

**Some simple steps towards
a social software infrastructure
for internal communications**

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Summary

Traditional Enterprise software	Social software
Top-down, command & control	Bottom-up, devolved
One to many, impersonal	Many to many, personal
Formal, bloated, inflexible	Informal, lightweight, flexible
Corporate voice	Human voice
Large, slow, expensive	Small, iterative, cheap
Owned by vendors or IT	Owned by you and your people

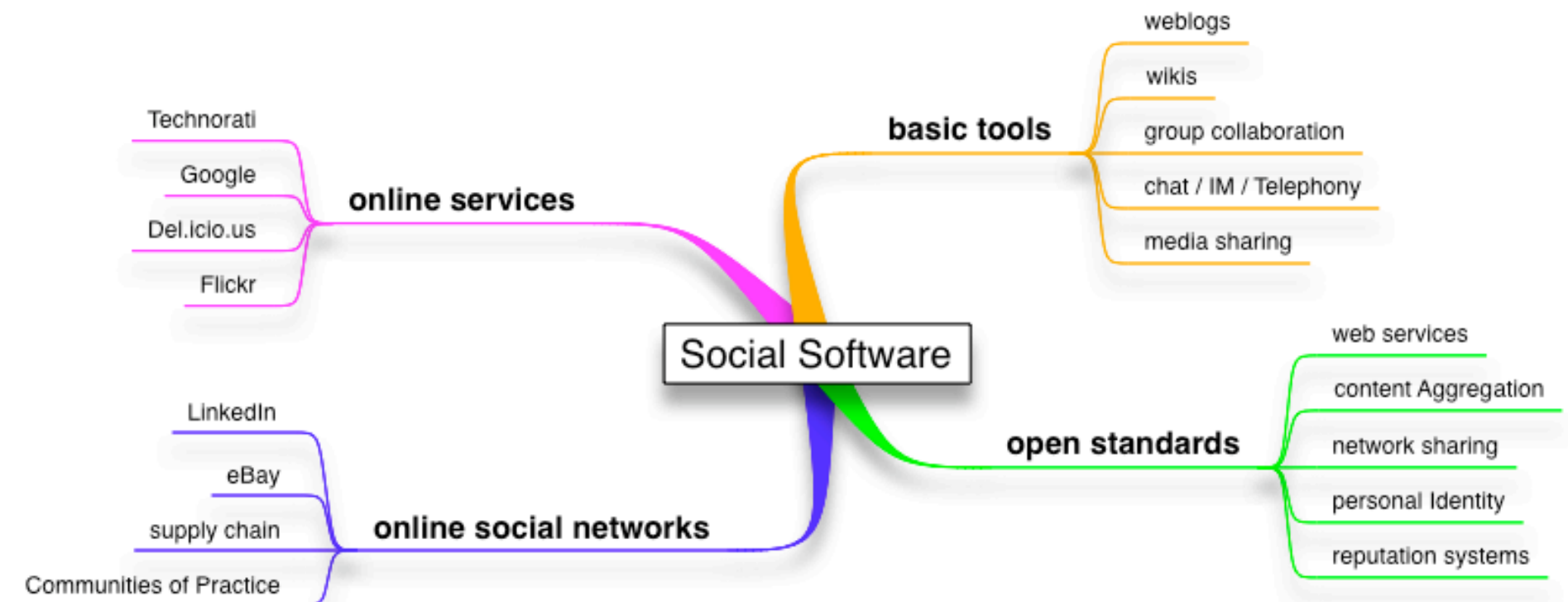
This brief presentation will look at how we can:

1. deploy social software for internal communications
2. integrate social software with existing systems
3. create a connected social infrastructure for your business

1 What do we mean by social software and how do we get there?

Social Software ?

- Simple, easy to use tools and services using open standards
- Aims to create social affordances through network effects
- Augment, not replace, human interaction
- Support networked individualism



Key tool: weblog (sense making networks)

the importance of small talk

By Suw: [September 10, 2004](#) : [Comments \(3\)](#)

[David Weinberger](#), in the [latest issue of the JOHO newsletter](#), defends small talk, explaining its value to relationship building:

[...] Art expresses something big in something small. (If it expresses something small in something big, you leave during the intermission.) Likewise, in small talk, we express ourselves in the details of what we talk about, the words we use, the ones we don't, how far we lean forward, how tentatively or aggressively we probe for shared ground. Because all of this is implicitly presented, it tends to give a more accurate picture of who we are and what we care about than big, explicit conversations.

[...] I'm more of a constructivist than an archaeologist when it comes to social relationships. My aim isn't to expose my buried self to you. It's to build a conversation and then a relationship that eventually is so deep that we can't disentangle the roots. For that, we need lots and lots of ambiguity.

