“We need to teach kids how to think not what to think”
We live in the most rapidly changing time in all of human history.

From the spectre of technological and climate change, through to profound economic and geopolitical shifts, the rate of change we’re currently experiencing is unprecedented.

That’s why now, more than ever, the need to teach creative and critical thinking skills to the next generation is so very critical.
While every teacher agrees that we need to help kids develop effective thinking skills beyond mere knowledge to rise to these challenges, the problem is that no one knows how to shift the course of the massive machine that is our education system.

But what if instead of trying to change the system from within like so many before us, we took a smarter and more innovative approach?
The School of Thought provides free effective thinking resources to teachers and students, using world’s best practices from the advertising and design industries.

The hypothesis is that if we use the same creative engagement employed to sell people things they probably don’t need, but for education instead, then it might just make learning how to think something that’s genuinely interesting and effective. The thing about hypotheses, though, is that they need to be tested...
PROOF OF CONCEPT:

The resources available to the education sector usually preclude the creation of highly engaging materials that resonate with students. So, what if we simply created them and gave them to schools for free?

Using world-class design, copywriting and code we created a microsite that took the heady critical thinking subject of ‘logical fallacies’ (which are flaws in reasoning often used by politicians and the media to fool people) and condensed each fallacy into a single, simple sentence that anyone could understand.

The results? yourlogicalfallacyis.com has received over 7.8 million unique visitors and is being used in thousands of schools all around the world including Harvard.

It has hit the front page of reddit.com several times, been tweeted by prominent public intellectuals such as Stephen Fry, and the free poster has been downloaded millions of times and hangs in kids’ bedrooms all over the world in over a dozen languages. All with zero marketing budget, and only organic viral spread.

And we just proved the value of this model again with the launch of a sister site on cognitive biases that is also being used is schools the world over, was featured in lifehacker.com, buzzfeed.com and hit the front page of reddit.com two days after launching. Check it out at: www.yourbias.is
WHAT NEXT?

The School of Thought is a registered 501c3 non profit and is now seeking funding to create a comprehensive suite of freely available online resources that empower teachers and students to learn creative and critical thinking skills anywhere, at any time.

From an interactive timeline of the most interesting philosophical ideas in history through to fully integrated and customisable modular curricula on critical thinking, the purpose of The School of Thought is to help us rise to the challenges of the 21st Century with clear eyes and creative minds.

This is perhaps the most pivotal point in all of human history, and we need your help to move toward a positive future based in reason.
ADVISORY COUNCIL

Gabriel Weinberg
CEO & Founder duckduckgo.com
Gabriel is a successful serial entrepreneur with a wealth of experience in business, digital product development, partnerships and tech operations.
www.duckduckgo.com/about

Julia Galef
President Center for Applied Rationality
Julia is a prominent skeptic and public intellectual who hosts the popular Rationally Speaking podcast with guests such as Peter Singer, Ben Goldacre and Neil DeGrasse Tyson.
www.rationality.org

David McRaney
Author of international best-selling book “You Are Not So Smart”
David is the author of two best-selling books and the popular blog and podcast at youarenotsosmart.com. He will be contributing feedback as well as providing collaborative input to The School of Thought’s projects.
www.youarenotsosmart.com

Deborah Hyde
Editor The Skeptic Magazine
Deborah is a British skeptic, folklorist, cultural anthropologist and Editor-in-Chief of The skeptic Magazine. She writes extensively about skepticism, folklore, paranormal activities and critical thinking.
www.skeptic.org.uk

Peter Ellerton
Founder UQ Critical Thinking Project
Peter is a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Queensland, and is leading the Critical Thinking Project, as well as several programs teaching critical thinking in schools.
www.ctp.uq.edu.au

Dan Brown
Partner DLA Piper Legal
Dan is a partner at the Brisbane office of the third largest legal firm in the world, DLA Piper. He will be advising The School of Thought with regard to all legal and structural matters.
www.dlapiper.com
Jim Strachan
Creative Director of The School of Thought

Jim is an advertising creative with more than 20 years of experience creating award-winning campaigns for some of the world’s biggest and best brands. Having worked in agencies including Y&R, Publicis and McCann, he brings a wealth of experience creating world-class concepts and executions.

As Creative Director and Director of School of Thought, Jim is passionate about using his skills to create simple, effective learning resources that will help change the world, for good.

Outside of work he’s a guitar player, sports tragic, husband and father – but certainly not in that order.

Barry Silverberg
Treasurer and Secretary of The School of Thought

Barry is the Director Center for Non Profit Studies, Austin Community College, as well as the Co-Principal of Silverberg Associates, and has over 40 years experience as a leader in the non profit sector.

He has consulted with hundreds of nonprofits and is known for his Strategic Thinking Leadership Gathering that focuses on Board engagement to create and sustain highly effective organizations.

Formerly Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations CEO and volunteer leader for 13 years, Barry served on two Texas Legislature task forces and helped develop recommendations that led to the Texas Nonprofit Council.

Barry is leading The School of Thought’s development in the USA and brings his extensive experience in the non profit sector to bear.
The University of Queensland Critical Thinking Project

The Critical Thinking Project has been set up to develop and disseminate research into critical thinking. Leading academic scholars from UQ’s School of Historical & Philosophical Inquiry have been engaged to create various resources to empower staff, teachers, and the general public to apply the benefits of critical thinking in both professional and personal contexts. The Critical Thinking Project will be collaborating with The School of Thought to provide academic rigour and input with regard to pedagogical research and implementation.

www.ctp.uq.edu.au

Josephmark

Josephmark is a global design agency specialising in pushing the boundaries where technology and design meet.

