

THE OFFICE OF
**COLLECTIVE
IMAGINING**

BRIEFING DOCUMENT



Let's imagine – it is March 2031.

The US Department of Labor confirms the formation of the inaugural Socio-Human Innovation Bureau (SHIB) and the launch of its maiden 'Imagination First' policy (2031).

Fiscal year 2030-31 sees a historic first, a significant downturn in US-wide revenues attributed to Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM) related investments which media outlets are referring to as "techno-exhaustion". A surge in support, hope, interest, investment and innovation in the Arts, Design, Culture (ADC) sectors, aka Imagination Industries are expected.

This explosion of the Imagination Industry is sparked by these events:

1. The late 2020s, dismantling of renewable energy, paired with the mounting ecological damage from fossil fuels, causes severe industry stagnation.
2. New data centers and water demands on Lake Michigan caused rising temperatures, threatening marine life and drinking water quality making these technologies unsafe.
3. The first all AGI films were panned by critics and audiences. Signs suggest a return to human-generated content by film studios.

The Socio-Human Innovation Bureau (SHIB) is tasked with developing policies to harness and enhance the development of human-derived innovation in education and business.

Tasks:

'Imagination First' has just been published. As company directors, you have received a letter from SHIB, which you must respond to today.

1. **Read the letter and policy paper.**
2. **In your groups, discuss and record (on the provided worksheet) all possible impacts this may have on your company.**
3. **Submit your response via the form [QR code on provided worksheet]**

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Welcome to the OCI
experiment.

We ask that you suspend
disbelief and put aside
habitual ways of thinking
for the next 90 minutes.

Thank you.

THIS PROJECT IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN
THE OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE IMAGINING AND THE M.S.
IN DESIGN + INNOVATION (MD+I) GRADUATE PROGRAM.



