), but we are interested in seeing much more careful academic research, discussion, and policy formation going on in regard to the phenomenon of accelerating technological change (our society remains amazingly acceleration-unaware, at present). We don't profess to believe in or blindly advocate immortalism, cryonics, implants, up/downloading, human genetic engineering, fossil fuel independence, space colonization, sustainable development, etc, but our speakers and Salon topics do regularly discuss these topics (and many others), and wish to help others to reach their own informed conclusions about them.

As a general rule, the more controversial a topic, the better it is handled in a debate or multi-viewpoint format when possible. Debate and discussion allows awareness and education without pushing specific positions, so it is a win-win for all, and as the data come in and are clarified we can all better pick our own positions on the issues.

Salon Self-Description and Branding. ASF Future Salons aren't "transhumanist" Salons, or even "futurist" Salons. We purposely avoid using or identifying with an "ist" label. In our experience there are a lot more productive people in the world who self-declare as "interested in the future" than there are folks who would call themselves "futur-ists". We seek to identify with and reach out to the first category as much as possible. We welcome the "ists" but we aren't building a community to promote their perspectives. We seek instead to mix their insights with the larger community of skeptical, inquisitive, future-oriented individuals, whom we seek to serve.

Whenever the general public has the choice to label our community as believers versus topically-interested but skeptical, we seek to help them choose the latter label. We strive to make our Salons a collection of people who are looking broadly and critically at the future and promoting awareness of accelerating change, and all its implications and challenges.

In addition to "Future," the word "Salon" is also carefully chosen for our groups. We use this European word to communicate that meetings are as much about getting input and discussion from the audience as they are about disseminating information. As one example, the LA Salon uses the first hour of each meeting for group discussion, article sharing, and updates, and every third meeting is usually a discussion around an interesting topic. Attendees have told us they really like having time set aside for group idea exchange.

To be effective with these goals, moderators and ASF generally stay away from advocating particular belief systems, policy positions and technologies, other than those mentioned above. Nevertheless, it's fine to book speakers who have their own strong opinions about the future, and can offer data to back up their positions. Salon moderators are expected to also have their own considered perspectives and may give passionate presentations on those on occasion. In their moderator role they should strive to be as balanced as they can be, which may require of the moderator asking hard questions of a "biased" speaker to ensure that countering viewpoints have a time to be at least heard and discussed by the group.

Controversial Topics. With regard to controversial topics, the futurist Bucky Fuller said: "You can't get an unbiased education, so the next best thing is a multibiased one." Controversial and politically-charged topics, such as human germline engineering, global warming, and peak oil, are best discussed in a debate and discussion format, where multiple perspectives on the issue can be fairly represented.

Likewise, extreme or simplistic claims of utopian or dystopian futurism, advocated by some preconventional futurists, are best handled in a very critical light. See ASF's definition of the [Twelve Types of Futures Thinking](#) for more on preconventional and other common types of futurist thinking. Salon leaders moderate best when they present counter information for the group to also consider on the opposite side of utopian and dystopian claims that inevitably arise in the course of Salon discussions.

On Extraordinary Claims. Here we seek to follow Carl Sagan's dictum, "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence." Previously scientifically discredited or highly speculative topics, such as Crop Circles, Mystical Claims, Parapsychology, Remote Viewing, UFO's, Zero Point Energy, etc. are in general quite poor topics for Salon discussion, unless such topics are presented in a manner that allows insight into their long history of investigative debunking to date.

Debate may be warranted where there seems at least a reasonable possibility for paradigm change to occur in the future (some would make this claim with cold fusion/zero point energy, for example). But even here the burden should be on the Salon moderator to ensure the speaker presents not just argument, or utopian thinking, but actual evidence and/or policy to be debated or discussed.

