

Business

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Schumpeter

Creative destruction in times of covid

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With the world in upheaval, enterprising minds are already whirring. Some of them are altruistic: schoolchildren, for instance, have been 3D-printing plastic visors for front-line workers. Some of them are saucy, such as the Thai bodybuilders, put out of work by lockdown, who last month set up Bsamfruit Durian Delivery, promoting it on Facebook not only with photos of durians and mangoes, but of taut abs and bulging bosoms. Some of them will simply be hungry for fame and fortune, believing, like Michael Moritz of Sequoia Capital, a vc firm, that social changes accelerated by the crisis, such as food delivery, telemedicine and online education, will eventually generate lucrative business opportunities. They will also expect the economic slump to wipe out incumbents, muting competition and freeing up space and manpower—provided governments do not interfere with the inevitable by propping up zombie firms.