What is Social Alternatives?
Social Alternatives is an independent, quarterly, multi-disciplinary, refereed journal. It analyses, critiques, and reviews contemporary social, cultural, economic, and ecological developments to determine their implications at local, national, and global levels. Because we value artistic endeavour, we publish short stories and poetry.

Why do we produce Social Alternatives?
Acknowledging the intrinsic worth of all human beings, Social Alternatives is committed to the principles of equity, democracy and social justice. It opposes injustice and oppression.

What issues does it deal with?
Each issue typically focuses on some particular matter of current concern or public debate. Past issues include matters such as peace and conflict, social welfare, sexism, social movements, the media, racism, Indigenous rights, social justice, inequality, mental health, crime and the law, and the environment. We also publish important articles outside of the theme for each issue.

Do you want to write for Social Alternatives?
We welcome practical and theoretical articles on relevant topics, as well as reviews, short stories, poems, graphics, comment, and critique.

Articles
Articles should be between 1500 and 3000 words, accompanied by a list of key words and an abstract no longer than 200 words. Articles are submitted to blind refereeing by at least two referees. We use the Harvard referencing system approximately as practised in the Australian Journal of Political Science (guidelines are provided on our website - www.socialalternatives.com). Submit articles electronically in Word format to the Co-ordinating Editor’s email address listed above.

Articles should be in 12 point Times New Roman, double spaced. Diagrams, figures and artwork should be submitted in MS WORD compatible formats.

Poetry, Short Stories & Graphics
We encourage short stories, poetry and artwork. However, we are unable to pay contributors, but provide offprints. If you wish to submit poetry (up to 25 lines) or short stories, these should be sent by post or electronic mail to the relevant editor.

What is an Editorial Collective?
Because we make decisions democratically, Social Alternatives is managed by an editorial collective while a co-ordinating editor takes responsibility for managing the process. After contributions are blind refereed, the collective has final control over what is published. Thus, the editorial collective is a distinct entity from the advisory board (which assists in refereeing).
## CONTENTS

### THEME FOR THIS ISSUE: The Value of Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Editorial: The Value of Techniques</td>
<td>Brian Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Weeks of Work that Make the Day: Looking at all the activities in activism</td>
<td>Sharon Callaghan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Designing a Public Conversation using the World Café Method</td>
<td>Lyn Carson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Jabiluka Revisited: Negotiating needs</td>
<td>Ian Miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Going Online for Social Change: Techniques, barriers and possibilities for community groups</td>
<td>Colin Salter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The Practice and Politics of Leaking</td>
<td>Kathryn Flynn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The Nitty Gritty of Creating Alternative Economies</td>
<td>J.K. Gibson-Graham and Gerda Roelvink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Sustainable and Resilient Social Structures for Change: The Organic Movement</td>
<td>Andrew Monk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>How Scientists Can Protect and Restore Their Reputations</td>
<td>Sandrine A. Thérèse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Showcases Gallery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Patterns in Nature at Murdering Creek</td>
<td>Debra Livingston</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### General Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>An ‘Independent’ Political Economy for Australia? Reflections on Unorthodox Political Possibilities</td>
<td>Geoff Dow and Howard Guille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Men and Feminism: Some challenges and a partial response</td>
<td>Jonathan Crowe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Short Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Wearing the World</td>
<td>Dominique Hecq</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Book Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>The Humanising of History: Kate Howarth's <em>Ten Hail Marys</em></td>
<td>Clare Archer-Lean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Poetry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Guest Editor for Poetry</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>From Derrida to Sara Lee</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Blind Worm ad Greedy Time's Decay</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Taming the Wilderness</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Bone Flute</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Plow a Straight Furrow</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Resurrection</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>The People You Leave Behind</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Butterflies</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Somewhere South of Eden</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Lazarus Exposed</td>
<td>John Knight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Techniques are ways of doing things. There are techniques involved in organising a rally, designing a building and washing the dishes.

In promoting social alternatives, the usual focus is on problems, solutions, policies, visions and strategies — with little attention to techniques. The focus is on what to do, with how to do it being a matter of routine detail. However, techniques shouldn't be neglected. They are an integral part of the alternative being pursued.

Consider the question of how to oppose oppression and repression. Activists following the tradition of Gandhi have long argued that actions should reflect the goals, so if the goal is a peaceful society, then violence should be avoided in trying to achieve it. In other words, the means should be compatible with the ends or, in a tighter relationship, the means should embody the ends. How something is done, namely the techniques used, should be based on the same principles as the goals being pursued.

Techniques are everywhere and need to be part of the alternative. This applies to the language of opposing repression, the way meetings are organised, the way activists relate to each other and many other areas.

Scholars have neglected the study of techniques. It is far more prestigious to investigate social structures, to study why things are the way they are. Studying theory is the way scholars distinguish themselves from practitioners, who usually know far more about how to do things. Furthermore, scholars usually look at things from the outside, as observers looking in, rather than from the point of view of a practitioner trying to get things done. For example, there is a lot of research on social movements, but not much of it is useful to activists. Quite a bit of the research looks at what happens to movements and why; very little of it looks at the strategic choices facing movements and how they can more effectively achieve their ends.

Practitioners also at times have neglected the examination of techniques. Those who become adept at doing things often do so at an intuitive level: their practical knowledge is tacit rather than explicit. This may be because practical knowledge is not valued as much as knowledge about issues. Being able to articulate why something is worthwhile is a more common conversation topic than how to do it.

Activists in social movements have a wealth of practical skills in organising events and interacting with people, but these skills are seldom the focus of attention. Instead, activists are more likely to talk about issues and personalities. Those with most experience in thinking strategically are likely to talk more about strategy than about the practicalities of carrying it out. The doing may be taken for granted.

The articles in this themed section are about techniques for social change, covering diverse topics.

- Sharon Callaghan on behind-the-scenes work in activism
- Lyn Carson on running a World Café
- Ian Miles on negotiating needs in activism
- Colin Salter on selecting and using cybertechniques
- Kathryn Flynn on leaking of information
- J K Gibson-Graham and Gerda Roelvink on using diverse economy framing
- Andrew Monk on promoting organic standards
- Sandrine Thérèse on dissident scientists maintaining their reputations

How to do something is often best learned by doing it. The next best option is seeing it done. However, in Social Alternatives we're restricted to text, so conveying how something is done is assisted by practical examples. I asked the contributors to illustrate the use of techniques using an extended case study. Readers are then able to generalise for themselves about using the techniques for other sorts of situations, including ones the authors never thought of.

These articles show the value of looking at techniques. Looking closely at how to do things inevitably raises questions about the articulation of methods and goals, the
old question of means and ends. I hope these explorations will encourage others to give more attention to the how of social alternatives.

**The editing process**
I sent prospective authors a standard framework for structuring articles in this themed section. Authors sent their initial drafts to me and I offered comments. After making revisions based on my comments, authors sent their papers to other contributors for comment. After further revisions based on feedback received, they sent their revised articles to me. I sent the entire group of articles to two external reviewers, Jørgen Johansen and Liam Phelan, who each offered numerous constructive comments on each article and on the collection as a whole. After making changes in response to the referees’ comments, authors again sent their articles to me, and I went through them a final time, attending to all sorts of details.

I thank the reviewers Jørgen Johansen and Liam Phelan for being so prompt and helpful and each of the authors for persevering through a long journey.

**Author**
Brian Martin is professor of social sciences at the University of Wollongong and author of many books and articles on dissent, nonviolence, scientific controversies, democracy and other topics.

---

**Guest Editor for Poetry**

**JOHN KNIGHT**

John Knight is founder and manager of *Post Pressed* ([www.postpressed.com.au](http://www.postpressed.com.au)), an indie publisher of academic books, verse and fine arts since 1995. An accomplished and internationally recognised haijin, he is a foundation editor of *Paper Wasp, an Australian journal of haiku*. He also served as poetry editor of *Scope* and *Social Alternatives* for a number of years. His published verse includes *Wattle Winds: an Australian haiku sequence* (Paper Wasp, 1993), *From Derrida to Sara Lee* (Metro Arts, 1994), *Excerpts from the Jerusalem Archives* (Sweetwater Press, 1997), *big man catching a small wave* (Post Pressed, 2006) and *Letters from the Asylum* (Sudden Valley Press, 2009). In a previous life he was an Associate Professor in The School of Education, The University of Queensland, with a particular interest in policy studies and social and literary theory. Retreaded after his retirement, he has worked in a mentoring relationship with doctoral students at QUT and elsewhere. Now 75, he is still writing verse and the occasional academic paper.

---

**From Derrida to Sara Lee**

in the courtyard
mARIanne dissects derrida

beneath her chair
rosie the dog licks the plate clean
and the baby is not talking

behind us coffee
and what’s left of the croissants

the poem is a pain in my chest
and the playing fountain
hides five golden fish

outside a philodendrum is
climbing the mango
and round the porch
some violets grow

**Blind Worm and Greedy Time’s Decay**

[1979 Oliver William Knight]

I scraped the stubborn blade
across my father’s face
at his request. My sister’s hair
fell on his chest. My mother
held his hand and willed him life.
‘I want to wee,’ he whispered half-asleep.

[1993 Blanche Marybelle Thirza Knight]

Blind worm and greedy time’s decay
may waste that shrivelled womb and foul
the withered breast. Where I once sucked,
and on the arm that cradled me
vile cankers spread. But the raven hair
you shook out for his pleasuring
endures, and the plain ring on your finger.
The Weeks of Work that Make the Day: Looking at all the activities in activism

SHARON CALLAGHAN

What you see is often not the full story. Public and up-front work is generally propped up and shaped by a myriad of behind-the-scenes (bts) activities. These activities are likely to have taken considerably more time than the final acknowledged, public activity. By focusing on bts tasks in activism we can identify the extent of work done and explore how to include more people in both bts and front line work. Comparatively, the preparation, facilitation and wrapping up of work associated with this kind of common public event is substantially greater than the public event itself. There is real long-term value in revealing the skill-sharing, solidarity and bts efforts that create and inspire efforts for social change.

Introduction

Here is a summary of a typical public political event.

The rally had around 500 attendees supporting the rights of people to seek asylum in Australia after fleeing their homelands. There were a series of speakers and performers, professional looking banners, many large visual props depicting the faces of men, women and children behind razor wire, handouts circulating, proposals for future action and media covering the event.

But what about the work involved in organising the rally and making sure it ran smoothly? These activities were behind-the-scenes (bts): they were invisible to most of those attending.

In this article, I look at the bts activities involved with activism, broadly defined to encompass social justice work in a paid or voluntary capacity. I have adopted the term behind-the-scenes — and the abbreviation bts — to emphasise how hidden the bulk of work is compared to the front view. A fundraising concert with two performers on stage may involve eight people working off-stage and ten people working for several weeks leading up to the hour-long performance. Bts work encompasses all the support tasks, preparation, planning, networking and negotiating, evaluation, documentation, administration, monitoring and facilitation work that underpins visible public activities.

Knowing what is going on behind the scenes to any undertaking is as useful as seeing the up front action. It gives the whole story and helps us account for the true effort involved in an event.

The hype around a publication, a campaign, a public gathering or any activism often overshadows the sturdy underpinnings that made the finale successful. Acknowledging and emphasising the importance of hidden work could make it more attractive. It is possible that despite revealing the great extent of the bts work – by showing how to share and develop skills and learn shortcuts and practical tips – participants are inspired rather than deterred by the quantity of work.

One of the first important questions activists ask is ‘what do we want to achieve?’ Looking at the bts work reveals what really makes the ‘star’ attractions, slick final products or one-off bursts of activity. It can show us the valuable resources we already have and what more we need to complete the work.

By mapping out what is involved with bts activity, we see that when the action seems to end there is often much more to do. There is important mopping up work – including documentation, evaluation, celebration and appreciation – to be done to ensure the successful activities can be replicated or resurrected in some other form.

Finally, a practice of looking bts may sharpen our ability to question the front line action and look deeper for the whole story. For activists the value of a more critical look behind the main action can reveal the urgent and ongoing need for our work as feminists, peace activists and progressive campaigners. It is useful to note whether bts workloads and practices are fair, inclusive and empowering and match our aims.

The following case study outlines the bts work of 1991
and 1992 fundraisers for a health project and artisan cooperative in Guatemala. The US backed repressive regime in Guatemala was responsible for over 200,000 civilian deaths, tens of thousands disappeared and thousands of displaced peoples, mostly Indigenous Guatemalans. In a small way the fundraising project sought to assist some of the displaced people and bring the little known story of Guatemala to the foreground in our Australian community.

I selected this case study because it was well documented at the time and required six weeks of work prior to the successful one-day public event. The bts tasks comprised a multitude of discrete activities before and after the event. A table follows the case study with point-form detail on the specific tasks.

Swimming for Guatemala (SFG)
The photos of the SFG showed what people saw on the day of the Swim. There was media, colourful t-shirts, welcoming people, chatting, laughter, photographers, swimmers, stalls, food and a hub of activity in every inch of the university pool.

This doesn’t tell the full story of what was going on behind-the-scenes: surveys being filled out for future planning, briefing of the media, directing and redirecting of swimmers to their lanes, accounting the money, and answering constant questions covering everything from Guatemala and fundraising to how to order a pair of swimmers or buy a t-shirt. The photos didn’t pick up my stress-induced hives getting redder as the day went on. I suspect everyone on the organising group had their own stress reactions.

To anticipate any problems, we workedshopped every role and aspect of the SFG the night before. A thorough two-hour group discussion before the SFG translated to a smooth two-minute exchange on the day. Our organising processes reflected our commitment to self-management and empowerment as outlined in the fundraising project proposal. Swimmers and supporters wouldn’t have known that we met almost daily for six weeks and talked through all decisions. All this work was invisible to outsiders.

Looking even further behind the scenes reveals how our fundraising collective came to exist. My long interest in Central and South American progressive political campaigns finally inspired me to visit Guatemala in 1990. It was the news story of the US Ambassador to Guatemala Thomas Stroock providing funds for another orphanage that sent me reeling. I wanted to know why he wasn’t asking ‘Why would Guatemala need more orphanages? What happened to all the parents?’

Of course everyone knew the answer: military and death squads of the US-backed regime were killing ‘leftists’, ‘activists’ and anyone perceived as a threat. In the daily newspapers it was common for dozens of bodies to be found or kidnappings reported in the same manner as a car accident or any other piece of standard city news.

I had not long returned from Central America and Guatemala was the place that had shown the worst that human nature can offer and the side of humanity that cannot fail to deeply inspire. I recounted my stories from Guatemala with friends, many of whom had also been involved with Central and South American solidarity activities. One friend, Lucia, and I were having swimming lessons with fitness in mind and relaxation an imperative given our hectic jobs as community workers. ‘We will have to combine the fundraiser with swimming so we stay healthy while we organise it,’ she decisively threw into our conversation.

The Swim for Guatemala was devised. It would raise funds for two projects. One was an artisans cooperative for Indigenous Guatemalans who were forced out of their communities by the scorched earth policies. The other was a health clinic for displaced Guatemalans.

We did some urgent planning to assess how much time we had available in an average week. Very little was the answer but we decided to go ahead. Then we went swimming as neither of us could comfortably do more than a few laps.

We wrote down the key aims of our fundraiser, now officially called the Swim For Guatemala (SFG), and what we wanted to achieve. We wanted to involve non-activists in this international social justice campaign and raise broad public awareness. We wanted to use a ‘non-political’ activity like swimming to bring people together for a political fundraiser. We particularly wanted different networks — of activists and others — to work together to broaden awareness and share resources. Most of our life’s routines went by the way for six weeks as we did little other than plan/speak/organise and swim for Guatemala.