What are the best aspects of conferences? The bits inbetween the panels and Q&A sessions where we get to chat with our peers. What is the best bit of the working day? Those watercooler conversations or lunch down the pub. Why do smokers have an advantage in the workplace? Because they take regular smoke breaks where they get the opportunities to chat and exchange scraps of information that become important later on.

Small talk is part of the 'social grooming' that is required to create and maintain social bonds. Through small talk, people reveal contextual information that they couldn't otherwise share, particularly in a business setting. It's around the

site tools:

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

related items:

from headshift moments:

[ETCON: Social networking tools](#)

from sites we read:

[In defense of small talk](#)
(elearningpost)

related sites:

[Ben Hammersley's Dangerous Precedent](#)

[Blog.org](#)

[Bosnian Institute](#)

[Catalogablog](#)

[Channel 'social_software'](#)

[Chocolate and Vodka](#)

[Clay Shirky's Essays](#)

[Curiouser and curiouser!](#)

[Designing for Civil Society](#)

[foe_romeo](#)

[Idle Words](#)

Key tool: wiki (group collaboration)

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a wiki page for 'Round CCD'. The page title is '1. Product Overview' and it was last changed on Apr 24, 2005 by Lee Bryant. The page content is organized into sections: 'WHAT IS CCDIRECTOR™?', 'WHAT DOES CCDIRECTOR™ DO?', 'CCDIRECTOR™ MODULES', and 'THE BUSINESS JOURNEY WITH CCDIRECTOR™'. A sidebar on the right contains 'Page Operations' and 'Incoming Links'. The browser's address bar shows the path: Dashboard > RCCD > Pages > Home > 1. Product Overview.

Round CCD

HOME SPACES ADMINISTRATION

User: lee History Profile Log Out

Location: [Dashboard](#) > [RCCD](#) > [Pages](#) > [Home](#) > [1. Product Overview](#)

Quick Search: Go

1. Product Overview

Last changed on Apr 24, 2005 by [Lee Bryant](#)

See [Glossary](#)

WHAT IS CCDIRECTOR™?

CCDirector™ is a deep capability assessment, reporting and planning tool. Its purpose is to help an organisation understand the alignment of their customer management capabilities and to help them prioritise the development and deployment of new capabilities to increase alignment, reduce operational tensions and improve the consistency of the customer experience.

As a result organisations can align goals, prioritise investment and optimise operating costs whilst making the journey to become more customer-centric to increase customer loyalty and profitability.

WHAT DOES CCDIRECTOR™ DO?

CCDirector™ defines all an organisation's capabilities that directly or indirectly impact the customer experience. Each capability has a defined position on the Round Baseball metaphor that represents the journey from Product Centric to Customer Centric.

By assessing the status of each capability an organisation can create a profile that shows capabilities as being: 'present, partially present (disputed), planned or required'. Once a target base is set the organisation can identify the capabilities that are required to create alignment across the business enabling them to prioritise the use of CapEx and OpEx.

CCDIRECTOR™ MODULES

The CCDirector™ product suite will consist of 4 modules:

- CCDirector™ [Assessor](#)
- CCDirector™ [Planner](#)
- CCDirector™ [Manager](#)
- CCDirector™ [Analyser](#)

THE BUSINESS JOURNEY WITH CCDIRECTOR™

Done

Page Operations

- [Edit Page](#)
- [Attach File](#)
- [Page Information](#)
- [Page History](#)
- [Rename Page](#)
- [Move Page](#)
- [Remove Page](#)
- [Export Page](#)
- [Lock Page](#)
- [Watch this Page](#)
- [Space Homepage](#)
- [Space Summary](#)
- [Add Page](#)
- [Add Child Page](#)
- [New Blog Post](#)

Incoming Links: [\(more\)](#)

- [Home](#)

Shared media: (perspectives / presence)

[Home](#) | [Tags](#) | [Groups](#) | [People](#) | [Invite](#)

Logged in as Alihodza (2 new) | [Your Account](#) | [Help](#) | [Log Out](#)

Photos: [Yours](#) • [Upload](#) • [Organize](#) • [Your Contacts'](#) • [Everyone's](#)

flickr ^{BETA}

Tags / lesblogs

[View as slideshow](#)
([New window](#) ⓘ)

You're looking at all the public photos tagged with lesblogs.



