Acknowledgements

We didn't set out to write a book about hype. What began as a modest attempt to write a short paper on the Hype Cycle Chart grew into something more ambitious. We imagined a relatively quick piece on the chart – perhaps a year of work at most. But the deeper we delved, the more we realised how little we understood about the phenomenon of hype itself. Nor did we find much academic guidance to help us. The further we explored, the more expansive – and elusive – the topic became.

Several years later, this book is the result of that initial enquiry. In many ways, it is the book we wished had existed when we first set out to understand the Hype Cycle Chart. It is also a book about how a deceptively simple chart opened up a much larger set of questions – about markets, futures, evaluation, and the machinery that organises what John Maynard Keynes famously called the 'animal spirits' of the economy. Hype, we came to see, was not simply a by-product of innovation but a structuring force – one that shapes how technology futures are imagined, contested, and acted upon.

To our knowledge, this is the first book devoted entirely to the phenomenon of hype. While scholars have examined adjacent concepts – such as bubbles, speculation, expectations, and promissory discourse – hype itself has rarely been the direct focus of sustained analysis. And yet it plays a critical role in the innovation economy: directing attention, mobilising capital, and coordinating belief. Writing a book about something so pervasive yet under-theorised has been far from easy. But we have been fortunate to draw on the support, encouragement, and generosity of a wide community of institutions, colleagues, and friends.

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