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MadLib

Dear _____,

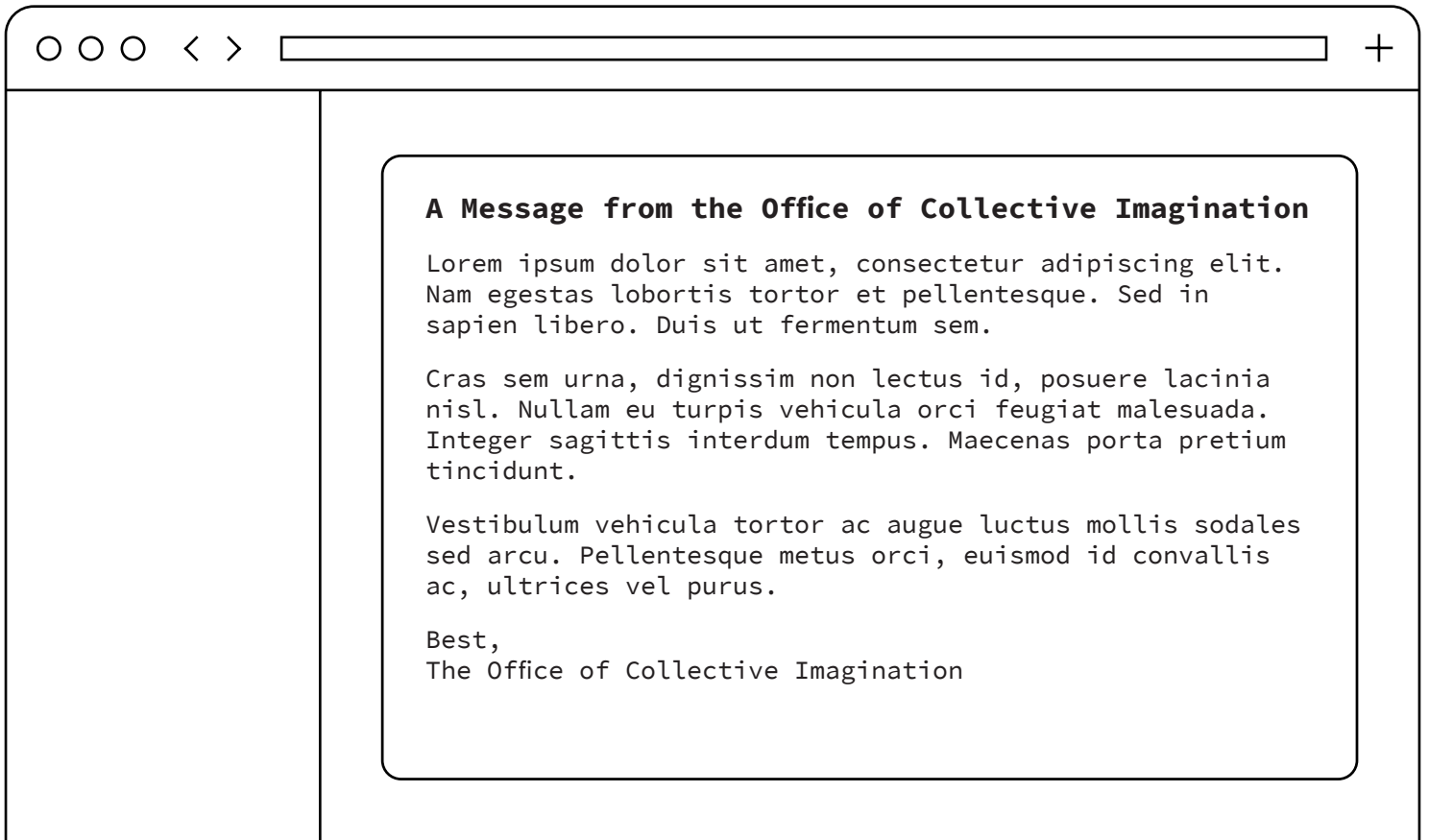
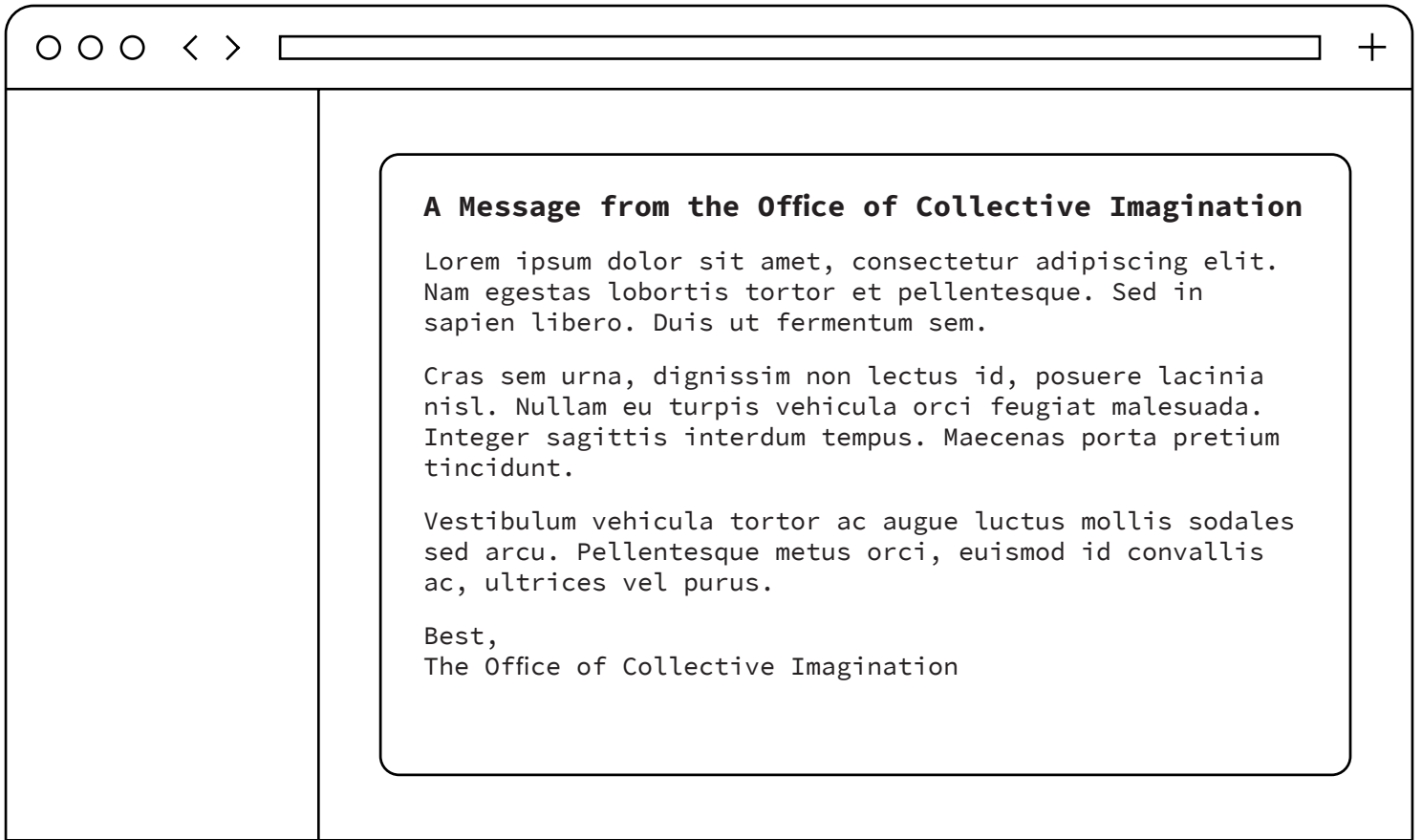
I am writing to you from a _____ castle in an enchanted forest. I found myself here one day after going for a ride on a _____ _____ in _____. There are _____ and _____ here! I fall asleep each night on a _____ of _____ and dream of _____. It feels as though I have lived here for _____. I hope one day you can visit, although the only way to get here now is _____ on a _____!!

