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Sábado 18 de Octubre de 2003 - ([Nuevos alfabetismos](#))

## La remediación

Por [Piscitelli](#)

### 1. Los medios oscilan entre la transparencia y la opacidad

Como todos los medios de comunicación que se han inventado desde el Renacimiento -y con más propiedad desde la aparición de la pintura en perspectiva, la fotografía, el cine y la televisión- los **nuevos medios digitales** oscilan entre la inmediatez y la hipermediatez, entre la transparencia y la opacidad. Esta oscilación es clave para entender cómo un medio reinventa a sus predecesores así como transforma a sus contemporáneos.

Aunque cada medio promete cambiar a sus antecesores ofreciendo una experiencia más inmediata o auténtica que los anteriores, la promesa de reforma nos lleva siempre a ver al nuevo medio como medio, es decir a pescarlo in fraganti en el proceso de inter-mediar.

Lo que, en un vaivén infernal, hace que la inmediatez se convierta en hiperinmediatez. El proceso de remediación nos vuelve conscientes de que todos los medios son en un plano tan solo un juego de signos, algo que nos enseñó el post-estructuralismo. Pero este proceso marca con no menor fuerza que los medios (en el mejor sentido del **Douglas Ruskoff** de *Media Virus. Hidden agenda in popular culture*, 1994) son un virus cultural y a su vez la misma máquina de propagarlos. (interesante [weblog](#) en la homepage del autor).

A esta altura de la evolución de la ecología de los medios, sabemos que éstos son **artefactos culturales** del mismo modo como las fotografías, las películas, y los softwares son tan reales como los edificios y los aviones.

Tampoco olvidamos que las tecnologías de los medios son redes o híbridos que pueden ser expresados en términos, físicos, sociales, estéticos y económicos. La introducción de una nueva tecnología de los medios no significa meramente inventar un nuevo soft o hard, sino mas bien diseñar o rediseñar una red de características multideterminadas.

La **World Wide Web** no es tan solo un protocolo compuesto de software, texto y archivos de datos. Es a su vez la cantidad de usuarios que la están utilizando (y que debieron ser diseñados para usarla, como nos enseñó [Douglas Engelbart](#) ) así como todo lo inesperado (muchas veces incompatible entre sí) que la misma hace posible -y que a su vez la hacen posible a ella: marketing, publicidad, educación, expresión personal (culminando en el culto de los weblogs, los wikis y lo que seguirá).

Todos estos usos son tan parte integrante de la tecnología como las mismas máquinas y los aparatos. Por esa razón **Jay Bolter y David Grusin** en su sagaz [Remediation. Understanding new media](#) (2000), (que junto a **Lev Manovich** [The Language of New Media](#) (2001) son los mejores marcos que tenemos para pensar estos fenómenos), insisten en que las tecnologías de los medios o del conocimiento son agentes, sin que ello suponga aceptar el mito del determinismo tecnológico.

Porque lo que ha quedado mas que probado es que los medios digitales no son -como proclama desgarradoramente la filosofía de la tecnología ingenua- agentes externos que solo emergen para volver loca a la cultura bien establecida. Es totalmente a la inversa, los



mismos emergen dentro de los contextos culturales y rediseñan a otros medios, que están inscriptos en similares contextos.

Para la lógica de la transparencia inmediata y la hipermediación remitimos al capítulo 1 de la excelente obra ya citada de Bolter y Grusin, pero queremos dar aquí algunas pinceladas sobre el tema de la remediación.

## 2. La remediación viene desde lejos

A principios y mediados de los años 90 Hollywood, la eterna fábrica de sueños, produjo mas versiones de las novelas clásicas que nunca antes en la historia desde 1930. Las novelas de **Jane Austen** (ver de **Linda Troost y Sayre Greenfield** (eds.) *Jane Austen in Hollywood* University Press of Kentucky; ISBN: 0813190061; 2001) y de **Henry James**, entre muchas otras, llegaron a la pantalla grande, y lo hicieron con dignidad y precisión. La reconstrucción histórica fue cada vez mas verosímil, parecíamos habernos subido al túnel del tiempo y haber parado la máquina justo en el momento preciso. (Esta intersección entre películas y textos está comprobada en las mas de [500 referencias](#) que hay en Amazon sobre el tema).

Lo curioso de las adaptaciones es que si bien presentaron sus escenarios con una exactitud y detalle nunca vista antes (algo que se reiteraría en otro contexto con la avalancha de efectos digitales de fines del año 2000), jamás se tomaron a si mismas como guiones hechos sobre novelas preexistentes.

Porque como espectadores no nos sirve de mucho saber que lo que estamos viendo fue originalmente una novela. Es mucho mas directo y creíble suponer que la película nos metió en ese túnel del tiempo y nos dejó frente a frente a la realidad misma, que estar haciendo malabarismos entre los medios, tratando de ver cuan "buena" o "ajustada" es la adaptación, qué se ganó o perdió en el medio, y como podríamos mejorar aun mas, para copiar a la realidad en su mismidad.

Históricamente no hay aquí mayor novedad en este tratamiento iniciado desde el nuevo formato. Técnicamente se llama *repurposing*, es decir tomar la propiedad de un medio y usarla en otro. Pero en el fondo no hay ningún entrecruzamiento de medios salvo para el espectador, que si leyó el libro podrá imaginarse cuan lograda es esa operación de traducción.

Para explorar mas el tema ver de **Linda Seger** *The Art of Adaptation: Turning Fact and Fiction into Film* (Henry Holt, 1992); ISBN: 0805016260; y de **Brian McFarlane** *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (Oxford University Press, 1996) ISBN: 0198711506.

Mas sutil que buscar meras adaptaciones, fue McLuhan cuando ya en la página inaugural de *Understanding Media* insistía en que el contenido de un medio es siempre otro medio (*el contenido de la escritura es el habla; la palabra escrita es el contenido de la imprenta; lo impreso es el contenido del telégrafo*).

Porque McLuhan estaba yendo mucho mas allá que el mero reformateo, imaginando un préstamo mucho mas complejo entre los medios, en el cual un medio es incorporado o representado por parte de otro.

## 3. Ekphrasis o la representación verbal de la representación visual

Los pintores holandeses incluyeron mapas, globos, inscripciones, cartas y espejos en sus obras (como bien lo muestra **Svetlana Alpers** en su magnifico *El Arte de Describir*, Hermann Blume, 1987). La forma sofisticada de estos empeños es la **ekphrasis** (ver el excelente artículo de Jay David Bolter "Ekphrasis, realidad virtual y el futuro de la escritura" en la compilación de Geoffrey Nunberg *El futuro del libro. ¿Esto matará eso?*), es decir la representación verbal de la representación visual -uno de cuyos momentos cumbres es el capítulo inicial de *Las Palabras y las Cosas*, donde **Michel Foucault** "narra" *Las Meninas* de **Velázquez**.