The really important thing that happened next was that we linked up with Community Aid Abroad (CAA) and the Committee in Solidarity with Latin America and the Caribbean (CISLAC) as they both had fund-raising projects in the region. I had worked with many others in Wollongong on earlier CISLAC projects.

CAA had a good national reputation, other projects in this region and access to resources we didn’t, including knowledge on how to run large fundraising events. They had printing and mail-out resources and advertising expertise. We had local networks, good planning and
facilitating skills and clear ideas on what we were trying to achieve. We had members with first hand knowledge of the political situation in Guatemala and extensive links with activists interested in contributing to such a social justice project.

One SFG supporter commented, ‘Goodness, I have reconnected with nearly all my old friends and made many new ones, got fitter and bought a SFG swim suit, all over the last few weeks.’

Who was involved?
We were a loose-knit working group of friends, local activists and community workers who had worked together in different contexts. We had a maximum of around 13 local activists, with five in the core group. We met almost daily (nightly, often till very late at night). We drew up lists, checked and rechecked lists, and mapped out what had to happen over the six-week period leading up to the Swim. The work was divvied up between those who felt comfortable with doing the tasks.

When other friends and community members offered to help, we informally chatted about what they could offer in time and skills. They went away with set tasks and came and went reporting back as they completed their jobs. They set their own tasks according to their specialist skills and the time they could donate. Yet others did tasks such as design and make swimming costumes, attend badge-making working bees, sell badges and distribute flyers about the Swim.

Tight time frame, intensive workload and staying on track
The time frame constantly scared us as each day swept past in a flurry of activity. The six weeks preparation time was quickly evaporating. The hundreds of letters seeking donations and sponsorship, thanking people, publicising the swim, writing background papers on Guatemala and why we were undertaking the project, distributing information on the streets, finding swimmers and scheduling their pool time, liaising with the media and ‘sporting celebrities’, all took time.

While every minute seemed precious for getting tasks done, we had pizzas and laughed as we stamped and numbered, folded and filed. We talked endlessly about each step, who was doing what, how it was going, what was going wrong, how could we fix it. We sometimes laughed until we cried which was cathartic and I suspect a coping strategy learned through many feminist and other political struggles.

In reality it was the endless lists, check lists and ‘job descriptions’ that really helped manage the workload. The written lists and job descriptions of what needed to be done helped people stay on track, see what still needed to be done and gave a sense of achievement and moving along.

The generosity of some local politicians, unions and community organisations saved the day by providing administrative help, space to work in and support for workers who were immersed in the SFG preparations

How can such a big project work with volunteers?
Our networks were long standing so we knew what skills people brought to the group and we trusted their ability to follow through with their tasks. The core group ensured continuity.

The flexibility of the working group allowed people to self identify their strengths, abilities and availability. The core group matched up people and tasks and filled gaps as necessary.

Every ‘meeting’ of the SFG was a working bee occasion with the ‘talking’ and ‘doing’ happening at the same time. The SFG working group was informal yet had structure and clear documented expectations and tips on how to fulfil commitments within the short time frame.

The strong sense of ownership came with the transparent way everyone saw how their efforts contributed to the broader project and watched as each aspect fell into place. We were all in this together and often laughed at our mounting hysteria as the SFG day loomed. An SFG group member commented:

We owned every aspect of the SFG, looking after each other, completing tasks well, checking and rechecking in with each other, we carefully assisted our co organisers with their jobs, we shared the creative and fun tasks and all the tedious jobs that had to be done.

How did you make decisions?
There was no ‘formal’ discussion about how we would make decisions. The five core organisers would regularly throw forward ideas for discussion and we would think through the pros and cons and decide as a group. The decision was then allocated to an action list.

The table lists the key activities within broad categories that allowed the SFG work to progress each day. The high volume of hidden work revealed in the table may reflect how the bts tasks of activist work generally are proportionally greater than the visible public work.

Swim for Guatemala behind-the-scenes actions/skills
### Planning
- Map out time and resources available against an estimated workload to complete an activity
- Do an informal ‘skills audit’ to see what work group members feel comfortable doing
- Itemise resources needed
- Involve as many people as possible in the initial planning
- Make all tasks and responsibilities transparent so everyone involved is aware of who has accepted what responsibilities
- Identify gaps in resources

### Administration
- List all administrative tasks
- Prioritise them with a realistic timeframe
- Aim to fill the identified gaps in resources by seeking funds, submission writing and sponsorship early in the project
- Discuss reporting back processes to make sure everyone understands the groups agreed processes

### Group Communication (Internal)
- Five core members of the group were part of all communication to ensure continuity and to document progress
- The core group could make quick decisions and delegate tasks
- ‘Talking and doing’ working bees meant most dilemmas and issues were worked through thoroughly
- Meetings remained informal with no minutes; instead, lists and ongoing documentation of the fundraiser were the only records
- Timetabling swimmers remained with the core group for ongoing monitoring
- Despite the hectic pace of each SFG gathering, there was lots of room for levity

### Public Communication (External)
- The core group had most responsibility for liaising with the media and public speaking with groups like Rotary and schools
- Detailed printed background materials assisted members to promote the SFG
- Experience and repetition made this easier for key members and they took more responsibility for media
- We used the skills of the community workers — who had undertaken significant media work in their paid positions — to promote the SFG publicly
- We were very persistent in following up media links and made ourselves available for any possible opportunities to get the word out
- The ongoing discussions in working bees meant we could share information we learned about how the media operated and how we could gain their support for the SFG
- To build on the benefits that come from ‘word-of-mouth’ information sharing, we promoted the SFG at union meetings, at Politics in the Pub, book launches and on the ‘peace trains’ of activists travelling to rallies in Sydney protesting against the first Gulf War

### Finances
- Bank accounts were opened, receipt books kept, tax deductibility explored, records maintained, a treasurer nominated, CAA credit card facilities used and a PO Box all put in place to ensure maximum accountability

### Documentation
- A detailed letter outlining the SFG included information on the sponsoring organisations and how the Wollongong community could get involved
- Core members wanted to replicate the SFG so documented what we learned along the way, created templates and precedents and noted problems and possible solutions for the future
- We kept a diary
- Essential tasks had a ‘job description’ and jobs were rotated throughout the day on a roster system
- Form letters, fundraising books with instructions, promotional materials, posters, flyers, vouchers, media clippings, questionnaire and results, photographs were maintained

### The bigger picture
My goal in looking behind the scenes is to see the whole activist picture. By seeing all the work that makes up an activity we form a better understanding of how to include more people in more productive activism work even when the workload seems overwhelming.

Looking behind the main action seeks to redefine what is valuable work and note the interlinking of various activities to form a successful and useful whole. Consciously noting how some people in the SFG did bts or front-line work or both assists us think about what it takes to do the different roles. Looking bts shows us how gender imbalances in roles and lack of acknowledgement continue to undermine our collective successes.

The majority of the SFG workers were women with a long history in the female dominated welfare industry. Our work skills and experience were then and continue to be poorly paid relative to similar sectors. We could easily apply our community work organising expertise to a passionately held political campaign where our efforts were greatly valued. Our paid and unpaid activist experience allowed us to garner support from an extensive network of like-minded men and women supporters.

Looking at bts work shows us how conscientious activists can be overlooked and at risk of burnout while everyone notes the public performance. Acknowledging, sharing and monitoring bts work is essential to the wellbeing of activist working groups.

The SFG emphasis on how we approached the massive workload was to incorporate fun, meals and ‘story telling’
as an antidote to exhaustion. Sharing the work in a friendly group setting made tedious tasks manageable. Sharing and developing skills and the solidarity of being part of an exciting public project helped counter burnout.

If looking at BTS becomes more embedded in our activism practice, the first comment on a successful campaign will not be, ‘great action’ but ‘how did you make such a great action?’ Hopefully people will want to know what happened to BTS to make the public activity successful.

Revealing the value of BTS work reminds us that public speakers often have speech writers, technicians maintain and direct the spotlight on the main performance and a successful political campaign was the result of the efforts of many people out of public view working hard over a long time. There will be days or even months of BTS activities to prepare for and support a brief public event. The learning from that hidden activity lasts a lifetime.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank Jørgen Johansen, Liam Phelan, Kathryn Flynn and Ian Miles for helpful comments.

References

Author
Sharon Callaghan is a community worker and social activist who writes on topics that reflect social and political issues within the community.

Taming the Wilderness

To hold the future in the palm of your hand and see profit: this is a peculiar talent. Beaches should of course be mined if not for rutile then for silica. Bulldoze frontal dunes for high-rise residential areas, strip shows and casinos after which tourists shall be encouraged. Hills blast blue metal quarries, open cut coal, bauxite, yellowcake makes spectacular scars on an otherwise boring environment and one tree’s as good as another, anyrate, Creeks are for cheaper effluent disposal, rivers should be dammed. Think BIG, you can always find a reason. Coastal swamp or quiet mangrove sheltered bay for bluewater access, dredge, landfill, elevate, boats, canals, jetties, pergolas, backyard pools, it’s just bush anyway. Honeyeaters have no economic value, who needs beauty anyway? The trees conveniently pulp for glossy brochures so the people who come to see them will know what they missed. Each beachcomber island’s palms, waterfront bungalows, shops, villas, plastic lagoons, packed, no vacancy and more and more tourists come half the world for what they left behind. Coral, clams, fish, birds, seastars, turtles, solitude remain accessible. There’s always somewhere they can go and it’ll all grow back in a hundred years anyway. Won’t it?

John Knight,
Mt. Gravatt, QLD
Designing a Public Conversation Using the World Café Method

LYN CARSON

Leaders talk about holding large-scale public conversations, but they won’t succeed if the methods are unsatisfying for participants, if an authentic conversation occurs at all. In this paper, I present the World Café method, a viable way of involving large numbers of people in a meaningful, conversational exchange. I describe how a particular World Café event was designed, and then explore the value of the World Café method as a means to achieve social change.

Introduction

Increasingly, we hear political and economic leaders talk about having a ‘conversation’ with stakeholders, or shareholders and the large communities that they serve. In practice, the talk usually goes in one direction. Opinion polls, focus groups and stage-managed public consultations do not afford citizens much decisive influence.

More and more governments and non-governments organisations (NGOs) with a genuine desire for democratic public engagement are convening public meetings. However, even with the best of intentions, the default ‘town hall’ forum usually degenerates into an angry tussle between polarised groups committed to winning their arguments at the expense of others. This occurs because most people are grouped with friends, family, colleagues or neighbours who are like-minded in their values and beliefs, which in their local conversations they reinforce and defend. The adversarial question-answer format is inevitably dominated by familiar participants, typically those who are incensed and articulate, with comparers raising the temperature with provocative rather than conciliatory comments.

So how can we have a large-scale conversation that draws on the rich diversity of public opinion? If the public are to be engaged constructively, they too need to be exposed to that broad range of perspectives, and appreciate them with respect. This ‘appreciative’ approach lies at the heart of new thinking in the structured design of influential public conversations.

World Café, an Exploration in Happiness

This paper describes a dialogic method called The World Café (W/Café), first trialled experimentally in 1995 by Juanita Brown and Chris Isaacs. The ‘café’ metaphor describes the informal seating at multiple small tables to encourage conversation. ‘The world’ symbolises how the format is scaled up to include dozens, even hundreds of people at a time. There is also hope that W/Café will gain global popularity as an accepted method to publicly address social and political issues.

I have designed and facilitated many W/Café events over the past decade around important issues like climate policy and regulatory frameworks. Rather than get caught up in the intricacies of such topics, in this paper I describe a light-hearted event that I was commissioned to design for the Sydney Festival in early 2010. The W/Café was designed to explore the meaning of happiness, which was the theme of the festival (hereafter called the Happiness Café). The originators of the W/Café format encourage us to ‘explore questions that matter’: the pursuit of happiness certainly satisfies that criterion.

While there are features that are the same for all W/Cafés, there is flexibility to adapt the format to the occasion. Usually I design the process and then facilitate or co-facilitate it from the stage. Drawing from colleagues and associates, we assembled a small team of volunteers to help run the event. Larger events require event management and a detailed running sheet. During each event challenges arise that provide opportunities to learn and to modify and improve my skills. The originators of the W/Café format describe a sequence of seven design principles (used as headings below) that still guide my design process, although perhaps less prescriptively now that I have gained confidence and experience.

1. Set the context: clarify the purpose and broad parameters within which the dialogue will unfold

For most W/Cafés, it is the designer/facilitator who directs all the initial work to create compelling invitations and promotion to gain a diversity of participants, often with little funding support. In the case of the Happiness Café, attracting participants was easy because the festival
organisers led the promotion. Unusually, the participants had to buy a ticket to attend, so it had to be an especially entertaining and rewarding event. Thankfully, the W/Café format rarely disappoints as people come ready to talk! Over two hundred people including several dignitaries participated. Their conversation was the performance.

Everyone knew why they were attending, but I had to help them focus their attention on having meaningful conversations. For most W/Cafés, participants are presumed to already have all the knowledge and lived experience to start and sustain conversations that stay on topic. In this case, with such a wide remit as ‘the pursuit of happiness’, I included a panel discussion at the beginning. The panel included an eminent academic and former politician as chairperson, a philosopher, a performance artist and a Buddhist monk, seated on comfortable couches on the stage. The panel demonstrated and modelled a civil conversation and presented different ways of thinking about happiness. Their discussion was entertaining and inspiring.

2. Create a hospitable space: assure the welcoming environment and psychological safety that nurtures personal comfort and mutual respect

The event was held at the University of Sydney, where I was on faculty, and which co-sponsored the festival. To gain the widest possible audience, the W/Café was scheduled on a Sunday evening. We used the university’s vast, elegant and historic Great Hall, which we filled with small cafe tables, each with six to eight chairs (other W/Café organisers prefer only four or five), and on each table a linen table cloth, flowers, wine glasses, pens and large sheets of paper. Participants were greeted upon arrival by volunteers and invited to sit at any table that had a free chair. The lighting was subdued and musicians played on the stage to welcome guests. Throughout the event, waiters brought food and drinks to the tables. It felt like a fashionable restaurant.

I usually place a red card on each table that participants can raise if they need volunteer assistance or clarification about anything. The card is rarely shown.

3. Explore questions that matter: focus collective attention on powerful questions that attract collaborative engagement

Generally, a W/Café is planned to take about two hours, about as long as participants can talk together before fatigue sets in. A W/Café works through ‘rounds’ of table conversation, with each round lasting 15 minutes, a total of six to eight rounds of conversation.

While participants should know what they are attending to talk about, each round still requires a relevant focussing question. In most W/Cafés, a single question is addressed through all the conversation rounds. It should be open and juicy enough to propel inspiring conversation through successive rounds. A constructive strategy, applied in the Happiness Café, is to frame questions to build appreciation of the positive rather than problematic aspects of an issue or situation. Participants are discouraged from judging answers as ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. It should lead participants to ‘drill down’ into deeper mutual understanding and more awareness of the diversity of perspectives in the room. The current question can be visible on a stage screen, and/or left on each table along with the agenda and guidelines.

For the Happiness Café, I adopted a different approach, which I have applied in other events. Rather than a single question, I asked a sequence of questions with each feeding into the next. The theory behind this approach lies in pedagogical scaffolding, starting with tangible context-setting questions and then working towards the more complex and speculative. Designing these questions is a creative endeavour, which I often bounce off associates before implementing them. Here are the questions/topics that were offered for the Happiness Café:

Round one
Q: What are your responses to the panel discussion?

