

# ***The Knowledge Tree Goes Social***

## **Abstract**

*The Knowledge Tree's* adoption of the blogging format for this ninth edition of the journal is an exemplar of changes occurring on an industry-wide basis both in publishing and education. There is a general trend towards a system of infinitely negotiable content publishing, and this is challenging the authority and longevity of traditionally published content.

The value of blogging systems in generating debate is clear: ease of engagement and the dig-down method of tagged searching and self-education online has brought about a period of active content consumption never achieved with traditional media product. But as a publishing mechanism, there is also distinct value for flexible learners and researchers in flexible learning in a user-driven knowledge exchange. Blogs have begun to emerge as a significant force in changing audience perception of ideas, organisations and products, partly because of the communicative nature of the technology, but also because consumers, researchers and learners in the digital age are becoming more demanding and exacting of content they consume as part of their daily routine. The technology may be more conversational than the rigidly complete form of publishing traditionally associated with journal publication, but such vernacularisation of idea development does not necessarily represent mass amateurisation of knowledge. Indeed, the act of playing with ideas via blogging architecture is distinctly useful in facilitating understanding of complex theories, and it enables much more effective knowledge aggregation and dissemination.

In this article, the value of blogs is calculated in terms of the challenges that they pose to existing paradigms in the publishing sector, including the transformational notion of infinitely negotiable content creation. The power of play as a technique in generating meaning is explored with strong reference to the work of Kane (2004) in his *The Play Ethic: A Manifesto for a Different Way of Living*. The role of blogs in facilitating and activating negotiated content publishing is presented as an exemplar of that spirit of play.

## **Introduction**

The Internet is enabling conversations among human beings that were simply not possible in the era of mass media (Locke et al. 2000:Thesis 6:xii).

Welcome to a conversation. In an age where mass consumption has primed us as readers, learners, producers and consumers to appreciate the quality, reliability and rigidity of published ideas, here is an iconoclastic moment: this article isn't the last word on social software and social networks. But it is an attempt to celebrate the move to a social framework of publication, and it is an exploration of a series of ideas about how best to gain value from the change. Importantly, it is only the beginning of the conversation that I hope will ensue.

In this ninth edition, *The Knowledge Tree: an e-Journal of Learning Innovation*, the journal of the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework) celebrates its move to a new format – that of the blog. For many, the concept of a blog is still problematic. Based on the reverse chronological posting of articles that often contain hypertext links and that can permit reader engagement through commentary systems, blogs are more of a protocol and praxis than a media production mechanism, because they invite the act of communication, rather than simply broadcasting ideas to a mass audience. Yet blogs theoretically and practically can also be used as a vehicle for transmissions of such ideas. Even so, not all commentators are convinced that the social software technologies of blogging represent a positive change to ideas publishing. Nicholas Carr (2005) writes (somewhat ironically in his blog) that blogs have a tendency to be superficial, promote

echolalia, and reinforce cultural or political perspectives, rather than subjecting them to deconstruction and negotiation. But Carr's criticism is predominantly associated with what he describes as the 'Cult of the Amateur', where the economics of production and consumption are driven by collective (and amateur) control, rather than professional quality. Because anyone can publish his/her own blog, and for the most part, any reader can respond to a blog post, blogs certainly place power in the hands of the masses, and thus, the quality of contributions to debate and exchange cannot be assured. Nevertheless, the blogosphere and social software tools generally have also introduced a culture of scepticism, and empowered even amateur audiences in the theatre of critical debate. In particular, where blogs are being used as a supplement to, or channel for, professionally driven content creation, they are powerful tools in idea promulgation, exploration, and negotiation.

As such, blogs represent a peculiarly suitable channel for communicating ideas about flexible learning. Rather than replacing existing education techniques, flexible learning, which includes e-learning, as a concept '...is about the learner deciding what, where, when and how they learn' (Department of Education Science and Training 2006:7). Blogs are uniquely suited to users who wish to choose their own time for engagement with content, and they permit many styles of engagement beyond mere reading. Whilst commentary systems are the most prominent example of participation, there is also the phenomenon of cross-linkages, trackbacks, tagging and independent further exploration – literally a knowledge tree of idea generation. Thus blogs could well be regarded as the natural habitat and channel for flexible learning.