Segun Bolter & Grusin es precisamente la representación de un medio en otro lo que ellos denominan remediación, que es también una característica distintiva de los nuevos medios digitales. Esta práctica es tan masiva que no cuesta trabajo alguno ilustrarla de múltiples maneras.

La forma mas llana de remediación es la reapropiación de los viejos medios por parte de los nuevos, sin ninguna moralización o comentario critico (como los innumerables CD o DVD que han proliferado en la última década y que encapsulan galerías de imágenes).

En otras oportunidades hay una intencionalidad manifiesta de los usuarios de medios de borrar las diferencias antes que de enfatizarlas. En estos casos la versión digital mejora la anterior, pero permanece fiel a ella. Y lo que aporta es algo inconseguible en el original, como la inclusión de sonido o de animación en una enciclopedia, por ejemplo.

La mayoría de los objetos que tenemos en la web comparten esta forma de remediación que ensalza y mejora lo tradicional sin cuestionarlo. Si bien podemos manipular con cierta facilidad textos e imágenes, en ningún momento el nuevo medio aspira a la transparencia, y mucho menos aún busca anular el valor de la materia prima de la que parte y a la que ensalza.

Pero el medio digital puede ser mucho mas ambicioso y transgresor en su proceso de remediación. Porque puede intentar (y a veces lograrlo) renovar al anterior en forma radical como en los casos de los CD musicales que incluyen videoclips, o distintas interfases gráficas que permiten interactuar con el material. Y lo mismo sucede con los DVD mas recientes de películas, que no solo traen trailers adicionales, sino también juegos y búsquedas del tesoro inexistentes en las versiones originales, manteniendo de este modo un sentido de la multiplicidad o la hipermediatez.

Hay por último una alternativa en la cual el nuevo medio busca modificar al anterior por entero, absorbiéndolo de manera tal que la discontinuidad con el anterior es minimizada integralmente.

Pero este intento, con lo ambicioso que es, está condenado al fracaso, porque el fenómeno de la remediación está predicado precisamente de la relación entre medios. Nunca el medio antiguo puede ser borrado por entero. Así juegos de computación tan hermosos como [Myst](#) o tan (poco) interesantes como [Doom](#), llamados nada casualmente "cine interactivo", remedian al cine.

En ellos los jugadores nos convertimos en personajes de una narrativa cinematográfica. Como tales tenemos cierto control sobre la narrativa pudiendo decidir tomar alguno de los caminos prefijados, e incluso manejar el punto de vista, de manera tal que al jugar podemos ser alternativamente directores o actores.

Nada sorpresivamente en la Web la que es remediada es la televisión. Muchísimos sitios web (incluyendo la versiones originales de las redacciones de **Clarín** y de **La Nación**) presentaban un torrente de imágenes, en donde webcams apuntan a todo tipo de objetos, paisajes y escenarios copiando la función bien tradicional de las cámaras de televisión.

No haremos aquí referencia alguna a los autocomentarios o autoreferencias de ciertos medios sobre si mismos (cine que cita al cine, literatura que cita a la literatura), ya que se trata de las cruces de remediación mas comunes, pero su gran cantidad muestra que estos cruces datan de antiguo

Por otra parte suenan ingenuas posiciones como las de **Steven Holtzman** en *Digital Mosaics* cuando insiste en que el reformato testimonia tan solo un momento infantil de los desarrollos digitales, y que cuando el nuevo medio adquiera su identidad plena los préstamos brillarán por su ausencia, algo que alguna vez nosotros mismos dijimos y compartimos.

Es al revés, precisamente lo nuevo del medio digital son sus estrategias particulares para remediar a la televisión, a las películas, a la fotografía y a la pintura. Y lo que tienen de específico es al mismo tiempo lo que no permite singularizarlo como una novedad absoluta.

La problemática recién se abre y hay mucho para decir al respecto.



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**Monday, September 13, 2004**

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### **Are Cell Phone Users the New Smokers?**

<http://www.thefeature.com/article?articleid=101010>

If the newest etiquette surveys are any indication, mobile phones may be going the way of the cigarette.

Just to prove how good smokers used to have it, a recent Seattle Times article cited the 1941 treatise on manners, "New American Etiquette." The book, with all the compassion that a high-school football coach bestows upon his third-stringers, admonishes nonsmokers not merely to accept but to accommodate their smoking peers. If unwilling, the author suggests, non-smokers would do best to "retire from social activities" altogether. With bludgeoning certitude, the book proclaims "Smokers far outnumber nonsmokers in every type of community, in every class of society and in both sexes... The young man or young woman who does not smoke is a rarity... If (a hostess) will not let her guest smoke in whatever part of the house they happen to be in, she will not have many guests..."

Now, six decades later, smokers have become the social pariahs: excluded, if not frowned upon, by contemporary behavioral codes and even municipal law. You almost have to admire them at this point for their pure strength of determination.

Yet, while smoking may have hit its sunset years, another handheld is most definitely on the up and up. According to the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association, there are now roughly 160 million cellular phone subscribers in the United States alone. A November Gallup poll confirmed this finding, telling us that roughly two-thirds of all American adults now own cell phones, compared with just half in 2000. Clearly, non-users have earned a minority status. But are they, like the nonsmokers of 1941, simply to surrender themselves to the tyranny of ubiquitous din? To the insufferable "cell yell" of their mobile-equipped brethren?

...more at [The Feature](#)

10:04 AM | [link](#) | [10 comments](#)

**Sunday, September 05, 2004**

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### **The Real Threat of Blogs**

I believe that the most dangerous thing about blogs to the status quo is that so many of them exist for reasons other than to make money. A thriving community of people who are engaged for free, to me, have a certain authority that people doing things for money don't.

Writing a book for money is always suspect. (Disclosure to all: I have written books for money and for free.) Writing it for free is very different - and might still be suspect, but for other reasons.

What made the early Internet so very threatening to the mainstream media was not just the new opinions being expressed, but the fact that people were spending hours of their lives doing something that didn't involve production or consumption in the traditional market sense. Families with Internet connections were watching an average of nine hours less commercial programming each week.