From [dsearls](#)



From [dsearls](#)



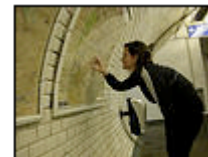
From [dsearls](#)



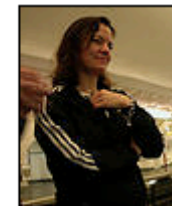
From [dsearls](#)



From [dsearls](#)



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social bookmarking (outboard brain)

del.icio.us / inbox / headshift

bookmarks | inbox | post | settings | logout | about | popular

« earlier | later »

The Access Web - Welcome

to access software reference programming by btaylor84 ... and 18 other people ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

axentric. a web designer's "tackboard".

to web programming by srboisvert ... and 459 other people ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

Entourage Help Page

to email osx software by ehuffman ... and 21 other people ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

Simple Thoughts

to java blog toread programming by JesseCuster ... and 4 other people ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

FreeTechBooks.com - Free online computer science and programming books, lecture notes and documentations

to learning computer books ebooks free howto information knowledge tutorials ebook by otispdq ... and 110 other people ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

Martin Fowler's Bliki in Japanese - オブジェクト指向を学ぶにはどの言語がよい?

to programming language perspective by etecoo ... and 6 other people ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

Flickr: Playing Favorites

to flickr by bxy ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

MySQLicious - del.icio.us to MySQL Mirroring [nanovivid

to del.icio.us programming learning MySQL database by otispdq ... and 292 other people ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

Sherlock Channels - 36 Channels Available

Sherlock Channels for Mac OS/OS X

to OSX Sherlock Channel by evolve75 ... and 1 other person ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

E in a Walnut: Distributed Computing

nice discussion of "promises", etc.

to distributed computing concurrency e programming language design computer science by brent.vukmer ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

Flickr/TiVo

to flickr tivo @doit by bldurling ... and 57 other people ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

VERY cool use of flickr api - JS no less

to flickr game memory concentration cool api nice javascript by femtoid ... on 2005-04-25 ... copy this item

Subs

*flickr X
 */knowledge X
 */london X
 */osx X
 */programming X
 */semweb X
 */social software X
 */socialsoftware X
 */social_software X
 ChristopherA X
 cshirky X
 dgurteen X
 ethanz X
 jonhicks X

» edit inbox

Key tool: newsreader (aggregation of feeds)

NetNewsWire (54 unread)

Next Unread Mark All As Read Open in Browser Show Info Post to Weblog Subscribe Unsubscribe Show Sites Drawer

54 items unread, 171 subscri...

Subscriptions

- (New items) (54)
- egov
- group blogs (2)
- news (3)
- ideas (1)
- blogs (16)
- social software (18)
- software
- tech (1)
- kblogging (12)
- IA
- headshift (1)
- 43 Folders

News Items	Source	Date
(New items) headlines		
Knowledge mapping tools	Knowledge-at-work	04:32
Jody Dunn: Blogging her way to defeat? (2)	www.perfect.co.uk	28 Sep 2004
Distance Learning Directory - Online Degrees	Moreover - Balkans news	(09:33)
The Balkans continues to fracture Part 1	Moreover - Balkans news	(09:33)
Distance Learning Directory - Online Degrees	Moreover - Top internet stories	(09:33)
Hamas and Fatah activists killed	Al Jazeera (English): Global News	(09:33)
ADV: Health Insurance for the Self-Employed!	Al Jazeera (English): Global News	(09:33)
Hostage hope for Bigley	This Is London: Top News	(09:33)
Ruud: Rooney will rule	This Is London: Top News	(09:33)
Spacey opens Old Vic season	This Is London: Top News	(09:33)
Brad and Depp are 'the coolest'	This Is London: Top News	(09:33)
Simply sinfully rich	This Is London: Top News	(09:33)
Blair insists Iraq war justified	BBC News	(09:33)
USS Cole bombers sentenced to death	BBC News	(09:33)
Herbal remedies 'do work'	BBC News	(09:33)
Ferguson salutes Rooney	BBC News	(09:33)

