

new media

Social Media and Social Publishing

Triarchy Press is on Twitter, Scribd and Facebook. If you *like* that sort of thing, join us for regular news, new e-publications, posts, articles and links:

[Twitter](#) ~ [Facebook](#) ~ [Scribd](#)

Or Google TriarchyPress (one word) and you'll find all three accounts on the first page of results.

If you *don't like* that sort of thing, here's a brief explanation of why we're there:

Twitter. This is the hardest one for many people, because the press (who are frightened of Twitter) tell us that people just tweet that they're on the bus or having a coffee. Which is partly true.

But, used judiciously, it's also a very effective way of keeping tabs on people, organisations and ideas when you haven't got time to visit their websites every day, and to learn more about people, organisations and ideas that you've just heard of.

So, if you're new to **Systems Thinking** you can Google it. But if you search for #SystemsThinking on Twitter, you'll find *who* is talking about the subject *now* with links to their favourite sources on the subject. Through Twitter you can join a global conversation with people who share your interest.

Facebook. If you're not on Facebook, don't join just to read about Triarchy. But once you *do* join (presumably to keep in touch with your family), it's also the ideal way to keep an eye on who's doing what, and to join special interest groups. (e.g. there's a good conversation taking place now in the Facebook **Strategic and Systems Thinking Group**).

Scribd. The press (also frightened of Scribd) tend to characterise it as an epic copyright catastrophe that will send publishing the way of the film and recorded music industries.

Well we've been using Scribd since March and it's a great way of making articles, book extracts, essays and newsletters (like this one) available free and in easily readable formats for reading online.

We can control access in multiple ways and charge for e-books (though only if the reader lives in the USA.) This is like Amazon not making its Kindle e-book reader available outside the US for two years. Thereby helping us get a little way inside the feelings of imperial and colonial subjects: powerless, helpless and potentially murderous.

New, digital and social Media



Generally speaking, social media provoke strong reactions. They can be enchanting to the point of taking up pretty much all your time and they are often seen as vengeful, divisive destroyers of the social fabric. Medea was a vengeful enchantress herself: enough reason surely for a misleading headline?

Digital and social media are the reason that the book is dying - that was Andrew Carey's theme when he talked about the future of the book at a recent meeting of the [AMED Network Writers' Group](#), which combines an interest in organisations and writing.

His grandfather had vowed never to sell the shire horses on his farm, and he kept that promise. The land had to wait until his death for the arrival of the first tractor. But it was inevitable. For Andrew, the future role of the printed book in disseminating information will be much the same as the current role of the carthorse in commercial agriculture.

In this newsletter you can read about how Triarchy Press is responding to the new media, as well as read about new books on the subject and new publishing formats.

Monkeys with Typewriters

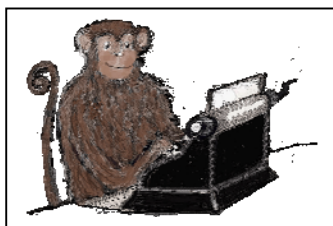
Myths and realities of social media at work

Whether you responded to the item (p.1) on our social media presence with interest or despair; whether you're an avid Blackberry Tweeter or a Facebook-denier; whether you have three blogs or closed your last one to spend more time with your brain, *Monkeys with Typewriters* thoroughly debunks the idea that social media are an amateurish distraction for today's organisation.

Triarchy's newest book (out on 9th December but you can order it from our [website](#) now) addresses the true impact of social media on the workplace. It asks how organisations and we who work in them should respond to the opportunities and threats, creativity and chaos offered by BarCamps, social bookmarking, crowdsourcing, RSS, digital mavens, huddle and copy-left. It asks specific questions like:

- 'What are the risks and benefits of increasingly open systems?'
- 'How can managers ensure a smooth transition to a more innovative, collaborative working environment?'
- 'Can social tools improve working practices?'
- 'How should managers cope with the erosion of executive power in the new, more porous business environment?'