Rounds two, three
Describe a recent experience of happiness. It may have been fleeting or deep or enduring.

Rounds four, five, six
Q: Have you ever knowingly cultivated happiness? If yes, what did you do?

Rounds seven, eight
Q: What are you already doing or what might you do in the future to cultivate happiness in your wider circle of family, friends, colleagues, community?

Round one allowed people to start talking to each other civilly and release what was on their mind. In rounds two and three, I was hoping participants would begin to articulate their perspectives on happiness in the company of others. In the next three rounds I wanted participants to brainstorm the various ways that people cultivate happiness. In the final two rounds, I anticipated that participants would build on their own ideas and activities, and even expand their repertoire of activities that would support social wellbeing. Notice that all the questions invite personal storytelling.

4. Encourage everyone’s contribution: enliven the relationship between the ‘me’ and the ‘we’ by inviting full participation and mutual giving

Before the start of the first round of conversation, I ask participants to nominate a permanent ‘host’ for their table.
To make it easy, I suggest that they select the person with the brightest clothing. If that person does not want the job, either at the starting time or later on, they can pass it on to another. This randomness enables a good mix of table hosts and avoids the task being taken by the most confident person at a table. The hosts do not shift tables between rounds, but rather record snippets of conversation on the sheets of paper provided.

Some helpful hints are available at each table for everyone to read, providing tips for good facilitating (see box). Hosts have the authority to gently ensure that participants have equal opportunities to speak by creating space for those who may be timid. Hosts can still contribute to the conversation, but must be careful not to dominate. I always reinforce this from the stage by saying something like, ‘This is a conversation involving everyone. If you usually talk a lot, talk a lot less. If you usually say little, say a little more. It works best when everyone contributes equally.’

### Tips for Good Facilitating

- When asking the question or stating the topic, speak slowly and carefully
- Listen actively. Let participants know they’ve been heard.
- When someone makes a point, thank them and write it down (very briefly).
- If you are not clear what someone means, check back with them as you write it.
- If people are talking too quickly, or too many at once, don’t be afraid to ask them to slow down or wait in order to give you time to write down their points.
- Remain neutral, don’t give any opinions about what people say, they are all valid – there are no rights and wrongs!
- Don’t get into long discussions.
- Make sure everyone has a chance to be heard.

5. Cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives: use the living system dynamics of emergence through intentionally increasing the diversity and density of connections among perspectives, while retaining a common focus on core questions

I arrange for the end of each conversation round to be signalled with some walking music — at the Happiness Café I used the jaunty ‘Baby Elephant Walk’ tune. Participants stop their conversation, rise and shift to different tables. Rather than moving in blocks, everyone (except the table host) is instructed to spread out and get quickly settled at a new table. The intention is to have everyone mixing.

The brief notes recorded by each table host serve as the table’s memory through the event, that each round expands. However, I also suggest that each round begin with conversation rather than a review of the record. I discourage hosts from trying to be too detailed or pedantic in their recording, as I’d prefer that they pay more attention to the actual conversation and its flow.

As lead facilitator, I suggest that if participants have a wild idea but are wary, they take it to the next table and claim it was someone else’s idea! Personality clashes inevitably occur, but the table rotation ensures that nobody sits perpetually next to somebody they’d prefer to avoid

6. Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions: focus shared attention in ways that nurture coherence of thought without losing individual contribution

At the Happiness Café, a large screen was on the stage, connected to a computer. To the side of the stage were eight volunteers called the Theme Team, each armed with a networked laptop. As the conversation rounds completed, volunteers collected the recorded notes and the Theme Team entered them quickly into their laptops. (In other events, the table hosts have entered their notes directly into networked laptops.)

After eight rounds at the Happiness Café, each participant had a conversation with over fifty people about a topic dear to their hearts, a unique opportunity to hear the diverse views of a crowd. On stage, the Theme Team tried to retain the words that were originally written by the table hosts. Entries were categorised and grouped as patterns of ideas emerged. Almost immediately after the final conversational round, these patterns were summarised in relation to the conversation questions and projected back to the room. These comprised the ideas that ‘had the legs’ to travel around the room. At the Happiness Café, a short informal plenary conversation ensued with participants, table hosts and panel members mentioning new ideas that surprised and touched them. Participants
are usually impressed at how many of the ideas expressed during their small table conversations are reiterated, which provides for a satisfying closure to the event.

7. Harvest and share collective discoveries: make collective knowledge and insight visible and actionable
The database of collected ideas is a valuable resource that can inspire change. The results of the Happiness Café were publicised in conjunction with further promotion by the Sydney Festival. After W/Cafés that address more politically contentious issues, the results can be used to influence public opinion and inform public policy formation.

The Happiness Café yielded many subjective ideas about happiness. Recent experiences of happiness included hitting a great golf shot, enjoying a dog’s loyalty, surfing in the Maldives, giving birth and experiencing sunset on a mountain top. Discussing the cultivation of happiness, participants spoke about practising random acts of kindness, doing voluntary community work, cultivating awareness of each moment, positively engaging with others, listing things for which to feel grateful, attending art classes, complimenting strangers, amongst hundreds of other ideas. Spreading these ideas into the wider community took various forms: knowing neighbours — including organising a Neighbour Day, teaching in developing countries, assisting Indigenous youth programs, changing jobs to a not-for-profit career, listening well, cultivating optimism, being politically active, being non-judgemental, practising generosity.

Notice that participants did not have a problem shifting their focus from atomised self to social community. This is a common feature of W/Cafés, even when the questions do not lead them in that direction.

On feedback sheets completed by participants at the end of a typical W/Café, there will be comments about being really listened to, discovering completely new ideas, understanding different opinions and unusual perspectives, and recognising alignment of personal choices where it wasn’t expected. Participants will occasionally comment on a surprising insight. The sharing of ideas invariably leads to rich social learning for W/Café participants.

Bigger picture
How might W/Cafés influence social change? National conversations, when undertaken, tend to involve key stakeholders, those who already have a seat at the policy-making tables. The World Café is a way for everyday citizens to participate in conversations that matter, thereby enabling governments and NGOs to generate interest and discussion in relation to difficult and intractable problems. The W/Café provides a constructive alternative to agonistic and unproductive public meetings, and facilitates a shift from self-interest to the common good.

A W/Café is very egalitarian. Participants mostly run it themselves. The small group activity enhances participants’ citizenship skills and they feel more motivated to act. For example, consider the W/Café in the lead-up to the Australian Citizens’ Parliament held in 2009. The topic for discussion was ‘How do we reform Australia’s political system to serve us better?’ The sub-questions were: ‘What are the problems with the current political system? What are your concerns? When does the current political system work at its best? What is it that makes it work well when it does? What changes would you wish to see in order to better reflect community interests?’ After the W/Café there was an undeniable sense that these individuals, who had come together as people one night after work, had experienced an activity that acknowledged their rights and capacities as citizens. There was a palpable sense of empowerment and worthwhile dialogue. But most importantly there was strong commonality regarding the issues people identified as predominantly important. After the Citizens’ Parliament was over, organisers were gratified to note the shifts in political activism on the part of participants: lobbying politicians, becoming more informed, working in the political arena and more.

W/Cafés offer the best prospects for positive social change when participants include both ordinary people and decision-making elites. Those in power gain insight into the needs and concerns of people who may live different kinds of lives. Everyone comes to a better understanding of the institutional barriers to change, leading to considerations about alternatives that are both feasible and would carry broad popular support.

W/Cafés can be convened to talk about happiness or politics or even intractable problems. When an issue attracts positions that are strongly held and apparently incompatible, the W/Café format helps all sides talk towards a better mutual understanding and appreciation of overlapping aspirations. W/Cafés can also be used as an educational tool. Some of the university students who experienced the method labelled it ‘speed dialogue’. This is because of the repeated movement between tables by participants and the strict timing of each table conversation. These W/Cafés, conducted in universities, could be described as ‘caged’ events (students were expected to participate) whereas those in community settings could be seen as ‘in the wild’ expressions of the method (borrowed from Mitchell 2005:298 citing Callon et al 2002:196). Caged or wild, the W/Café is a flexible method for cultivating conversations that matter.

The W/Café method is used more widely than ever as a method to have a big conversation. Although the website
dedicated to it speaks of ‘[a]wakening & and engaging collective intelligence through conversations about questions that matter,’ it can also be used as a research method, or for problem-solving, strategic planning and more. With those aspirations the World Café is not without its critics. Aldred, for example, has noted her concerns which include ‘the concealment of structural inequalities, problematic notions of empowerment, and … the co-option of critique’ (2009: 13). These concerns arise when the promise exceeds its ability to effect social change and are less evident when the promise is merely to convene a large conversation, albeit ‘about questions that matter’.

Learning more
If you would like to convene a W/Café, talk to someone who has done so already. In the absence of such a person, the website http://www.theworldcafe.com/ maintained by Juanita Brown and David Isaacs is a useful source of case studies and resources.

The W/Café is one of a number of techniques that are covered in a cross-institutional, cross-cultural program, Dialogue, Deliberation & Public Engagement, that is offered simultaneously each year (August to January) by Fielding Graduate University in the US and the University of Western Sydney in Australia (I am the Australasian coordinator). For further details see http://www.uws.edu.au/ccpp.

My own website www.activedemocracy.net has links to related techniques and other relevant websites and case studies. There are also professional associations that can assist to find practitioners who are skilled facilitators of techniques like the W/Café. See, for example, www.iap2.org.

You might be surprised at how easy it is to convene a conversation in the style of a World Café, whether for a small organisation or a large public. I encourage you to try it.

Acknowledgements
With much appreciation, I thank Kathy Flynn, Katherine Gibson, Jørgen Johansen, Liam Phelan and Gerda Roelvink for their helpful comments, and Ron Lubensky for his research assistance.

References
Aldred, R. 2009. ‘From Community Participation to Organizational Therapy? World Café and Appreciative Inquiry as Research Methods.’ Community Development Journal, advance access, 29 July.


Author
Lyn Carson is a professorial fellow at the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy at the University of Western Sydney. She undertakes research and teaches in the area of deliberative democracy and citizen engagement.
Jabiluka Revisited: Negotiating needs

IAN MILES

Traditionally activism has concentrated on making arguments for change aimed at mobilising support and compelling decision makers to change. Often this is done by appealing to the ‘rights’ of a disenfranchised party, and by taking direct action causing some kind of coercive disruption to the current status quo. I will argue that activists need to spend less time advocating for rights and coercing power holders into recognising and upholding them, and more time listening and communicating skilfully, to facilitate collaborative negotiation of mutual needs. Here I examine some personal experiences of blockading, with a view to illustrating an alternative way of doing activism.

Much activism seems to be based on the idea of rights. Activists often work to identify the rights of an individual or group, label the failure to legitimise or uphold these rights as injustice, and mobilise and demand that power-holders validate the rights in question. Whilst many of us perhaps would like to find ourselves in a ‘win/win’ world where everybody’s rights are recognised and upheld, sadly, many rights seem to exclude or interfere with others. The approach to ethics I will suggest here acknowledges the centrality of context to ethical decision, and is thus presented interwoven with narratives from activist experience.

At Jabiluka in the Northern Territory, Australia in the late 1990s, I was involved in just such a scenario, where the rights of the Traditional Owners of the site were legally over-ruled by the rights of Energy Resources Australia (ERA) to mine the land for uranium. Activists, myself included, waged a campaign to overturn this decision. The rights of Traditional Owners to decide what happened on their land and the right of all Australians to a safe and clean environment were the two main arguments we used in our information strategy to try to convince people and governments to change what was happening at Jabiluka. This strategy was placed in tandem with our occupation of the site, with intent to physically prevent or forestall the operation of the mine.

Here I reflect on my experiences during this occupation as a way of demonstrating an alternative way of ‘doing’ activism, founded on negotiating needs rather than arbitrating rights. The intention to meet the needs of those I do politics ‘with’, as well as those I do politics ‘for’, will change the way activists approach direct action. At Jabiluka, whilst not in favour of uranium mining, my deepest purpose was to support the Traditional Owners (the Mirrar People) in their ability to decide what happened on their land. Whilst not devoid of moral interest, and still subject to codes of conduct, the needs of the people we encountered whilst blockading were placed in a secondary position, where they tended to become an object or a means to an end. My new way of ‘doing’ activism would abandon this hierarchy of moral interest. The needs of all those with whom I actively engage whilst on blockade, and those whom I came to Jabiluka to support, would receive the same attention.

The deeper aim was to bring the issue to the attention of a wider audience and by their agitation coerce or persuade decision makers to recognise and protect the rights of the Traditional Owners.

The approach I will suggest here shifts activist attention from arbitration to negotiation. Successful activism is not where we ‘win’ the debate and establish our preferred reality, but where all parties collaborate to meet needs. Thus, in taking direct action, our primary focus becomes negotiating the needs of all those who become involved, both present and ‘unpresent’, as we simultaneously make our contribution to public debate. This idea will, I hope, have application in most areas of life, even as a response to actual violence. Importantly mutual recognition, as an aspect of moral behaviour rather than its sum, is contextual in its application. It does not present itself as a universalist morality, but an important and often ignored aspect of moral relationship — an aspect I suggest that could, in some cases, be more important than or indeed part of the instrumental outcomes of justice.
Like the concept of rights, meeting needs is also an approach to securing human dignity. In pursuing this as a moral compass, I am not claiming it is better than other potential ways of constructing ethics, but rather illustrating how such an idea might work, for those who are interested in attempting this way of relating. The central philosophical tool for the realisation of this project is ‘Mutual Recognition’, as envisaged by Jessica Benjamin (1988). For the functional tools to practise recognition, I draw heavily on the strategies of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) (Garver and Reitan 1995), itself grounded in the ideas of Restorative Justice, and the critique of competition found in the work of Alfie Kohn (1992). The process I describe involves the building of the personal skills of reflection, self awareness and empathy, and the use of communication skills to create, sustain and repair social contexts where these skills can be practised by all to collaboratively meet the needs of all.

Events at Jabiluka
As part of our strategy to bring public attention to the problems of uranium mining, particularly that conducted on Aboriginal land without the prior consent of Traditional Owners, we decided to stage a one day blockade of the nearby Ranger uranium mine. The event was also to some extent a decoy, to allow Traditional Owner Jackie Katona to symbolically ‘trespass’ on the Jabiluka site. By four o’clock in the morning on the appointed day, about forty activists arrived at the mine, four people locked themselves to the gates of the mine with the locks being hand held inside forty-four gallon drums filled with concrete. My own role, in concert with others, was to talk to the drivers of vehicles as they turned up at the gates, inform them of what we were doing and why, and deal with their responses. We had all taken part in nonviolent training, and it was our intention to blockade without using violence or intimidation.

As the first car arrived we approached the bemused looking driver and delivered our spiel, and requested that the driver (who was a cleaner at the mine) turn around and go home, and call his employer and tell them that he was unable to attend work, and why. In keeping with our nonviolent aspirations we spoke quietly and mildly, and the use of communication skills to create, sustain and repair social contexts where these skills can be practised by all to collaboratively meet the needs of all.

Later in the demonstration, disciplined communication gradually declined and by the end activists were openly yelling political slogans at vehicles trying to gain access to the site, many of which were simply going to the airport, and had to pass through the gate which led to the mine. Blocking people from entering the site was our way of taking a stand against the mine, and the people blocked became means (objects) in this process, with their needs and feelings mostly assumed and/or disregarded.

