

“Selling” Social Software:

a new approach to IT for organisations and networks

- Is it time for social software or just more IT hype?
- What is going on in this area right now?
- Some potential business uses for social software
- Putting computers in their place: a better future?

Presented by Lee Bryant, December 3, 2003

Interesting times...

A new era of technology usage:

- We have the basic technology now - what can it do?
- Tools becoming simpler, more personal
- Ubiquitous computing, rich webs of connections emerging
- Expensive “corporate” IT not working - cheap informal IT blossoming

New ways of thinking about networks:

- Social Network Analysis and behavioural / ethnographic studies
- Complex systems / systems thinking
- “Tribes” and personal networking, social capital

New ways of thinking about organisations:

- Organisations as networks, complex systems
- Move away from command and control thinking
- Focus on greater autonomy of action for employees / stakeholders
- Increasing interest in “intangible assets” not just “physical assets”

The next big thing?

Hype-fuelled mini bubble

- Mini investment bubble in social networking sites
- Proliferation of Weblogs and media coverage
- AOL, Google and Microsoft working on derivative products and services
- Early social “business” applications starting to emerge

Social nets: goldmine or rat hole?

VCs CONNECT WITH SOCIAL NETWORKING

Friendster, LinkedIn, and Spoke raised nearly \$40 million in combined VC funding. The question now: Can they survive as standalone companies?

Company	Focus	Total venture funding	Potential competitors
Friendster Sunnyvale, CA	Consumers	\$13 million	Match.com, InterActiveCorp
LinkedIn Mountain View, CA	Professionals	\$4.7 million	Monster.com, Yahoo Hotjobs
Ryze British Virgin Islands	Professionals	Approached by VCs	Professional networking groups
Tribe Networks San Francisco	Consumers and professionals	In talks with VCs	Craigslist, Yahoo Groups, Newspaper Classifieds
ZeroDegrees Santa Monica, CA	Professionals and enterprises	In talks with VCs	Salesforce.com
Spoke Palo Alto, CA	Professionals and enterprises	\$20.9 million	Salesforce.com
Visible Path	Enterprises	In talks with VCs	Salesforce.com

SOURCE: Red Herring

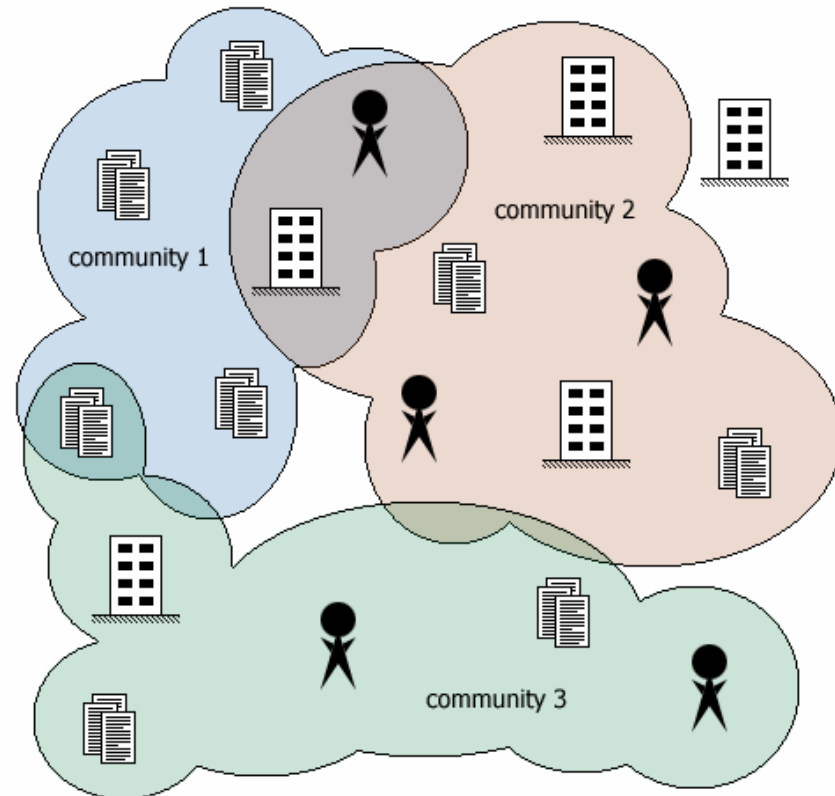
Time for social software?

Technology not new...