8. Choosing Meeting Dates

Currently, the majority of our non-virtual Salons meet on Friday evenings or Sunday afternoons for 2-4 hours, generally the first, second, or third Friday or Sunday of the month. While other times work best to bring in special audiences (such as an event at a school or a business) or special speakers, we generally find that meeting on Friday evening or Sunday afternoon maximizes the opportunity for our attendees to stay afterward for several more hours and socialize. Salons are free to meet on different days of the week depending on what works best for the goals and interests of the attendees and speakers in that city.

A Sample of Current Salon Meeting Times:

San Diego: Second Sunday of the month
Las Vegas: Second Friday of the month
Bay Area: Third Friday of the month
Los Angeles: First Sunday of the month
Second Life: Last Thursday of the month

Salons typically run 2-4 hours, with 20-60 minutes of intro time and sharing interesting news articles in the beginning. The Bay Area Future Salon starts off with one hour of appetizers, drinks, and networking before the Salon, which is hosted and sponsored at SAP Labs. Many attendees still go out to socialize over dinner afterward.

It is also good to be flexible with meeting dates and times once in a while if a really good speaker can only make it on a certain day (i.e. they are coming through town on a book tour and will only be there on a Tuesday night).

9. Choosing a Meeting Location: Four Models

A. Local Bookstore, Restaurant, Bar, or Coffee Shop. Our first four Salons all started out meeting at Barnes & Noble Bookstores, either in a special events room, or when those aren't available, in a chair circle in a clearing where booksignings are usually done. Since many of the Salons do book reviews, you can easily qualify as a reading group, if you regularly discuss books during your program, and get space at a bookstore. This is a great option because it is free and also because it is fun to be part of a book reading community.

Restaurants may also give you free meeting space, though some may require that you buy a certain number of dinners. The Las Vegas Future Salon, for example, meets either at a bookstore whenever a book review is scheduled or at a hospitality suite at a casino when a speaker requires audiovisual equipment for a PowerPoint presentation, or in the community room of a popular and centrally located athletic club to which the moderators belong.

B. Corporate Sponsored Meeting Room. The Bay Area Future Salon has secured sponsorship from SAP that provides a meeting space, travel stipends for selected speakers, and hosted drinks and appetizers before the meeting. The Las Vegas Future Salon's meeting space and travel stipends for selected speakers are also sponsored by a company, Korns Associates.

C. University Campus. The Los Angeles Future Salon has joined forces with a newly-created UCLA Future Salon student group, formed with student members of our Salon. Co-meeting with the student group allows us free access to campus meeting spaces and allows us to attract more students.

D. Virtual Meetings. We currently host a Salon in the online world *Second Life*. If you are interested in this model, please contact Jerry Paffendorf, Salon director at jerrypafendorf@accelerating.org

10. Choosing and Inviting Speakers

Inviting local speakers usually works the best, as they will be volunteering both their time and travel expenses. It is surprisingly easy to find brilliant, interesting, future-oriented people in local universities and companies doing interesting work. If you and your group members are constantly monitoring local newspapers and media sources, they will constantly suggest potential invitees to you (ask them to use the Discussion list for that), and you can remind them to do so at every meeting.

It usually helps to have a theme in mind, and then to research experts in your area. You can also ask for recommendations from nearby Salon leaders, who may themselves be very glad to come to your city and speak at your Salon once a year (as you might do annually at theirs, if interested, on a theme of your choice). It can also help to look for speakers coming through your city on a book tour. In coming years the ASF hopes to have a staff member dedicated to helping all the Salons find great speakers.

As for inviting the speaker, always try to use your network first. Do you know someone who knows the speaker? Ask them to personally invite the individual, or ask your friend permission to use their name in the invitation. Having a relationship with the potential speaker certainly increases the chance of hooking them. Email invitations are standard, with follow-up phone calls. You may want to send some big-name speakers snail-mail invites as a nice touch.

Another good source of potential speakers are recently published authors who are seeking to promote their book. If you don't have a direct link to the author, and their contact information isn't available online, you may try contacting their publishing agent.

Sometimes, the individual will be busy one month, so always have back-up dates ready to say, "Okay, if you're busy in July, we have an opening on September 16th." See the Sample Salon Speaker Invitations in the Appendix below for more suggestions.

