

Going Back to Basics Helps Sometimes : What IS Social Media?

Collaborative Intelligence: You Are Seen

Among the tribes of northern Natal in South Africa, the most common greeting, equivalent to “hello” in English, is the expression: Sawu bona. It literally means, “I see you.” If you are a member of the tribe, you might reply by saying Sikhona, “I am here.” The order of the exchange is important: until you see me, I do not exist. It’s as if, when you see me, you bring me into existence.

This meaning, implicit in the language, is part of the spirit of ubuntu, a frame of mind prevalent among native people in Africa below the Sahara. The work ubuntu stems from the folk saying Umuntu ngumuntu nagabantu, which, from Zulu, literally translates as: “A person is a person because of other people.” If you grow up with this perspective, your identity is based upon the fact that you are seen – that the people around you respect and acknowledge you as a person.

[Taken from '[The Fifth Discipline](#)' : Peter Senge, et. al.]

Social networking is growing from strength to strength. As it does our ability to ‘see’ each other expands. Time pressures are forcing us to use more virtual means to sustain

connection. This means large and far-reaching implications for how we establish, build and maintain communities- both on-line and off-line.

[Second Life](#) may be a bridge too far for some people (right now) but I am meeting more and more parents who's greatest hope is that they are cool enough to be included on their kids Face-book. I know I am dating myself when I admit that when I was twelve years old I didn't have a Face-book page – I had a vinyl record collection with three Charlie Pride [LPs](#) in it – how cool is that?

New Collaboration Tool

Collaboration tools are popping up like gophers on a spring day. The latest tool to emerge that has caught my attention is [SwarmTeams](#). From their site:

*The **Community Engagement Tool** – inspired by nature.*

Discover how you can enlist your key audiences – consumers, fans, citizens, staff, members or delegates – and transform them into proactive advocates of your cause, community or product.

Like a lot of the new social networking and collaborative tools – at first glance it takes a few moments to catch onto what they are offering to do for us. However what caught my eye immediately was the concept of turning audiences into communities. Inspired by natural systems [SwarmTeams](#) promises much in terms of collaborative possibilities.

You may have heard me mention in other posts that I am quite convinced that the traditional business model is changing so fast and so drastically that in a few years 'communities' will replace 'brands' and 'community members' will replace

'consumers'. Social networking /marketing is one of the main forces behind this shift. [SwarmTeams](#) is a great concept – and well worth a visit – I would love to hear what others think about.

If I can't Manage the One I've Got – Why Do I Need a Second Life?

Unless you've been living under a rock you will have already heard some sort of reference to '[Second Life](#)'. The site that allows you to create an avatar, or [Second Life](#). This one is virtual and doesn't, of course, come with the same restrictions your present physical life has. A good thing in some ways – in another it raises all sorts of question about what constitutes real human connection. In the virtual space provided by the software you can have a conversation or take part in activities with other 'second lifers'. It is unlikely you will meet these people in real life and some critics have said that meeting people in this way is soul-less etc.. I prefer to view it as an extension of ourselves. While I am not blind to the problems we have failed to solve (yet) here on the physical plane, I know that Second Life and 'places' like it will continue to proliferate as we human continue to explore our potential. By the way Sweden was the first country (am not sure if anyone else has followed them yet) to open an Embassy within Second Life.

[Thomas De Zengotita](#) has written an interesting article about Second Life in the present (Oct 2007) issue of '[What Is Enlightenment?](#)' magazine. You can [hear Thomas talk](#) about the

effects media is having on our consciousness at the WIE Site. Well worth a listen.

Collaboration : 43 Things We Can Do

I had forgotten about this neat little service site – a place to store 43 things you'd like to do with your life. What are [43 Things](#) you'd like to do with yours?

One of the coolest things about this site is that when you sign up and put something into the site – it will find all the other people who also want to do the thing you have set your heart on. You can send them message etc.