Monkeys with Typewriters takes its title from Andrew Keen who argued in his book *The Cult*



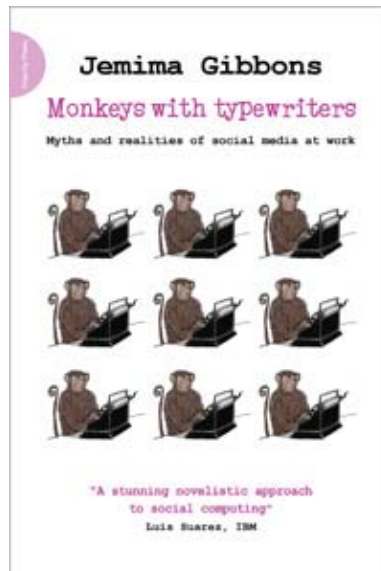
of the Amateur that social media are destroying culture by prioritising the participation of poorly-informed 'monkeys' over well-

informed experts. The same argument is echoed in the debate between advocates of 'The Wisdom of Crowds' and 'The Wisdom of the Wise'. It's the old split between the cathedral and the bazaar. It's our apocalyptic fear that dumbing down will bring about the end of civilisation.

For the book, Jemima Gibbons interviewed 50 thought leaders: executives at Google, Yahoo and Salesforce; developers at MySpace and Microsoft; web pioneers like Tim O'Reilly and Craig Newmark.

It's packed with insights from CEOs of small, savvy start-ups, plus lessons from senior staff at multi-nationals like BT, Ford, IBM and Shell.

She identifies a number of key behaviours in social media and ties them to current business practice. These behaviours are then presented as a practical framework which anyone can actively apply to create happier, more productive organisations.



The chapter headings give a good idea of the behaviours Jemima is talking about:

Co-Creation ~ Passion ~ Learning ~ Openness ~ Listening ~ Generosity.

The copious notes and links and the glossary of 150+ key terms will be especially useful for newcomers to social media and offers valuable reference material for the more experienced.

Pre-publication copies are available for order at a discount price of £17.50 from our [website](#) only.

Jemima Gibbons is also an innovation and media consultant, Cass Business School lecturer and fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. She blogs, of course. Google her!



Early Reviews:

'A timely and thoughtful reflection on how the social web is developing...'
- Lloyd Davis, Founder, Tuttle Club

'Great insights into past and present notions of what it takes to be a leader' - David Wilcox, Social Reporter

'Jemima's book captures the zeitgeist' - Joanne Jacobs, Social Media Expert Consultant

Join us at Cass Business School for the book launch **Networking the Workplace**

9th December ~ 6-9pm ~ 106 Bunhill Row ~ London EC1Y 8TZ

Panel debate on the impact of social media in the workplace, plus social drinks, social nibbles and social networking. The panel:

[Suw Charman-Anderson](#) ~ [Jemima Gibbons](#) ~ [Prof. Clive Holtham](#) ~ [Euan Semple](#) ~ [Luis Suarez](#) (via live link)

To attend: Register [here](#) ~ e-mail [Claudia at Cass](#) ~ [Facebook](#)

Leadership 2.0 was going to be the title of Jemima Gibbons' book (see previous page), until she realised that changing what leaders do in organisations was just one of many changes required by Web 2.0 and social media. (Here's a [video clip](#) of Jemima explaining about all that.)

Leadership 2.0

Which is a reminder that leadership is one of those elusive concepts...

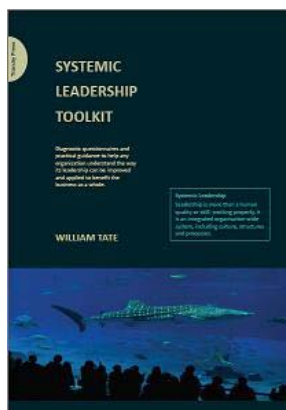
...time and time again, when companies, governments, people or systems begin to fail, the world calls for 'strong leadership'. But, in most cases where leadership is deemed to be lacking, solving the problem turns out not to be as simple as replacing a weak leader with a better one.

Yes, we need strong leaders, but if we want to improve any system, we need to get beyond the mindset that expects one person to be able to wave a magic wand and fix it all. In particular, we need to ask the questions that will make a difference:

- what exactly is 'leadership'?
- who is responsible for it?
- what happens in the gaps between people and job roles?
- what is needed to make sure that organisations are well led?

Bill Tate has recently started a new blog that responds to management and leadership issues in the public eye and explores them from his 'systemic leadership' perspective.

Visit systemic-leadership.blogspot.com to read Bill's views about the MOD, Fred Goodwin, Haringey and Baby Peter Connelly, and the sacking of Professor Nutt.



