Rethinking Conference Interfaces
Increasing Participation Value

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Map

• Vital role of meetings
• Attractors
  – positive: increasing participative value
  – negative (travel hassle, security, etc)
• Participant environment: rethinking the interface
• Interfaces / Boundaries
• Image cultivation – distinctiveness
• Ways of meeting for the 21st century
• Towards Another Order of meetings
Provocative – Brainstorming
-- what is the “problem”?

• the conference industry is
  – not only "missing the plane" ?
  – but people feel guilty about taking it ?

• rate of meeting innovation compared to that of other technologies
  – how will meetings be in the future
  – IBM -- Typewriter moment
  – equivalent for meetings industry??
Anticipating future meeting styles

What will this meeting look like in
  » 10 years?
  » 30 years?
  » 50 years?
  » 100 years?
  » 500 years?
  » 1000 years?

And why should we care?
  ..... what are we failing to recognize?
“Meating” substitution trends?
-- loss of conventional travel-meeting market

Mass “membership” meetings

Eminent / Prestige meetings

Social networking “meetings”

Expert / Specialist meetings
Key question? Whose “problem” is it?

Is the meetings industry to be fruitfully framed as:

- client driven?
  - who is the “client”: organizer, PCO, participant?

- sponsor driven? supplier led?

- all together, synergistically:
  - negatively undermining each other?
  - positively proactively together?

- threat driven? opportunity driven?

Who has the freedom to innovate?

... where does innovation happen?
Interfaces & Boundaries

to be bridged & by selling “inter”

Face-to-face << >> Virtual
Culture A << >> Culture B
Sector A << >> Sector B
Discipline A << >> Discipline B
Language A << >> Language B
Epistemology A << >> Epistemology B
etc etc

Challenge
reconciling differences (vs exploiting them)
managing agreement vs managing disagreement
Recognizing the variety of biases
- of participants, of organizers

• 7 “axes of bias” (W T Jones)
• 6 “thinking hats” (Edward de Bono)
• 4 “mindscapes” (Magoroh Maruyama)
• 7 varieties of “intelligence” (Howard Gardner)
• psychological types (Myers-Briggs, etc)
• etc
Meeting “attractors” & Attractive meetings

• Why would "who" choose to "meet“?

• How and what does "meet" mean?
  – How can people meaningfully meet?
  – “Meat” world vs meet world?

• What is the pull? the attraction?
Enhancing meetings as “strange attractors”
Vital expectation of meeting participation

Emergent / Enabling / Fruitful:
– Insight
– Opportunities / Priorities
– Order / Organization
– Resources
– Contacts
– Reframing / Recontextualizing
– “Re-creation”
Meetings as “attractor containers”

- Checklists (and bullet points) are not containers

- More appropriate metaphors?
  - Facets of polyhedra?
  - Origami?
    etc

- Different kinds of messages
  - Other kinds of communication
Participant interface

- Risk exposure (no pain, no gain?)
- Status enhancement?
- Knowledge acquisition?
- Contacts? Networking?
- Conviviality?
- Value enhancement?
- Qualitatively superior context?
- ??

only partially shared by client, sponsor, supplier?
Risk taking & Conference organization

• Zero risk >>> Zero payoff?
• Competitiveness?
• Marketing formulae?
• Challenge for Singapore – itself an interface?
Meeting alternatives and willingness to risk

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Conferencing and risk

Order

Congress session

Caucasing

Low participation

Crowd

High Participation

Spontaneity ("corridor")

Disorder
Stakes and risk

(High stakes)

Average congress
High stakes / Low risk

Caucasing
High stakes / High risk

Crowd
Low stakes / Low risk

Spontaneity (“corridor”)
Low stakes / High risk

Low risk

(Low stakes)

High risk
Distinctive image of Singapore
-- the interface place

• Rethinking the participant “container”
  – "interior" decoration
  – psychoactive environments – risk exposure?
  – exposure to “spam”, “viruses”? 
  – message filtration?
• Proactive care? Making contact?
• Balancing “openness” and “reservation”
• Subtlety? Distinctive metaphors?
• The interface place for “intelligent meetings”
Lessons from Second Life
a “second life” for the meetings industry?

• Who here
  – Is a visitor to Second Life?
  – Transacts business in Second Life?
  – Has an office in Second Life?
• How imaginative is acceptable?
• How alternative is acceptable?
• What kinds of mask can be adopted?
• What kinds of communication?
• What kinds of activity?
• Electronic
  – “hostesses” / “secretaries” / “midwives” ?
Reframing through new metaphors

Influence of new thinking on meetings

- > New problems
- > New strategies
- > New technologies
- > New theories
- > Non-western cultures
- > New generations

.... and ensuring their relationship to the old
Meeting Metaphors
-- based on long-lasting cultural metaphors?

Towards Another Order of Conferencing: Insights from the Chinese *Book of Changes*
http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/ching/achngcot.php

New Asian Meeting Metaphors
?
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Other documents relating to meeting
http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/themes/azdialo.php