Certifying Professional Futurists 2030

Results from a Real-time Delphi Survey

Jay Gary, PhD • Feb 28, 2013

Twitter: DrJayGary
jaygary.com/certify2030.pdf

Note: This research is being written up to submit for publication
Jay Gary, PhD
Lake James, Virginia Beach

- 20 yrs in Management Consulting, 10 yrs academic
- Research is in Strategy, Leadership, & Foresight
- Assistant Professor, MBA to PhD
  --Master of Arts in Strategic Foresight
  --Doctor of Strategic Leadership

http://www.regent.edu/global
## Toward a Profession of Futurists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henshel (1981)</td>
<td>Offered comparisons between emergence of 19th century social sciences and futures studies in the 20th century, with regards to professionalism, internal self-criticism, and arbitrary boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell (1993)</td>
<td>Proposed that WFSF and WFS develop a Code of Ethics with guidelines for professional conduct, standards of training, and ethical guidelines with clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaughter (1998)</td>
<td>Argued that ‘critical futures studies’ is a link between the intellectual foundations of futures studies and practical applications in organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaughter (1999)</td>
<td>Invited WFSF to establish and uphold professional standards of quality and ethics in futures work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelwright (2000)</td>
<td>Surveyed how futurists (n = 72) think of their practice compared to established professions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coates (2001)</td>
<td>Considered how applied futurists might be certified and the effect on raising quality of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hines (2003)</td>
<td>APF explored the identity, work, methodology, and value proposition of the foresight profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogan (2003)</td>
<td>Compared the state of the futures field to six foundational elements of established professions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demeritt (2005)</td>
<td>Offered futurists a review of sociological literature that addresses the nature of professions and the process of professionalization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson (2006)</td>
<td>Suggested cross-applications of futures studies to the MBA curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hines (2012)</td>
<td>Considered new roles for organizational futurist to integrate foresight into organizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-Industrial Role Shifts

- Factory
- Office
- Shop
- Laboratory

Brint, S. G. (1994). *In an age of experts*;
Jackson (2010) defines a profession as:

a special type of occupation...(possessing) corporate solidarity...prolonged specialized training in a body of abstract knowledge, and a collectivity or service orientation...a vocational sub-culture which comprises implicit codes of behaviour, generates an *esprit de corps* among members of the same profession, and ensures them certain occupational advantages...(also) bureaucratic structures and monopolistic privileges to perform certain types of work...professional literature, legislation, etc.
Evolution of a Profession

1. **Knowledge Base**: of frameworks, theories and methods.
2. **Competency Profile**: that delineates skills by job task and career level.
3. **Accredited Training**: that is offered in certificates, diplomas, degrees or modules.
4. **Professional Body**: accepted by profession to represent them.
5. **Global Council**: that sets standards and upholds them.
6. **Professional Skills**: that are updated through continuing education.
7. **Code of Ethics**: with adherence to standards.

If you want to walk fast, walk alone.
If you want to walk far, walk together.

-African proverb
Delphi Study on Certifying Futurists

Certification of Professional Futurists 2030

Dec 11th - Jan 31st

Dear Prof Gary,

As colleague in the global foresight community, you are cordially invited to participate in a RealTime-Delphi on how futurists ought to approach the professionalization of their work out to the year 2030.

This welcome screen orientates you to the Delphi survey—a web-based assessment of 14 statements that weigh factors that might undergird the “certification” of professional futurists by 2030. Certification in this study indicates a voluntary process by which an individual receives recognition by a recognized body of their peers, based on an assessment of their work experience and knowledge. It does not refer to earning a diploma, a degree or certificate in futures studies. Neither does it indicate licensure by a government.

As an expert nominated for this study you will be asked to evaluate each statement’s probability of occurrence, its impact on the foresight community, and its desirability. A statistical group opinion of all participants will be calculated and provided to you. You will then have the opportunity to re-assess each response in light of the views of your peers.

Most respondents can complete this questionnaire in 20 minutes, although individual progress will vary by how quickly you move through the questions, and whether you enter justification for your numerical estimates. Written comments will enhance the group dialogue, however providing comments is optional. Rest assured that your identity as a participant will be kept confidential, and all answers will be kept anonymous to protect expression.

You can interrupt your session at any time and come back through the “save & return later” button at the bottom of the screen. Via your personalised link, you can also return to the Consensus Portal at any time until its closure on 28 February 2013 and monitor how the group opinion may have changed with the growing number of participants. You are free to revise your own answers as you deem necessary.