- “It's a concept that's been around for many years in varying forms. But unlike the purely online communities most of us are familiar with (chat rooms and bulletin boards), social software is designed to link people in real life.”
Mike Butcher, Irish Times, 31/10/03

... but its usage is:

- Online social networking sites
- Business social software
- Weblogs and personal knowledge sharing
- Wikis and simple collaboration tools
- Bottom-up knowledge sharing
- Easy group / community formation



social networking sites let users create personal business networks - based on idea of exploiting "weak ties"

The image displays three overlapping web browser screenshots illustrating social networking sites:

- LinkedIn (Left):** Shows a member profile for **Baker (aka John B. Corey)**, Consultant, IT management, financial United Kingdom. It lists his current role as **Private investor**, companies as **Egg plc; Mandrakes**, and primary industry as **Investment Banking**. It also shows he has 95 connections and is connected to you (1 degree away).
- Ryze Business Networking (Top Right):** Shows a sign-up page with a navigation menu (Ryze Home, Invite Friends, Networks, Friends, Events, Upgrade). It prompts new users to sign up for free and existing members to log in with their ID and password.
- Ecademy (Center):** Shows a network homepage with a login form, a "Welcome to Ecademy" message, and a list of "Currently Online" members. It also features "Trusted Networks" (Ecademy, Beyond Bricks, Marketplace, WiFi) and "Premium Sponsors" (CSI, BT, IT Act).

Ryze is what the Internet is for, and what it used to be. Within seconds, I was reconnecting with past contacts from many different worlds, and making even more new ones. It gives me that cyberhigh that I remember from the first time I sent an email or used the web.
Dave Whelan

The site is not only well thought out

Business social software applications are emerging: **Spoke** creates maps networks from email data...

- **Socialtext** offers collaboration spaces for projects, conferences using a combination of weblogs and wikis

Weblogs: simple tools for sharing observations, links and ideas, with easy browser-based content management using XML-RPC, RSS, and other emerging standards

ideas | about | work

moments

moments | themes | vision

headshift moments

A selection from our knowledge feed. If you would like to contribute or you think we should monitor your site or data feed, then please [tell us](#).

My Society civil society incubator launches
December 02, 2003: MySociety launch event sees dozens of ideas presented for review

Conversation: is it two-way?
02, 2003: New Labour's Big Conversation has been, supported in consultation Web site, but is it really a two-way process?

WYFIWYG: experience design
02, 2003: Chris Heathcote muses on the nature of interaction / experience design

Privacy concerns over online social networking
02, 2003: privacy and authenticity concerns from Weinberger on about online social networking services

Magazine KM tips
02, 2003: Some useful corporate KM tips - but fails to mention the more informal tools and techniques that can break down corporate participation

Resting conversation about turning ideas into action
01, 2003: An interesting conversation about using our blogging to help each other turn evolving ideas into action

Douglas's reading list on interactivity
01, 2003: Douglas Rushkoff's reading list for his NYU course on all perspectives on interactivity.

Why by, not getting on: Technology in UK workplaces
30, 2003: The recent iSociety report on IT usage within the UK suggests that we are in a state of low-tech equilibrium, blighted by training and insufficient focus on the human factors when making decisions **Comments (1)**

site tools:

[Contact](#) | [Sign up](#) | [Archives](#) [xml](#)

on our radar:

[Knowledge feed](#)
[Incoming links](#)
[Sites we read](#)

areas of interest:

themes:

[Knowledge sharing](#)
[Social software](#)
[Online public services](#)
[User experience design](#)
[Information architecture](#)
[Technology](#)

vision:

[Smarter](#) | [Simpler](#) | [Social](#)

Headshift | MOVABLE TYPE - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address http://217.199.183.127/cgi-bin/mt/mt.cgi?__mode=menu&blog_id=3

MOVABLE TYPE PERSONAL PUBLISHING SYSTEM

Headshift User: Lee

POST

NEW ENTRY Main Menu > Headshift Editing Menu

EDIT ENTRIES Welcome to Headshift.

UPLOAD FILE You can post and maintain your weblog by selecting an option from the menu located to the left of this message.

MANAGE

TEMPLATES If you need assistance, try:

CATEGORIES [Movable Type User Manual](#)
[Movable Type Support Forum](#)

NOTIFICATIONS This welcome message is configurable.

WEBLOG CONFIG [Change this message.](#)

UTILITIES

SEARCH ENTRIES

EXPORT/IMPORT

REBUILD SITE

VIEW SITE

Post to MT Weblog | MOVABLE TYPE - Microsoft...

MOVABLE TYPE PERSONAL PUBLISHING SYSTEM

Select a weblog for this post: Headshift Post Status: Draft

Title

Primary Category: Select

Allow Comments: Open

Entry Body

Headshift | MOVABLE TYPE

Excerpt

Keywords

Five Most Recent Entries

My Society civil society incubator launches

The Big Conversation: is it two-way?