Creators and co-founders of the We Are Hunted platform that was acquired by Twitter, they went on to be appointed to redesign the new Myspace (to great critical acclaim), and have recently launched the similarly acclaimed #hash twitter platform. Their motion design company Breeder also created the opening titles for the first season of True Detective for which they won an Emmy for Outstanding Main Title Design.

Josephmark are The School of Thought’s official design partners and will be providing strategic, graphic, and user experience design support.

www.josephmark.com.au

Flip Creative

Flip are a full service digital agency who have a wealth of experience in digital design and programming.

Their great value lies in bridging the gap between design and code.

They will be providing The School of Thought with programming expertise from both a back-end and system operations infrastructure point of view, as well as front end code creation and implementation.

www.weareflip.com
INTRODUCTORY VIDEOS

Click to view the School of Thought introductory video (2.5 minutes)

Click to view the School of Thought TEDx talk (18 minutes)
Give a man a fish, feed him for a day, teach a child to think and she'll grow up to enact legislation that saves our resources for future generations.
Asset 1: timelineofideas.org

Sparking an interest in philosophy can have a profound effect on someone’s life.

timelineofideas.org will provide a fun introduction to the more interesting ideas of philosophy (without having to read a dusty old book full of dense, archaic language).

Following the same model that made the fallacies site successful, timelineofideas.org will take ideas such as those espoused by Plato, Kant or Sartre, and distill and simplify them so that anyone and everyone can understand them.

Using best practice design and communication principles to create a highly engaging asset, timelineofideas.org promises to help popularize philosophy by making it accessible and interesting.

The site will be fully responsive and published under a creative commons license so that students, teachers and the general public will be able to access the resource anywhere and everywhere.

Each idea has its own bespoke page with expanded explanations, recommended reading, and relevant links.

Every idea page also features a curated piece of crowd-sourced artwork inspired by that particular idea which can be downloaded or shared as a poster or desktop wallpaper for free under a creative commons license. This means that a viral sharing mechanism is built into the asset (example poster design on the following page).
René Descartes 1596 – 1650
Cogito Ergo Sum translates as 'I think therefore I am' and is one of the most well-known philosophical ideas. Essentially it's saying that if someone is able to be thinking about themselves, then at least must be true - and everything else might be an illusion.

“I think therefore I am”

timelineofideas.org
Download this artwork for free as a poster or desktop wallpaper at the website. You can also find out more about this and other interesting ideas throughout history.
timelineofideas.org/1625

AN INITIATIVE FROM schoolofthought.org

Artwork created by @artistexample
This poster is published under a Creative Commons No Derivative Works license 2015 by The School of Thought International. You are free to print, copy, and redistribute this artwork with the binding proviso that you reproduce it in full so that others may share alike.
Asset 2: Fallacy Bingo App & Website

A website and app that builds on the success of yourlogicalfallacyis.com to provide students and the public with a fun, social and interactive way to explore logical fallacies.

One of the most fun and effective ways to learn fallacies is to spot them ‘in the wild’. This app means that students can watch the news, a presidential debate, or any other form of rhetorical media to spot logical fallacies and play by themselves or against their classmates or friends to be the first to get ‘Fallacy Bingo’ by getting three fallacies in a row.

In addition to the Fallacy Bingo game functionality, the app allows users to explore the fallacies’ descriptions and examples.

Fallacy Bingo provides a highly engaging way for students to learn about the fallacies in a native context.
Asset 3: Never Trust A Brain video series

A monthly viral video web series exploring cognitive biases. Each episode explores a particular bias and runs for 5-10 minutes.

Using humour, high-end animation, and engaging content, each episode of Never Trust a Brain gives the viewer a quick yet comprehensive lesson on a particular cognitive bias.

Cognitive biases affect all of us, and becoming aware of the tricks our brains play on us, and the effects of our own predispositions and flaws in thinking, can profoundly change a person’s life.

Big decisions as well as small everyday judgements are affected by the many cognitive biases that humans are susceptible to.

By creating a virally shareable video resource, Never Trust a Brain will significantly improve the thinking of students, their teachers, and the world at large.
We don’t learn very well by having someone dictate to us, we learn by following our curiosity; by listening to interesting things and having our minds set alight by new ideas.

This new podcast format invites curated guests as well as the general public to have a passionate, curious, heated and/or interesting conversation on a particular subject every week.

Using a question from the A Curious Question app as a jumping off point, An Interesting Conversation will explore philosophy, politics, ethics, technology, and myriad other curious subjects.

With the power of editing, we’ll take dozens of interesting conversation on the same subject, and pick out the most controversial, inspiring and amazing bits to create a weekly hour-long podcast that is jam-packed with snippets of interesting conversations.

What makes this format truly unique is that the show notes will have direct links to the full expanded 10 - 12 conversations, so if you find a particular conversation particularly interesting, you’ll be able to dive into a much bigger discussion; and also join the conversation yourself on the website.
Ultimate Goal: A comprehensive, free, gamified online school

Each of these assets is helping us build towards an online platform that is free for students and teachers to access all around the world.

A fully modular curriculum will allow students to increase their Acumen Score by engaging with various assets, taking online tests, and collaborating with other students around the world.

The beauty of digital products is that they can be perpetually enriched through iteration, evolution and application to new areas.

The School of Thought will seek to make integration with school curricula in countries all over the world as simple, effective and viable as possible.

A physical campus is also planned for the future offering intensive courses in creative and critical thinking practice for both.
THE ASK

The School of Thought is looking for sponsors. Will you back us?

By sponsoring The School of Thought, you may be contributing to one of the most important projects of our time.

Can you help us to make a profound difference to millions of people’s lives, and the future of our planet?

Your partnership will be recognised and accredited on all assets, communications, and press releases.

If you see the value of teaching the next generation to think independently, please contact us via jesse@schoolofthought.org