A couple of hours later, some workers ended their shift and wanted to leave the site, and the new shift of workers began to arrive. The arriving workers, assisted by ERA employed security guards, attempted to breach part of the fence adjacent to the gates to allow people to enter the site. A scuffle ensued, with some low level violence, involving a lot of pushing and shoving, and a little verbal abuse. Eventually the attempt to enter the site this way was abandoned, but a contingent of activists remained stationed at the breached section of the fence. Finally the Tactical Response Group (TRG) arrived, and with welding and cutting equipment, removed and arrested the four locked-on activists, and arrested many of those who physically remained blocking the road. Most of the rest of us were issued with trespass notices, which could be used against us should ERA choose to pursue charges against us. Apart from (successfully) negotiating the leaving of those ending their shift, the rest of the interactions with workers and TRG were openly hostile, though (scuffle excluded) without verbal abuse or physical violence. Bystanders (people travelling to the airport in particular) witnessed much aggression and hostility from both ‘sides’ of the encounter.

Jabiluka revisited
To analyse this experience, I will use the AVP (NSW) Restorative Practices model. The core belief of the restorative justice model is that we give attention to fixing the damage done by what has occurred, rather than finding and punishing a ‘wrongdoer’ (Bischoff 2003). The AVP (NSW) application of the Restorative Practices model involves asking a series of questions, of oneself or, in a conflict resolution situation, of all parties. The questions are ‘What happened for me?’, ‘What was the hardest part of this?’ ‘What would I do differently?’ and ‘What needs to happen to restore any damage done by these interactions?’ These questions, particularly when addressed skilfully, with good listening, and use of ‘I’ statements (Cornelius & Faire 1989, 60-68), can open up opportunities for participants to relate collaboratively, and restoratively, and reflect on what has happened in ways which may lead to personal insight and personal and political transformation. Done in partnership with others, it can approach the conditions which Jessica Benjamin describes as Mutual Recognition (Benjamin 1988, 23), where people can relate with a balance of assertion of
personal needs and active listening to the needs of others, which hopefully reduces the power struggles which often lead to domination. Ideally all present in the scenario above would work through such a process together. In this case I shall demonstrate how this process works with an exercise in personal reflection.

‘What happened for me?’ is an invitation to reflect on, and share with others, personal feelings. Feelings are often an indicator of our needs, and understood deeply can be useful information not only to separate needs, interests and desires, but to control the unhelpful behaviours which often arise from poorly understood and inarticulate feelings (Lindner 2009). Evelin Lindner points out that people who are damaged in their ability to understand their feelings often make disastrous social decisions and damage their relationships. It follows that poorly understood and uncontrolled feelings contribute negatively to situations of conflict (Lindner 2009, 8).

At Jabiluka, I was unhappy because what I was doing was plainly causing distress to others. It simply felt wrong to be making no effort towards understanding or satisfying the needs of those we were preventing from entering the site. Jessica Benjamin calls this desire to recognise the needs of others, mutuality: a condition of ‘attunement’ created by mutually recognising one another (Benjamin 1988, 28). This experience where I flouted mutuality with militancy has been pivotal in my adoption of mutuality as a guiding ethic for not only activism, but social interaction in general. I see now that the hardest part of all this for me was the lack of any space or time to reflect on what was happening, and a corresponding lack of foreseeable means to address the lack of recognition and competing needs.

So what would I do differently? I would try to open possibilities for mutual recognition and reflexivity among all of those touched by the circumstance. There were opportunities to do this before, during, and after the event. Before we blockaded I would share my idea of mutual recognition with other activists, starting with those who are sympathetic, so by the time the idea reaches the wider group of activists it will be an idea that already has some support, and this will minimise the chances of the idea (and the person or people championing it) being treated as marginal, and quickly dismissed. Having shared the idea, I would get together and practise skills for applying the theory to what is likely to happen, with those activists interested in relating this way. It is also important to negotiate with other activists and make sure that the approach we take does not undercut or compromise the group endeavour. If the idea has support I would also look at opportunities to discuss the ideas with police and even representatives of the mine, if it can be done without compromising the surprise element needed to begin the specific blockade.

The next part of what I would do differently is to practise and demonstrate the skills for establishing mutual recognition in politics during the blockade. This entails making every engagement an opportunity for us and all involved to mutually recognise each other by listening to each other, trying to work out our collective needs, and collaboratively work out ways for all of our needs to be met. The skills pertinent to this are communicative tools, and via a reconstruction of the previously described events I will now try to demonstrate what a mutually recognitive exchange might have looked like in this context.

Originally when we greeted the cleaner as he arrived, we presented him with a fait accompli: he was told we were stopping him from going to work. We made no attempt to find out his feelings or needs, we merely gently apologised for denying them. A mutually recognitive approach would be to share our feelings about why we are blockading, and ask him how he would feel about not working today. This both models a statement of our own needs and invites him to share his own. These could be, for example; that he can't afford to lose a day’s income, or he's angry at being prevented from carrying out his lawful business. If he is unpersuaded by our cause as we share our reasoning for stopping him working, the next step is to negotiate how we can both get our needs met: ours, to make a public point about opposition to the mine, and his to go to work. This may have revealed that in demonstrating our commitment, we had nothing further to gain by preventing him from working, and it may have been both wise and ethical at an interpersonal level to allow him through (as we did later with workers leaving the site).

This sort of approach has a number of advantages over what actually happened. Firstly by taking the time to engage with his feelings, at least we demonstrate some interest in his feelings and needs – vital for a person to feel recognised. In actually changing our intended behaviour we lose little if anything. The blockade was never going to last very long: the forty or so isolated people did not have the resources to block the mine against the forces of the Northern Territory government. To let him through, as well as meeting his needs, does little to diminish ours.

It is possible to apply this idea to every interaction during the blockade, whether with the differing needs of workers, managers or security officials, or conflict within our own group. Would we have gained equally or more from a dialogue with each person attempting to enter the site about our reasons for blockading (our needs) and their reasons for working at the site (their needs) followed by us allowing those to enter the site who were going to be financially or emotionally damaged by the loss of a day’s...
work? We could have both made our point about listening to Traditional Owners and the problems with the uranium industry with far less damage to the needs and interests of people working at the mine, and thus possibly had more chance of winning their ‘hearts and minds’ for our cause.

Even if we had not elected to let him through there is more we could have done. With awareness of his feelings made plain, we could have been mindful of his feelings and delayed our celebration of our first ‘victory’ until he had left, sparing him the unpleasant experience of being emotional collateral damage. This awareness of feelings could have also guided our answers to the question of what we could do to restore relationships after the events. We could have tried to raise money to diminish the financial damage caused by our actions, as we did later for ourselves, raising thousands to pay for court cases and fines for activists.

The critical part of negotiation of needs is expression and comprehension of feelings. In this model, communication skills, and a framework within which to practise them, become the centrepiece of ‘good’ activism. When greeting the driver of the first vehicle, after greeting and expressing our needs (our reasons for blockading) as an ‘I’ statement (or in this case as there were two activists, a ‘we’ statement) we should leave space for him to speak, and then facilitate his expression of his feelings. This could be a question such as, ‘how do you feel about not going to work today’. Space can be created by simply not speaking or by saying, ‘If you need time to think about this, that’s okay’.

Part of establishing mutuality is to recognise power imbalances and respond in ways which support the weaker positioned party to negotiate for their needs (Benjamin 1988, 26). As blockaders in this situation we were clearly the more powerful, and indeed our numbers and the confrontational position of blockading are likely to intimidate a sole individual. Skilled communication, such as the two examples above, demonstrate our commitment to understanding the needs of the ‘other’, and use our communication ‘powers’ collaboratively.

With this one event I have tried to give a sketch of the kind of process that could be used to create the event as an ongoing negotiation about needs, rather than a strategic act in a debate about rights, where the actor on the ground is devalued to the status of object by being treated as a means to our end. Perhaps the most critical shift entailed by this approach is the move from only arguing ‘our’ case, as activists, to listening to the feelings and needs of those involved in the situations in which we intervene. Implied in this change is that we engage in a skilful way, using communicative power to create collaborative situations, where the needs of those affected by the changes we seek as activists are taken as seriously as those whose perceived needs call us to action.

Acknowledgements
I thank Kathy Flynn and Brian Martin for helpful comments on drafts

References

Author
Ian Miles was an activist for 20 years. He is a musician, works in disability services and is doing a PhD at Wollongong University.
Going Online for Social Change: Techniques, barriers and possibilities for community groups

Colin Salter

Going online can significantly assist a community group to meet its aims. Many open source technologies are designed to embody decentralised and collaborative authorship, facilitating a group’s ability to share its message with a much broader audience — and on its terms. By reflecting on the techniques adopted by the Sandon Point Community Picket in going online, and how the approach mirrored their grassroots campaign, we can explore the how alongside the why of working for social change. Challenges faced, their implications, and what we can learn from them can also be considered.

It is now possible for almost anyone with internet access and a home PC to publish content online. A website can be a very effective campaign tool: a means for promoting, and realising, change. Damian Trewhella and Melissa H. Conley Tyler have observed that ‘there have been many constructive, innovative and successful uses of ICTs [information and communication technologies] in the [Australian] peace movement’ (2007, 3). Peter Van Aelst and Stefaan Walgrave similarly note that ‘the Internet brings new opportunities for everyone, but at the moment international activists are benefiting relatively more than their opponents’ (2002, 47). How can we realise these opportunities while fostering an inclusive and grassroots approach?

The development of new media technologies has provided the means for websites to be created with minimal technical aptitude and little or no financial outlay. Services such as Buzzr, Drupal Gardens and Wordpress enable the creation of websites with the click of a mouse button. Having a website is widely seen as a necessity for effective and broad dissemination of an organisation’s message to like-minded groups, members of the local community and beyond. It is a key technique in fostering and facilitating social change. Having a page on the social networking site Facebook and an account with the microblogging service Twitter are also becoming increasingly common for campaigns. These and other social media services can be simply and directly integrated with an organisation’s website. Using such services can be seen as an extra burden on organisations, with increasing technical aptitude being required. Considered alongside the apparent ease in creating a website, this (apparent) burden arguably provides the potential for a variation and expansion of the social relations of the public sphere and increased campaign effectiveness (see Habermas 1989).

Social media can provide a direct means of sharing information, aims and intent, with this information remaining visible long after it was first produced. Both the potential for the spread of information — across a community, even across the world — as well as the ability for many others to become involved in a cause or issue can be facilitated through an online presence. This affords some opportunities to counter disparity between a small group of concerned citizens and governments or large corporations with a wealth of financial resources and personnel (Howard 2010; Van Aelst and Walgrave 2002).

In considering the efficacy and appropriateness of an organisational website, issues surrounding access and equity need to be considered. Viewing a website requires access to a computer and an internet connection. There are some 9.6 million Australian internet subscribers, where a subscriber can be a household, out of a population of approximately 22.5 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010). This indicates that a significant number of Australians are not internet users. Paralleling other indicators of structural disadvantage, the divide between those with and without access is widest between remote Aboriginal communities and other Australians (McCallum and Papandrea 2009).

We can look at specific examples to learn how websites and social media platforms can be used to promote social change. The aim of this paper is to provide some practical guidance on specific criteria for choosing a service and introduce some of the potential challenges. In exploring how existing services have been used strategically, we can develop a greater understanding and awareness of
what approaches, strategies and tactics can be most effective.

The website of the local community at Sandon Point (http://www.sandon-point.org.au), in Wollongong, Australia, is considered here to reflect on the techniques adopted and their overall effectiveness. This website has enabled wide access to information about the area and community concerns over its future. By existing alongside a spirited and committed community campaign, the website has facilitated much greater awareness and increased the potential for broader participation.

Increasing awareness of the Sandon Point campaign is apparent in the record of site access shown in Figure 1, indicating an overall increase in visitors over time. Spikes in visitor numbers represent key strategic actions and resulting media coverage.

**Making the choice to go online**

When making the decision to go online, there are several key issues to consider. For community groups, cost can be a key limiting factor. Technological factors can dictate whether a web presence will or will not be an effective tool. For example, issues of equity and access can determine who an organisation’s message can reach. Similarly, technological skills can determine who the message can reach, and the ability to publish and promote this message. The structure of the technology itself can shape and limit both interaction and participation — sometimes intentionally, sometimes not. In much the same way that stairs enable and limit access to certain areas, the design of a website — the technology upon which it is built — can both foster and limit participation and interaction.

Whereas financial matters, technological factors and the intersection between the social and the technological can be considered constraints, some of these can be addressed with only a little effort. Services such as Buzzr and Drupal Gardens do not require a direct financial outlay. They are also designed to allow people with minimal technological aptitude to create a web presence. These services provide the initial steps on the path to a potentially very effective web presence.

Beyond the financial and technological, there are other questions. Why would members of the wider community want to learn about the issues? Why should they? How can they become aware? The latter can be considered a causality dilemma, a circular cause and consequence question. For example, will a web presence provide the means for a broader audience to become aware, or are local actions required to build a base awareness from which a web presence can extend this? It can be both.

**The local and the networked**

The effectiveness of a website cannot be separated from actions taken in the local community and on the ground. This holds true for other forms of community engagement. In many ways, an active and engaging grassroots campaign fosters the necessary attention and awareness that creates interest in seeking further information — from which those with access can seek out relevant websites. As simple as this sounds, it makes it possible for people to gather information, to learn about an issue or campaign, in
the comfort of their own home (or work environment) with very little effort on their part. What is also made possible is for those with little or no awareness of an issue to access information — information that details a community group's aims and intent in its own words.

The potential availability of information online contrasts with more traditional forms of community organising: only those who happen to walk past (even stumble upon) a campaign stall, public meeting or event are exposed to an issue or able to gain further insight. Beyond that, word of mouth is a key method of sharing information.

**SPATE and the community picket**

In December 2000, members of the local Aboriginal Community established the Sandon Point Aboriginal Tent Embassy (SPATE), providing a direct and symbolic statement of a desire to protect culture, environment and heritage. The immediate context was a controversial large-scale housing proposal earmarked for the Sandon Point area.

In March 2001, members of the broader local community received permission from SPATE to establish their own permanent presence. The Sandon Point Community Picket provided another very visible statement of community opposition to the proposed housing estate — and promotion of an alternate vision. The Community Picket became a centralised information hub for passers-by. It was also a place for members of the local community and passers-by to gather, to share experiences and to discuss the most effective means of achieving their goals: to save and protect the Sandon Point area. In effect, we can describe the social space, the discursive arena, that the Community Picket enabled as typical of a Habermasian public sphere.

The establishment of the Sandon Point website in February 2002 extended the presence of the Community Picket beyond the local, with the website seen as an add-on to the campaign. Information about the contentious proposal — and community-building alternatives — became much more widely available. The website made it possible to reach a broader (even global) audience, to make otherwise obscure details public and circumvent traditional top-down means of information dissemination. It also made it much easier for interested people to directly contact those involved in the struggle. In effect, means to counter the power imbalance between state and corporate interests on the one hand, and a small collective of local residents on the other, were further set in motion (see Trewhella and Conley Tyler 2007).

Rather quickly, the limitations and possibilities of the initial website became clear. Set up as a static website — what is increasingly referred to as web 1.0 or the pre-participatory era — the posting of content mirrored the traditional gatekeeper model of journalism. The final say over what was published was in the hands of those who had technical ability, and were in the circle of those with access to edit the respective computer files. Whether intentionally or not, content was tightly controlled. The first Sandon Point website was effectively a one-to-many form of communication.

A key feature of the first iteration of the Sandon Point website was that the technology upon which it was built, the structure of the technology, did not reflect an open and inclusive process. The technology, in essence, restricted and dictated the approach: what could be done and how. Interaction and participation were significantly restricted.