However, no exploration of the value of blogs as a vehicle for communication would be complete without an understanding of how the technology responds to the imperatives characteristic of an active digital culture. It is necessary to consider how the blog format contributes to an emerging trend among techno-savvy audiences: the rise of *play* as a means of generating meaning. While the concept of play may be embedded in educational theory, the role of play in planning, identity formation and process improvement has only recently found relevance in professional (business) contexts and management theory. As such, the impact of blogs in facilitating play is only now beginning to be acknowledged in literature, and in methods for disseminating knowledge generally.

In this article, the value of blogs is calculated in terms of the challenges that they pose to existing paradigms in the publishing sector, including the transformational notion of infinitely negotiable content creation. The power of play as a technique in generating meaning is explored with strong reference to the work of Kane (2004) in his *The Play Ethic: A Manifesto for a Different Way of Living*. The role of blogs in facilitating and activating negotiated content publishing is presented as an exemplar of that spirit of play.

## **Blogging (as) history, and blogging literature**

When Locke et al. developed *The Cluetrain Manifesto* in 2000, with the opening thesis that 'markets are conversations', it was a celebration of the interconnectedness of producers and consumers in the Network Society (Locke et al. 2000, Castells 2000). But whilst the potential of the technology permitted conversations to emerge, and the anecdotes told by technological optimists, such as Howard Rheingold in his *Virtual Community*, Nicholas Negroponte in his *Being Digital*, and Esther Dyson in her *Release 2.0: A Design for Living in the Digital Age*, all seemed to herald a revolution in communication systems, the true promise of the information society had yet to be fulfilled. Further, the market and business oriented aspects of technology development for the internet were occurring almost against the grain of social communications systems; while conversations were being held online in bulletin boards, chat and other precursors to social software systems, they were regarded

as remote from those technologies dealing with e-business, e-commerce and business management. But suddenly at the end of the last millennium, markets were finally beginning to accept that it was now not just technologically possible but actually *feasible* for one-to-many-to-one communications to support business and organisational functions (Hoffman and Novak 1996:50-68), and where the human dimension of ICTs was just beginning to emerge. As Carr (2005) has noted, Web 1.0 (circa 1994–1999) may have been built on the rhetoric of conversations, but in practice the often-promised dreams of a democratic and participatory technological Utopia were simply not realised. Interconnectivity had instead heralded the dawning of an age of information overload, where a new elite emerged among the hackers and true geeks of the Network Society; those who could navigate the networks to find the information they needed quickly and efficiently.

The practice that came to be known as weblogging or blogging quickly emerged as the tool of choice for that information elite. Through collaborative sharing and commenting on information sources discovered online, these information gardeners were able to weed out the useless or apocryphal sources and foster the development and popularity of reliable and interesting information sources. Sites such as Slashdot, Boing Boing and Metafilter emerged as primary sources for technological, political and popular culture resources for the digital elite. (See Useful Links herein for details.) Individual bloggers such as Howard Rheingold, Clay Shirky, Tim O'Reilly, Glenn Reynolds and Dan Gillmor grew in reputation as distinguished commentators on technological change, politics, and digital culture. The unique architectural and conversational characteristics of blogs were delivering a peer-oriented quality framework for content accessed online.