Knowledge mapping tools

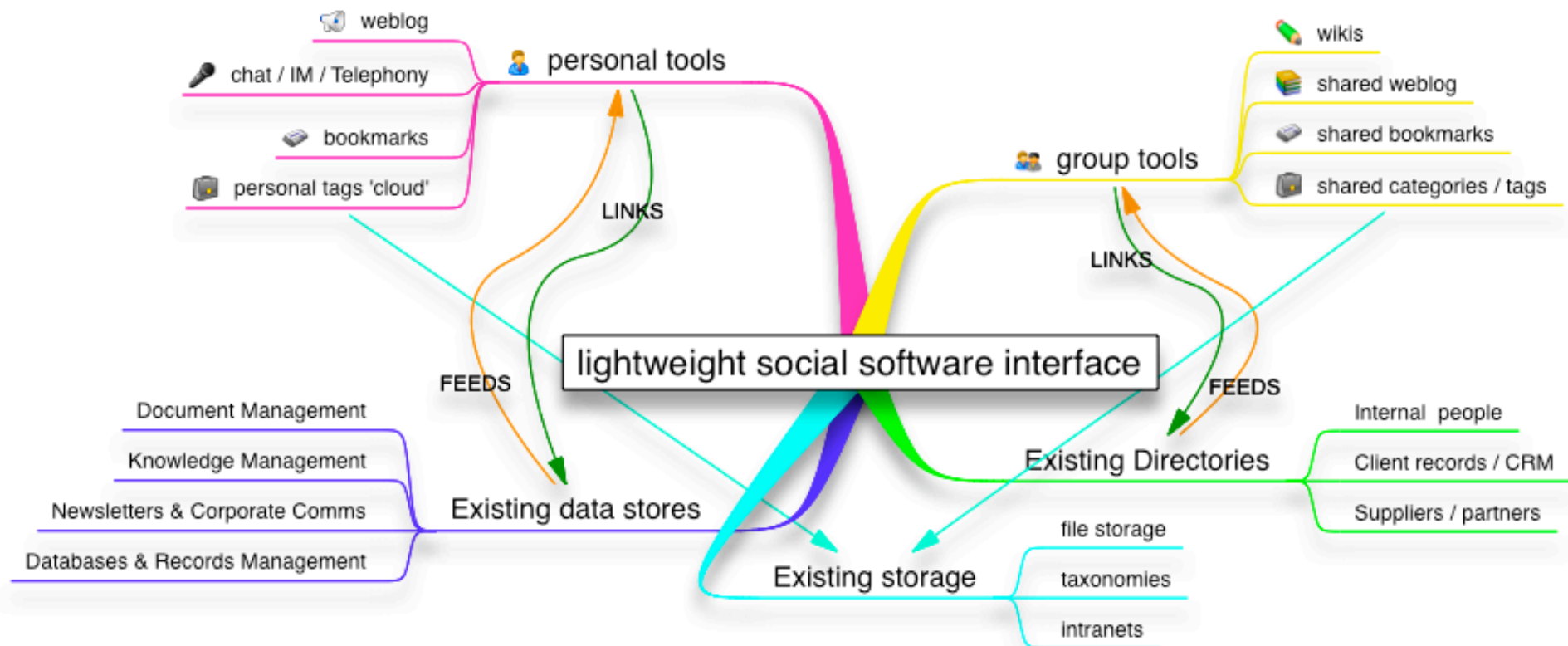
Tools for knowledge mapping vary from MS Visio or Inspiration for flow charts and concept maps to specialized software such as InFlow and NetMap. I guess the important question to ask is, what are you mapping for?

- To compile an inventory of knowledge artifacts and find tacit knowledge wellsprings?
- To chart the speed source, destination and constraints on knowledge flow?
- To track compliance with established knowledge practices? (capture deviations, exceptions and critical parameters)
- To search for knowledge related opportunities? (technology, cultural or practice related)

2 How can we integrate this with our existing software and systems?

Bringing enterprise systems to life

- Make existing data available as feeds and URI links
- Let people link, annotate, re-purpose, re-organise and share
- Create simple social interface to let people manage their info



Flexible metadata: let users reorganise

Themes



The most popular and the most recently applied themes.

Faceted top-down metadata combined with emergent bottom-up 'social tagging'

Latest themes

- [SOSIG](#) (13:06 on 01 July 2004)
- [GENDER](#) (13:06 on 01 July 2004)
- [sexuality](#) (13:06 on 01 July 2004)
- [gay](#) (13:06 on 01 July 2004)
- [lesbian](#) (13:06 on 01 July 2004)
- [bisexual](#) (13:06 on 01 July 2004)
- [early intervention service](#) (10:07 on 30 June 2004)
- [EIP](#) (10:07 on 30 June 2004)
- [Leeds](#) (10:07 on 30 June 2004)
- [annual review](#) (02:43 on 25 June 2004)
- [report](#) (02:43 on 25 June 2004)
- [anti stigma](#) (02:40 on 25 June 2004)
- [DISCRIMINATION](#) (02:40 on 25 June 2004)
- [mentality](#) (02:40 on 25 June 2004)
- [Disability](#) (02:40 on 25 June 2004)
- [SEU](#) (02:40 on 25 June 2004)
- [local service directory](#) (16:00 on 23 June 2004)
- [liverpool](#) (16:00 on 23 June 2004)
- [lincolnshire](#) (16:32 on 23 June 2004)
- [Lewisham](#) (16:11 on 23 June 2004)

The screenshot shows the NIMHE Knowledge Community website. The main content area is titled "Early Intervention Teams" and contains a list of resources. A faceted search interface is overlaid on the page, showing a "Filter by type" dropdown menu with options: "All", "Person: All (2)", "News: All (1)", and "News: External News (1)". The "All" option is currently selected. To the right of the main content, there is a "I want to..." section with options to "Subscribe to latest items" and "Subscribe a group to latest items". Below this is a "Perform action on selected items:" section with a dropdown menu and a "Submit" button. The website header includes the NIMHE logo and navigation links for Home, Admin, Help, and Logout. A search bar is also visible in the top right corner.

