

# 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

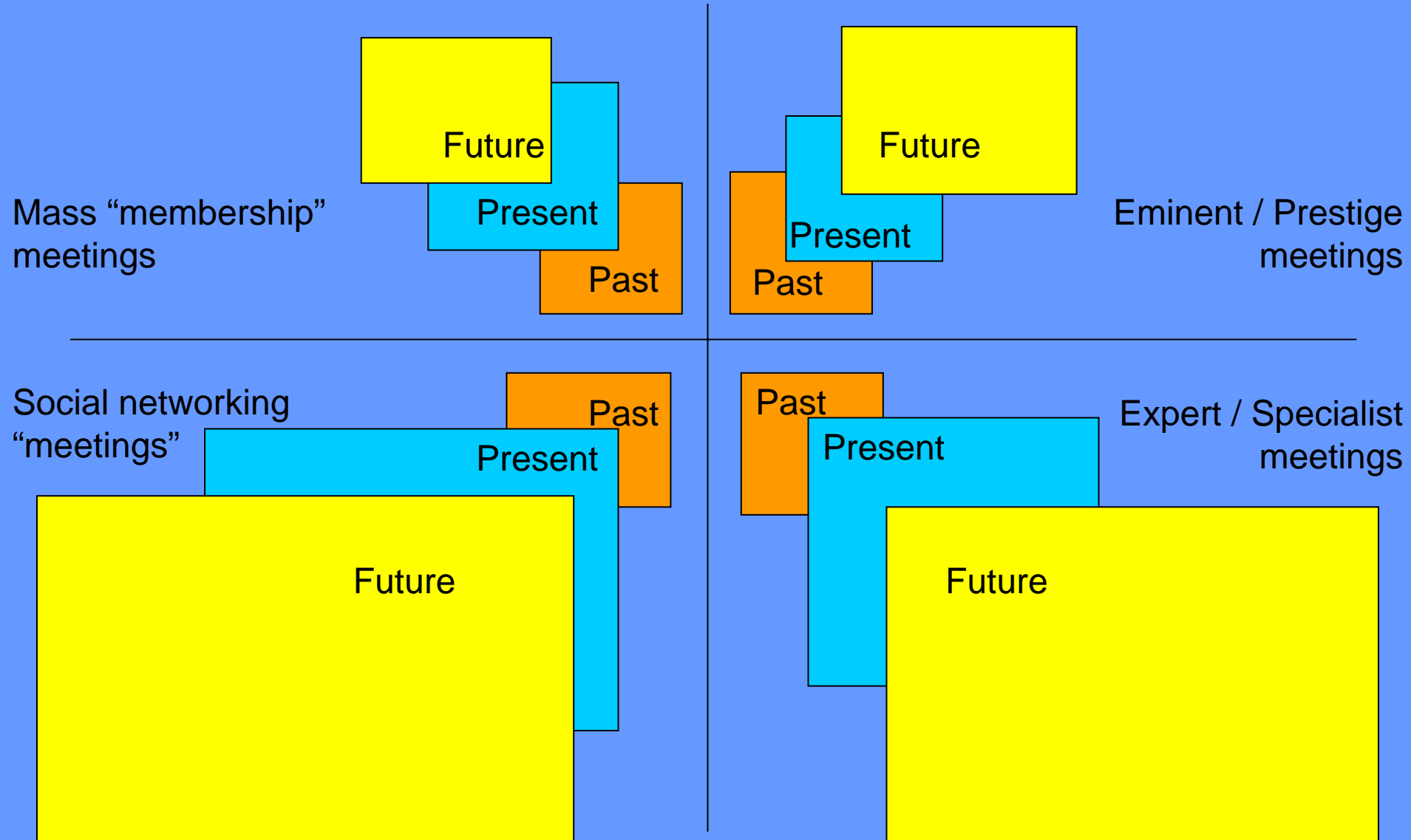
- » 10 years?
- » 30 years?
- » 50 years?
- » 100 years?
- » 500 years?
- » 1000 years?

And why should we care?

..... what are we failing to recognize?

# “Meating” substitution trends?

-- loss of conventional travel-meeting market



# 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

	Cool... let's do it	If you insist	Thanks... maybe not	You must be joking
Spontaneous organization				<b>X</b>
Participant content			<b>X</b>	
Participant communication		<b>X</b>		
Podium communication	<b>X</b>			