Your careful responses to these 14 statements will assist us as researchers to determine: a) the tensions and contradictions surrounding the conventional notions of the professionalization of work; b) how corporate firms, future associations and degree programs might cooperate to strengthen the practice of foresight; and c) where futurists agree and disagree on how our practice can become a recognized profession. Our results will be presented at various futures conferences and published in foresight journals.

We recommend that you consult the tutorial before starting the survey. It provides a brief guided tour (2.3 minutes) that summarises the survey process. If there are still questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

We hope that you will find this RealTime-Delphi a thought-provoking experience. We look forward to learning about your outlook on the future of the foresight profession. Thank you.

Dr. Jay Gary
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Regent University, Virginia Beach, USA

Dr. Helko von der Gracht
heiko.vondergracht@ebs.edu
EBS, Wiesbaden, Germany
Who Responded to the “CFP2030” Delphi?

142 Respondents, 1,200 Invitations, 12% response

Gender:
- Male: 78%
- Female: 21%

Location:
- Europe: 45%
- N. America: 33%
- Oceania: 7%
- Asia: 6%
- L. America: 4%
- Africa: 3%

Associations:
- ST: 10%
- WFSF: 14%
- MP: 15%
- WES: 29%
- APF: 31%
- OTHER: 10%

Profession:
- Consultants: 31%
- Academia: 15%
- Applied Research: 14%
- Industry: 10%
- Assoc/ Govt: 10%
Industry Competitors: Actors, Levels & Identity

Organizational Futurist

Champion Client

End User Client

Consulting Futurist

Strategic Foresight

What was the Conceptual Framework?

Porter's Five Forces

- Potential Entrants
  - Threat of new entrants
- Suppliers
  - Bargaining power of suppliers
- Industry Competitors
  - Rivalry among Existing Firms
  - Threat of substitute products or services
- Substitutes
  - Bargaining power of buyers
- Buyers
Who Might Shape Certification 2030?

**New entrants** (consolidation or not of the field?)
1. Viable professional certification?
3. Single recognized Council setting professional standards?
8. Consolidation of knowledge base, theories, methods

**Suppliers** (those who train)
4. On the Job Training - apprenticeships
5. Graduate Programs compete via Certificates
6. Commercial Firms compete w/ Univ?
9. Academic acceptance of foresight?
10. Accreditation of foresight education?

**Buyers** (students, consultants, clients)
2. Certification by levels or sector?
11. Explicit job offers for futurists?
12. Preference for certified futurists with foresight degrees over MBA?

**Substitutes** (other professions, technology)
7. Foresight training by related professions?
13. Individualized Self-Training thru ICT?
14. Interactive E-Learning
Propositions for 2030

1. The global foresight community employs a viable form of certification for professional futurists.
2. A professional futurist may earn certification at various levels that range from trend analysts, to project managers, to senior consultants.
3. The global foresight community has only one widely accepted council that sets and upholds standards for professional futurists worldwide.
4. 'On-the-job' apprenticeship with a future focused firm is a viable training path to certify one's competency as a professional futurist, without earning a graduate degree.
5. Graduate programs in futures studies compete with one another on the basis of the percentage of their alumni who become certified professional futurists.
6. Commercial firms establish their own in-service foresight training programs to compete with universities.
7. Other professions (strategy, planning, innovation) offer explicit foresight modules in their certifications to compete with the futures education market.
8. The global foresight community shares a common accepted understanding of futures assumptions, theory, methods, knowledge, and ethics.
9. The number of university graduate degree programs in futures studies has at least doubled worldwide since 2010 from a base of 16.
10. Leading graduate programs in futures studies form a 'University Foresight Accrediting Agency' to ensure quality.
11. There are explicit job offers in various sectors for certified professional futurists.
12. Clients prefer certified futurists with a Master's degree in futures studies over certified futurists from other fields (cf. MBAs, engineers, sociologists, economists).
13. Professional foresight training leads to increased demand for individualized ICT self-training methods.
14. Social interaction and communication among participants is valued in online foresight training over ICT self-training methods.
Your Estimates for 2030

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14. Social interaction and communication among participants is valued in online foresight training over I.C.T self-training methods.
Conventional Delphi

Delphi is “a method for structuring a group communication process,” Not a method aimed to produce a statistical sample (Linstone & Turoff, 2011)

Characteristics of Delphi

• Group communication process
• Based on expert knowledge
• Provision of arguments
• Controlled feedback after rounds
• Statistical group response
• Re-assessment of estimates
• Consensus measure
• Substitute for empirical data
Real-time Delphi

A real-time Delphi reduces the need for multiple surveys and generates a broad database for scenarios (von der Gracht, 2011)

Innovative RT-Delphi

The “Real-Time Delphi” is an anonymous, systematic, questioning process, in which the statistical group opinion is calculated in the background after each question.