The threat of rave culture was that it was an alternative economy. The kids were no longer going to the mob-run nightclubs, the police weren't getting their cut, and the liquor distributors weren't making any money. Those of us involved in rave - or at least many of us - didn't realize that's why they were such a threat.

#### **ARCHIVES**

- [March 2002](#)
- [April 2002](#)
- [May 2002](#)
- [June 2002](#)
- [July 2002](#)
- [August 2002](#)
- [September 2002](#)
- [October 2002](#)
- [November 2002](#)
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- [Current](#)

#### **WEBLOGS I'M READING**

- [Places](#)
- [Saturation](#)
- [JewSchool](#)
- [Greater](#)
- [Democracy](#)
- [Justin's Links](#)
- [BoingBoing](#)
- [Plotz](#)
- [See the Forest](#)
- [Planet P](#)
- [People](#)
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Likewise, I believe the greatest power of the blog is not just its ability to distribute alternative information - a great power, indeed - but its power to demonstrate a mode of engagement that is not based on the profit principle.

Admittedly, many people need to try to make money any way they can. And many people who insist on making their money by writing, but can't do so in the current commercial writing space, will attempt to do so on their blogs. I think that they will learn, as I have, what is so valuable about keeping certain areas of one's life and work market-free if at all possible. Even if it means getting a day job, which many of us have done in order to support our work. I have been very lucky in my ability to craft my messages into forms that publishers will pay for. But the more integrity I get (and the more market-driven the book industry gets) the harder that is to do. Indeed, the book industry used to use criteria other than marketability in picking what to publish. Sometimes, editors would publish books that only broke even, because they happened to like them. Those editors are few and far between, now, because they don't make as much money for their companies, and the values have changed.

Please understand, this is not a critique or attack on anyone who makes money through their blog. It is merely a statement about what I believe is the most threatening and thrilling aspect of the early blog community.

Soon enough, it will be back to your regularly scheduled programming.

11:44 AM | [link](#) | [30 comments](#)

## Friday, September 03, 2004

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### Club ZeroG & end of the Convention

Yes, ClubZeroG is still alive and well, enjoying the shelves in the comics shops and online, if not the bookstore chains. And a new interview (well, actually, an expanded version of an older interview) on [Comic Book Resources](#) should help some new people find out about its existence.

How about that convention? Thank goodness it's finally over. The lying and meanness were really over-the-top. The theme of the whole show was, pretty much, that real men have no doubt about what they do because they're macho and God loves them more. And anyone who thinks that actions should be considered before they are taken is a sissy. The world only understands machismo and force, and will not do as we say unless we prove ourselves that way.

The grins and shouts and god-stuff and lies and daddy posturing reminded me of both the movies 1984 and Requiem for a Dream (those game show sequences).

I do not believe America is as dumb as the people in that arena do. I don't even believe the majority of the people in that arena believed, earnestly, in what they were doing - but saw it as a necessary stage in publicizing their party.

This one isn't over, yet.

8:10 AM | [link](#) | [9 comments](#)

## Thursday, September 02, 2004

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### Bloggers Ad Nauseum

I did a panel the other night - part of all the generally anti-Republican Convention stuff going on this week in NYC - about Blogs and Bloggers. We covered the obvious ground, about whether blogs make a difference or are just having a good time (my response was that having a good time *can* make a difference, and that making a difference is a good time).

But as we veered over into the realm of career blogging, we touched briefly on the subject of whether ads hurt blogs - and that's where I think the whole thing died. And even depressed me a bit.

I tried to make the point that the early Internet and early rave culture were alike in that they were ad-free zones - alternatives to the free market reality in which we were living. And that's what made them so powerful. I was trying to go on to explain that there might be a value in ad-free blogging; that doing it for money, for ads, may not change our writing on a conscious level, but that we may be changed - yes, corrupted - by the ads we're endorsing, er, displaying.

The moderator shut me down with great force, dismissing the entire notion of ads affecting writers as silly - that the marketplace would judge the integrity of those writers accordingly. Now, I've been shut down by co-panelists, but not by moderators. And I would have chalked it up to my own 'sensitivity' had I not received more than a few emails from people calling the moment to my attention.

So I thought I'd call it to yours - not because I feel slighted or hurt, but because I believe that the underlying assumption that the market corrects all problems, eventually, or that the market is itself 'value neutral,' is incorrect. I'm not challenging free market capitalism; God bless the USA and all that.

I'm only challenging the perception that we are living in a marketplace. We don't *have* to use the metaphor of a competitive economy to understand this world; it may as well be a collaborative ecology.

Plus, if I put ads on this blog, it'd be the end of something. No?

3:29 PM | [link](#) | [47 comments](#)

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## Monday, August 23, 2004

### Changing Selves

I did an interview on Changesurfer radio this weekend - mostly about my book Open Source Democracy, but ultimately about the changing nature of the individual in the face of emerging networks and community.

As I explained it on the air, it all comes down to the way we define "self." In the past - since the renaissance, really, we've defined "self" in terms of the boundaries we experience differentiating us from others. As we move forward self becomes defined by our connections with others.

That's the fun part of doing interviews - you come up with new ideas, and sometimes you even agree with them!

You can listen to the whole half hour, [here](#).

9:00 AM | [link](#) | [12 comments](#)

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## Tuesday, August 17, 2004

### We Don't Need Another Hero

Just back from an Omega Institute weekend I led with Grant Morrison, Paul Laffoley, Richard Metzger and Howard Bloom. Interesting combination of people - I ended up hanging out and resonating most with Grant this time out.

Where we seemed to connect most was in our shared sense that Aristotle's narrative arc - the male heroic narrative - no longer adequately describes our experience of this world. It's something I've been thinking and speaking about for a long time, but it was very rewarding for Grant to respond so favorably to this notion. He's experienced it, himself, in his work as a comic book writer trying to move past current expectations for superhero characters. I confront it, myself, as I try to help people conceive of more emergent narratives for human history - to break our addiction to stories with endings or intrinsic, pre-existing meaning.

After all, what if meaning is something that evolves or emerges? I think it's a lot more useful to think about God not as a character who created our universe with

some purpose, but rather as something that might happen in the future. We make meaning - which doesn't make it any less meaningful.

The problem is whether, without artificially constructed heroic narratives, we still have the will to rise to the world's many problems. Will we dare to approach hunger, violence, and confusion without the promise of a happy ending? Or do we still need charismatic leaders with beautiful stories to our motivate us?