# Conferencing and risk

**Order**

Congress session

Caucasing

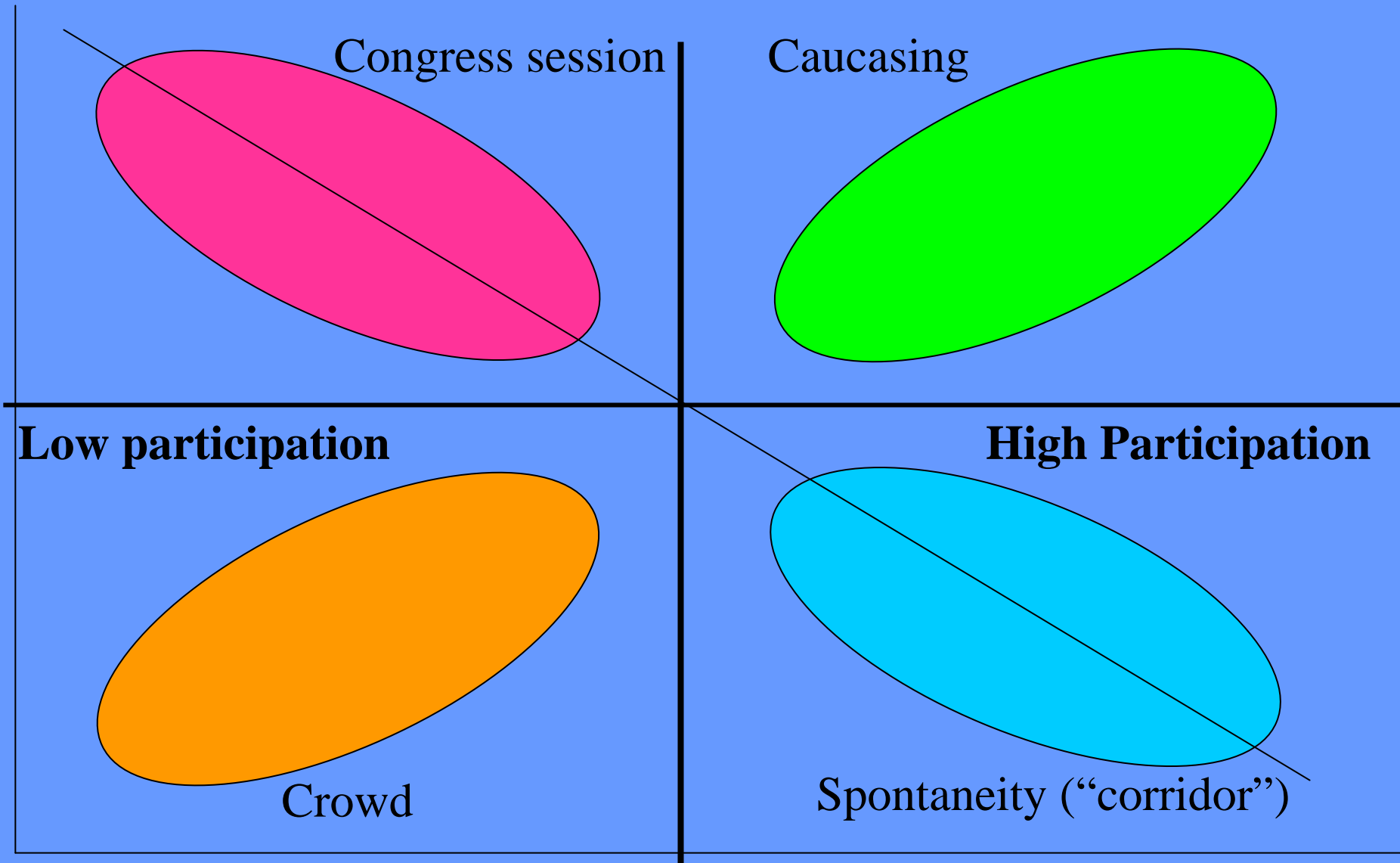
**Low participation**

**High Participation**

Crowd

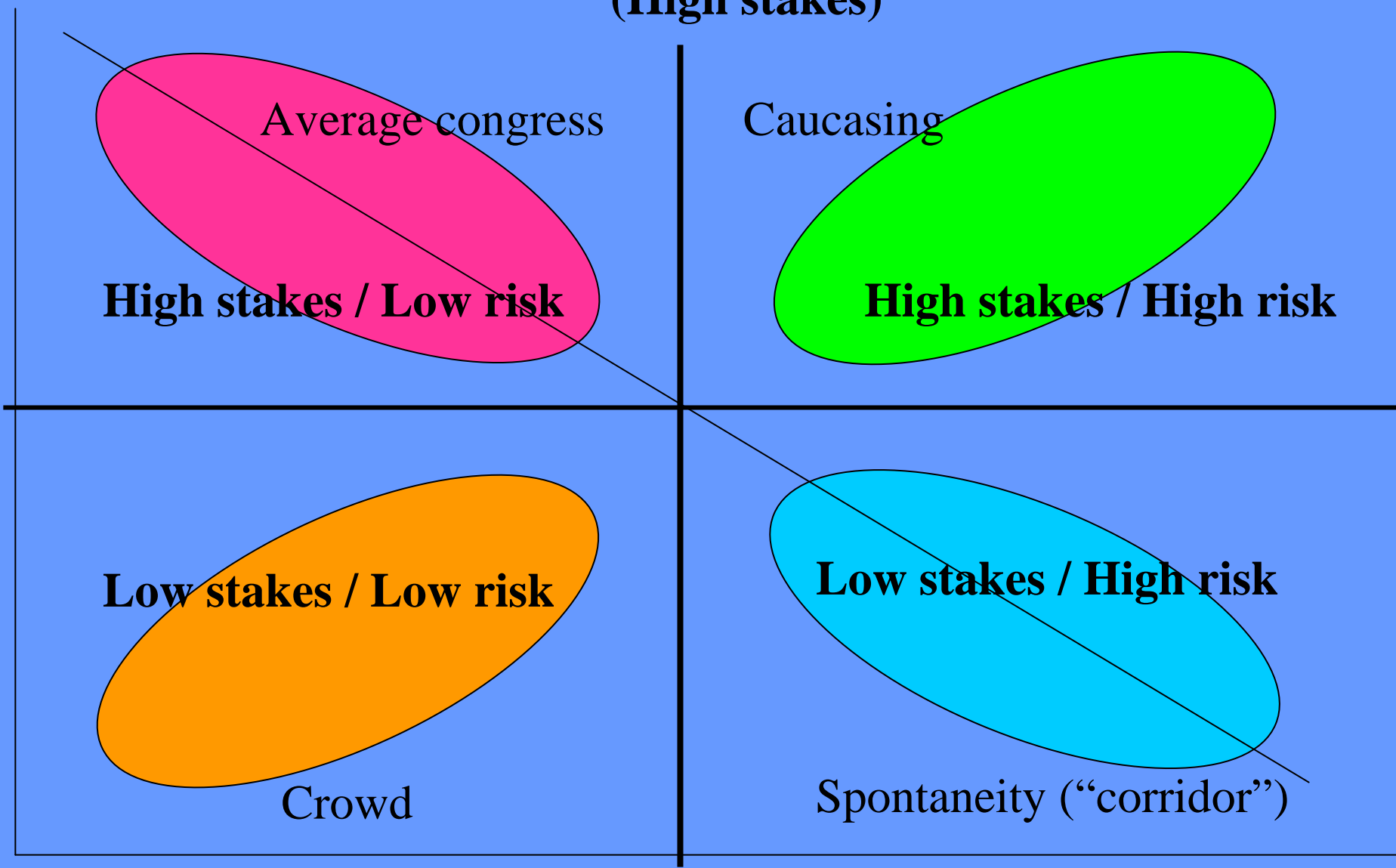
Spontaneity (“corridor”)

**Disorder**



# Stakes and risk

(High stakes)



Average congress

Caucusing