Simultaneously, the rise of blogging software such as Movable Type, Grey Matter and Word Press, and blog hosting services for the masses (notably LiveJournal and Blogger) emerged as vehicles for simplifying the publishing process of updating websites, automating archived posts and creating linkages and networks with friends and other bloggers. Whilst the primary critical focus for commentators on this new medium was on the publishing software itself, it was the other aspects of blogging – syndication, trackbacks, tagging, shared linkages and friendster-style networks that actually drove the popularity and perceived value of blogging among its advocates. Really Simple Syndication (RSS) allowed blogging users to aggregate their online content sources into readers, so that they could browse blog post titles and content for anything they may want to explore further without having to visit the website home page. Trackbacks allowed bloggers to see who was referring back to content sourced from a blog post. Tagging allowed bloggers and consumers of RSS feeds to set up mechanisms for aggregating knowledge about a specific idea, event, person, or product, and further refine their content exploration online. Collaborative linking systems such as del.icio.us allowed users to pool their resources on tagged entries and ideas, to expand the possible sources for information access. And finally friends' networks permitted the aggregation of content developed by known sources, and forged connections between unknown bloggers on the basis of their posts. Extremely quickly, the act of blogging, active commentary and all the other value additions embedded in blogging architecture collectively achieved the vision that Locke et al. (2000) had foreshadowed in *The Cluetrain Manifesto*. Markets became conversations almost overnight.

Of course, since this occurred, there has been growing scepticism about the value of blog-based sources as the number of blogs has grown and the activity in blogs has generally declined (Pew Internet and Lifestyle Research 2005). Shirky (2003) has noted that the longevity of the term 'blog' may well decay. Indeed, the time may well have passed wherein blogging technology has infiltrated so many forms of publishing, aggregation and syndication, that the significance of the word as an harbinger of a new form of communication has simply drained away. If so, the word 'blog' has become what Bruce

Sterling (2006) describes as a technological 'archaeologism' – a word which represents a concept that is at first revolutionary (and manifest as a neologism), but which over time is so widely adopted, or so adapted to a multiplicity of purposes, that its branding, initially calculated for early innovator adoption, has been made obsolescent in an era of critical mass appropriation. However, the importance of the technology in establishing ease and automation of electronic publishing, and in permitting a more evolutionary design of idea and argument negotiation has not been lost. The implicit value of negotiation and conflict transformation (as opposed to the more finite notion of conflict 'resolution') in sustaining audience interest and better meeting the needs of an active marketplace, is so obvious that the technological infrastructure supporting the practice is functionally irrelevant. Nevertheless, it is still useful to explore how blogging is differentiated from traditional publishing in current literature, because the technology itself is affecting consumer expectations of information sources and content available both online and offline. In consequence, it is also constructive to consider how the technology can be used as a powerful medium for scenario mapping and to examine how blogs can be utilised to support the exploration of what Kane (2004) and Sutton-Smith (1997) have described as 'adaptive potentialities', because the use of blogs as a means of playing with ideas is central to understanding the impact of the medium in fostering flexible learning.

Most scholarly literature pertaining to blogging is confined to the (often uneasy) relationship the phenomenon has with professional journalism, and the use of blogs as a means of providing a better educational experience (Gillmor 2004, Williams & Jacobs 2004, Mortensen & Walker 2002). The consideration of the role of blogs in supplementing existing publishing and educational formats tends to be lost amid concerns about blogs generating a kind of mass amateurisation of knowledge, as Carr (2005) and others have identified (Shirky 2002, Coates 2003). However there is a clear trend in current literature and professional practice towards (perhaps grudging) acceptance of the blog as an interactive space.

Blogs have been described by a number of commentators (Rowley 1997, Weinberger 2003, Gregg 2006) as agents that better accommodate the act of communication. Heidegger's (1954, published in English in 1976) notion of language as a medium for communication, rather than communication in itself, is cited as basis for arguing that traditional publishing systems are inadequate in generating meaning for audiences. Weinberger (2003) argues that when we use language, '...(w)e are ... turning towards the world together, letting the world reveal itself' (2003:para. 8). In transmitting language and in presenting ideas and knowledge, blogs are a more inclusive and participatory form of publication than traditional press and thus they are closer to genuine communication.