WYFIWYG: experience design

Privacy concerns over online social networking

CIO magazine KM tips

Five Most Recent Comments

chris macrae

Lee Bryant

Atkins Diet

Cynthia Typaldos

Lee Bryant

Five Most Recent Plings

Why IT doesn't work as hard it should

Rebuilding Distributed Discussion

Barca<strike>blog</strike>

Barca<strike>blog</strike>

What to publish to start collaboration

E.g., we use weblogs as part of our **project communication**

NIMHE Knowledge Community project weblog

The above images are by artists featured in our [Gallery](#)

December 02, 2003

DATA FOR AUDITING THE QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE NHS IS TO BE STORED IN ONE AREA

[Data for auditing the quality of services provided by the NHS is to be stored in one area](#), says the NHSIA according to a Kahlenet report.

Posted by Lee at 03:49 PM | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

November 25, 2003

STIGMATISATION OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN ASIA

[TIMEasia Magazine: Hidden Away](#) is a special report on the plight on people living with mental illness in Asia. There is also a photo story of institutions [here](#).

Posted by Lee at 09:53 AM | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

November 24, 2003

ILG TERMS OF REFERENCE

NIMHE: Delivering Race Equality Consultation - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: <http://bme.nimhe.org.uk/>

National Institute of Mental Health in England

NIMHE Black and Minority Ethnic Mental Health Programme

Home
Background
Framework
Projects
Documents & Reports
Consultation
Recruitment
Contact

Welcome to the Delivering Race Equality online consultation

Delivering Race Equality: A Framework for Action is a [draft framework document](#), which is being issued for consultation, setting out what those planning, delivering and monitoring local primary care and mental health services need to do to improve services for users experiencing mental illness and distress, as well as their relatives and carers, from Black and minority ethnic communities. There is clear evidence that these users and their relatives and carers experience inequitable services and outcomes.

On 17th October 2003, Health Minister Rosie Winterton launched the consultation paper. Videos of the launch event are available [here](#).

This [online consultation](#) has been set up to provide a simple means for stakeholders to comment on the framework document and the consultation process, and to encourage the sharing of ideas, observations, links and documents related to these issues.

If you have any queries about the site, please [contact the webmaster](#) in the first instance. This site is hosted and managed by [Headshift](#).

Race Equality Leads: Shortlisting process

PROJECTS

- Home
- Project overview
- Key features
- Stakeholder mapping
- Information Architecture
- Functionality identified

Latest entries

- Community engagement
- Contact Database
- Information Architecture
- KC Project Scoping
- Knowledge sharing
- knowledgebase
- NIMHE Info Leaflet
- Online public session
- Other MH links
- Project Management
- Projects / stories

Related projects (5)
Social software (24)
Stakeholder mapping (2)
Technology (8)
User experience (11)

RECENT ENTRY

- Data for auditing the quality of services provided by the NHS is to be stored in one area

Consultation

- Building Blocks
 - Appropriate, responsive
 - Better information
 - Community engagement
- Areas of Concern
 - Acute inpatient facilities
 - Pathways to care
 - Suicide prevention
- General links
 - Latest items
 - Consultation events
 - Other news
- Recent Comments
 - hanif bobat on Better information: Barriers to services
 - Victor Downer on Appropriate, responsive: The role of other agencies
 - Victor Downer on Better information: Collecting ethnicity data
 - Victor Downer on Other news: Health Minister launches consultation for

...and to support **consultation initiatives** for our partners

Wikis: very simple shared online spaces where anybody can edit anything...

e.g. **WikiTravel**

San Francisco/Tenderloin
From Wikitravel, the free travel guide.

Understand

A number of cities in the U.S. have "tenderloin" districts. Legend has it that these rough-neighborhoods got their nicknames from the police who patrolled them; these cops receive pay (or bigger bribes -- stories vary), and were therefore able to regularly dine on steak.

Get in

Street parking in the Tenderloin is extremely difficult to find, but parking garages are plentiful. The neighborhood is also well-served by public transit; both the Powell and Civic Center BART will put you well within walking distance of any Tenderloin attraction.

Eat

Vietnamese, Thai, and Indian restaurants are well represented in the Tenderloin. One of the options for a cheap lunch is picking up a "Vietnamese sandwich" from any of a number of delis in the area (they're packed especially thick along Larkin). For about \$2.50 you can get a generous helping of your choice of meat and shredded vegetables sandwiched into a baguette and dressed with a thin, tangy sweet and sour sauce. Be sure to bring cash; these places don't take any credit cards.

- Dottie's True Blue Cafe**, 522 Jones, 895-2767. Thursday-Monday 7:30 AM-3 PM. almost always a line stretching out of Dottie's and down the sidewalk, and that's because this is one of the best places to get a sandwich in the neighborhood, and it's in the city center, and...