10:39 AM | [link](#) | [34 comments](#)

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## Thursday, August 12, 2004

### Graphic Novel as Sigil

The reviewer at [Media Underground](#) pegged it. From his critique:

*The minimalism that is present in Club Zero G makes the pace of the book exceptionally fast. The images are simple yet bold with a richness in colour that seems extremely striking to the eye. The dialogue is sparse yet to the point and it is this which encourages the reader to run through the story quickly, whilst the mind is bombarded by an array of vivid imagery that conveys an almost subconscious message about a battle between human potential and consensus reality. As one reaches the books conclusion the tables are switched quickly and cleverly to bring the reader into the equation.*

*Did I just read a comic book or participate in an experiment?*

*To most people this will seem like just another graphic novel, but to anyone like me whose time as a youth was laced heavily with occult practice, Club Zero G is a deliberate and effective form of modern day Pop Magick.*

*Perhaps Rushkoff will now email me to tell me if my assumptions are correct, or maybe he doesn't want anyone to know. Whatever the case, readers should not feel afraid of approaching the sigil Club Zero G. After all, if it works the future might not turn out as bleak as it presently looks.*

11:29 AM | [link](#) | [12 comments](#)

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## Sunday, August 01, 2004

### What's Wrong with Voting Against George Bush?

The right-wing pundits on the Sunday morning news shows this week seem to think that the best critique of John Kerry and of the Democratic Convention, voters, and ticket in general is the notion that most of the party's supporters are still just voting "against George Bush." The idea, here, is that voting *against* something is not enough to carry the day.

Ridiculous, I say.

I am voting against George Bush. I'm sure Kerry has his problems. If any of you who regularly read this blog went to college with the man, I'm sure you wouldn't have been friends with him. He volunteered for the military, for chrissakes. How many people who you relate to went to Ivy League colleges in the 60's but, instead of trying to get out of service, dropping acid, or conscientiously objecting, actually went to Vietnam and then volunteered for gook-shooting duty on a boat? Sure, I would have preferred someone like Kucinich. But I'm a weird-ass lefty pinko artist writer, and I doubt the Democratic party will ever support a candidate with whom I truly resonate.

As I realist, I understand that Bush is a problem on a very different order. And I believe it is okay to vote purely to rid the nation and the world of a dangerous, misguided, deluded sociopath and the rapacious clique who control him - while there's still enough integrity in the voting system to exercise such authority over the executive branch. This may be our last chance to use our blogs and our voices

towards such a purpose.

Indeed, the attack on Democrats who are voting simply to get rid of Bush strike me as hollow as early attacks on Jews and early Christians who believed in an abstract God. To the polytheistic peoples around them, these monotheists were basically atheists. The God they believed in had no form. They were understood simply as iconoclasts, whose very purpose seemed to be to smash the idols that reigned reality.

And if those of us voting against Bush must be understood that way, it's fine with me.

9:49 AM | [link](#) | [52 comments](#)

## Wednesday, July 28, 2004

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### Spawn

Science told us it couldn't happen, but guess what: a future Rushkoff is making her way to this dimension.



4:19 PM | [link](#) | [43 comments](#)

## Monday, July 26, 2004

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### Anti-Drugs Vaccines For Kids?

Just got passed this one from the Center for Cognitive Liberties and Ethics. Frightening?

In brief, yesterday The Independent issued a story: "Children to get jabs against drug addiction":

<http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/story.jsp?story=544439>  
stating, among other things:

"A radical scheme to vaccinate children against future drug addiction is being considered by ministers, The Independent on Sunday can reveal."

"Under the plans, doctors would immunise children at risk of becoming smokers or drug users with an injection. The scheme could operate in a similar way to the current nationwide measles, mumps and rubella vaccination programme."

"Childhood immunisation would provide adults with protection from the euphoria that is experienced by users, making drugs such as heroin and cocaine pointless to take. Such vaccinations are being developed by pharmaceutical companies and are

due to hit the market within two years."

8:50 PM | [link](#) | [17 comments](#)

## Saturday, July 24, 2004

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### Omega in alpha

I'm doing a workshop of some kind at the [Omega Institute](#) in a few weeks, along with Howard Bloom, Paul Laffoley, Richard Metzger, and Grant Morrison, all under the general [Disinformation](#) umbrella.

The description on the Omega site explains that the weekend "offers us a rare chance to interact with a disparate, yet thematically cohesive group of "out-of-the-box"thinkers, and discover creative new strategies for navigating the zeitgeist of the new millennium."

Sounds fine, but what do you think I should do? I believe we'll each be given a two hour slot to make whatever mayhem we choose. Paul Laffoley will show some of his art, Howard Bloom will make a speech about some wonderfully apocalyptic scenario, no doubt. Grant will probably explain how to make a sigil (how to do magick, basically).

I'd love to raise the dead or take everyone into an alternative dimension, but neither is in my bag of tricks at the moment. I could go political, spiritual, technological, media... My hope would be to demonstrate the principles of 'open source reality' rather than simply talking about them.

So - if you were coming to such a thing, what would you want to do with me for two hours?

11:42 AM | [link](#) | [20 comments](#)

## Sunday, July 18, 2004

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### Two New Interviews

Two great new interviews with me have gone up in the last week. I think they both cover some new ground.

[Madghoul.com](#)

"...I do believe that those who can see - those who are willing to see what's going on in this world, and feel obligated to do something about it - they are outcasts. I'm not sure whether they're outcasts because of how they feel, or whether their status as outcasts makes them uniquely capable of seeing how things are."

[Bakers Dozen](#)

"...But when the story, the genre, the medium, and the theme all merge, then it's magic. (Or magick.) Then you're really happy that there's an audience who won't be attracted unless you create an artifact worthy of attention - because you only get there if you've worked out the kinks, and gotten your own agendas out of the way of the characters' or the story's. Ultimately, if you're going to play around with myth, you've got to disappear."

8:31 AM | [link](#) | [4 comments](#)

## Monday, July 12, 2004

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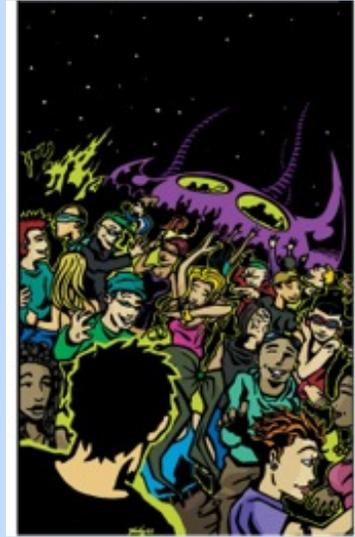
### New York Appearance

I'm doing a single event to promote the launch of my new graphic novel, Club Zero-G, at Barnes & Noble on 8th Street and 6th Ave, NYC, Thursday July 15 at 7:30pm.

