

News bulletin: January 2010

Hi everyone

Belated New Year greetings to all our members and friends. We hope that you all had a wonderful festive and restful break over Christmas and New Year with your loved ones.

If you were snowed in, hopefully you managed to enjoy the beautiful scenery and have some fun with the family!!!

All that seems rather a long time ago now - we've already had our first event of the year! On 20th January **SOL-UK**, in partnership with Triarchy Press who are SME members, organised an extremely successful Seminar and Workshop with Jemima Gibbons – see review below:



SOL-UK: EVENT REVIEW

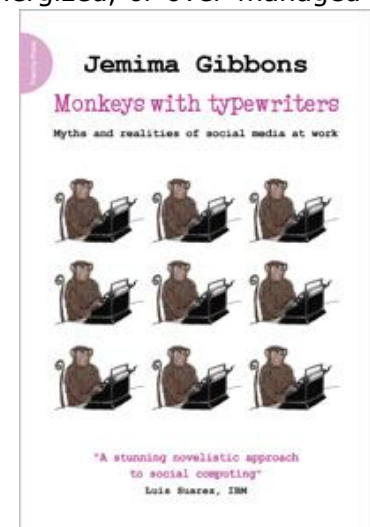
Jemima Gibbons: *"Monkeys with typewriters"*



When I did an MBA ten years ago, Peter Senge's "The Fifth Discipline" was a popular set text. It is probably that book, along with Arie de Geus' "The Living Company", that most inspired my interest in why organisations behave the way they do, and how they can either be designed and managed in a way that makes them vital and energized, or over-managed and over-designed to death.

It was a real pleasure to be invited to speak to members of **SOL-UK**, the UK chapter of the organisation that Senge himself set up in the late 1990s. For the past five years I've been conceiving, researching and writing a book that used Senge and de Geus' ideas as a starting point, and looked at their relevance in the light of social media and Web 2.0. The book, *Monkeys with Typewriters*, was published by Triarchy Press in December 2009.

I was looking forward to meeting a crowd of people who'd been equally excited by the ideas of Senge, de Geus and other champions of what is loosely termed distributed leadership – and who were equally interested in the significance of these ideas in relation to the latest manifestations of the Internet and World Wide Web.





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The seminar was at OneAlfred Place and lived up to its promise. The event was sold out, and the conference room packed to the nines, despite a couple of no-shows. We also had a virtual audience, thanks to the handful of attendees who were tweeting and blogging through the event – special thanks are due to Stephen Cribbett and David Wilcox for their comprehensive reports. We even had a tweet from Craig Newmark in San Francisco, just seconds after his leadership style was being discussed – and I'd been talking about what a good listener he was!

Robert Goodsell, **SOL-UK Steward**, and I originally structured the evening as a presentation followed by break-out discussions followed by feedback, but there were so many questions and points raised, almost from the outset, that we had very little time for any kind of break-out work at the end. Of course that didn't seem to matter.

This being the first time I'd presented ideas from the book, I was feeling my way a bit. I tried to keep the slides as simple as possible, consisting of an overview of six key behaviours I identified in my 12-18 months of dedicated research. These six behaviours (or attributes) are ones that seemed most present/obvious in both people's approaches to social media and in organisations which were embracing what we can term a 'Web 2.0' ethos, or approach to management. The six behaviours are: co-creation, passion, learning, openness, listening and generosity.

It was great to be in a room where people seemed to pick up on ideas eagerly and in a critical but constructive way. The audience was diverse in terms of technological knowhow – some people confessed to avoiding social networks like the plague, or simply coming along because they were curious about social media but had never used it at work, others were ICT careerists with backgrounds at companies like IBM and HP.

The chapter entitled "Co-creation" had started out as "Metanoia" (Peter Senge's term for the heightened state of creativity achieved by a group or team working together in a super-effective, efficient, intellectually-charged manner). When I mentioned that, after some research, I'd had to ditch that title as it turned out that Senge's interpretation of metanoia was rather different to the accepted definition, which has overly-religious connotations of salvation and repentance, it was good to see a couple of heads at the back nodding sagely.

Not surprisingly, it was the chapter on "Learning" that caused the most contention, with one attendee observing that the organisational adoption of social tools such as wikis, tagging and social bookmarking enabled not so much "learning" as simple communication – surely the term "learning" should be reserved for a deeper kind of understanding, one which involved some kind of significant psychological realisation, acknowledgement and development? Another attendee referred to Otto Scharmer's work around "presencing" as an illustration of such a process.

Of course, I firmly believe social media can help encourage learning on a deep level throughout organisations. However, adoption of these technologies is just one part of the process. It is only when these new digital tools are combined with a distributed approach to leadership, enlightened management and flexible structure that we will really make a breakthrough.

