

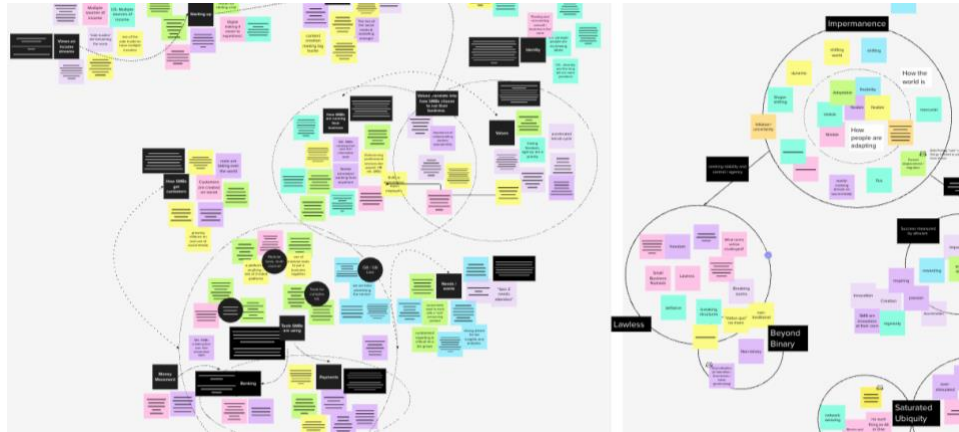
## Fluidity and Friction

### An Experiment in Ethnographic Foresight

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Foresight diagramming. Image Credit: Erin Duncan

*Ethnography can be a divining rod for the future. Though speculative, the study of cultural signals to seed foresight creates a rich, provocative perspective that is difficult to dismiss, even in an always-be-shipping business context. Our presentation is a journey into our team's nascent foresight practice and our discovery of a secular trend that is creating friction for all of us, and in particular, for organizations that depend on clear, rectified data. 'Beyond Binary' encapsulates the social sea-change taking place as identities are becoming increasingly fluid. Boundaries are dissolving, liminal spaces expanding. Language and meaning are being reclaimed, remade. We may be nearing the precipice of an organizational identity crisis. What are big data analytics in an era of mercurial data? How will we remake and recalibrate our tools and methods for understanding humanity at scale?*

Erin Duncan is a design research manager at Intuit QuickBooks. She finds purpose in understanding and advocating for small businesses, using insights to amplify their voices to inspire teams to build meaningful solutions to meet their needs.

Katherine Lee is a research director at Intuit QuickBooks. She and her team thrive in the complexity of an ecosystem of solutions – defining foundational insights for key initiatives and exercising foresight to surface key transitional moments and patterns of change that have implications on the business and user experience.

Ellie Michel is a senior design researcher at Intuit QuickBooks. Over the last year she has explored the path of Gen Z business owners to guide product strategy. Ellie's background in psychology underpins her passion for learning from people, her questioning nature, and curiosity to have people "tell her more."