Please come if you'd enjoy such an event. I'll probably talk a bit about the ideas behind the comic - and maybe try to figure out a way to read some of it. Perhaps those who want to can go out for a beer or something afterwards.

The book itself is meant as a little challenge to consensus reality, and a shove towards taking the plunge into world creation. You can find out more at <http://www.clubzerog.com> or the interview at <http://www.popimage.com/content/rushkoff.html>

If you want a copy, order it online at [Amazon](#), [Disinformation.com](#) or through your local comics shop.



6:37 PM | [link](#) | [12 comments](#)

**Saturday, July 10, 2004**

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### **Bad Grammar Reveals Crooks**

Like most of you, I receive many fake emails from people spoofing Ebay and Paypal, asking for account information, passwords, credit card numbers, and more. Their art, complete with site logos and characteristic fonts, is quite good - good enough to fool many users. And so is their url spoofing, which usually has ebay.com or paypal.com somewhere in it. Sometimes, they'll even create a link that appears to end in ebay.com - and only if you copy the link beneath it and paste it into a browser, you can see it goes somewhere else.

But the dead giveaway on almost any of these fraudulent emails is not the painstakingly simulated appearance or the sophisticated coding, but the grammar! That's right, these people just aren't competent in the English language. Unlike the copywriters at places like Paypal and Ebay (usually former tech journalists) these crooks don't use proper tenses, have great trouble with agreement, and use diction that sounds like language in translation. Find the two dead giveaways in the email, below:

Dear eBay Member,

We wish to inform you that for the next two days we shall upgrade our database servers in order to increase our efficiency in managing eBay users accounts and to secure the transactions.

To avoid any possible errors that might occur during this process we advise you to check if your account is active and the registration information are correct by clicking the following link:

<http://cgi3ebay.com@eBayISAPI.dll?&MfcISAPCommand=EnterConfirm&UsingSSL=1>

Thank you very much for your cooperation!  
Marry Kimmel,  
eBay Billing Department team.

3:22 PM | [link](#) | [27 comments](#)



**BOOKS**  
**ARTICLES**  
**MIXED MEDIA**

**WEBLOG**  
**BIO**  
**PRESS**

**SPEAKING/TOUR**  
**MEDIASQUAT**  
**CONTACT**

## Monday, September 13, 2004

---

### Are Cell Phone Users the New Smokers?

<http://www.thefeature.com/article?articleid=101010>

If the newest etiquette surveys are any indication, mobile phones may be going the way of the cigarette.

Just to prove how good smokers used to have it, a recent Seattle Times article cited the 1941 treatise on manners, "New American Etiquette." The book, with all the compassion that a high-school football coach bestows upon his third-stringers, admonishes nonsmokers not merely to accept but to accommodate their smoking peers. If unwilling, the author suggests, non-smokers would do best to "retire from social activities" altogether. With bludgeoning certitude, the book proclaims "Smokers far outnumber nonsmokers in every type of community, in every class of society and in both sexes... The young man or young woman who does not smoke is a rarity... If (a hostess) will not let her guest smoke in whatever part of the house they happen to be in, she will not have many guests..."

Now, six decades later, smokers have become the social pariahs: excluded, if not frowned upon, by contemporary behavioral codes and even municipal law. You almost have to admire them at this point for their pure strength of determination.

Yet, while smoking may have hit its sunset years, another handheld is most definitely on the up and up. According to the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association, there are now roughly 160 million cellular phone subscribers in the United States alone. A November Gallup poll confirmed this finding, telling us that roughly two-thirds of all American adults now own cell phones, compared with just half in 2000. Clearly, non-users have earned a minority status. But are they, like the nonsmokers of 1941, simply to surrender themselves to the tyranny of ubiquitous din? To the insufferable "cell yell" of their mobile-equipped brethren?

...more at [The Feature](#)

10:04 AM | [link](#) | [10 comments](#)

## Sunday, September 05, 2004

---

### The Real Threat of Blogs

I believe that the most dangerous thing about blogs to the status quo is that so many of them exist for reasons other than to make money. A thriving community of people who are engaged for free, to me, have a certain authority that people doing things for money don't.

Writing a book for money is always suspect. (Disclosure to all: I have written books for money and for free.) Writing it for free is very different - and might still be suspect, but for other reasons.

What made the early Internet so very threatening to the mainstream media was not just the new opinions being expressed, but the fact that people were spending hours of their lives doing something that didn't involve production or consumption in the traditional market sense. Families with Internet connections were watching an average of nine hours less commercial programming each week.

The threat of rave culture was that it was an alternative economy. The kids were no longer going to the mob-run nightclubs, the police weren't getting their cut, and the liquor distributors weren't making any money. Those of us involved in rave - or at least many of us - didn't realize that's why they were such a threat.

#### ARCHIVES

- [March 2002](#)
- [April 2002](#)
- [May 2002](#)
- [June 2002](#)
- [July 2002](#)
- [August 2002](#)
- [September 2002](#)
- [October 2002](#)
- [November 2002](#)
- [December 2002](#)
- [January 2003](#)
- [February 2003](#)
- [March 2003](#)
- [April 2003](#)
- [May 2003](#)
- [June 2003](#)
- [July 2003](#)
- [August 2003](#)
- [September 2003](#)
- [October 2003](#)
- [November 2003](#)
- [December 2003](#)
- [January 2004](#)
- [February 2004](#)
- [March 2004](#)
- [April 2004](#)
- [May 2004](#)
- [June 2004](#)
- [July 2004](#)
- [August 2004](#)
- [September 2004](#)

[Current](#)

#### WEBLOGS I'M READING

- [Places](#)
- [Saturation](#)
- [JewSchool](#)
- [Greater](#)
- [Democracy](#)
- [Justin's Links](#)
- [BoingBoing](#)
- [Plotz](#)
- [See the Forest](#)
- [Planet P](#)
- [People](#)
- [SaranWarp](#)
- [Jakeneck](#)
- [Andie Miller](#)
- [Julian Sanchez](#)
- [Honkus](#)
- [Bruce Sterling](#)
- [Steinberg](#)

powered by [blogger pro](#)





Likewise, I believe the greatest power of the blog is not just its ability to distribute alternative information - a great power, indeed - but its power to demonstrate a mode of engagement that is not based on the profit principle.