For further information, links herewith links to the reports:

Stephen Cribbett, dub I insightful interactions:

<http://www.dubstudios.com/co-creation/monkeys-with-typewriters/>

David Wilcox, Social Reporter:

<http://socialreporter.com/?p=708> and <http://socialreporter.com/?p=705>

Please contact ann@sol-uk.org

Team Academy in the UK Update

At the first meeting in December of the Team Academy special interest group it was agreed that we should put a proposition to the Stewards' Group that would involve the creation of a Limited Liability Partnership, of which **SOL-UK** would be a member. The purpose of such an LLP would be to create a vehicle that could take the initiative forward, negotiate a commercial relationship with Team Academy and Partus, the licence owner of many of the methods that TA employs, so that **SOL-UK's** not-for-profit and taxation status would not be compromised. It was also agreed that we should make contact with Team Academy and Partus and put our proposition to their directors and senior coaches to seek their agreement and support.



We are delighted to report that we have received an enthusiastic and encouraging response from Hanna Walden, Team Academy Senior Coach and Johannes Partanen, founder of Team Academy and a director of Partus in Finland. They propose to visit the UK in late February or March in order to discuss ways in which the relationship might develop, meet with members of **SOL-UK** and with the University of Surrey Step 1 team, which is piloting a Team Academy based programme this year at the university.



Johannes Partanen

On January 26th, the Stewards Group agreed to support the proposals and to move forward with the establishment of the LLP.

In the coming weeks we shall be setting up a steering group and a number of other groups with members and others to lead the discussions with Partus/Team Academy, explore sponsorship and other fund raising opportunities. If there are any members who are not already involved in this initiative and would like to join in and make a contribution (in energy and commitment rather than in cash), please contact Ann.

A separate development is the news that the Surrey Step 1 team has bid for and been granted funding to research other, possibly related enterprise initiatives in the South East from the Higher Education Entrepreneurship Group and SEEDA. Congratulations!

SOL-UK: New Member Profile

Stella Smith



I'm self-employed, having set up my own management and training consultancy three years ago. I specialise in translating the best of current thinking around leadership, business and management practice to make it relevant to the not for profit sector. In practical terms, this involves researching management theory, writing articles and guidance and practically working with senior staff in the not for profit sector. My current areas of interest are focused around knowledge, change, creativity and intuitive decision making.

My background is as an English teacher, initially working in Greece and then in rural China as a VSO volunteer. After a spell in sales and marketing, I transferred to the charity sector in the late 90s working in strategy and change, first for Centrepoint and then for RNIB. This sparked my interest in organisational theory, especially what helps or hinders the effectiveness of not for profits. Whilst working, I studied for an MBA with the Open University.

I have been a Trustee at VSO and at the Greenleaf Centre for Servant-Leadership and have been tutoring for the Open University Business School. I am currently studying for an MSc in Mindfulness Based Approaches at Bangor University.

I live in north London, and when I'm not absorbed in books on creativity and management, I enjoy travelling, music, literature, theatre and walking in the Scottish countryside.

I first came to hear about **SOL** after reading 'Presence' by Peter Senge et al and joined for the opportunity to be involved in debate, challenge, ideas and discussions around management, leadership and making organisations work for people. I hope to be able to assist in the research projects that **SOL-UK** is currently undertaking. I noted research exploring how to support systemic thinking among professional public leaders in the November bulletin and some great topics coming forward for 2010, around professionalism and trust - all sounds fascinating!

Talent/Skills Request

SOL-UK is a voluntary, not for profit organisation and relies on proactive participation of its members. We are currently looking for someone with marketing skills to raise the profile of **SOL-UK** to a wider audience. If you have talent/experience in this area and

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have some time to give, please contact Ann. Your contribution would be much appreciated and will benefit the whole of the **SOL-UK** community.

2010: Looking Ahead

As mentioned in the December newsletter, we have lots of exciting ideas for our members in 2010, including:

- **Professionalism**
- **Why trust matters**
- **The Importance of story/narrative in organisational learning**
- **The future for Generation "Y"**
- **Myth/Scenario**
- **Responses to the unexpected**
- **Complexity**

The Stewards' Group will be developing these themes to bring a range of events and research projects to members

As an interim measure Robert Goodsell (robert.goodsell@pulsebrands.com) has offered to act as the focal point for developing our seminar programme. If any of you have suggestions for topics please contact him direct.

We are hoping to organise an **SOL-UK/Team Academy** event in February/March, to coincide with Hanna Walden, Team Academy Senior Coach and Johannes Partanen visit from Finland (mentioned in the Team Academy update above) we don't yet have dates and will advise as soon as possible re this.

We would also like to mention 2 SoL events with Peter Senge that are coming up soon (though not in the UK). They are:

[Foundations for Leadership March 9-11, 2010 with Peter Senge and Robert Hanig, Bedford, MA](#)

[Leading and Learning for Sustainability Workshop: April 27-29, 2010 with Peter Senge and Alain Gauthier, Paris, FRANCE](#)

Please contact Frank Schneider at 1-617-300-9535 or [by email](#) if you need help with registration, have questions or would like to know more about the value these programs offer.

We look forward to seeing you all and many new members and friends in 2010.

Best wishes

Please contact ann@sol-uk.org



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Ann and the SOL-UK Stewards

If you are not a member and would like information on membership, please email ann@sol-uk.org

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