I am _____ we might see a _____, they are kind of dangerous. We are going to hike, fish, and _____.

I have heard that the _____ lake is great for _____. Then we will _____ hike through the forest for _____. If I see a _____ while hiking, I am going to bring it home as a pet! At night we will tell _____ stories and roast _____ around the campfire!!

Table No. _____





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OCI Overview

The OCI harnesses our collective ability to envision better futures beyond present realities. To address the “imagination deficit” we must reignite social imagination.

Imagination deficit refers to the lack of bold, visionary thinking about the future, particularly in institutions that are meant to shape it (universities, governments, think tanks, business). This isn’t just about a lack of creativity but more about a growing focus on managing the present rather than imagining and building possible futures. As individuals we are proven to be better at imagining apocalyptic scenarios and technological advancements than we are at envisioning desirable, plausible social futures.

Just as genetic diversity strengthens species against environmental changes, a society with a broad range of ideas is better equipped to adapt. Without robust imagination, future challenges will likely be met with inadequate responses, reinforcing existing inequalities.

If we cannot think expansively about alternatives for the future, we are less likely to challenge the status quo or create truly transformative solutions for the current significant challenges we face as humanity such as climate change and socio-political instability. The OCI was formed to be a proactive part of the social imagination revival

It’s often the radical, imaginative thinkers—those who look beyond the immediate horizon—that push society forward, often these are designers. The world of design is uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between abstract ideas and tangible, real-world solutions—they create space for new ideas to emerge, advocate for diverse voices, and challenge paradigms. By integrating speculative, human-centered, and participatory approaches, design can inspire society to dream big, think long-term, and imagine other ways of being. Interdisciplinary designers are especially crucial to this shift as they bring diverse perspectives together and tackle complex, multifaceted problems. The blending of expertise from various fields and wide critical vision enables these designers to think more expansively, see patterns, connections and opportunities—making for more resilient societies and environments.

You, too, are part of this office. Welcome.