**High stakes / Low risk**

**High stakes / High risk**

**Low stakes / Low risk**

**Low stakes / High risk**

Crowd

Spontaneity ("corridor")

**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

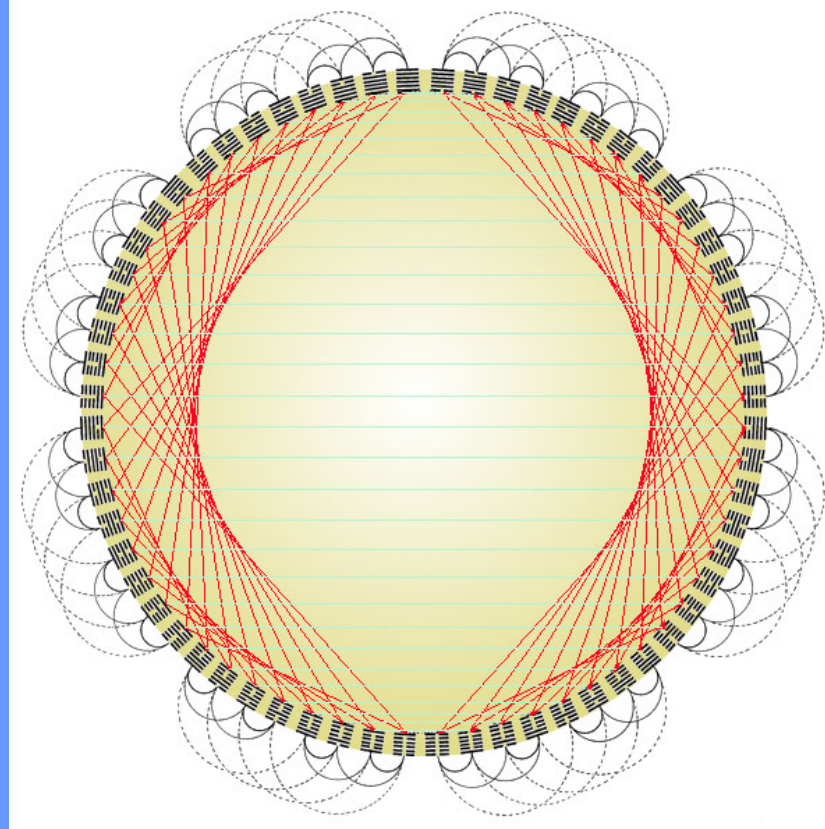
## Influence of new thinking on meetings

- > 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>