Admittedly, many people need to try to make money any way they can. And many people who insist on making their money by writing, but can't do so in the current commercial writing space, will attempt to do so on their blogs. I think that they will learn, as I have, what is so valuable about keeping certain areas of one's life and work market-free if at all possible. Even if it means getting a day job, which many of us have done in order to support our work. I have been very lucky in my ability to craft my messages into forms that publishers will pay for. But the more integrity I get (and the more market-driven the book industry gets) the harder that is to do. Indeed, the book industry used to use criteria other than marketability in picking what to publish. Sometimes, editors would publish books that only broke even, because they happened to like them. Those editors are few and far between, now, because they don't make as much money for their companies, and the values have changed.

Please understand, this is not a critique or attack on anyone who makes money through their blog. It is merely a statement about what I believe is the most threatening and thrilling aspect of the early blog community.

Soon enough, it will be back to your regularly scheduled programming.

11:44 AM | [link](#) | [30 comments](#)

## Friday, September 03, 2004

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### Club ZeroG & end of the Convention

Yes, ClubZeroG is still alive and well, enjoying the shelves in the comics shops and online, if not the bookstore chains. And a new interview (well, actually, an expanded version of an older interview) on [Comic Book Resources](#) should help some new people find out about its existence.

How about that convention? Thank goodness it's finally over. The lying and meanness were really over-the-top. The theme of the whole show was, pretty much, that real men have no doubt about what they do because they're macho and God loves them more. And anyone who thinks that actions should be considered before they are taken is a sissy. The world only understands machismo and force, and will not do as we say unless we prove ourselves that way.

The grins and shouts and god-stuff and lies and daddy posturing reminded me of both the movies 1984 and Requiem for a Dream (those game show sequences).

I do not believe America is as dumb as the people in that arena do. I don't even believe the majority of the people in that arena believed, earnestly, in what they were doing - but saw it as a necessary stage in publicizing their party.

This one isn't over, yet.

8:10 AM | [link](#) | [9 comments](#)

## Thursday, September 02, 2004

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### Bloggers Ad Nauseum

I did a panel the other night - part of all the generally anti-Republican Convention stuff going on this week in NYC - about Blogs and Bloggers. We covered the obvious ground, about whether blogs make a difference or are just having a good time (my response was that having a good time *can* make a difference, and that making a difference is a good time).

But as we veered over into the realm of career blogging, we touched briefly on the subject of whether ads hurt blogs - and that's where I think the whole thing died.

And even depressed me a bit.

I tried to make the point that the early Internet and early rave culture were alike in that they were ad-free zones - alternatives to the free market reality in which we were living. And that's what made them so powerful. I was trying to go on to explain that there might be a value in ad-free blogging; that doing it for money, for ads, may not change our writing on a conscious level, but that we may be changed - yes, corrupted - by the ads we're endorsing, er, displaying.

The moderator shut me down with great force, dismissing the entire notion of ads affecting writers as silly - that the marketplace would judge the integrity of those writers accordingly. Now, I've been shut down by co-panelists, but not by moderators. And I would have chalked it up to my own 'sensitivity' had I not received more than a few emails from people calling the moment to my attention.

So I thought I'd call it to yours - not because I feel slighted or hurt, but because I believe that the underlying assumption that the market corrects all problems, eventually, or that the market is itself 'value neutral,' is incorrect. I'm not challenging free market capitalism; God bless the USA and all that.

I'm only challenging the perception that we are living in a marketplace. We don't *have* to use the metaphor of a competitive economy to understand this world; it may as well be a collaborative ecology.

Plus, if I put ads on this blog, it'd be the end of something. No?

3:29 PM | [link](#) | [47 comments](#)

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## Monday, August 23, 2004

### Changing Selves

I did an interview on Changesurfer radio this weekend - mostly about my book Open Source Democracy, but ultimately about the changing nature of the individual in the face of emerging networks and community.

As I explained it on the air, it all comes down to the way we define "self." In the past - since the renaissance, really, we've defined "self" in terms of the boundaries we experience differentiating us from others. As we move forward self becomes defined by our connections with others.

That's the fun part of doing interviews - you come up with new ideas, and sometimes you even agree with them!

You can listen to the whole half hour, [here](#).

9:00 AM | [link](#) | [12 comments](#)

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## Tuesday, August 17, 2004

### We Don't Need Another Hero

Just back from an Omega Institute weekend I led with Grant Morrison, Paul Laffoley, Richard Metzger and Howard Bloom. Interesting combination of people - I ended up hanging out and resonating most with Grant this time out.

Where we seemed to connect most was in our shared sense that Aristotle's narrative arc - the male heroic narrative - no longer adequately describes our experience of this world. It's something I've been thinking and speaking about for a long time, but it was very rewarding for Grant to respond so favorably to this notion. He's experienced it, himself, in his work as a comic book writer trying to move past current expectations for superhero characters. I confront it, myself, as I try to help people conceive of more emergent narratives for human history - to break our addiction to stories with endings or intrinsic, pre-existing meaning.

After all, what if meaning is something that evolves or emerges? I think it's a lot

more useful to think about God not as a character who created our universe with some purpose, but rather as something that might happen in the future. We make meaning - which doesn't make it any less meaningful.

The problem is whether, without artificially constructed heroic narratives, we still have the will to rise to the world's many problems. Will we dare to approach hunger, violence, and confusion without the promise of a happy ending? Or do we still need charismatic leaders with beautiful stories to motivate us?

10:39 AM | [link](#) | [34 comments](#)

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**Thursday, August 12, 2004**

### **Graphic Novel as Sigil**

The reviewer at [Media Underground](#) pegged it. From his critique:

*The minimalism that is present in Club Zero G makes the pace of the book exceptionally fast. The images are simple yet bold with a richness in colour that seems extremely striking to the eye. The dialogue is sparse yet to the point and it is this which encourages the reader to run through the story quickly, whilst the mind is bombarded by an array of vivid imagery that conveys an almost subconscious message about a battle between human potential and consensus reality. As one reaches the books conclusion the tables are switched quickly and cleverly to bring the reader into the equation.*

*Did I just read a comic book or participate in an experiment?*

*To most people this will seem like just another graphic novel, but to anyone like me whose time as a youth was laced heavily with occult practice, Club Zero G is a deliberate and effective form of modern day Pop Magick.*

*Perhaps Rushkoff will now email me to tell me if my assumptions are correct, or maybe he doesn't want anyone to know. Whatever the case, readers should not feel afraid of approaching the sigil Club Zero G. After all, if it works the future might not turn out as bleak as it presently looks.*

11:29 AM | [link](#) | [12 comments](#)

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**Sunday, August 01, 2004**

### **What's Wrong with Voting Against George Bush?**

The right-wing pundits on the Sunday morning news shows this week seem to think that the best critique of John Kerry and of the Democratic Convention, voters, and ticket in general is the notion that most of the party's supporters are still just voting "against George Bush." The idea, here, is that voting *against* something is not enough to carry the day.