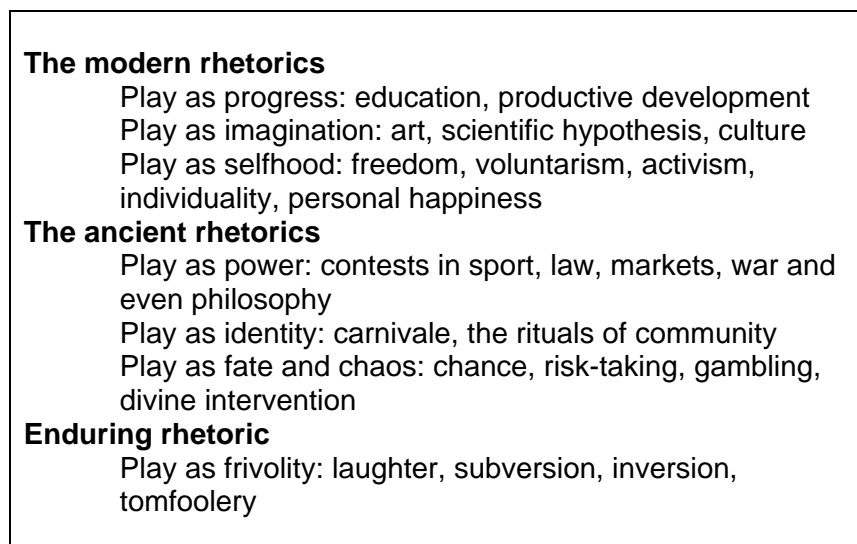
While such communication does involve a degree of vernacularisation of content creation, it does not necessarily follow that the conversational attributes of blogging imply mass amateurisation of publishing generally. Indeed, the very architecture and structure of the blog supports highly professional writing and corporate practices in addition to facilitating the act of communication. Mainstream media are citing copyright infringement and defamation as commonly held concerns about the phenomenon of blogging, but the *practice* of blogging does not tend to support these concerns. Indeed, the practice encourages cross-referencing of quoted works, critical discussions and the presentation of additional resources via hyperlinks. Blood (2002) argues that blogs therefore act as training for professional practice in writing, and in professional communication more generally (Blood 2002:90-92). Gillmor (2004) adds that the more 'professional' the blog (as indicated by association with a mainstream media institution, corporation or publishing house), the more likely it is to have influence over decision making, and the more likely it is to encourage participation and debate.

Finally, there is a strong sense in current information and communications technology literature that blogs have the power to affect individuals and group decision making. The notion of media ecology and transformative technologies was recently explored in Downes' *Interactive Realism*, where he argued that cyberspace is best understood as a new communicative environment using digital technologies to create new experience (2006:140). Downes is quick to censor those technologically utopian commentators who argue that the technology itself is the catalyst for change, but he admits that media ecology theory is useful in determining how technology can 'calibrate' perception. For the phenomenon of blogging, this is a particularly interesting thread in scholarly literature, because the application of media ecology theory to blogging can assist in ascertaining the *affective* qualities of the practice. If blogs are, as Gillmor (2004) posits, influencing decision making in organisational and business contexts, it is not unreasonable to suggest that those participating in the practice of blogging are also being influenced by each other. These affective qualities are crucial to understanding how blogs can be used to explore potential outcomes, to visualise ideas from alternative perspectives and to act as a competitive space for conflict transformation – in essence, to play.

## The power of play

Kane (2004) explores the concept of play as being different from, but complementary to, traditional and puritan Protestant conceptions of work. He argues that increased hours at work and increased emphasis on work as a serious and bureaucratic imperative, is concerning because it is failing to foster innovation and learning around the interests and concerns of an organisation's employees, placing such organisations at a competitive risk.

Kane (2004) builds on Sutton-Smith's (1997) *Seven Rhetorics of Play*, arguing that an active digital culture inherently supports playful acts as a means of generating and renegotiating meaning. These Seven Rhetorics become a coincidentally useful framework for identifying the class and intention of any blog implementation (Figure 1).



**Figure 1 A Framework for Identifying Class and Intention in Blog Implementation**  
(Jacobs 2006, adapted from Kane 2004:15)

Blogging fits Kane's (2004) definition of a playful activity because it involves infinite transformations and adaptations over time, in response to feedback from a viewing public. But there are also variations in the manner in which blogs are implemented, in terms of blogger-intention. For instance, *LiveJournal* is a hosted blogging forum designed to act as

a diary system for bloggers, also facilitating sharing of posts among a network of friends, as a stream of content. *LiveJournal* posts are more clearly play as selfhood, identity and frivolity than the other rhetorics. Conversely, political blogs such as *Instapundit* and *LeftIndependent*, would be more closely aligned with play as progress, imagination and power.