11. Book Reviews

Particularly when you are starting out, if you live in a city with limited speaker opportunities, and for everyone on a periodic basis, you may choose to have your Salon moderators or attendees present a book review. The first year of the LA Future Salon, for example, was almost all book reviews, see <http://ucla.accelerating.org/archive/Salon2002.html>

If you are meeting every month in a bookstore it is a particularly good idea to do book reviews on a regular basis, so that the connection between your Salon and the promotion of books is obvious to the bookstore manager. Be sure to thank the manager at the end of each meeting, and to have your members help you clean up and fold/stack chairs at the end of each meeting.

If possible, ask thoughtful and articulate members of your group to agree to read future-oriented books and lead discussions on them. While your members are there, see if you can get one of them to agree to buy and read a book by the next meeting. Rotate this assignment among your leading members if possible.

If no one volunteers to review a book in a particular month, we recommend you try Community Review of a book. Here's how it works: arrive ten minutes early to the bookstore and find an interesting, future-relevant book with at least six copies of on the shelf. Take five of those copies to your meeting area.

At the start of the meeting tell people that you want the group to discuss this book during the second half of the meeting. You might even bring over five copies of two different books and have the group choose which one they want to review together. Give out three or four copies of the chosen book to three or four people who have volunteered to lead discussion on the book, or three or four members you appoint if there are no volunteers.

During your 10 to 15 minute break between the first and second halves of your meeting, have these individuals look at the table of contents and decide which chapters/sections each wants to take, dividing the book up three or four ways. Ask each of them to browse the book during the break, and to be ready to lead a 5 to 10 minute discussion on interesting aspects of their section of the book during the second half. People just need a little nudging and you'll be surprised what they will do.

Each leader can read quotations and lead discussion for 5 to 10 minutes, and the whole review time should take from 30-45 minutes. This process will give you a surprisingly good discussion and make it obvious to the store managers that your group cares about books and is a great fit for the store. With luck at least one of the reviewers or audience members will buy the book too. Even if they don't, you have done your part for literacy promotion, and it only takes 30-45 minutes of your meeting time.

12. Maintaining Your Group's Mailing Lists (and Optional Meetup Group)

Currently, we have a Future Salons Network homepage at <http://accelerating.org/futureSalons.html>. This links to each Salon's Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups list, and their website or blog.

Each Salon moderator is asked to maintain both **1. a Yahoo! or Google Groups mailing list** and **2. a Salon website or blog**, where you can post upcoming speakers, an archive of past speakers, directions to your Salon, and any other information (for a sample group website see: <http://ucla.accelerating.org/>). When you are ready to create your Yahoo Group and website or blog, contact us for templates, ASF graphics, and any assistance you may need.

Perhaps the most important task of the Salon moderator is to find speakers each month and to announce them on their mailing lists. You may want two different mailing lists, and an optional third list:

- 1. Events/Announcements list**
- 2. Discussion/Chat list**
- 3. Salon Moderators list (optional)**

This three-tiered mailing list structure allows each new group member to sign up for Events emails, and some to sign up additionally for Discussion. The Salon Moderators list is for those active members/officers that you want to have discussing and voting on things like speakers, officers, etc. Creating this list is recommended if you have a larger Salon and want a separate place for discussion and voting by your community of Salon officers.

The rules of posting to your Events list should be any local future-relevant events in your area, and moderated posting should be available to the entire community. It is not just a place for moderators to announce the upcoming Future Salons. Therefore, when you post Salon meeting announcement emails, you want to send them as "Special Notices" as some members will have set their preferences to only receive emails that are Special Notices from the Salon moderator (which gives them a lower volume of Events in their inbox).