The potential for change emerged in 2006. The Sandon Point website shifted from being a one-to-many to being designed as a many-to-many form of communication. Based on the advice of international visitors involved in Indymedia and other citizen journalism projects, the possibilities of open publishing were embraced. The Sandon Point website was re-created as a means to both transcend the existing technological-structural limitations imposed on it, and to foster a more participatory, open and decentralised approach to information publication and sharing. The latter more directly reflected the idealised aims and intent of the local community in seeking to save and protect the Sandon Point area.

**Open source initiatives**

The Drupal CMS, adopted as the framework for building the new Sandon Point website, is described as ‘more than software — it is a project and a community’ (various 2010). Development is driven and facilitated by a knowledge community that continues to grow.

Drupal is based on the open source philosophy of collaborative free software development and is licensed under the GPL. Drupal is itself open source and builds on and supports other open source projects (various 2009).

GPL is shorthand for the GNU General Public License. It is a ‘free, copyleft license for software and other kinds of works (various 2007). The license allows for anyone to download, reuse, modify, and distribute any files (i.e. computer code) that form part of the Drupal software for free. What this means is that, like other open source software, Drupal is available at no cost. The source code is freely available for anyone to modify, improve and share. The code base is actively maintained by a large community of web developers and designers. Working together, they have created a knowledge community, a collective intelligence, improving the code on which the software is built and sharing this with the world (see Flew 2008).
The choice to use Drupal over other freely available open source CMSs (Wordpress, for example) was based on input from the extensive community of web developers, designers, and community activists involved. Another influence was the example of other groups using Drupal, including Amnesty International, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Human Rights Watch, Make Poverty History and Oxfam.

Built into the technology, the code of the Drupal CMS, were key features that mirrored the aims and approaches adopted and espoused by many decentralised networks and community groups. At the core of the CMS were interactive elements designed to facilitate and foster community building via decentralised access and control. Significant aspects of the gatekeeper limitations present in the previous website were removed. Features and elements of the new website include decentralised control, many-to-many publishing, interactivity, participation, anytime conversation, open access and transparency.

The use of the Drupal CMS enabled control of the Sandon Point website to be decentralised. Contrasting with the previous reliance on those with technical skills to publish content, adding information to the website became as simple as typing an email. In essence, anyone involved in the community campaign could become a citizen journalist, and could contribute their knowledge in an open and transparent way. The possibility of collaboration became a central feature: it became easy.

The ability to collaborate in real-time, with information instantly published to a potentially global audience, made possible many-to-many means of reporting and information sharing. The knowledge community developed in and around the Community Picket as an information and meeting hub — and the local community more broadly — could be built on and shared. The re-developed Sandon Point website was designed to take full advantage of the world wide web as both an interactive and participatory communication tool (see Spurgeon 2008, 7; Jenkins 2008).

**Challenges: the skill question**

The Sandon Point website was built on Drupal before services like Buzzr and Drupal Gardens existed, and hence required technological aptitude and skills beyond those held by many activists and community groups. With the advent of these services, these barriers have been largely removed. Anyone having a level of comfort using a modern computer can create a website within minutes; it is like filling in an online form. The necessary code is generated in the background. What is displayed is a clear and user-friendly graphical user interface.

Buzzr and Drupal Gardens also embody principles upon which Drupal is based. In contrast to proprietary systems that offer similar services, there is no lock-in or expensive conversion costs. A website created with Buzzr or Drupal Gardens can be saved (exported) for use outside the respective services. When something more is needed than the service provides, those with sufficient skills can customise the Drupal framework. In this way, we can consider such services as a stepping stone, providing ease in creating websites, for those without technological aptitude, that embody the ends as means.

The skill question aside, merely creating the means for participation does not ensure the hoped-for participation. For example, with the adoption of web 2.0 technologies, the number of people who contributed to the Sandon Point website increased but was still limited. As a task, contributing to the website was left to, or assumed to be the responsibility of, some people only. There is a clear delineation between those more familiar and comfortable with computers and new media technologies, and others in the local community.

One highly knowledgeable member of the community uses email prolifically and has the ability to repeatedly unsettle regulatory authorities (see Walker v Minister for Planning [2007] NSWLEC 741). Using email as the main avenue for communication implies a level of comfort with computers. However, this person asks others to post relevant materials to the Sandon Point website, often the very people involved in the creation of the initial website, because they are seen to have the aptitude, and because the management and updating of the website are seen as their role. The vision of a broadly participative tool, an extension of the grassroots campaign, is still far from being achieved. The technological barriers, or perceptions of them at the least, are still present.

**Reflections, possibilities**

The rise in new media technologies includes the promise of an ability for citizens to create their own, alternative, public spheres, to share information on their own terms (see Howard 2010, 100-107). The services provided by Buzzr, Drupal Gardens and Wordpress allow for the creation of a website by those without technological aptitude. They provide a means to go online in a manner commensurate with an ideal of participatory inclusiveness — to build on existing social relations and structures. Open source technologies have the potential to enable non-hierarchical community building.

Fostering a transparent and participatory culture, the creation of a knowledge community, are key features of the technology behind, and the approach to, the Sandon Point website. The website has significantly increased awareness of the dispute over the future of the area,
proving to be a thorn in the side of the state government, regulatory authorities and the corporation involved. The as-yet unfulfilled potential for increased involvement that the website provides is an issue for technologically minded activists, community groups and social theorists to grapple with. As the campaign struggles on, so do attempts to increase participation and effectiveness. As the years continue to pass, with active opposition to the proposed housing estate at Sandon Point continuing as further land is being cleared, the website is increasingly becoming a form of documentation: it is coming to be seen as a community history project. Is this a metaphorical graveyard, the endpoint, for campaign and other social media websites?

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank Kathryn Flynn, Jørgen Johansen, Shane Korytko, Brian Martin, Ian Miles, Liam Phelan and Sandrine Thérèse for valuable comments and suggestions.

References


Author
Colin Salter is assistant professor in the Centre for Peace Studies at McMaster University, Canada. He has a special interest in public controversies, dissent, nonviolence, and movements seeking and promoting peace and social justice.

Bone Flute...

blind dancer
at the end
of time

legs
reaching the ribs
of the sky

Samson
between the pillars
of my hips

his shadow
on the blue veins
of my breasts

white flesh
twists on the sweep
of the bone

his hands
pull down the horses
of the sun

and i am lost
in the thick forest
of his hair

John Knight,
Mt. Gravatt, QLD
The Practice and Politics of Leaking

**KATHRYN FLYNN**

*Civic-minded people who encounter what they believe to be corrupt and illegal conduct in the workplace may take it upon themselves to release relevant confidential information. This is done either through an open disclosure, where the identity of the whistleblower is publicly known, or an unauthorised disclosure where the identity of the leaker is not revealed. This information is typically leaked to journalists or activists who may be able to seek redress. Leaking is an alternative to whistleblowing and carries fewer risks of reprisals but leakers need to be alert to pitfalls with this practice.*

**Introduction**

In a democracy people need access to information on political, social and economic issues in order to judge whether their elected officials are acting in the public interest. However, too often their elected officials evade such scrutiny, and fraud and abuse go unchecked. Most people with access to relevant information are deterred from leaking or whistleblowing due to legislative prohibitions. They may be those embodied in official secrets acts or the case of the United States the Espionage Act (1917). The Official Secrets Act covers legislation providing for the protection of state secrets and official information and is used in the United Kingdom, India, Ireland and Malaysia. Australia does not have an Official Secrets Act but has provisions under Part VII of the Crimes Act (1914) restricting Commonwealth public servants from revealing confidential information. The U.S. Espionage Act has a more limited application. This Act only applies to the prohibition on the disclosure of government information on defence issues. While governments have aimed to keep official secrets confidential public servants with access to this material have been successful in releasing it to the public either through the press or in recent times passing it to WikiLeaks, a website for newsworthy leaks.

To draw a distinction between whistleblowing and leaking, whistleblowers are overt in their disclosure of organisational deviance, but there is a price. Bureaucracies now know where their opposition is coming from, and can isolate the whistleblowers by discrediting them, not giving them access to further information and suspending them from work. Generally leakers don’t suffer these reprisals.

The definition of leaking is blurred; it can mean an unauthorised source giving information to a journalist but it can also involve an authorised source with political power and high status using the media to their advantage with little likelihood of being prosecuted (Tiffen 1989: 97). In both instances leakers are covert in their disclosure of information. The leakers discussed in this article are workers in the public sector who, without authorisation, convey official information to recipients outside of government (Standing Committee 67). It is usually released to the media in the public interest and these leakers lack positions of high status and power. The information they provide journalists has not been processed by official channels and there is an undertaking by the journalist that the identity of the source will not be revealed. This practice provides some measure of protection to the leaker.

Journalists are the usual recipients of leaked information but on occasion information is leaked to activists who can act as a spur to additional media coverage of the story (Martin 2009: 206-216). There can be a range of motives for leaking, not all of them altruistic. Some leaks are vexatious in nature and not in the public interest. The protection for journalists lies in checking the information with many sources and gauging their reliability (Flynn 2006: 264-265).

The examples of leaking discussed in this paper are mainly Australian ones but the issue is applicable to many other countries. Leaks can come from a range of organisations: governments, not-for-profit groups, corporations, environmental groups, trade unions as well as churches. This paper also mainly focuses on leaks from governments.

Not surprisingly governments and unions will not protect leakers if they are caught even when they are acting in the public interest. But there are divergent meanings of the phrase ‘the public interest’. Journalists and leakers define it as information that brings accountability and transparency
to government and exposes maladministration or corruption. Governments argue that they are the interpreters of the public interest and that public servants are bound by rules of confidentiality and are not free to speak out on malfeasance. As Peter Shergold, Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in the Australian government led by John Howard explained, leaking by public servants is ‘not just a criminal offence but also democratic sabotage’ (Shergold 2004). Supporting this view, the then National Secretary of the Community and Public Sector Union, Stephen Jones, giving evidence to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in its report on whistleblowing protection, held that leaking should not be protected due to its harmful impact on the relationship between the executive and the public service. Presenting a different perspective to this committee was Peter Bennett, president of Whistleblowers Australia. He argued that the official responses to people who leak confidential information are outrageous and that leakers should be protected from civil and criminal liability (Standing Committee 2009: 67).

The practice of leaking
For a public servant who sees evidence of what they perceive is an organisation’s corrupt practice and believes that neither management nor parliament will do anything about the problem, one of the difficulties is deciding what to do next. They may be influenced by the rhetoric of senior bureaucrats who assert that leaking undermines the trust between the executive and the public service. Presenting a different perspective to this committee was Peter Bennett, president of Whistleblowers Australia. He argued that the official responses to people who leak confidential information are outrageous and that leakers should be protected from civil and criminal liability (Standing Committee 2009: 67).

So it is best to use a photocopier in an offsite facility, for example, in a newsagency, library or internet cafe. When the journalist receives the document request him or her to re-photocopy the document and shred the document they had received (which is not the original). It is best to avoid using departmental photocopiers, fax machines, computers, email or telephones (The Art of Anonymous Activism 2002).

- The print media are preferable to television as print is better able to ensure the leaker’s anonymity. Television productions quite often need shadow outs or use distorted voice – and the original voice sometimes can be reconstructed. Television and radio will often do stories inspired by a print story.
- Some leakers, including WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, believe that leaking is best undertaken by one person working alone who maintains confidentiality. Again others derive safety from working in a group, with information being streamed through a designated spokesperson. In this way the journalist knows the identity of only one of the leakers. Others believe that with group involvement the security of the operation is compromised as someone in the group may drop their guard and talk openly about the leaked information.
- Reactions by staff members to leaks can be to find the source of the leak and pass further additional information to this source so it gets into the public arena.
- If leakers are caught it can result in the same reprisals that whistleblowers are subject to, including harassment, demotion or dismissal. To find a leaker, managers may resort to targeting innocent people and attributing them with the leak. This can have the desired effect of making the leaker come forward with an admission of guilt.
- There are risks in leaking. The identity of the leaker may be disclosed during the course of a parliamentary inquiry or by accidental disclosure, for example when a document is passed to a journalist by fax machine.
- On the positive side leaking can influence government policy because it can result in some aspects of public policy being examined more thoroughly than they would in an environment where policy is not subject to such scrutiny (Flynn 2006).
- Further information on leaking can be found in Nicky Hager and Bob Burton’s 1999 book Secrets and Lies,
a booklet The Art of Anonymous Activism (Project on Government Oversight, 2002) and Julian Assange’s article How a Whistleblower Should Leak Information (Assange 2010).

Case study: Medibank

Medibank was a system of publicly funded universal health care introduced in Australia in 1975. It enjoyed great electoral popularity but there was a defect with the scheme. It had no legislative architecture to control fraud and overservicing, and with few systems in place and inadequate staffing, the Department of Health was left to manage the situation as best it could. Whistleblowers and leakers played a major role in exposing fraud and abuse (Flynn 2004).

Medibank’s first fraud investigator and first whistleblower was Joe Shaw. In 1978 he estimated $100m was being lost annually to fraud and overservicing and wrote a report outlining his concerns. He was not listened to and he resigned. Some months later, he gave his report to a journalist working for Brisbane’s Courier Mail newspaper, who wrote an article published on the front page. Two days later Senator Mal Colston asked that Shaw’s report be tabled in parliament. This request was refused. Four years later, committee members of the JCPA recognised the value of Shaw’s report. This made it more difficult for senior management in the Department of Health to deny knowledge of the problem.

The second whistleblower was John Kelly, Director of the Operations Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Health. He had been asked by a senior officer of the Department of Health to provide a departmental briefing for the Minister. Kelly’s estimate of the amount lost through leakage to the system was the same as Joe Shaw’s estimate. Kelly was aware that this information was likely to be deleted by senior management, so using a strategy that was procedurally correct; he hid the estimate in a complicated statistical appendix in an attachment to the brief to the Minister. A senior officer in the Department of Health reading Kelly’s report did not grasp the significance of the statistical data and the report was forwarded to the Minister. This figure was then sent to the Australian Medical Association (AMA) who accepted the figure as the amount lost through fraud and overservicing.

The actions of whistleblowers, leakers, the media, the AMA and the Auditor-General’s office in 1981 led the JCPA to undertake an inquiry into abuse of the Medical Benefits Schedule by medical practitioners. A freelance journalist, Katherine Beauchamp, was employed by the JCPA from February to September 1982 to prepare questions for the committee. She interviewed whistleblowers, unauthorised confidential sources and high-ranking officials. However, her use of material from leakers raised the ire of the Committee and she was suspended from her employment.

The Chairman of the Committee, David Connolly, had received leaked information that either the Victorian division of the Commonwealth Department of Health, or individual staff members of that office, had facilitated criminal fraud by some doctors (JCPA Report 203, 1982: 48). Connolly subpoenaed forty-one files from the Commonwealth Department of Health’s Melbourne office relating to this matter. On the first day of the Committee’s hearings it was announced that there would be no discussion of the forty-one files (JCPA vol. 1, 1 July 1982: 303) because citing the names of doctors could prejudice police investigation of the trials of those mentioned in the files.

A confidential unauthorised source leaked the police report of the files to Michael Smith, an investigative journalist with Melbourne’s The Age newspaper, who wrote the story under the headline ‘Medifraud Cover-Up Suspected’. On 13 September 1982 there were further revelations. The story ‘Medifraud: A Tale of Political Failure’ was compiled from leaked government documents and other sources and helped put pressure on the government to complete an interim report earlier than expected. Its publication in December 1982 contained 45 recommendations and validated the stance taken by whistleblowers and leakers for government action on medical fraud and overservicing.