Kane's (2004) exploration of the Rhetorics is useful in articulating the value of play, as a means of realising human potential. A playful culture in business, in education, in politics and in communities is profoundly liberating, and it supports innovation, scientific exploration and artistic cultivation far more effectively than the drudgery implicit in an (obsolete) Protestant puritan work ethic. But one of the most important aspects of Kane's work is in his identification of the personalities and motivations of interactive netizens; those he describes as the 'soulitarians'. Rather than focusing on a narrowly digital elite, Kane suggests that these soulitarians shape their identities and influence others through their use of emergent technologies, but they also act in 'the real world' to engage in experiences through festivals, activism and participation in public debate. Kane argues these soulitarians are beginning to realise their collective power (2004:100), and are using tools such as blogs as a means of exerting their influence on communities, on companies and on innovation development.

Fundamentally, what we are seeing with blogging is an extension of what Toffler (1980) intended with the concept of a 'prosumer' – a consumer who actively customises his or her own content. Through RSS and blogging architecture, as well as the strange but important notion of lurking participation (non-active, yet not entirely passive engagement, demonstrated through trackbacks and linkages), there emerges not simply a prosumer, but what Bruns (2005) describes as a 'producer' – a dynamic producer of content, operating in collaboration with a number of other players, affectively and actively channelling information to new audiences. Kane's (2004) soulitarians are producers, but they are also something more; they are civic citizens of a distinctly networked culture, bestowing their intellectual experience and politico-emotional responses to ideas as a means of augmenting the value of shared knowledge, and influencing idea generation. The playful soulitarians who participate in ongoing debate and discussion are life-long learners as well as educators, keen to use the functional aspects of blogging and other social software tools to plan, to forge identities and to constantly innovate. Importantly, the soulitarians have differing concepts on social and technical realities, thus the push to use ICTs for purposes outside of traditional educational, organisational and strategic contexts has largely been driven by these visionary players.

Inevitably, the playful acts of the soulitarians are also the basis for immense change in producer expectations placed on published works. Again, this does not connote amateurisation of publishing. Instead, an evolving system of critical analysis emerges – something which should not be confused for amateurisation, merely because idea development is transparent, and even public. Simply, the soulitarians are drivers of a new publishing paradigm which augments the output of traditional publishing systems.

## **A new publishing paradigm and commercial opportunities in blogging**

News Corporation's Rupert Murdoch has admitted in several speeches over the past few years that he ought to have taken more notice of blogging and consumer demand for active publishing, and these admissions have been widely identified as the turning point in mainstream acceptance of the importance of blogging (Gibson 2006). However, it is important to note that Murdoch clearly does not intend that blogging should *replace* traditional publishing formats. Indeed, he has made it quite clear that changes in the way

mainstream media offer content to readers will undoubtedly extend the importance of media institutions to the masses. Thus the widespread adoption of blogging in journalism, and more generally across the publishing sector, is indicative of a new publishing paradigm based on value addition, rather than substitution of an existing content stream. Murdoch's point is that blogs and other social software applications are useful mechanisms to validate content expressed through 'traditional' channels (whether these are electronically mediated or not), and to drive new content creation.

Essentially, this new publishing paradigm is one which facilitates communication, learning and negotiation. And this is where the traditional publishing sector has commonly misconstrued the potential impact of blogs. The opportunities to be derived from the technologies have been hidden by more banal questions about mass amateurisation of content creation, and the perceived challenge that blogs pose to traditional journalism and published works.