The brand new [Systemic Leadership Toolkit](#) by Bill Tate includes 9 sets of diagnostic questionnaires, implementation notes and revealing case studies - designed to guide any organisation through the process of assessing and improving its leadership.

The Toolkit is based on Bill's book, [The Search for Leadership](#), published in

May 2009 by Triarchy Press.

For details, visit thesearchforleadership.com

Russ Ackoff

Russ Ackoff's name has appeared many times in this newsletter and is currently to be seen in magazines and newspapers around the world.

The Dean of Systems Thinking and author of many books including *Management f-Laws* (published by Triarchy), died recently at the age of ninety.

Here are extracts from just two obituaries. On page 5 is a longer tribute from Rosie Beckham.

This from Rita McGrath at the [HBR website](#):

Ackoff's ideas had a profound impact on business schools and on several generations of managers. At a time when business schools were becoming increasingly discipline-based and quantitative, he was an ardent advocate for viewing problems systematically, across intellectual boundaries, and with qualitative insight. In the program he designed, we learned to think the way architects do – to construct a whole solution out of constituent parts that work together, rather than to optimize any given piece of the solution... He had learned that all kinds of complex problems could be tackled by first understanding what kind of problem one was facing, then by working to "dissolve" the problem.

This by [Steven Brant in The Huffington Post](#):

The world lost a very great man this past Thursday. So great, in fact, that the only person I can compare him to is Einstein. And that's because this man - Russell L. Ackoff, Professor Emeritus of The Wharton School - transformed the world of problem solving just as Albert Einstein transformed the world of science.

Finally, listen to [Peter Day's tribute to a very distinctive management genius](#). Here Russ Ackoff highlights the way we have shifted from viewing the organisation as a mechanical entity (a machine) to seeing it as a human entity (with a head) and now to seeing it as a social entity (a sophisticated set of living, interacting components; a micro-society).

*The theme of the move from mechanical to social is echoed in Ackoff's later f-Laws (to be published as *Systems Thinking for the Curious Manager* with a foreword by Jamshid Gharajedaghi by Triarchy Press early in 2010).*

Join the Ongoing Discussion at the In2:InThinking Network

17th & 18th December ~ teleconference with Bill Bellows and other Friends of Russell Ackoff

Formed by students of Deming and other theorists, the network aims to make thinking about systems, variation, knowledge and psychology (and their interaction) - more conscious.

To join the discussion: register [here](#) ~ In2InThinking is [here](#).

Triarchy books online

We've already mentioned the Triarchy publications you can see at Scribd. There are 32 books, chapters and book extracts which you can search and preview. Some are for sale, others you can download free of charge.

For example, there's a 29-page preview of [Monkeys with Typewriters](#) (see previous page), the late Russ Ackoff's [Little Book of f-Laws](#) and much more.



You can also read copies of our co-publications with the IFF free online. For example, visit our site for the wonderful [Ten Things to Do in a Conceptual Emergency](#). (Conceptual emergencies include, of course, the current state of our

planet. This lovely little book would make a great Christmas present¹ for anyone who's worried about that sort of thing.)

You can also buy, download and read groundbreaking self-assessment management audits on:

- [Innovation](#)
- [Customer satisfaction](#)
- [Writing a strategic marketing plan](#)
- [The shadow side of organisations](#)
- [Employee motivation](#)
- [Training and Development](#)

from our sister company [Cambridge Strategy Publications](#).



A number of our books have dedicated websites. You can read most of *Inside Project Red Stripe* - the story of *The Economist's* controversial 6-month innovation project, at the dedicated [Project Red Stripe website](#). (It so happens the project was all about new social media possibilities and applications.) Find out how they managed and what lessons you could learn from their innovation team.

¹ Other rituals are available

- Russ Ackoff's *Management f-Laws* have their own site at www.f-laws.com
- As does Bill Tate's *Search for Leadership* at www.thesearchforleadership.com
- And Phil Smith's magical *Mythogeography* at - you guessed - www.mythogeography.com where you can learn to:

- walk like a crab
- explore the seamy underbelly of Devon
- cross the Pennines in the footsteps of Pontiflunk,
- learn about the history of the Air Loom in Victorian Bedlam,
- and ever so much more...



The Espresso Book Machine

If that's not enough, you can now get a copy of most of our books printed on an Espresso Book Machine®. This is particularly useful if you happen to live near one. The full, current list of EBM installations is available [here](#), but don't get excited if you live outside North America, the library of Alexandria, Melbourne and London.



