

# Preface

The story of this book dates back to 2012. At that time, Jon Mikel Zabala-Iturriagoitia was working at the Centre for Innovation, Research and Competence in the Learning Economy (CIRCLE), Lund University (Sweden), studying knowledge-based entrepreneurship in the country's software industry. At the same time, Miguel Gómez-Uranga had started to read about symbiotic processes and new findings from molecular biology. In turn, Jon Barrutia was focused on the physical properties of processes at the nanoscale. In one of the visits Jon Mikel made to Bilbao (Spain), the three editors of the book exchanged ideas, discussed their findings, and began talking about a new concept: epigenetics.

In January 2013, Jon Mikel moved to a new position at the University of Deusto in San Sebastian (Spain). As a result, the three editors undertook joint research on epigenetics and how the concept could be brought into the study of innovation at the organizational level. In particular, we were interested in exploring the Internet ecosystem, due to the dramatic innovation processes occurring in it. After a year of research, in 2014 we introduced the concept of “Epigenetic Economic Dynamics” in a paper published in *Technovation*.

A few months later, we got an e-mail from Anthony Doyle, engineering editor at the UK office of Springer, who invited us to write a book delving into the concept of Epigenetic Economic Dynamics (EED). We were stunned by the offer, which derived in careful thought on whether to accept the challenge or not. We were a small team, and even though a book would allow us to expand and improve our ideas, we were very much aware that writing a book differs greatly from writing a paper. After long discussion among the three of us, we decided to take a step forward and provided Springer with an official proposal for this book in July 2014. The contract with Springer was signed in October 2014 and the ‘book project’ was underway.

In order to complete the book, we felt the need to include a wide array of competences and perspectives on the evolution of the Internet ecosystem. Its singularity, its light-speed evolution, and the business diversity found in it demanded an interdisciplinary approach. It was necessary to take the scope of the book beyond EED focus and gain inputs from other specialist colleagues in the areas we intended to study. In December 2014 we organized a workshop at the University

of the Basque Country in Bilbao, to which several researchers from different Spanish universities were invited to present their views on the Internet ecosystem and their potential contribution to the book. We consider this to have been the kick-off meeting for this book.

This interdisciplinary work obliged us to be knowledgeable about systemic and managerial approaches to innovation. The contribution of computer and telecommunications engineers was required to gain an understanding of the technological phenomena. Knowledge of strategic management was key in explaining the rational behavior of the large business groups we were interested in examining. At the same time, we were interested in gaining the commitment of developers. Developers are becoming the cornerstone for the rapid development of the Internet and the dramatic growth of the large industry groups dominating it. We needed practice-oriented developers, who could provide new insight into how the Internet ecosystem is seen through their entrepreneurial eyes. Combining all these academic and practice-oriented cultures, as well as individuals with different levels of dedication, has not been an easy task. However, our aim to provide a quality product with a high degree of novelty has overcome all the difficulties that we have encountered during the preparation of this book.

As in any human endeavor, we have been through situations, as could be expected. There have, however, been many more circumstances that we did not foresee and that we cannot draw conclusions from. The first were the very serious illnesses suffered by Miguel Gómez-Uranga and Goio Etxebarria, which put the ‘book project’ on hold for a while. The excellent care received from the oncologists and hematologists who treated them kept their conditions from becoming an impediment; not to mention the special role played by their families, friends, and colleagues. Adversity can sometimes help us to give the best of ourselves.

Timing has also been an issue, and sometimes we felt that we were confusing two terms that, despite looking similar, have very different implications: importance and emergency. We have experienced, suffered, and endured processes that even made some people consider the possibility of some of the authors appropriating intellectual property they did not own. Basque people are said to be characterized by their clarity, transparency, and the value they place on a given word. Maybe, as in epigenetics, our Basque DNA has been altered by the context. This often meant that when we were discussing the progress of the book, and exchanging our views on how the process should be led, we ended our discussions with an “NN” (we to ours—or “nosotros a lo nuestro” in Spanish). For all of the above, we must express our gratitude to Garrett Ziólek, editorial assistant at Springer UK, for his understanding and flexibility with regard to all the administrative work needed for the edition of this book.

We are finally able to deliver this ‘eclectic’ book. During this year, we have often seen ourselves not as great chefs of the worldwide recognized Basque haute cuisine, but more like those small restaurant cooks now fashionable on TV shows which have to do something with what they have readily available, and for which time is short. In our case, the final opinion is the reader’s.

We do not want to forget the role and contribution of those who have helped us improve the quality of the manuscripts, be it translating them into English or reviewing the editing of the text. In this regard we are particularly indebted to Patricia O'Connor and Aimar Basañez Zulueta, without whom this endeavor would have not been possible. Funding is also a key factor when carrying out an activity of this type. We are thus grateful to the Basque Government for the funding provided through the Etortek 2014 program to the Nanogune' 14 project.

Bilbao, Spain  
Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain  
Bilbao, Spain  
October 2015

Miguel Gómez-Uranga  
Jon Mikel Zabala-Iturriagoitia  
Jon Barrutia

PS: On 17 December 2015 Miguel Gómez-Uranga passed away after a long disease. This book constitutes a memory, a tribute, and a recognition for his hard work on the development of a comprehensive analytical contribution based on the concept of "Epigenetic Economic Dynamics" during these past years. Rest in peace.

Dynamics of Big Internet Industry Groups and Future  
Trends

A View from Epigenetic Economics

Gómez Uranga, M.; Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, J.M.; Barrutia  
Guenaga, J. (Eds.)

2016, XXV, 254 p. 38 illus., 33 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-31145-6