The only explanation I have for the remarkably obtuse manner in which the subject has been so far addressed by the corporate sector, is that the opportunities of blogging must not have been expressed in the form of a business plan to decision makers. Regardless of the dynamism and mass free access to the technologies of blogging, it is still possible to generate substantive commercial and non-commercial returns from adoption of the practice of blogging in open and closed environments. Already in the publishing sector, several publishing houses have used blogs as a promotional channel to foster reader interest in fictional works (even going so far as to develop fictional *blogs*, as occurred with the Doubleday publication, *The Traveler*, by John Twelve Hawks), and there is increasing use of blogs in editing, trialling new writers and growing readerships for prominent authors (Jacobs 2006).

Even so, the commercial and non-commercial prospects to be derived from blogs are not limited to those adopted in the publishing sector. The most significant commercial opportunity for blogging rests in driving audience participation and customer loyalty. The inclusiveness of blogging means that the soulitarian audiences engaging in content delivered through blogging architecture feel more committed to the agency source of that content. The sense of ownership in content negotiated between the source and the blog audience is more palpable, measurable and *reciprocal* than standard consumer engagement models.

Additionally, organisations that implement blogs as a means of communicating with their consumers tend to be perceived as more trustworthy. Because blogs provider consumers with a free voice to respond to an organisation's outputs (whether these be tangible goods, services, information products or education), and because there is an implicit permission in blogging practices for consumers to freely discuss these outputs in their own blogs, there is a perception of transparency and active innovation that can promote competitive advantage. The conversational aspects of a blog-enabled consumer engagement model can effectively provide a channel for the kind of play that Kane advocates in his manifesto.

For the *Dallas Morning News* the blog format was implemented as a space for editors to raise new issues for possible further explanation of the printed edition, and as a transparent decision making mechanism to decide on publication of editorial opinion pieces. Since initial implementation, the print media product has rapidly expanded its blog offerings, finding new audiences for advertisers via the digital media content stream. The practice has led to a company-wide acceptance of almost infinitely negotiable content development.

At Renault in France, the Renault F1 Blog provides the company with an opportunity to reinforce the Renault brand but also to identify and market its association with Formula 1

racing, and to educate about the history, the technologies and processes associated with supporting the team. Augmenting their existing marketing offerings, the blog provides a real time response to issues associated with their F1 franchise, but also manifests as an enduring knowledge base for interested parties.

In the Netherlands, Accenture's suite of blogs allows its consultants to offer a taste of the advice that populates consultancy reports for businesses in the region in a generalised fashion. Regionally specific (and language specific) blog publishing of general interest advice is offered as a means of supporting the Netherlands economy, and for promoting and disseminating the research conducted by the organisation. Commentary systems allow readers to ask consultants questions about research, technology and process at Accenture, and the engagement model humanises the development of understanding both for the consultants, and for audiences of their blogs.

Beyond corporate and business education blogs, there are of course the many and varied iterations of blogs being used in educational contexts: as a supplement to on-campus teaching, as a value-added resource for pedagogues or as an engagement model for distance education and flexible learning systems. At the macro level, American public broadcaster PBS has recently launched *learning.now*, a facility for educators to keep in touch with emergent technologies and theories of education design. One of the more than 69,000 educational blogs presently available online (according to the blog search engine, Sphere), *learning.now* has been established as both a news resource and network space for education specialists, providing information about the best means of using blogs and considering the value of other social software such as wikis and podcasts in educational contexts. At a much more micro level, the uses of blogs for studies undertaken in the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program at Queensland University of Technology were chronicled by my colleague, Jeremy Williams, and I (Williams and Jacobs 2004), where a subject-oriented blog was provided to allow students to develop their writing and arguing techniques amongst peers, whilst also receiving outside input to their writing from national and international sources who happened upon their ideas. We concluded that use of blogs as a means of providing a public voice for students was both a powerful and positive force in students' educational experiences.