In fact, the author of *Mythogeography* would probably recommend that any sort of excitement should be restricted outside those places during the hours of darkness for an experimental period.

A tribute to Russ Ackoff *by Rosie Beckham*

I first encountered the 'Dean' of Systems Thinking after he had contacted Triarchy with a proposal to publish a collection of his 'Management f-Laws'. After working closely with him over many months, he became a good friend. Even when I left publishing, he kept in regular touch. Each time he contacted me, he made me interrogate the complacency of my thinking.

He once rebutted my suggestion that he was a living 'legend': *'I'm not sure what being a legend implies,'* he wrote, *'but it seems retrospective and I'm still prospective.'* I guess he felt that being a legend in his own lifetime was unhelpful to his work which, whilst he was still breathing, he considered to be an open-ended project. Rightly in my view however, there is little hope that his wish to cast aside this legendary status will be respected.

Whilst it was appealingly disingenuous of him to wish that his thinking could be detached from his reputation as a great man, the most effective examples of Systems Thinking in practice will be evidenced by people who collaborated with him, and who will carry his work forward. For Russ's astonishing written output is indivisible from his years teaching at Wharton or working with corporates and government; it is the combination of collaboration and intense personal thinking that made him such a radical genius. His legacy will lie in the dissemination and continuation of his work by so many former students and practitioners.

His 2007 UK book tour afforded readers able to attend his dialogues with co-author, Sally Bibb, a face-to-face encounter with one of the most witty, acutely acerbic thinkers of the post-war period - ironically, reinforcing the sense of 'legendary' that he resisted so strongly. His collection of *f-Laws* turned management thinking on its head: providing an ironic and often subversive take on how organisations *really* work. He saw them as keys to his Systems Thinking. His humour and synthetic thinking was a deadly but effective weapon against the reductionist, analytical approach.

That Ackoff relished diversity is another key to his greatness - diverse perspectives, as Gerard Fairtlough pointed out about him, acting as an 'antidote to blinkered thinking.' This is arguably a characteristic common to all great polymaths, for it is certain that only a polymath could come up with the profound shift in thinking required to develop Systems Thinking and Operational Design. He exploited a diversity of views and perspectives to 'take a break' from his own thinking processes; they tested his boundaries and, at best, allowed him to expand or break free of them.

But Russ knew that most people in the business and policy-making world insist on 'doing the wrong thing righter' (a term picked up from Peter Drucker). This frustrated and irritated him. Last spring, I e-mailed him about the Presidential campaign and the level of hope being invested in Obama. His reply was typically acerbic:

"The optimism and "we can do it" attitude that you observe is probably restricted to the student population. There is a great deal of skepticism if not cynicism, among those in my generation with whom I have contact. It is generally agreed that Bush has led a devolution of this country and there is doubt that a democratic president can pull it out. However, there is certainty that a republican can't."

He cared deeply about this state of affairs. He understood that in order to change and learn you must be allowed to do the right thing, even if that means making mistakes; but that most politicians reject the very notion of a public admission of possible errors.

That awareness of resistance to change never stopped him trying to inculcate a fundamental shift in attitudes. He wrote to think, and he thought deeply every day. In another e-mail he said:

"I am doing some work on a manuscript: Differences that make a Difference – a glossary of distinctions that matter. For example; development versus growth, education versus training, and management versus leadership."

But Russ did more than think through writing. In 2007, he told me about a more active project:

"My major current activity involves a new not-for-profit tax-free corporation – Adopt a Neighborhood for Development. We have one corporate sponsor and several others in the wings. With the one sponsor we have one disadvantaged neighborhood of 22,000 involved in a self-development project. We hope eventually, to cover this city, then other cities in the USA, and then cities abroad. I don't know that we will ever get there but it is worth the try."

This wasn't an exercise in CSR but a reflection of his overall philosophy in which the political, economic and social are all seen as part of an interacting, interdependent human system. One that, if you really want to get things right, will inevitably lead to you doing the right thing. These examples point to a remarkable consistency between his thinking and his actions in what he described as the 'art' of Systems Thinking.

Russ made light of the badges of honour thrust upon him, such as being a legend in his own time. Happily for us, his work will continue to provide a legacy that deserves the accolades. *Rosie Beckham*