In this case study the leaker/s were successful in passing information to the media in ways that protected their anonymity. No one involved was caught, discredited or suspended from work. They were able to maintain the secrecy of their covert manoeuvre to get information to the media and bypass official channels. The leaker/s took documentary evidence to an experienced journalist who investigated the claims of the leaker/s, collected further evidence and wrote newspaper articles on the topic. The timing of the release of the documents was fortuitous. The editor of the newspaper was interested in white-collar crime, the health debate and exposés of policy failures of the federal government. This was a government already weakened by scandals and leakers, so whistleblowers were emboldened to make disclosures that would be effective (Flynn 2004: 218).

The bigger picture

Leakers and whistleblowers acted in concert and fought for media and parliamentary oversight of fraud and abuse against Medibank. These acts come under the umbrella of what political theorist John Keane called ‘monitory democracy’. This was a new form of democracy born in the post World War Two period which saw the emergence of communicative technologies – the photocopier, the scanner, the fax machine and later the Internet, mobile phones and video recorders. It enabled citizens to more effectively monitor the actions of government and with the help of the media tell others about matters that have been
covered up (Keane 2009). Peter Shergold's admonition that leaking was 'democratic sabotage' is at odds with monitory democracy as the corrective to unnecessary secrecy and unaccountable power.

In spite of inexperience or a lack of professionalism in handling the media, unauthorised leakers have worked to a variety of goals and been successful. For some it is getting information into the public arena. For others it is to expose government policy to wider and more rigorous community debate. Some want to drive a wedge between the executive and the parliament by suggesting to politicians that they are not being well briefed by senior officers of their departments through the omission or cover-up of information. Others are interested in setting in train some form of parliamentary inquiry into organisational malfeasance. For others it is to achieve more substantial social or political reform than any inquiry can achieve.

One influential monitor on democracy was Daniel Ellsberg, an employee of the Rand Corporation and an advisor to the Pentagon in the 1960s. Initially he was a supporter of the war in Vietnam but in the course of his employment he uncovered evidence that the Johnson administration had lied about its involvement in the war. Ellsberg decided to take action. He photocopied the evidence of the government's deception, a hefty 7,000 page set of documents called the Pentagon Papers, and leaked this information to The New York Times in 1971 (Ellsberg 2002). There were long legal delays before The Times started to publish the documents. The government issued injunctions to prevent publication of any other papers in the series. The matter ended up in the Supreme Court, which ruled against the injunctions; this generated adverse publicity for the government.

When asked whether he would have used this approach today Ellsberg replied that to avoid the legal delays he would now scan the documents and put them on the Internet. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange argued that for someone in Ellsberg's position it would be better to go to a mainstream outlet to get maximum publicity but use WikiLeaks for the storage of the documents. This has the advantage, Assange told The New York Times, that the material can be verified in the same way that an academic paper can be verified.

Learning more
Much has changed since the inception of newspaper investigative journalism. In 2006 WikiLeaks was developed as a safe house for newsworthy leaks of political, historic or ethical significance. The site is located on servers in Sweden, Belgium and the United States. It maintains its own servers, keeps no logs and uses military grade encryption to protect sources and other confidential information. To date WikiLeaks has not released a misattributed document.

The website has had significant successes. These include the release of the Afghan war logs, the Iraq war logs and US embassy diplomatic cables. The mainstream media picked up these stories on WikiLeaks and the level of publicity which ensued encouraged other leaking activists to send material to this site. The retaliatory action taken by the US government was to imprison the alleged leaker Bradley Manning.

Most unauthorised leakers do not meet such a fate. In fact they are successful in reaching their goals, which may be to get information via the media into the public arena or to expose government policy to wider and more rigorous community debate. Some want to drive a wedge between the executive and the parliament by setting a doubt in the mind of politicians that they are not being well briefed by senior officers of their departments through the omission or cover-up of information. For others it is to achieve more substantial social or political reform than any parliamentary inquiry can achieve.

Julian Assange has a different agenda and a bolder ambition. He is more interested in societies being based on justice rather than on transparency and openness, although these goals can converge. In essays written in 2006 he explained his position. The goal is to 'radically shift regime behaviour'. He argued,

We must understand the key generative structure of bad governance ... we must use these insights to inspire within us and others a course of ennobling and effective action to replace the structures that lead to bad governance with something better (Assange 2006).

He likens this bad governance to a conspiracy and by that he means the ability of political elites to hold onto power through the secrecy of their plans and actions which work to the detriment of the population. Conspiracies can be undone by mass leaking. The idea is to increase the porousness of the conspiracy's information system so that the conspiracy will turn against itself in self-defence. As the lines of communication are interrupted the information flow decreases to the point where the conspiracy is not able to govern.

Where this bold ambition leads is yet to be seen but in the meantime leaking, whether it is on WikiLeaks or in mainstream journalism, provides an alternative to whistleblowing or just doing nothing in the face of corruption, fraud, waste, abuse or hazards to the public. Leakers can be effective in redressing these injustices...
but they need to be mindful of precautions to protect their anonymity.

Acknowledgements
I wish to thank Jørgen Johansen, Liam Phelan, Brian Martin, William de Maria, Sandrine Thérèse, Lyn Carson, Colin Salter, Sharon Callaghan and Ian Miles for helpful comments on drafts of this paper.

References
Introduction

Climate change is a booming wake-up call that our economies cannot go on with business as usual. Widespread concern about the environment sits alongside growing doubt about the viability of what we know as ‘the economy’ — the financial system is considered shaky, unemployment rates are high, and market expansion is no longer seen as a viable solution to declining revenues. From all quarters, not only the traditional left but also governments, non-government organisations, development agencies and grassroots organisations, there is interest in environmentally attuned and socially orientated economic alternatives.

Amidst such concern, for some time now activists in movements such as the World Social Forum have been supporting and growing alternative economies through a whole range of techniques including new forms of learning and more traditional methods of lobbying, publicity and rallies (Roelvink 2009 and forthcoming). In doing so they are clearly showing that ‘another world is possible’. As academics, with others we have developed a suite of complementary techniques for use in research specifically designed to cultivate more diverse, people and environment centred economies, what we call ‘community economies’ (see Gibson-Graham 2006, Chapter 4).

In developing these techniques, one of which we introduce below, our primary aim has been to make real the possibility that the economy can be a space of ethical action, not a place of submission to ‘the bottom line’ or the ‘imperatives of capital’ as it is so often portrayed. We have found, however, that to imagine and enact ‘other’ economies is no small feat. A significant barrier resides in ourselves, in the very way that we understand ‘the economy’. As Stephen Healy (2009) argues, when the capitalist economy is seen as the real, dominant and or most powerful form of economic life, the alternative economy is usually seen as idealistic, inferior and powerless. But if we displace this binary view of the economy with one of radical difference — of diverse capitalist and non-capitalist economic forms — then we open up many more spaces of action without prejudging their transformative potential. From here our task can be to facilitate ethical debates about which practices foster community wellbeing and resilience and to conduct research that supports and grows these practices.

The techniques we have developed are thus directed at transforming ourselves, that is, at creating new economic subjects who can begin to take ethical action in the economic realm. To create new subjects, however, we first need a different representation of the economy. J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006) offers an alternative framing of economy — diverse economies — that acknowledges the already existing multiple forms of economic activity and sources of economic innovation that we can find all around us if we look for them. In this essay we focus on the technique of diverse economies framing.

The diverse economies framing

When people speak of ‘the economy’ they tend only to think of formal commodity markets, waged and salaried labour and capitalist enterprises focused on creating profit for owners or shareholders. The diverse economies framing broadens our conception of the economy. There are different kinds of transaction and multiple ways in which exchange is negotiated — not only formal market transactions, but alternative markets where considerations other than supply and demand influence the terms of exchange, and non-market exchanges and transactions. There are different ways of performing and remunerating labour — not only waged and salaried labour, but alternatively paid labour and unpaid labour. And there are different modes of economic organisation.
or enterprise with their multiple ways of producing, appropriating and distributing surplus labour — not only capitalist enterprise, but other forms of enterprise where private accumulation of surplus is not, or not the only, core business.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transactions</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Enterprise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>Paid</td>
<td>Capitalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Market</td>
<td>Alternative Paid</td>
<td>Alternative Capitalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Market</td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
<td>Non-Capitalist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: A Diverse Economy Framing. Source: J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006,71)

This preliminary framing is the starting point for specifying the wide range of activities that constitute economies in place. Rather than lay out a more elaborated diverse economy framing here, we turn now to how this representation has been applied.

Using the diverse economies framing in place
We have used this representation as a tool for reimagining regional economies in many different places such as the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts, USA, the Latrobe Shire in South Eastern Australia and the municipalities of Jagna and Linamon in the Central and Southern Philippines (see Cameron and Gibson 2005a, Gibson, Cahill and McKay 2009, Gibson-Graham 2006, Graham, Healy and Byrne 2002). Participatory action research processes have been central to many of these projects (see Cameron and Gibson 2005b). In the Pioneer Valley, the Latrobe Shire, Jagna and Linamon there has been some interest by potential research partners in the agenda of imagining and enacting different economies, ones in which people who are often seen as economically marginalised play a purposeful and valued role. The choice of site has been influenced by the proximity to our university settings in the first and second cases and, in the third, by our partner NGO’s relationship with particular municipal governments keen to experiment with alternative development pathways.

Once the institutional partnerships with either local governments or NGOs were negotiated, the recruitment of participants in the research has proceeded in different ways. Each project employed local community researchers with varying educational backgrounds who joined with one, two or a small group of academics to become the research team. Research funds have been used to pay limited term salaries or small stipends for all community based researchers. They, in turn, have recruited other community members to work, usually on a voluntary basis, on inventorying and mobilising community assets towards social enterprise development. In the Latrobe Valley the research team placed newspaper advertisements for community researchers who were members of economically marginalised groups (retrenched power industry workers, young unemployed people, sole parents). In The Pioneer Valley the research team advertised and used snowball techniques to find interested community researchers who could network with a wide range of Valley residents. In both Jagna and Linamon the research team recruited two ‘local researchers’ recommended by our municipal government and NGO partners for 12 months initially. They had tertiary education and, having grown up in the region, significant local knowledge and connections with peasant farmers, semi-employed labourers, fisher people, young mothers, older women and ethnic minorities. As each action research project has been slightly different, we focus here on only the Linamon Community Partnering Project to illustrate the nitty gritty of using the diverse economies framing.

Conducting a diverse economies inventory
In Linamon the diverse economy inventory was conducted as part of a larger exercise of identifying the assets (in addition to the needs) of the community. Our concern was that strengths-based approaches to community economic development often operate with a very narrow vision of economic assets that highlights small business and micro-enterprise and making formal markets ‘work for the poor’. This focus ignores the wide range of economic practices that support well-being directly, offer a social safety net and are vehicles for community celebration and civic engagement.

Drawing on their own networks the employed local researchers recruited four people as ‘community economy researchers’ (CERs). In Linamon the project worked with a young unemployed youth, a retrenched power industry worker, an older single parent woman farmer and a young unemployed Muslim woman. The CERs were of varied social and educational backgrounds and came from different barangays, representing coastal and upland areas of the municipality (a barangay is the lowest administrative unit in the Philippines, equivalent to local councils in Australia). As part of the training for all community based researchers the research team worked together on compiling an inventory of the diverse economy of Linamon, drawing on local knowledge and data contained in the recently completed Barangay Development Plans.

With the employed local researchers the academics led a brainstorming session to scope out the range of diverse economic activities under the headings transactions, labour and enterprise. While conducted in English, attention was paid to listing the local terms for activities like barter, reciprocal labour and gleaning. Taking only the transactions column as an example, the following
questions were used to flush out the variety of exchange relationships in one setting.

**A diverse transactions inventory exercise**
- What kinds of goods and services are traded in your local area?
- What kinds of markets exist for these commodities?
- Are there alternative markets?
- What kinds of goods and services are exchanged in non-market ways?
- What kinds of ethics govern all these different transactions?
- How many buyers or sellers are there in each market?
- What kind of power is wielded by buyers or sellers?
- Can new entrants easily enter the market or are there constraints?
- Are some goods bartered, gifted, gleaned, poached, stolen?
- What kinds of relationships exist between producers and sellers, consumers and sellers, givers and receivers?

The research team was concerned to include those transactions taking place in formally regulated markets including naturally protected, artificially protected, monopolised, state regulated and niche markets. They were also keen to inventory the goods and services that were exchanged in non-typical or alternative markets, such as informal markets, barter, ethical fair-trade markets, underground markets, local trading system, alternative currencies, co-op exchanges, alternative credit and the sale of public goods. Many of the most important goods and services are given, taken or exchanged outside of markets in areas of life often seen as ‘not economic’. In Linamon these ‘non-market’ transactions included the following:

**Household flows**
- Food sharing
- Child care sharing
- Care of house and animals

**Gifts**
- Charity to poor — house built, water sealed toilets constructed
- Dajong: neighbourhood mortuary assistance including money, food and services
- Gala 1: families give money, rice, wood to family of marrying son
- Gala 2: dances and money offered in honour of patron saint — fund raising for church
- Gift to coconut plantation landowners in gratitude

**Indigenous exchange**
- Ritual offerings to spirits

**Gleaning**
- Pamulak: collecting fruits and vegetables after harvest
- Lasik: picking up left over coconuts after the harvest

**Theft**
- Robbery of crops to settle gambling debts
- Illegal fishing practices
- Illegal logging on uplands

When it came to conducting the exercise with the CERs our local researchers outlined the columns in the local language and, using the names that had been identified in the first inventory round, gathered stories about activities that fit within each cell. As it was used in Linamon the diverse economies inventory was not an exercise in constructing a quantitatively complete census of the local economy, though this could be done in any setting if resources allowed and if it served the purpose of the research intervention. While the research team was able to collect information on labour and transactions from local knowledge and on the number of enterprises (mostly sole proprietorships and a few family businesses) from the Barangay Development Plans, they did not conduct a comprehensive survey. For the purpose of the Linamon Community Partnering Project the objective was to qualitatively identify local practices that might be strengthened and reoriented towards enhancing community economic development. The exercise was targeted at training all the non-academic researchers to shift their focus onto the fullness of their economy in place. The technique achieved a representational turnaround by situating practices often represented as backward and unproductive as part of ‘the economy’. Many practices were thus revalued. Others were recognised as producing resource conflict and stress. The new understandings achieved by doing the diverse economies inventory then informed the next phase of the action research.

The stories that had been told while compiling the inventory were examined for what they could tell us about mobilising resources. They disclosed many potential ways to fund community economic development in addition to export orientated production and micro-credit schemes so often pushed by mainstream development bodies. The transactions inventory highlighted, for example, remittances gifted by overseas contract migrants that are used by households to fund the necessities of everyday life and sometimes to purchase more luxury items. Stories were also told of migrants using their remittance earnings
to fund local barangay improvements. Local roads and water systems had been built by harnessing volunteer labour (modelled on the time honoured performance of bayanihan, or local civic effort) and materials bought with gifted remittances. The inventory prompted discussion about whether existing sources of finance and practices of giving and reciprocity might be enlisted to support other community-orientated development projects.

The diverse economies inventory was a technique that formed part of a much longer process of action research that lasted for three years. It was used both in the early stages of community involvement and informed the subsequent process of researching the feasibility of community based social enterprises and experimenting with building new businesses (see Gibson, Hill and Maclay, 2008 for more on this process).