In addition to your mailing lists, if you can afford the small monthly cost, we also recommend you consider starting an optional Meetup Group, as with the [New York Future Salon](#). A Meetup group will cost the Salon moderator a low monthly fee (something like \$10/month) but will give you access to an excellent platform for meeting notification and calendaring that many people are beginning to use to discover affinity groups in

metropolitan areas. Your members can even donate to your Meetup group via PayPal, if they wish, to offset the your cost of running the Meetup Group. This is a very easy way to advertise your group on a monthly basis, without spending additional time or money on promotion.

13. Promoting Your Salon

When you start up a new Salon, the ASF will be happy to check our database for *Accelerating Times* subscribers who have indicated they live in your area, and to send them emails urging them to attend your inaugural meetings. You may also want to market the Salon to groups with similar interests in your area, at your job or university, and at local bookstores and coffee shops, as well as with business cards that you give to your members that they can hand out to their friends and associates.



Printing business cards with the Salon's mailing list and webpage and email on them, and handing a stack out to all your attendees, is a great way to expand membership. Sample Future Salon business card templates can be found at:

http://accelerating.org/fsn_collateral/index.html. ASF graphic artist wizard Marlon Rojas can help you make these, but you will need to foot the bill for their printing (typically \$90 for 1,000, which should last you for a good while).

If you are meeting on a university campus, and are associated with a student group on campus (the LA Future Salon model), you can also get sandwich boards constructed (see picture). Unfortunately, these boards are expensive (Marlon Rojas can make one or two for you at a cost of about \$200-400 per board, depending on complexity) but they are very effective at recruiting interested students. These have clear plastic rainproof flyer holders for one-sheets announcing your next meeting,

which your student representatives can print out and stick in the holders each month.

The growth of our Salons varies from location to location, but with good speaker selection your group will grow consistently, and if you pick good, intelligent, insightful speakers, you will discover your network of optimistic, practical, future-oriented friends will quickly get very rich. For many moderators, this is the most exciting and rewarding part of leading a Salon community.

The LA Future Salon started with about 8 attendees and now has 30-55 interesting, inquisitive folks at each meeting. The Bay Area Future Salon started off the same and now has 30-70 regular members at each meeting. Las Vegas and San Diego, each have about 15 and 20 attending on average, respectively. The Second Life Salon debuted in 2005 and has around 50 attendees at each meeting.

14. Running the Meetings

Each Salon has a slightly different meeting structure. Choosing how to run the meeting is up to the Salon leaders and attendees. Here are some suggestions:

Introductions: Some Salons choose to have everyone wear name tags and/or to do a round of introductions at the beginning of each meeting (even with 50 attendees). Some will do this every other month as it takes significant time (15 to 25 mins), even when asking attendees to share only a sentence or two each.

Recent News Articles: Most Salons choose to start off by sharing recent news articles of interest to the group, and giving the group a few minutes to discuss each. Usually, the article sharer gives a very concise summary of the article and then passes it around the room. The discussion on each needs to be kept short by the Salon moderator so that several can be shared in the time allotted (usually 15 to 30 mins).

Presentation Structure and Q&A: Salons that have access to projection equipment usually have speakers give PowerPoint presentations, though this is not a must. Usually, the speakers do 30-60 minutes of presentation, followed by Q&A. One highly effective (but demanding in terms of moderator invitations) format is to have three complementary but diverse speakers, which present for 30 mins each (tightly timed), then all are asked to come up for 30-40 mins of collective Q&A. Each speaker has the option to end their 30 mins early and do one on one Q&A before they turn their time over to the next presenter. With good curation you can have three very interesting perspectives on the same or complementary themes.

Another approach that works well is 45 mins and 45mins for two presenters, or 60 mins for your main presenter followed by 45 for your secondary presenter. You can ask each presenter to save the last 10-20 mins for Q&A individually, or have them do it collectively if they are presenting on a complementary theme. Keeping tight to your time is important. You might make 5 minute, 1 minute, and Stop reminder cards and delegate one of your attendees to flash them at your speakers as they are nearing the end of their talk time, if you think they might run over (otherwise many speakers will).