Worldwide to date there are very few similar web-based foresight tools.
2030: The global foresight community employs a viable form of certification for professional futurists.
2030: The global foresight community employs a viable form of certification for professional futurists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probability of occurrence</th>
<th>Group response</th>
<th>Aggregated arguments</th>
<th>Your final answer</th>
<th>Revision of your answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ø = 50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a low probability (optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>This is only an incremental step beyond AIF's present criteria.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Industry (in case of occurrence)</th>
<th>Group response</th>
<th>Aggregated arguments</th>
<th>Your final answer</th>
<th>Revision of your answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ø = 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>a low impact (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a high impact (optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The number of certified professional futurists would be triple the number of annual graduates of futures studies programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desirability of occurrence</th>
<th>Group response</th>
<th>Aggregated arguments</th>
<th>Your final answer</th>
<th>Revision of your answers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ø = 4</td>
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<td>a low desirability (optional)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>a high desirability (optional)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## 1. Professional Certification

### Arguments for...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Probability of Occurrence</th>
<th>High Probability of Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="52.png" alt="52" /></td>
<td><img src="47.png" alt="47" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Long-term planning still is not in the focus.</em></td>
<td><em>It will be more important to have a competency-based certification for futurists, university degrees are too difficult to compare.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Universities will not value separate professional certification in futures studies, but instead, focus on traditional degrees and some may try to run a professional certification program across legal, cultural and linguistic boundaries, but it will prove to be too costly and complex.</em></td>
<td><em>The market will demand separate qualification programs, as university programs are too heterogeneous.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Objective criteria need to be established for assessing professional futurists and this could be challenging as it is with the case of e.g. artists, creative professionals etc. It depends on the future definition of futurist professional.</em></td>
<td><em>Futures Studies will be an important skill in corporations and public service. Transparent and objective certificates will be very useful.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Even simply agreeing on the lowest possible criteria and how to verify these properly so there is confidence in the certification will be difficult.</em></td>
<td><em>This is only an incremental step beyond AFR's present criteria.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>No additional value.</em></td>
<td><em>To be effective a professional futurist (as opposed to a topical or method specialist) needs to have a functional understanding and ability across a broad array of methods and disciplines in order to best and fully meet clients needs.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>There is no guarantee for a viable form of professional futurist certification. Nothing can guarantee the work of any professional futurist. It requires a vast effort to demonstrate the necessity of launching such an initiative.</em></td>
<td><em>The desire for certification is reflective of both marketing needs (PR value etc) as well as the likelihood that more futures thinking will be being employed in a formalised way, which in turn suggests more check on qualifications of the futurists.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The question is “What is a prof futurist”. In other words who can control the use of the title, AFR wants to do this but many who are in the field may not want or need this.</em></td>
<td><em>If certification is rethought and becomes a model more suited to a global, digital society.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Who see themselves as “futurists” and whose clients/employers see them as such may not be congruent w/ need for cert.</em></td>
<td><em>There is enough pressure from professional associations to make this very likely – though I am interested in just what “viable” means in this context.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>There is some commonality of thought within the global foresight community, but that is shared at the most basic level and varies regionally.</em></td>
<td><em>With all the talk about it, finally someone will champion it and will carry the day even though many disagree about it.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>This is a very contentious issue with multiple stakeholders and vested interests.</em></td>
<td><em>On the other side, there is a strong industry incentive to put futures on the map and to standardize the field. I see these two forces fairly evenly matched.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome to the consensus portal, Prof Gary.