The bigger picture
In this essay we have offered the diverse economies framing as a technique of reading for economic difference (see Gibson-Graham 2006, xxxi-xxxii). This technique trains us to see ‘the economy’ as a site of economic diversity. It enables those who use it to begin to see themselves differently, as actively contributing to economic life in multiple ways and through multiple roles and identities, as workers, researchers, gift givers, gardeners, reciprocators, activists, traders and so on. The reframing this technique achieves can be harnessed towards building socially and environmentally just economies. As Gibson-Graham (2006, chapters 2 and 6) has shown, however, it takes further techniques than those we have discussed here to turn ‘reluctant subjects’ of alternative economies into animated producers of new economic possibilities. Reframing can be joined by techniques that document examples of community economic action, that prompt participants to imagine creating new social enterprises and that help groups to build these enterprises (see Gibson-Graham 2006, 132). It is clear to us that academic work has a central role to play here.

With more techniques we might further differentiate economic life, thereby enlarging the possibilities for action. As it has been applied in different settings, for example, the diverse economies framing has been extended to include diverse forms of property and finance. In our new geological epoch of human-induced climate change, the Anthropocene, it has become increasingly clear to us that the more-than-human world is fundamentally implicated in the way we live our lives. We humans are neither masters nor caretakers of the environment and other species; the more-than-human world is an active participant in diverse economies. Consider the diverse exchanges, labour and surplus appropriations that involve rivers, soil profiles, animals, biota, minerals and atmospheres that contribute to economic wellbeing. Our task now is to open ourselves up to the contributions of the environment and other species and to recognise the transactions we make with this more-than-human world. We might then also open up the space of ethical economic decision making to ‘earth others’ and together transform our economies (Roelvink and Gibson-Graham 2009, Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2010).

Learning more
The Community Economies Collective has developed a number of resources with which to develop a discourse of economic diversity in place, many of which can be found on the Community Economies Collective website: http://www.communityeconomies.org/Home and in a book in progress by J.K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy called Take Back the Economy (forthcoming with the University of Minnesota Press).

The diverse transactions inventory in Linamon highlighted above was only a small part of the Community Partnering Projects conducted in the Philippines. The projects also involved the development of new social enterprises. Some of this work is documented in the DVD Building Social Enterprises in the Philippines: Strategies for Local Development (Gibson, Hill and Maclay 2008) which can be accessed at http://www.communityeconomies.org/Resources/Community-Resources.

The diverse economies framework was developed by J.K. Gibson-Graham. Her books The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It) (1996) and A Postcapitalist Politics (2006) are central to the rethinking economy project and have inspired a new generation of economic researchers. Her Progress in Human Geography lecture (2008) provides a picture of this emerging field of research. The diverse economies approach is aligned with a range of activists and social movements, some of which can be found at the World Social Forum meetings.

Our new work developing an economic ethics for the Anthropocene has been published in two journal articles, one in the Australian Humanities Review (2009) and the other in the radical geography journal Antipode (2009).

Acknowledgements
We would like to thank Liam Phelan, Jørgen Johansen, Lyn Carson and Sharon Callaghan for their helpful comments on earlier drafts.

References
Cameron, J. and K. Gibson. 2005b. ‘Participatory Action Research in a Poststructural Vein.’ Geoforum
We understand the importance of career development in education. To make it easy for you to extend your professional expertise, The University of Queensland offers a range of flexible and relevant postgraduate education programs.

Studying with UQ’s School of Education will expose you to the latest developments, policies and practices in education.

Postgraduate coursework programs include:
- Master of Educational Studies
- Graduate Diploma in Educational Studies
- Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies

You can choose from 11 specialisations, enabling you to tailor a program to meet specific needs or interests, or to undertake a more general approach by selecting from a range of courses.

Further information:
P: (07) 3365 6550
E: education@uq.edu.au

www.uq.edu.au/education
School of Education

EXPAND YOUR EXPERTISE IN EDUCATION

Social Alternatives Vol. 30 No.1, 2011 33
Sustainable and Resilient Social Structures for Change: The organic movement

ANDREW MONK

The organic food and farming movement has evolved over the past three decades from an alternative movement for social change at the farm and food industry level to one that is professionally formalised in its production standards and in its relationships with governments and its associated industry across the world. Such an evolution has not been without challenges including a fundamental one of maintaining a focus on its originating social movement tenets of sustainable natural farming, animal welfare and fair trade. This article explores some of the risks that such movements face as they mature. Corporate or organisational structures that encourage ownership and involvement of stakeholders (in standards and agenda setting) are a key point of success for the organic movement and its associated industry. Balancing this with professionalism and financial and resourcing independence from governments and other interests not fully aligned with the organic ideals has also been a key element in delivering longer term resilient and lasting change.

Introduction

The organic farming movement can trace its roots from mid last century with the reaction to the rising use of synthetic pesticides and a more corporate or agribusiness trend in farming. Consumers were becoming disenfranchised from being able to make active and informed choices about their food, where it came from, who produced it, and under what methods. From the 1970s there were farmers and consumers who came together to establish standards by which their farming and food production systems would be predicated: banning synthetic pesticides, shunning productivity pressures in favour of sustainability and ecological priorities, and re-orienting the status of farm animals from production units back into integrated parts of the whole ‘organism’ of the farm.

From quite radical beginnings in the 1970s, organic farming now has well-entrenched international standards, with both government and industry or movement-driven regulatory and verification arrangements. The organic farming movement became a successful industry and market niche through the 1990s in particular via the uptake of organic food products in the major supermarkets of Europe and the US. While dominating some food market sectors (baby foods, dairy products) in some countries, it averages between 2 and 3% of total food and beverage retail value across much of the western industrial world, while being a recognised value-added marketing claim into many emerging markets by the larger food industry players. Its impact has been both within the marketplace itself, albeit as a niche offering, and as a broader movement impacting on or questioning food labelling claims and promoting greater transparency in production standards at farm level.

The processes of standards setting, independent assessment and verification, and market monitoring, remain to this day both ‘organic’ and true to the core of the original tenets of the movement of the 1970s. It is arguably this success, of remaining focused on processes of standards setting and maintaining broad stakeholder input into these processes (rather than being beholden to singular commercial interests or interest groups) that maintains organic as a distinct and sought after food category in the markets of the developed economies.

While, like the food industry generally, not without its contradictions and ethical challenges, this movement and its associated industry offer lessons (from both its successes and mistakes) for those looking at wanting to see greater social change in the food and farming sector. The upside has been that a percentage of farmers from developed economies have converted their farmlands to organic production practices, and in turn given access to consumers wanting food products that are pesticide-free and, more recently, produced without the use of GMOs (genetically modified organisms). In an environment where consumers are getting more confused rather
than informed about food labels, food origins, and food ethics, and where more farmers continue to leave the land due to lowered returns and competition from anonymous producers in other countries, the ongoing growth of the organic market and its networks of farmers to consumers stands out as a case of successful social change engineering. Its challenge remains the balancing of the competing agendas and interests of government, big business and commercial retailing maximising financial returns and protecting market share, with that of consumers and the ideals embodied in the standards for organic production.

Organic processes of standards setting themselves at their best remain ‘organic’ and changing rather than ossified, and the movement and associated industry have worked hard to ensure ongoing ownership and buy-in of key stakeholders. The organic industry remains a case study of consumer-producer-driven food production regulation in action. At the centre of this success are resilient, sustainable and professional industry associations and social structures that provide the glue to manage the conflicts as well as opportunities for further social change in the food and farming community. These successful aspects of the movement could effectively be applied across a range of social change theatres.

Setting and maintaining standards
The fundamental strength of the organic movement has not been its stance against synthetic pesticides or less than ideal animal welfare standards, but how it goes about reviewing its stances on food and farm technologies, and establishes and maintains standards and systems to deal with these. The case of GMOs and their progressive integration into the food and farming system through the 1990s is a classic example of technologies being utilised against the wishes of a significant proportion of consumers, but consumers otherwise unable to make discerning choices about the use of such technologies in their own food purchases.

The organic industry has been able to establish a choice for consumers amidst this sea of confusing and sometimes opaque labelling requirements (or lack thereof) and in turn create a channel to market for farmers and value adders wishing to supply to that demand. But how has it managed to do this?

Well established standards setting processes, via consultation with industry members, consumer groups, food technologies and others through the 1990s, determined that GMOs did not have a place in organic production principles and therefore would not be actively used in organic farming. This has been determined again and again in a variety of international settings. The most extreme example of social involvement in organic standards setting was the 1990s processes in the US which saw one of the largest public responses via submissions to a draft USDA organic standard which suggested the inclusion of GMOs in organic standards. Over 250,000 submissions were received on this draft, with a resounding ‘no’ vote being registered.

The level of social engagement within the organic community on such issues, and the regular commentary that the organic movement has on food and farming practices more broadly, continues to provide the social jell that ensures a continued focus on the issues, and an ongoing resourcing (both financial and social) such that submissions are made, the public is informed via the media and other social forums, and governments are pressured to deliver on policy that aligns with the interests of the movement.

Such success has translated into premium prices for organic foods being maintained at retail level, such that farmers can continue to maintain what are very exacting agricultural and food standards for the consumers that demand them. An industry-driven and maintained system of auditing or inspection and certification to the standards then ensures that commercial pressures and self-interest do not outweigh and take over the principles upon which the standards are based in the first place.

One key message has been that the attention and resources placed in ensuring widespread consultation and broad stakeholder input, as well as independence of the regulating of those standards, are quite critical elements in building legitimacy for standards setting, particularly when such standards are related to issues of significant controversy.

Organisational structures and financing
On the one hand the organic industry’s success via market share growth and ongoing uptake by consumers and farmers alike (albeit still at niche levels of low single digit percentages of total market) continues to enable it to have influence on food standards and some production methods. From a ‘network theory’ point of view this may be a good thing, suggesting that the ideals and ideas are being cemented in mainstream social structures and practices. On the other hand, such success risks the organic industry becoming beholden to the very masters and market pressures that stimulated the birth of the movement in the first place.

The world’s largest food companies now own organic processing facilities and organic brands (for example, Danone, General Mills, Proctor and Gamble internationally; in Australia, Heinz, Sanitarium, National Foods and the major retailers Woolworths and Coles). Similarly in some countries there has been a significant take-over of
Managing interests and agendas
BFA's financial resilience means that it is not beholden to government interests. The competing and sometimes conflicting interests and agendas of governments can mean that more conventional or 'non-organic' interests (for example, the introduction of GMOs, synthetic chemical control of pest plagues and food labelling laws) can otherwise overpower organic interests and practices, or at best continue to position them as fringe or radical ideas (for example, in relation to debates about sustainable farming and carbon emissions reduction, current favourite topics of governments around the world).

In contrast to this there have been a number of attempts by governments in Australia in setting and then propelling up a 'single voice' to government from the organic movement, either federally or at state level. In and of itself this is a desirable and admirable thing. The problem has been however that such moves have often been instigated by government, rather than the movement, and have been attached to a series of public funds being made available that fostered a culture of dependency within the structures and functions of the group. Although some social movements cannot exist without some form of public good funds or philanthropy from external sources, there are often unwanted costs associated with such 'gifts', particularly in instances where the movement in question may otherwise be able to organise to fund themselves in the absence of this.

In the most overt of cases, the Victorian government nominated funds for an organic industry representative group following a review of a GMO-crop moratorium. The logic of support for organic (as well as GMO crops in the final report) was that organic offered consumers a choice of non-GMO foods in the marketplace. The logic on the
surface appears reasonable, however the implications can be that such groups then become co-opted into government agendas and policies, and distracted by meeting those, rather than being driven from and by the roots of the movement itself.

The contrast of these two types of groups (one movement or industry-driven, the other funded and driven by government interests) is a classic case study in ‘what to do’ and ‘what not to do’ in establishing lasting, effective, and independent associations and structures that are aligned with the founding movement ideals. The important challenge for such movements, where there is the potential to raise funds via its membership and stakeholders in one manner or another, is to create financial and resourcing structures that are renewable and sustainable in a manner to meet the needs and expectations of the members that are supporting such funding and related organisational activities. What can become a ‘virtuous loop’ of support can then in turn translate into a very effective and powerful tool for further social change. A lack of a focus on achieving this, in contrast, can deliver a movement both dependent on external (and sometimes finite) resources and captivated by interests and agendas well beyond its own control.

Conclusion
The recipe for success for the organic industry in Australia is to balance competing agendas and stakeholder interests with a pragmatism for using existing social and financial structures - retail markets and government rules - to engage and impact on farmer and retailer behaviour alike. By educating consumers and mobilising stakeholders to influence policies, such outcomes in turn can encourage further purchase of organic products, which in turn make it more evident as a viable option for farmers and consumers. This in turn may influence governments and the media to cover stories and issues close to the heart of the organic movement such as animal welfare practices, food labelling transparency and the use of synthetic chemicals or GMOs in foods.

Most importantly such moves generate a vortex of social change in the food and farming communities, questioning food production methods and labelling claims and their alignment with practice in the field, which is exactly an aim and ideal of the organic movement.

The very success of the organic movement to date, and the litmus test of its future performance, will be measured on how well it maintains these social networks of consultation with stakeholders, the balancing of competing and sometimes conflicting interests, the tempering of overt commercial and government interests and agendas, and its pragmatism in remaining relevant to and for the general public. All of these cannot all be achieved simultaneously all the time. Like democracy itself, the organic movement’s strength and its effectiveness can never be taken for granted and require continual renewal and engagement by affected stakeholders.

Ultimately a smaller group of individuals and select groups that are best placed and able to continue to engage and look after the wider stakeholder environment will define the success of this social change movement and others like it. The role of well structured, pragmatic and well resourced associations and social groups are key in this process and cannot be under estimated. Investing significantly in getting these structures right early on, but also maintaining them with the ownership, buy-in and support of the pivotal stakeholders is the key to lasting success.

This case study leads to several recommendations for organisers promoting social change.

- The setting and maintaining of production standards should have meaning and integrity, based on processes of broad participation and buy-in of stakeholders.
- Organisational structures and financing should be sound and sustainable to ensure resilience.
- Special interests should be tempered by effective structures and processes.
- Issues that stimulate greater government interest and recognition and in turn co-option of agendas and directions should be managed very carefully.

Further Reading

Author
Dr Andrew Monk has two decades of experience in organic industry auditing, certification and standards setting as well as commercial interests across the organic supply chain, currently in the organic waste sector with prior horticulture ventures and value adding. Andrew has a PhD with a focus on organic production systems and sustainability in Australia.

Andrew consults to both public and private entities across the supply chain on environmental, including organic, issues and management systems, whilst being managing director of an environmental sector services company, Mulching Technologies Pty Ltd. Andrew is a prior CEO and current director of Biological Farmers of Australia Ltd (BFA) and an adjunct associate professor at the University of New England, Armidale, NSW, School of Business, Economics and Public Policy.
How Scientists Can Protect and Restore Their Reputations

Sandrine A. Thérèse

Scientists whose work and reputation come under fire may adopt strategic practices to protect and restore their status and identity. Some of these tactics are illustrated through the case of an Australian scientist who became targeted when he began researching the biological effects of mobile telephone radiation. While the strategies used by controversial scientists could be seen as primarily self-serving they can also be viewed as means to creating a more democratic, open-minded and less politically naive scientific world that encourages innovation for the benefit of society.