With regard to the Q&A, you may find that one or two audience members dominate the discussion and ask too many questions to allow everyone to participate. In this case, you might suggest that they let everyone have a chance to talk or to let the presenter progress more smoothly to her points.

Cleanup & Etiquette: Ask attendees to help clean up by stacking chairs and putting away equipment. And remember to always take time to thank the hosting group before you leave, whether it is a bookstore, restaurant, or company.

15. Visual Presentation Equipment

Having an LCD projector (approx. \$1,000) and a portable screen (approx. \$300) either onsite or that you can bring and take away with you afterward is very helpful for presenters who give PowerPoint presentations. This is probably the most important equipment that will take your Salon to the next level. Salon members who own this equipment may be willing loan them as needed, or you may be able to find sponsors who will contribute toward this.

We also recommend purchasing a wireless clicker to allow speakers to walk around during their presentation, and a DVI to Serial dongle to allow Mac users to present (speakers will often show up with their laptop but without their DVI to Serial dongle).

16. Audio Recording Equipment

Having a good turnkey audio recording setup, costing anywhere from \$200 to \$1,000, will allow you to record your presentations and Q&A, and post them online for the entire Salon Network, and for any local members who weren't able to attend.

With a little extra effort you can tag this audio for RSS and publish it as a podcast on a podcasting channel. See the Appendix for an example of a professional audio recording setup purchased by the LA Future Salon (Cost \$1,000). Much cheaper setups are possible, but the quality of the audio is very hard to guarantee without a professional setup, so be warned...

17. Portable Salon DVD/CD/Software Loaner Library

One nice extra that Salon moderators can do for their members, if they wish, is to build a Portable Salon Loaner Library, a collection of:

- 1)** Educational, practical, and future-oriented, DVDs,
- 2)** Audiobook CDs, and
- 3)** Useful Software,

for members to check out and take home during the month between Salons. Over time you can build up a great set of materials. You might ask your members once a year to contribute a DVD, audiobook, software CD, or perhaps a \$20 check, so the collection keeps growing. Do it on the anniversary of your Salon and you will should get significant library contributions each year. You might also make an inventory sheet of what you have in the library, for your members to look over during the Salon.

18. Salon Wiki

The ASF also maintains a [Future Salon Network Wiki](#) that Salon members and Salon leaders can use to share Salon ideas, speaker suggestions, etc. You may also wish to set up your own independent wiki (using [PBWiki](#), for example). We plan to eventually create a database of presentation materials (PowerPoints, blog notes, audio or video recordings) of all our Salons.

19. Terminology: Future Salon vs. “Futurist” Salon

Some of our Salons originated as “Futurist Salons” or simply “Futurists” (as in “LA Futurists”). Because we serve people who are future-curious but don’t necessarily consider themselves futurists, we are standardizing our group names around the phrase “Future Salon” as used by the “Bay Area Future Salon” of Mark Finnern. Some groups, following the lead of our Hawaii Salon, may call alternatively themselves a “Futures Salon,” to stress the importance of alternative futures, the range of possible futures that we influence by our present choices.

In your emails to your community, the greeting “Hi Futurists” or “Hi Salongoers”, or other appellations are equally fine, but printed matter references to your group should always be “Future Salon” or “Futures Salon.” While some of your group members may refer to themselves and your group as “futurists,” Salon moderators are responsible for maintaining the correct usage of their group name in print.

20. Nondiscrimination Policy

All individuals, regardless of age, sex, race, educational background, sexuality, etc. are allowed to attend Future Salons, unless the rules of the host location have a minimum age requirement.

21. Next Steps

If you are interested in starting a Salon in your area, please contact John Smart (johnsmart@accelerating.org) to discuss how you and the ASF can work together.

We recognize that not all moderators are a good fit with the Future Salon vision as outlined here, but if you can find value in and live with these guidelines, we’d love you to join the Future Salon Network, and we look forward to sharing our experiences with you and learning from your example.

We hope you’ll join us in improving social foresight in the fast-paced, fascinating, and challenging years ahead!