Here you have the chance to compare your estimations with the group opinion. The 14 theses are listed with their key title and coloured depending on your deviation from the group:

- within the group opinion
- moderate divergence
- significant divergence
- strong divergence

From this portal, you can jump into all thesis evaluation screens independently in order to revise your initial answers. Preferably, you may choose those theses where you differ significantly from the group. Since your last visit some experts may have added plausible and striking arguments for a contrary position than yours. Take your chance for revision and contribute with your experience and expertise!
# Delphi Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Propositions</th>
<th>EP</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Professional Certification</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Certification by Levels</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recognized Council</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>On the Job Training</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Grad Programs – Certif. Advantage</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Commercial Firms Compete w/ Univ</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Training by Related Professions</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Knowledge Base of Futures Studies</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Academic Acceptance of Foresight</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Accreditation of Foresight Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Explicit Job Offers for Futurists</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Preference for Foresight Degrees</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EP = Expectational Probability;  I = Impact;  D = Desirability
## Ranking of Expectations

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recognized Council</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
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*Note: EP stands for Expectation Points.*
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<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Consensus

- **Strong**
- **Moderate**

### Dissent

- **Strong**

C = Degree of consensus of EP = 2nd round Interquartile Range (IQR 3 minus IQR1);
Strong consensus (IRQ of <= 20); Moderate consensus (IRQ of 20-25);
Moderate dissent (IRQ of 25-30); Strong dissent IRQ of >=30)
Convergence? Round 1 to 2

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Professional Certification</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-6.1%</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Certification by Levels</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recognized Council</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>On the Job Training</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Grad Programs – Certif. Advantage</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Proliferation of Foresight Training</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Foresight Training by Related Professions</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>-5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Knowledge Base of Futures Studies</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Academic Acceptance of Foresight</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Accreditation of Foresight Education</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Explicit Job Offers for Futurists</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Preference for Foresight Degrees</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Individualized Self Training</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Interactive E-Learning</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measure of CV

- Very strong convergence (decrease of standard dev. >= 20%)
- Strong convergence (decrease of standard dev. >=10%-20%)
- Moderate convergence (decrease of standard dev of <= 10%)

Moderate To Weak
Comparison of Projections for 2030

1. Professional Certification
2. Certification by Levels
3. Recognized Council
4. On the Job Training
5. Grad Programs – Certif. Advantage
6. Commercial Firms Compete w/ U
7. Training by Related Professions
8. Knowledge Base of Futures Studies
9. Academic Acceptance of Foresight
10. Accreditation of Foresight Education
11. Explicit Job Offers for Futurists
12. Preference for Foresight Degrees
13. Individualized Self Training
14. Interactive E-Learning

Graph showing the comparison of projections for 2030 with axes for Impact and Probability.
Discussion

1. What stands out to you from this study about the prospects for the foresight profession?

2. What are the next steps for the foresight community to develop a profession?
Next Step: Competency Maps

http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/pyramid.aspx

Competency Maps - Detail

Management Competencies
- Staffing
- Informing
- Delegating
- Networking
- Monitoring Work
- Entrepreneurship
- Supporting Others
- Motivating & Inspiring
- Developing & Mentoring
- Strategic Planning/Action
- Preparing & Evaluating Budgets
- Clarifying Roles & Objectives
- Managing Conflict & Team Building
- Developing an Organizational Vision
- Monitoring & Controlling Resources

Occupation-Specific Requirements

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies
Competencies to be specified by industry sector representatives

Industry-Wide Technical Competencies
Competencies to be specified by industry representatives

Workplace Competencies
- Teamwork
- Adaptability/Flexibility
- Customer Focus
- Planning & Organizing
- Creative Thinking
- Problem Solving & Decision Making
- Working with Tools & Technology
- Workplace Computer Applications
- Scheduling & Coordinating
- Checking, Examining, & Recording
- Business Fundamentals

Academic Competencies
- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- Communication - Listening & Speaking
- Critical & Analytic Thinking
- Active Learning
- Basic Computer Skills

Personal Effectiveness Competencies
- Interpersonal Skills
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Initiative
- Dependability & Reliability
- Willingness To Learn

School of Business & Leadership | Jay Gary, PhD
Career ladders/lattices can:

- attract individuals to an industry by showing potential career progression beyond entry points,
- focus workforce development efforts,
- show workers how different jobs interconnect within careers in an industry, and
- inform workers about the training, education, and developmental experiences that would enable them to accomplish their career objectives.

http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/CareerPathway/CPWCIIInstructions.aspx
Certifying Professional Futurists 2030
Results from a Real-time Delphi Survey
Jay Gary, PhD • Feb 28, 2013
Twitter: DrJayGary
jaygary.com/certify2030.pdf

Note: This research is being written up to submit for publication