Introduction

The traditional view of science is an apolitical one. Scientific knowledge is produced by trustworthy individuals and groups who undertake research in ways that keep subjective values, theoretical prejudices, secrecy and self-serving interests from distorting results (Merton 1973). Scientists whose work or reputation come under fire may therefore feel surprised and overwhelmed, particularly if they are following the rules of good scientific practice, such as experiments using respected techniques that can falsify deductions and presenting results to peer review scrutiny in academic journals.

Scientists who become the centre of controversy may find their formal status, reputation and research are undermined through a variety of tactics:

- **Degradation rituals** are practices used by critics to redefine the target as a ‘polluted’ or ‘polluting’ person in science (e.g. as pseudo-scientific, fraudulent, incompetent, magical thinker, crazy). They often involve demotion or dismissal and can lead to docility, depression and suicide in the target, as well as fear and compliance in observers (Thérèse and Martin 2010);
- **Dissident research and researchers may be ignored or rendered invisible** in scientific discourse as if they do not exist;
- **Critics may strategically upgrade uncertainty** about dissident theories, research methods and data whilst bolstering certainty in orthodox equivalents;
- **Dissidents may be denied mainstream research funding and blocked from publishing** in mainstream or prestigious scientific journals;
- **Dissidents may have difficulties forging collaborations** because their reputation has been tarnished so that other scientists do not trust them or fear they will be ‘polluted’ by association if they work with dissidents.

In response, targeted scientists can wield an array of tactics aimed at restoring their blemished reputations (Goffman 1961) and protecting themselves from future attacks. To illustrate some of these tactics, I explore the case of an Australian scientist which shows how researchers following their curiosity about nature may find their reputations and their work unfairly attacked, prompting increasingly self-conscious strategies to remediate their status and identity in response.

The mobile phone radiation research controversy

Using the media

I first became aware of Dr Peter French, an Australian cellular biologist researching the effects of mobile phone radiation (MPR), through media coverage. Only later did I realise that this coverage demonstrated a key tactic scientists may turn to when they experience suppression and denigration. (See Thérèse (2003) for details of the French case and one other.)

In a television documentary on the controversy over the health effects of mobile phone radiation (Insight, 6 April 2000), French, then Principal Scientist and Manager of the Centre for Immunology at Sydney’s St Vincent Hospital, divulged that he and his research team (French et al. hereafter) had found it difficult to secure funds for their research. This was despite being one of the few groups in Australia to have published experimental results on the effects of MPR on human and animal cells. French suggested the government’s standard setting body had been ‘dominated for years by industry and continues to be dominated by industry’ and that the National Health & Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) and the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency...
scientists may be tempted to consider legal recourse. Faced with potentially defamatory representations, and the organisation formally apologised to French. The issue was settled out-of-court on the matter. The document was defamatory and he sought legal advice on the matter. The issue was settled out-of-court

However, media use by scientists, especially amidst controversy, is also risky. Talking to the media, particularly before your research has been published in a peer-reviewed journal, may be frowned upon by other scientists, prompting suspicion or envy, as well as accusations of self-promotion and whingeing. French’s televised admission that he was unable to secure grant funding was cast by some elite scientists I interviewed as denoting potential zealousness, shameful admission of failure and bad sportsmanship (Thérèse 2003, 197, 208). French’s earlier media appearances, where he described his team’s experiments showing harmful effects on cells from radiation exposure similar to mobile phone emissions, attracted attention and criticism from more powerful, orthodox players. The research arm of a major telecommunications company (Telstra Research Laboratories) sent employees to check on French et al.’s radiation exposure chamber, which French allowed. The exposure system and the results French et al. published in their early articles were subsequently damned in a report prepared by the company, later circulated at a key scientific conference on the topic.

French’s scientific reputation also suffered a degradation ritual through circulation of a damaging document amongst a group of key researchers, advisors and industry representatives in the field. Prepared by an employee of an industry standards setting agency, the document analysed submissions to the Australian Senate Inquiry into Electromagnetic Radiation (see SECITARC 2001) and explicitly identified French in terms that undermined his scientific credibility and impugned his motivation for engaging in the research. French had made a submission to the Inquiry, describing his group’s peer-reviewed published hypothesis for a mechanism by which MPR might lead to diseases, such as cancer, and citing other published studies showing MPR effects on cells, organisms, animals and human subjects. In French’s opinion the document was defamatory and he sought legal advice on the matter. The issue was settled out-of-court and the organisation formally apologised to French.

Faced with potentially defamatory representations, scientists may be tempted to consider legal recourse. However, positive legal outcomes do not necessarily repair scientific status as damaging representations may continue to circulate within and beyond scientific circles, irrespective of a court finding. Scientists who are defamed should carefully consider whether to enter into legal proceedings and should assess whether they have the material, social and emotional or psychological resources to pursue this avenue.

The French case demonstrates the importance of choosing the right forum in which to highlight the controversy surrounding your research. Despite the risks, French’s media exposure of difficulties he faced in continuing his research, and specific degradation rituals he was subjected to, led to some benefits. After coverage of his experiences in a weekend newspaper magazine (Linell 2000), French was contacted by a wealthy philanthropist who had been struck by the story and offered the funds necessary to perform cutting edge experiments. Media representation of struggles dissident scientists face may help secure material resources to continue research (when mainstream funding seems blocked) and social or symbolic resources to counter some of the damage done to their reputations.

Dissident scientists should also consider using forums beyond science, such as popular print, broadcast or web media, to show how their critics are protecting their own reputations or other vested interests, as demonstrated by French’s comments in the documentary mentioned above and in his use of the Centre for Immunology’s website to critique the scientific reasoning of his orthodox detractors. This tactic does double duty by alerting audiences to the inherently political nature of scientific research and undermining simplistic acceptance of critics’ views on dissident scientists. As I observed in the French case, it may also prove highly persuasive for dissident scientists to show how their own interests lie in furthering scientific knowledge and that their media appearance is driven by the public interest.

In my first interview with him, French explained that he initially approached the media about his early experimental results because he felt the public had a right to know about a potential health risk from mobile phone radiation. However, as his experiences of intellectual suppression and degradation grew, French appeared to use exposure in the print and broadcast media and in other forums, such as the website mentioned above, in more self-consciously strategic ways.

Learning more about media framing may, therefore, be useful for dissident scientists to help ‘package’ their stories in ways that attract media interest and reporting. Developing contacts with a range of investigative journalists in print, broadcast or web media may also help
to avoid the pitfalls of tabloid clichés in the representation of conflict, lead to more sophisticated coverage of the issues and capture the attention, and potentially the support, of demographically diverse audiences.

In arenas such as popular media, highlighting the controversy that surrounds you might lead to a remediation of your reputation amongst non-scientific audiences or even amongst fellow scientists who may perceive your treatment as unfair or be encouraged to collaborate with you. The same cannot be said for mainstream or elite forums of science where depoliticised representations of research appear far more effective, as I consider below.

**Attracting influential allies**

Another useful tactic may be to attract influential allies from the world of politics. While the scientific legitimacy of French’s submission to the Senate Inquiry on Electromagnetic Radiation was derided by one group of powerful players, a presentation by French and his physicist colleague, Professor David McKenzie, to the Senate Inquiry panel led to a Senator suggesting their research was groundbreaking and possibly worthy of a Nobel Prize in the future (Tape Transcript, Hearings of Senate Inquiry on Electromagnetic Radiation, Sydney, 16th November 2000). This was also an important forum in which French and McKenzie asserted the scientific superiority of controlled cellular studies their team used in ways which sidelined the utility of epidemiological studies, often held up by critics as the only means to determine whether MPR might cause harm.

French counted the Senate Inquiry presentation as critical to a status turnaround amongst government and industry officials and a subsequent invitation to collaborate from Telstra Research Laboratories (TRL), which had previously been a source of damaging criticism. Impressed by their novel hypothesis for how MPR might trigger illness, an executive from TRL provided French et al. with a cutting edge (and expensive) radiation exposure system that accurately simulates microwave emissions from mobile phone handsets. Along with the funding provided by a wealthy benefactor, mentioned above, the donated exposure machine from TRL led to a widely publicised and scientifically lauded launch of experiments on human brain cells (see for example *The Australian and The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 January 2002), with clear attributions of French and his team as groundbreaking researchers. The French case shows that the creation of a robust network of allies and resources (Latour 1987) may be critical to build or repair scientific reputation. In French’s case, winning over political figures, forming alliances with previous detractors, and deploying the best available experimental systems and methods were instrumental in undoing at least some of the damage his scientific reputation had suffered.

**Forming alliances and camouflaging controversy**

French revealed that, at first, promised collaborations with scientists from other research institutions failed to manifest. Despite these setbacks he continued to seek and successfully attract research collaborators from different disciplines and universities, forging a strong network of scientific alliances. This included a prestigious physicist, Professor David McKenzie, from the high-status University of Sydney, who helped him characterise the electromagnetic fields generated by the radiation exposure chamber used in early experiments. French’s team also published a key article (French et al. 2001) on their hypothesis for how MPR might cause cancer in a top-ranking cellular biology journal with a recognised ‘silverback’ or elder researcher as co-author (Professor Ron Penny, a well-respected and distinguished biomedical scientist and head of the Centre for Immunology where French was Principal Researcher during the study period).

Controversial scientists should consider crossing disciplinary, institutional and even national boundaries to form alliances they may previously have not considered. Cultural diversity in the international world of science — such as disciplines, countries, research groups or specific journals more open to your research interests — should be sought out as part of a self-conscious strategy to form scientific alliances. A key means to strengthen the persuasiveness of your research, deflect potential future attacks and undo damage already done to your reputation is to represent your research as the fruits of a respected scientific collective rather than the work of a lone maverick. In this case, avoiding the potentially polluting effects of politics and controversy in elite forums of science is vital.

While highlighting controversy over your work in popular media may have some benefits, in mainstream and elite scientific domains, such as top-ranking peer-reviewed journals or scientific conferences, backstaging (Goffman 1959) or masking controversy seems more advisable. French et al.’s key article in Differentiation (French et al. 2001) did not allude to the controversy over French and his research, focussing instead on the group’s innovative and testable theory for how MPR might cause cancer. Similarly, the media release announcing the launch of French et al.’s cellular experiments displayed a studious ‘camouflaging’ of the degradation rituals that French and his previous experiments had suffered, focussing on a ‘world first’ and ‘crucial trial’ which would test the ‘ground-breaking theory published by St Vincent’s researchers’ (Thérèse 2003).

**Knowing when to move on**

It may also be fruitful for scientists to identify when it is time to move on to less debatable areas, or, at least to work in less contentious fields while pursuing controversial topics.
on a part-time basis. After French et al.’s groundbreaking experiments on human cells showed none of the expected effects predicted in their published hypothesis, French left the Centre for Immunology to pursue a career in several biotechnology firms. Gaining an MBA during his time at the Centre for Immunology allowed French to make a successful sideways career move that saw him using his scientific credentials and experience in domains beyond academic science.

The bigger picture
It is unfortunate that scientists may find their reputation and work come under attack for doing what they are expected to do: investigate nature. Scientists may not be fully aware, particularly in the early stages of their career, that research often involves entering terrains already colonized by relatively powerful parties protecting interests related to commerce, the military, politics or even scientific reputations based on an established theory. The tactics that targeted scientists can use to retaliate against attacks and restore their reputation should not, however, be seen as simply self-serving. They also play a role in making wider society, and other scientists, more aware of the political, economic and cultural aspects of scientific research. Making the interests of all parties in science explicit contributes to a more open-minded and democratic scientific process that can acknowledge and encourage dissent as much as consensus. The suppression of diversity in science is a threat to the innovation so urgently needed for a liveable future.

For scientists and non-scientists alike, becoming aware of and adept in using techniques to protect and restore scientific reputations can be critical for producing knowledge and practices that ensure public health and deliver ecological and social sustainability. Shedding political naiveté about scientific practice is a key step in achieving Francis Bacon’s vision of science as the liberator of humankind’s estate.

Learning more
Scientists should familiarise themselves with cases of controversy and intellectual suppression in science (Martin 1999), preferably before they encounter problems themselves. It is equally important to be familiar with how scientists who have come under attack work to repair their blemished status and identity while also undermining the legitimacy of their attackers’ claims, motivations and methods. For instance, Simon (2002) shows how some cold fusion researchers are able to continue working in a thoroughly stigmatised field and still retain scientific credibility, while others fail spectacularly. Learning more about persuasive discursive techniques (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984), how the media represents scientific controversy (Dunwoody 1999) and building robust networks of scientific allies (Latour 1987, 108-121) are also good places to start.

Cases where scientific heretics are eventually exonerated in the most prestigious of ways — Nobel Laureates Leon Prusiner (who identified prions as the cause of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease) and Barry Marshall and J. Robin Warren (who showed the link between Helicobacter pylori bacteria and gastric and duodenal ulcers) are excellent examples — are both instructive and inspirational.

Acknowledgements
I thank Jørgen Johansen, Liam Phelan, Kathy Flynn, Colin Salter, Brian Martin and Peter French for helpful comments.

References


SBS [Special Broadcasting Service]. 2000. Insight. 6 April, Sydney, Australia.


Endnotes:
1. These tactics are clearly discernible in the field of mobile phone radiation research. At the time of writing there is ongoing controversy over the interpretation of studies suggesting potential MPR health effects, such as the long-running Interphone Study which showed an increased risk of glioma at the highest exposure levels and the need for more research on long-term and intensive mobile phone use (Interphone Study Group 2010, http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/dyq079, accessed 8 July 2010). Despite this, ARPANSA’s website, for example, suggests ‘There is essentially no evidence that microwave exposure from mobile telephones causes cancer, and no clear evidence that such exposure accelerates the growth of an already-existing cancer,’ (http://www.arpansa.gov.au/mobilephones/index.cfm#4, accessed 8 July 2010, emphasis added).

Author
Dr Sandrine A. Thérèse (née Llabrès) is an Honorary Research Fellow in Anthropology, School of Social Science, University of Queensland. Her research, university teaching and publications focus on practice, politics, symbolics and education in science, engineering and sustainability.

Resurrection

I
Now green leaves and flowers unfurl, float on the pond’s skin, each bloom satin-clean under the sky they sought rising. Bees drink, dragon-flies hover, midges rise to the sun. Unseen, below, bedded in black ooze, the long stems rise.

II
So long under world, tunnelled in the dark, feeding on silence. But now, urgent for the sun, break for the soft night air, climb blindly upwards, struggle for new life. Burst the old husk, leave the shell on the rough bark, wait for dawn and the warm sun. Sing to the sun, drummer!

III
Leaving the stones and the small wet world whose sky meets air with water, turn to the sun through the skin of the sky and wait for the changing. Dragon no longer but a prism of light shot across the still pond. Quick, I’m gone!

John Knight,
Mt. Gravatt, QLD

The People You Leave Behind

So all day long you sat quietly in the sand dunes under that summer sun watching the clumsy pterodactyl pelicans follow the fishing boats seeing how they would wheel and bank over the river then glide stiffly till flaps lowered landing gear out they’d skate the resisting water to bob up and down in the boat’s wake or observing the gulls flock and squabble over the food you threw them with loud and ungracious cryings like the people you left behind but they could soar and turn free of the earth touching forgotten longings and in the evening the black shags settled on the bare arms of the dead mangrove and beyond the ti-tree and banksia you could hear the surf calling until at last on the monochrome water the moon’s light shone through long thin clouds there were stars on the small ripples it was so quiet you heard them lap the bank and a tern calling as it fled up river and after you swallowed the last pill leaving the half-empty bottle of whisky beside the bag and the blanket you walked slowly and deliberately into the cool water.

John Knight,
Mt. Gravatt, QLD