Ridiculous, I say.

I am voting against George Bush. I'm sure Kerry has his problems. If any of you who regularly read this blog went to college with the man, I'm sure you wouldn't have been friends with him. He volunteered for the military, for chrissakes. How many people who you relate to went to Ivy League colleges in the 60's but, instead of trying to get out of service, dropping acid, or conscientiously objecting, actually went to Vietnam and then volunteered for gook-shooting duty on a boat? Sure, I would have preferred someone like Kucinich. But I'm a weird-ass lefty pinko artist writer, and I doubt the Democratic party will ever support a candidate with whom I truly resonate.

As I realist, I understand that Bush is a problem on a very different order. And I believe it is okay to vote purely to rid the nation and the world of a dangerous, misguided, deluded sociopath and the rapacious clique who control him - while

there's still enough integrity in the voting system to exercise such authority over the executive branch. This may be our last chance to use our blogs and our voices towards such a purpose.

Indeed, the attack on Democrats who are voting simply to get rid of Bush strike me as hollow as early attacks on Jews and early Christians who believed in an abstract God. To the polytheistic peoples around them, these monotheists were basically atheists. The God they believed in had no form. They were understood simply as iconoclasts, who very purpose seemed to be to smash the idols that reigned reality.

And if those of us voting against Bush must be understood that way, it's fine with me.

9:49 AM | [link](#) | [52 comments](#)

## Wednesday, July 28, 2004

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### Spawn

Science told us it couldn't happen, but guess what: a future Rushkoff is making her way to this dimension.



4:19 PM | [link](#) | [43 comments](#)

## Monday, July 26, 2004

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### Anti-Drugs Vaccines For Kids?

Just got passed this one from the Center for Cognitive Liberties and Ethics. Frightening?

In brief, yesterday The Independent issued a story: "Children to get jabs against drug addiction":

<http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/story.jsp?story=544439>

stating, among other things:

"A radical scheme to vaccinate children against future drug addiction is being considered by ministers, The Independent on Sunday can reveal."

"Under the plans, doctors would immunise children at risk of becoming smokers or drug users with an injection. The scheme could operate in a similar way to the current nationwide measles, mumps and rubella vaccination programme."

"Childhood immunisation would provide adults with protection from the euphoria that is experienced by users, making drugs such as heroin and cocaine pointless to take. Such vaccinations are being developed by pharmaceutical companies and are due to hit the market within two years."

8:50 PM | [link](#) | [17 comments](#)

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## Saturday, July 24, 2004

### Omega in alpha

I'm doing a workshop of some kind at the [Omega Institute](#) in a few weeks, along with Howard Bloom, Paul Laffoley, Richard Metzger, and Grant Morrison, all under the general [Disinformation](#) umbrella.

The description on the Omega site explains that the weekend "offers us a rare chance to interact with a disparate, yet thematically cohesive group of "out-of-the-box"thinkers, and discover creative new strategies for navigating the zeitgeist of the new millennium."

Sounds fine, but what do you think I should do? I believe we'll each be given a two hour slot to make whatever mayhem we choose. Paul Laffoley will show some of his art, Howard Bloom will make a speech about some wonderfully apocalyptic scenario, no doubt. Grant will probably explain how to make a sigil (how to do magick, basically).

I'd love to raise the dead or take everyone into an alternative dimension, but neither is in my bag of tricks at the moment. I could go political, spiritual, technological, media... My hope would be to demonstrate the principles of 'open source reality' rather than simply talking about them.

So - if you were coming to such a thing, what would you want to do with me for two hours?

11:42 AM | [link](#) | [20 comments](#)

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## Sunday, July 18, 2004

### Two New Interviews

Two great new interviews with me have gone up in the last week. I think they both cover some new ground.

#### [Madghoul.com](#)

"...I do believe that those who can see - those who are willing to see what's going on in this world, and feel obligated to do something about it - they are outcasts. I'm not sure whether they're outcasts because of how they feel, or whether their status as outcasts makes them uniquely capable of seeing how things are."

#### [Bakers Dozen](#)

"...But when the story, the genre, the medium, and the theme all merge, then it's magic. (Or magick.) Then you're really happy that there's an audience who won't be attracted unless you create an artifact worthy of attention - because you only get there if you've worked out the kinks, and gotten your own agendas out of the way of the characters' or the story's. Ultimately, if you're going to play around with myth, you've got to disappear."

8:31 AM | [link](#) | [4 comments](#)

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## Monday, July 12, 2004

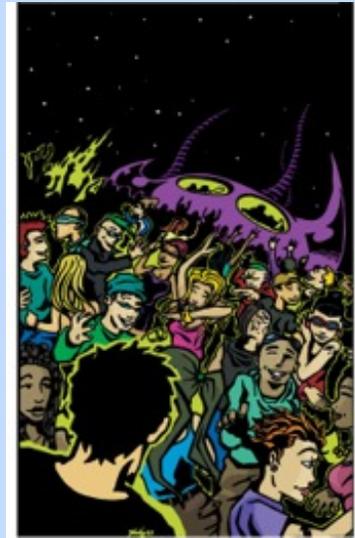
## New York Appearance

I'm doing a single event to promote the launch of my new graphic novel, Club Zero-G, at Barnes & Noble on 8th Street and 6th Ave, NYC, Thursday July 15 at 7:30pm.

Please come if you'd enjoy such an event. I'll probably talk a bit about the ideas behind the comic - and maybe try to figure out a way to read some of it. Perhaps those who want to can go out for a beer or something afterwards.

The book itself is meant as a little challenge to consensus reality, and a shove towards taking the plunge into world creation. You can find out more at <http://www.clubzerog.com> or the interview at <http://www.popimage.com/content/rushkoff.html>

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6:37 PM | [link](#) | [12 comments](#)

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**Saturday, July 10, 2004**

## Bad Grammar Reveals Crooks

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Dear eBay Member,

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To avoid any possible errors that might occur during this process we advise you to check if your account is active and the registration information are correct by clicking the following link:

<http://cgi3ebay.com@eBayISAPI.dll?&MfcISAPCommand=EnterConfirm&UsingSSL=1>

Thank you very much for your cooperation!  
Marry Kimmel,  
eBay Billing Department team.