22. Websites to Visit for More Info

ASF Homepage: <http://accelerating.org>

Future Salon Network Homepage: <http://accelerating.org/futureSalons.html>

Appendix 1: Sample Speaker Invite Letters

Sample 1, Speaker Invite

Speaking Invitation to the LA Future Salon

Dear Brian,

My friend Melanie Swan introduced me to your insightful website last year. I'm writing to ask if you'd be interested in speaking at the Los Angeles chapter <http://ucla.accelerating.org/> of the Acceleration Studies Foundation <http://accelerating.org/>'s Future Salon Network, to tell us about your work with ThinkArete to date and some of the ways you see that we can better self-actualize in the modern world, using perennial wisdom. We have monthly meetings on the UCLA campus to educate students and professionals in the community about the innovations and impacts due to the accelerating rate of technological and social change, and how this rapid change is affecting the different dimensions of our lives. Many of our students future careers can be influenced by our speakers, so it is a great opportunity to have a positive impact.

We would be honored to have you present at our Friday, July 15th Salon, in Kerckhoff Hall at UCLA. We would have you speak from 8:30 to 9:30pm, including perhaps 20 mins of Q&A with the audience of students and non-student professionals (perhaps 50-60 in attendance). We usually have 1-2 speakers for each meeting. We have had many distinguished speakers from local universities and companies at our meetings, including Dr. Yoseph Bar-Cohen of JPL in 2004, who is also an adviser to our nonprofit. You can find past speakers in the "2005, 2004, 2003, 2002" links at our website above.

As a non-profit organization we can't presently pay an honorarium, but we can reimburse your \$7 UCLA parking expense and would love to pay for your dinner if you can join us in Westwood after 9:30pm for an additional hour after your talk. Please feel free to make your dinner decision at the time of your talk.

We hope that you will be able to join us this July, and we thank you for your excellent, inspiring work.

Warm regards,
John Smart
President, Acceleration Studies Foundation

Sample 2, Speaker Invite

Invitation to Speak at ASF's Los Angeles Future Salon

Dear Dr. Lombardo,

I'm writing to ask if you'd be interested in speaking at the Los Angeles chapter of the Acceleration Studies Foundation's Future Salon Network. We have monthly meetings on the UCLA campus (co-hosted by the UCLA Future Salon student group) to educate students and professionals in the community about the impact of the accelerating rate of technological and social change, and how this rapid change is affecting the different dimensions of our lives.

We would be honored to have you present on the future evolution of human psychology, the human mind, and consciousness, or a similar topic that you prefer. We usually have 1-3 speakers for each meeting, and I think you have enough interesting content for a solo talk, if you are comfortable with that. Would Friday June 17th from 8-10pm at the UCLA campus work for you?

As a non-profit organization, we are unfortunately unable to pay travel expenses. However, the ASF President, John Smart, would like to offer you his guest bedroom for the weekend.

We hope that you will be able to join us and look forward to working with you.

Warm regards,
Iveta Brigit

Iveta Brigit, Executive Director
Acceleration Studies Foundation
2227 Amirante Drive, San Pedro CA 90732
Office Phone: 310.831.4191
Mobile Phone: 518.965.3593
Fax: 310.732.2285
ivetabrigis@accelerating.org

Sample 3, Speaker Invite

Subject: UCLA Future Salon Speaker Invitation

Dear Dr. Yang,

Thank you kindly for the conversation today. Your work combining gene therapy, stem cells and dendritic cells to show the value of an "instructive immunotherapy" paradigm is truly brilliant. We are hopeful that it will continue to make progress, and continue to gain attention in the research and lay communities.

I'm writing to ask if you'd be interested in speaking at the Los Angeles chapter of the Acceleration Studies Foundation's Future Salon Network, to tell us about your work to date and some of the next steps, including any hopes you have for the field of instructive immunotherapy that you'd like to share. We have monthly meetings on the UCLA campus to educate students and professionals in the community about the innovations and impacts due to the accelerating rate of technological and social change, and how this rapid change is affecting the different dimensions of our lives. Many of our students' future careers can be influenced by our speakers, so it is a great opportunity to have a positive impact.