Personal aggregation & syndication

- Every weblog, person, group, classification node, saved search, etc should be exposed as an XML feed that can be **aggregated** & used across the system

External Feeds

From here you can subscribe / unsubscribe to external news a feeds. Just select the checkboxes next to the feed title and click button.

- [About Mental Health Resources](#)
- [BBC Health news](#)
- [CounsellingResource.com](#)
- [Department of Health MH news](#)
- [Guardian Health](#)
- [Health News from Google](#)
- [PubMed - mental health](#)

My Feeds

- ["lee.bryant"](#)
- [Anti stigma and discrimination](#)
People, resources, networks and groups directly linked with this NIMHE programme.
- [BBC Health news](#)
- [Modernisation Agency Change programme](#)
Group to share information and discuss issues of common concern arising out of current changes at the MA. This group and the postings to it can only be seen by members of the group (cf View all members in right hand panel.)
- [NIMHE Programme and Knowledge Development Leads Group](#)
This group aims to support the development and effective communication of knowledge sharing and development. It is a new group which will look to combine the focused work of the knowledge community together with ensuring effective programme management.

How Social Software can add value

- **Informality** of tools encourages participation and gives greater ‘personality’ to online networking
- **Devolved, bottom-up approach** promotes self-organisation, involvement; reduces burden on centre
- **“Small pieces loosely joined”** - promotes a culture of re-use & linking that adds value to existing information
- **Emergence and network effects** - can uncover sources of energy and activity you may not be aware of
- **Encourage personal ownership** of content, connections and action - this can act as a stimulus for action

3 How can we create a connected social infrastructure?

Small steps...

- **Give people small, lightweight tools** such as weblogs and wikis to support the journey from sense making to actionable sense; let them use them to manage their own communication
- **Make use of free online services** to start connecting internal comms with external conversations; pull in useful feeds from services such as Google, Flickr, Del.icio.us, etc.
- **Generate connected conversations and online dialogue** around the boundaries of your organisation to engage users
- **Live your work in public** - be honest, open and engaging
- **Use what works and throw away what doesn't** - don't be led by the technology; create your own solutions

How: a social engagement approach

- **Scope your project --> map your network -->** define objectives
- **Use a project weblog** to plan the project and identify early adopters; let users shape the system and define its 'voice'
- **Start small and local:** create pilot sites to get early adopters blogging 'close to home' where they are comfortable; aggregate upwards when they are ready
- **Develop iteratively** with pilot groups; add features and tools based on user feedback; keep it simple
- **Support your people** through events, demos, training and capacity building - take inefficient 'inbox time' and redeploy it to social network stimulation

Groups as the centre of activity

- Groups should be easily formed by users to provide a shared window on the corporate world. They need:
 - ✓ **Common objectives:** statement of purpose and intent
 - ✓ **Shared weblog:** sense making and info sharing
 - ✓ **Open space/wiki:** collaboration and co-writing
 - ✓ **Directory:** find people by expertise, location, etc.
 - ✓ **Aggregator:** create and manage useful info feeds
 - ✓ **Categories/tags:** organise info reflecting local needs
 - ✓ **Events system:** share calendars and event info
 - ✓ **Access control:** flexible modes from open to closed

General observations

- **A balanced approach** of networked individualism and free-style group forming can unleash dialogue and collective action
- **Manage feeds, not items:** informal weblogs, feed aggregation and bottom-up metadata can help solve the content problem
- Online social networking works best for a **specific common purpose**, not for its own sake
- **Engage with people on their own terms** and build the network person by person, group by group
- **Embrace rather than deny complexity:** ‘Small pieces, loosely joined’ is more resilient than command and control

Some Links

Other social software references:

- www.headshift.com/moments (headshift weblog)
- www.corante.com/many (Many to Many weblog)
- www.lifewithalacrity.com/2004/10/tracing_the_evo.html (history of social software)
- <http://del.icio.us/tag/socialsoftware> (more links)

Contact me for further info:

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