These are just a few examples of the range of corporate, educational and technical applications of blogs, all exhibiting the playful characteristics of idea negotiation, active participation and solicitation of care that Kane identifies as distinctly soulitarian, but they are also clearly commercial, allowing perception management and new income opportunities through advertising. Kane does caution that organisational adoption of social software technologies will require transparency of business practice. Treating the technology as a mere tool, and not as social network architecture will result in an occlusion experience. He argues that the value of social software such as blogs will dramatically deplete should an educator or an organisation choose to use it as a new channel for traditional advertising, because it will denigrate the value of conversations to mere public relations and corporate spin. However, where an organisation is prepared to allow its client base to drive content creation, there develops a more transparent and distinctly social architecture, and almost incidentally, commercial benefits can evolve from increased client loyalty and investment. As exemplars of a revolution in publishing, corporate, educational and technical iterations of blogging all demonstrate the validation techniques Rupert Murdoch identifies in his speeches on the impact of active publishing, and the clear commercial opportunities arising from a participatory communication strategy. (See Useful Links for details)

## Conclusion

*The Knowledge Tree's* adoption of blogging architecture should not be regarded as an alteration of its mission to enable '...the sharing of research and innovation in global e-learning practice' (Department of Education Science and Training 2006:5). Instead, it is an accommodating and facilitating decision, designed to engage its audience in an ongoing and organic conversation. For that reason, I have questioned my own subtitle in this section, as a conclusion to this article should only be presented as the beginning of debate and conversation, rather than an end. Nonetheless, there arises the question of how critical, and how rich and diverse the debate which follows this article can be, given the self-selection of the readership. I have been cynical enough to state in a prior article (Jacobs 2005) that the elective nature of social software tools, and the common lines of interest that characterise comments contributed to iterations of these applications do not represent formal spaces for negotiation and critical debate. However, in those articles, I referred primarily to the notion of social software tools being used as 'substitution arena' for political negotiation and problem solving. Again it is necessary to bear in mind the 'new paradigm' of augmented, and value added debate that can emerge when social software tools are applied to an existing environment. The value of contact and communication, idea generation and play can still provide an acutely critical dimension to a content stream. These emergent technologies may tend to produce communities of collective understanding and interpretation, but such an outcome is a substantial improvement on traditional publishing; an industry characterised by a hegemonic structure that rendered its audiences powerless to participate in an ongoing debate.

Rushkoff (2003) argues that contact is the driver of social currency, and that social applications and social software have value as facilitators for communication and learning. The evolving publishing format, he argues, enables informed participation and influence. Rushkoff regards himself as pro-consciousness, rather than pro-technology, but his vision is distinctly iconoclastic: rather than valuing published works in accordance with a traditional and structured hierarchy of content development, he considers the act of communication as having primacy over content. For Jacoby (2005), a utopian society is one which is based on iconoclasm, not on tradition, order and structure. While it may be dangerous to consider the transition to the blogging format of this e-journal as essentially utopian, it does herald a romantic and perhaps necessary vision for participation, communication and negotiated understanding. Moving away from the 'copy-ready' tradition of journal production to the more conversational style of the blog, there are now opportunities to engage in ongoing debate, learning through connections and negotiation strategies, rather than merely passively consuming broadcasted ideas.

With the rise in blogging architecture as the transmission mechanism for journals such as this, the empty-vessel strategy of knowledge transmission seems now officially dead. In its place, Kane's (2004) 'soulitarian' concept of learning through digital connections and engagements has emerged. Indeed, it appears an entirely appropriate reflection of the journal title – an organic force of knowledge sharing, and co-creation. In that light (perhaps even, that *enlightenment*), it seems appropriate to recommend playing with the concepts, the ideas and the learning strategies presented in articles, through commentary systems attached to each entry of this new publishing format. Enjoy, engage, but most importantly, *play*.

## Useful Links

Accenture's suite of blogs <http://blogs.accenture.nl/BlogPodium/blogs.php>

Boing Boing <http://www.boingboing.net/>

Dallas Morning News <http://www.dallasnews.com/>

learning.now <http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/learning.now/>

Metafilter <http://www.metafilter.net/>

Renault F1 Blog <http://blog.renaultf1.com/>

PBS Learning.Now Blog <http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/learning.now/>

Sphere Blog Search engine <http://www.sphere.com/>

Slashdot <http://www.slashdot.com/>

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