We would be honored to have you present at our Friday, May 20th Salon, in Kerckhoff Hall at UCLA. We would have you speak from 8:30 to 9:30pm, including perhaps 20 mins of Q&A with the audience of students and professionals (perhaps 50-60 in attendance). We usually have 1-2 speakers for each meeting. We have had many distinguished scientists and technologists from local universities and companies at our meetings, including Dr. Yoseph Bar-Cohen of JPL in 2004, who is also an adviser to our nonprofit. You can find past speakers in the "2005, 2004, 2003, 2002" links at our website above.

As a non-profit organization we can't presently pay an honorarium, but we can reimburse your \$7 UCLA parking expense and would love to pay for your dinner if you can join us in Westwood after 9:30pm for an additional hour after your talk. Please feel free to make your dinner decision at the time of your talk.

We hope that you will be able to join us this May, and we thank you again for your excellent, inspiring work.

Warm regards,
John Smart

Appendix 2: Professional Audio Recording Setup (\$1,000) – LA Future Salon Example

In 2006 LA Future Salon (LAFS) decided to build a very easy and dependable professional Salon audio recording setup that would allow one person to be able to carry in and quickly set up a system for recording an entire room.

Designing this we worked with Scott Senn (Scott_Senn@sweetwater.com) and Scott DeMarco (Scott_demarco@sweetwater.com) of Sweetwater Sound, a web-based recording equipment company known for its superior customer service. Because of the need to test and install fresh batteries in wearable wireless microphones (lavalier mics) we designed them out of the system, using higher end area microphones instead. We also wanted a minimum complexity to any postproduction editing, which meant we would record on two channels maximum.

The total cost of this professional setup, excluding the cost of the audio engineer's laptop, which must also be brought to the Salon, is \$1,000, about the price of a good LCD projector. The setup is simple and highly reliable. Any Salon leaders who purchase this equipment through Sweetwater get unlimited phone technical support.

We assumed a typical Salon environment of about 20-80 audience members, either sitting in a circle around a desk or in chairs facing the presenter. To get best recording quality most of the cost of this system goes into the microphones, and they needed to be adaptable to both closed rooms, like we have at LAFS, and for noisier open areas, like the community area in a Barnes and Noble bookstore.



For audience recording we use two very sensitive Audix TR40 omni mikes (\$190 each, left), each set on mike stands (\$22 each) on each side of the room at about 6 foot height, about three feet into the audience area, pointed at the back of the room. When we dial the gain up for these mikes on the mixer these capture audience sound as far into the audience as we need. Setting the TR40's near the front of the room on each side of the audience, four feet to the side of them, six feet high on the stands, and pointing down and back at the audience is perfect. The TR40's have 20 feet XLR cables (\$25 each).

A small (41" tall) padded guitar bag (probably for a small electric guitar) is the perfect size for storing the TR40's and their XLR cables attached to their stands, so that it takes only seconds to pull them out, telescope up the stand and plug the XLR cables in. Get a case that has a strap so you can sling it over your shoulder for transportation.



For presenter recording we chose a Sennheiser e901 boundary microphone (\$230, right), which we set in front of the speaker, either on a podium or at the edge of a table if the speaker isn't using a podium. The presenter is free to roam almost 90 degrees to each side of the mike while they are talking, and this excellent microphone will still pick them up nicely. Even if they walk further away they are then in among the audience and are then captured well by the TR40's. The e901 also needs a 20 foot XLR cable (\$25).

All three mikes are powered by a Blend6 compact mixer (\$100, left). This thing is ugly and has many more dials than we need, but it is cheap and compact. The only knobs that ever need to be touched are two of the four white preamp gain knobs at the bottom, one for each TR40. Once you set those, if you keep returning to the same room you never need to touch any of the knobs again. You can even leave the power button switched on, so that you simply plug the mixer into the wall and everything's ready to record.