Editing San Francisco/Tenderloin
From Wikitravel, the free travel guide.

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Many guidebooks will tell you to avoid a large part of downtown [[San Francisco]], roughly bounded by Geary, Polk, Taylor and Market--the Tenderloin. It's true that this "bad neighborhood" is rife with panhandlers and massage parlors, but it's also full of good, cheap ethnic restaurants and colorful dive bars. The area is lively and safe until about 2 AM (when the bars close); after that, it does get sketchy, and is best avoided by travelers walking alone.

==Understand==

A number of cities in the U.S. have "tenderloin" districts. Legend has it that these rough-and-ready neighborhoods got their nicknames from the police who patrolled them; these cops received hazard pay (or bigger bribes -- stories vary), and were therefore able to regularly dine on steak.

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Possible business uses

Knowledge sharing & learning:

- Devolved personal knowledge sharing / self-managed learning
- Content aggregation / syndication on intranets
- Identifying networks: data mining network behaviour (e.g. ALA)

Internal and External communications:

- Bottom-up counterpoint to expensive ERP, CRM, KM systems
- More direct, honest stakeholder / customer engagement
- Supporting dialogue, debate and “networked conversations”
- Beyond email: weblogs, wikis etc

Collaboration:

- Online meetings, conferences, shared calendars, etc
- Collaborative document / proposal writing
- Project management and communication

Problem: corporate IT isn't working

Top-down IT vs bottom-up people networks:

- Many IT systems based on **command and control mentality** that does not fit the way we see our organisations today.
- IT seen as **stifling creativity**, some online activity going “underground”

Big systems = single point of failure:

- **Major CRM, ERP failures** common in public and private sector
- Big systems build **lock-in, dependency** and are not adaptable

Putting computers in their place:

- IT should **augment** our online interaction, not seek to control it
- IT should **adapt** to our behaviour, not the other way around

Social software: part of the solution?

Break down formal barriers to sharing knowledge:

- People often do not contribute to corporate knowledge sharing because of the **formality of “official” systems**
- Social software encourages a **proliferation of simple, informal publishing** that can be aggregated in new and unexpected ways

Build connections inside and outside:

- Weblogs and social networking tools can help **identify, bridge and strengthen business networks** both inside and outside organisations

Smarter, simpler software needed:

- **Lightweight**, social software standards support better interoperability
- **“Small pieces loosely joined”** better than IT monoliths - we should evolve rather than engineer overall IT solutions
- Design, build, test and adapt around the **people** who will use the tools

A word of caution

You can't control complexity:

- Organisations create the conditions for networked conversations but can only *influence* (not manage) results

Avoid crass exploitation:

- Social software is a bottom-up approach “owned” by those who use it - this can be harnessed for business uses but not totally assimilated or formalised

Culture and Context:

- In a culture that values openness, transparency and relationships this can bring real results - it is not for everybody

Peter Van Dijck - Themes and metaphors in the semantic web discussion - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address <http://www.poorbuthappy.com/ease/semantic/>

There **never** was a suggestion that all metadata work cease and desist as we sit down on some **mountaintop** somewhere and fully derive the model before allowing the **world** to proceed.

Dan Brickley [writes](#):

One point I was particularly **puzzled** by [...] was your apparent impression that we're working towards a single, global, **monolithic** ontology.

Danny Ayers [says](#):

Another **tiresome** premise is that Semantic Web somehow involves a global ontology. Nothing could be **farther** from the truth. Semantic Web technologies (RDF, OWL) allow you to define ontologies which can be **entirely** local. If there are parts you can share or map, great, if not, no big deal.

Some future areas of development

Semantic Web:

- Interoperable metadata and shared meaning through ontologies, etc to allow people to share their world views / perspectives
- Emergent metadata & latent semantic indexing

New people-based standards and aggregation tools:

- E.g. Friend of a Friend (FOAF) and similar standards for describing relationships between people
- More emphasis on content and network aggregation rather than simple search to find relevant content

Better reputation systems and authentication:

- New ways of proving who we are in an online context and how trustworthy we are (cf eBay, slashdot)
- Moves towards a single login/authentication system (cf MS passport)

Contacts & further information

Contact Details:

- Lee Bryant: lee@headshift.com
<http://www.headshift.com>

Background Reading:

- Social software reader:
http://ross.typepad.com/blog/2003/11/social_software.html
- Good collection of links:
http://www2.iro.umontreal.ca/~paquetse/cgi-bin/om.cgi?Social_Software
- Many-to-Many Weblog:
<http://www.corante.com/many>
- Our Weblog:
<http://www.headshift.com/moments>