An STP201 cable coming out of the two ¼ out channels at the top of the mixer mixes the two TR40 mikes and turns them into a single audience channel, which plugs into the US122 USB audio interface (\$200, right). The e901 speaker mike also plugs into the US122 interface.

The US122 has a USB cable out that plugs into a laptop, and comes with Q-Base audio recording software. We can record two channels of input, one from the audience and one from the speaker. If there is extraneous noise coming in at any point from the audience on the TR40's, you can keep that channel mute in postproduction until you need it for audience questions.

The final bit of slickness is a plastic SKB [R1717 mixer case](#) (www.skbcases.com). This 18"x17"x4" plastic case is the perfect size to hold the Sennheiser e901 presenter microphone and its XLR cable, the US122 USB unit it plugs into, the Blend6 compact mixer, and its power cord and transformer, including an extension cord.



All you have to do when you get to the Salon is take the top off the mixer, plug it into a wall socket, plug the TR40's into the top of the mixer, and plug the USB cable into your laptop. Fire up your laptop recording software and you're ready to check your levels. Tweak two knobs on the Blend 6 and one on the US122 if the sound is coming in too loud or too soft, and you are done. If you are using the same setup in the same room you did last month, you don't even need to readjust the knobs. Just hit record when the speaker starts and stop when the last Q&A is finished. Good luck and happy recording!

Appendix 3: Portable Salon DVD/CD/Software Library – LA Future Salon Example

Here is the Portable Salon Loaner Library system that LA Future Salon uses and recommends. Feel free to innovate your own. The organizing box we use is the **DVT14** from Case Logic. These plastic boxes are \$6 each at Best Buy or Circuit City (phone first to be sure they have them) or can be ordered for \$8 each from [Case Logic's website](#). Each box holds 14 standard-sized DVDs (seven on each side of the middle divider), 34 standard-sized CD jewel cases (audiobooks or productivity software), or seven DVDs and 16 CDs, as shown in the picture to the right.



The next thing you'll need is a large wheeled luggage bag, so you can wheel in your boxes and set them up on a counter for your members to pick through before, during, or after the Salon. You'll also need a \$2 notebook and a pen for them to write what they are checking out. We do everything on the honor system at LAFS, and lose only a few items every year. You might have a rule that members have to have come to three Salons before they can start checking items out.

The case we chose is a wheeled Eddie Bauer Medina 27" vertical case (Item 22497CH, picture right, available at Target for \$150), with an inside capacity of 27" high, 19" wide, and 13" deep. This is the perfect size for holding eight DVT14's with the DVDs/CD's facing up, stacking two wide and four high inside the case.

The boxes hang outside the case a bit but after you zip up the front they fit just right inside the case. This lets you bring roughly 112 standard-sized DVDs or 272 audiobook/software CDs, or some combination of either to your monthly Salon. Once you get more than that in your collection, you can buy an extra bag and get one of your volunteers to bring it every month.

What's nice about this system is that you can keep the DVT14's on your shelf at home between your Salons, giving you access to anything that hasn't been checked out. It takes just a few minutes to pack and unpack them each month. There is one problem with this system, however. The DVT14's don't hold wide-sized DVDs. So if you have any DVD box sets, TV series, or other wide DVDs to bring you will need a separate box to hold those, if you want to keep them in their original containers. The only one I've found that fits into the same



space as the DVT14s is The Container Store's [Acrylic DVD & Video Box](#), 10.25"x8"x5.5" (Item 10025994), \$30 each. There must be a cheaper solution for your wide DVD sets but that's all we've found so far.

You'll also want to put a Library label with the moderator's address and phone number on all your checkout items. We use Avery 8160 labels and a Word template, printing them out on a color printer, and attaching the label over the place where the bar code is on the DVD or CD.

Our label reads:

**From the Library of:
Los Angeles Future Salon
(Mailing Address)
Please Return at the Next Salon or
Return Mail after 60 Days**