3:22 PM | [link](#) | [27 comments](#)

"As much as possible, to boost mankind's collective capability for coping with complex, urgent problems." [0A](#)

**Fellow site:**

[Bootstrap Alliance](#) (under construction) [0B](#)

**Contact:**

Bootstrap Institute,  
6505 Kaiser Dr.,  
Fremont, CA 94555  
Tel. (510) 713-3550  
Fax: (510) 792-3506  
Email:

\* [Administration](#)

\* [Webmaster](#) [0C](#)

Valid XHTML  
1.0!

This web  
site is maintained by  
Bootstrap volunteers [0D](#)

**On this page:**

[Our niche](#)

[Reasons for action](#)

[Our mission](#)

[Those funny purple](#)

[numbers](#) [1](#)



# Bootstrap Institute

[| Goal | Chronicle |](#)  
[Colloquium |](#)  
[| About BI | Engelbart papers |](#)

[site map](#) | [search](#)

**June 24, 2003**

## Who we are. How we think. What we do. [2](#)

The **Bootstrap Institute** was conceived by Dr. Douglas C. Engelbart to further his lifelong career goal of boosting individual and organizational ability to better address problems that are complex and urgent.\* It is along this chosen career path that he became prominent as a pioneer of the digital age. He garnered fame especially through his invention of the computer mouse and was the first to use the cathode-ray tube for the display of text, of graphics and of the mouse pointer (the monitor as we know it today). He is credited with pioneering online computing and email, and other inventions and innovations. More on this will be found in the *Chronicle*, a part of this website that conserves the past. We hope that the *Chronicle* will prove especially useful to those of a historical bent of mind as well as to



[11](#)

*The National Medal of Technology, the highest award in its class in the United States. On December 1, 2000. The White House bestowed the medal on Douglas Engelbart essentially for his technological achievements, including the invention of the computer mouse. Still to be recognized is that Engelbart's technological career is but part of a humanitarian career. His dream is to get society to buy into a means of boosting its ability to successfully cope with complex and urgent problems.* [11A](#)

*He first acted on this dream by entering a PhD program in 1951 to learn about computers. During two decades from 1957 on, he had an opportunity (mostly as Director of his Augmentation Research Center of Stanford Research International) to act on the technological and applied psychological underpinning of his dream. In 1977, commercial forces chiseled out the humanitarian part for seven years running. Then, from 1984 until 1989, while in the employ of McDonnell Douglas as senior scientist, he was able to continue from where he left off.* [11B](#)

*Seeing no commercial value in Engelbart's work, the company's executive fired him and his staff, and closed down his laboratory. It was his darkest hour, but bouncing back, Engelbart continued to propagate his ideas through his Bootstrap Institute.* [11C](#)

members of the press. However, the overarching aim of these web pages is to inform decision-makers and a wider public about a strategy and tools for achieving peak performance within public institutions and commercial enterprises in the interest of mankind as a whole. [2A](#)

Foundation for Engelbart's experience-based and logically worked out strategy is an optimized bootstrapping approach for drastically improving on any organization's already existing improvement processes. Referring to an organization's principal work as an A-activity and to ordinary efforts at process improvement as a B-activity, he denotes bootstrapping as a C-activity, which is an improving of the improvement process. His paper [Toward High-Performance Organizations: A Strategic Role for Groupware](#) argues that highest payoff comes from engaging in that C-activity. [2B](#)

Engelbart's bootstrapping principle is most generally applicable. Hence, it may not only profit private corporations, but also serve public institutions and all levels of government. On the high end of the scale, we find the United Nations; on the other end, individuals. [2C](#)

The Bootstrap Institute and associates seek to promote an international Alliance of

*From 1989, he has been increasingly recognized for his contributions mainly, but no longer exclusively, to technology. He has become the recipient of an extraordinarily long string of awards, including the Lemelson-MIT Prize of \$500,000, and culminating in the National Medal of Technology. But the all-encompassing part of his struggle continues. [vE]. [11D](#)*

stakeholders, the *Bootstrap Alliance*. The Alliance provides funding for critical elements of Engelbart's strategy: an open hyperdocument system and a hyperscope. [2D](#)

***The open hyperdocument system*** (OHS) is a standards-based, open source framework for developing collaborative, knowledge management applications. Its primary objective is to support the creation, organization, and maintenance of Dynamic Knowledge Repositories (DKR). [2E](#)

The OHS's initial design specifications are a result of 50 years of innovation and experimentation by Doug Engelbart and his team of researchers among a variety of user communities, including aerospace and software development. These requirements include fine-grained addressability of all types of documents and support for multiple ways of viewing and manipulating them. Some of these features have found their way into existing tools, such as the World Wide Web, while others are currently being explored. The purpose of the OHS is to serve as a standard framework for these features, so that different applications may interoperate with the DKR and with each other. [2F](#)

As an intermediate step toward building the OHS, Engelbart has

proposed the design for a hyperscope, a tool for browsing otherwise incompatible document types and facilitating linkages between them. The hyperscope would be built on top of the OHS's hyperdocument architecture. [2G](#)

*A ten-week colloquium* held at, and webcast from Stanford University early in 2000 provided Doug Engelbart with an opportunity to present his motivation and thought in the context of the professional views of 30-plus guest speakers who are currently working the frontiers of society, technology, business, and urgent concerns of people around the world. Named *Unrev-II* (the unfinished revolution, part II), it culminated in a stepped-up effort to bring the open-hyperdocument system to fruition. The story, a rich educational experience, is told in the part of this site called *Colloquium*. [2H](#)

The Bootstrap Institute is a California corporation under the law, but it functions more as a non-profit organization. Any services provided by the Institute merely serve to help fund the Institute's work. [2I](#)

*The site map* reflects the dynamism of continual interaction among Engelbart and his collaborators who mostly serve as the Bootstrap Institute's local and telecommuting staff of volunteers. It might be said that over time and with so many

participants having worked on this site, it has become a little disorganized in spots, a fact we are continually seeking to correct. We have introduced a system of double menu bars, with the upper bar listing the major parts of this site and the lower bar the sections of a selected part. The system serves to widen a visitor's purview and expedite his browsing. The *site map* ought make browsing through this site more efficient still. However, apart from these features, this site is fully intended to remain dynamic, hence ever-changing. [2J](#)

The site's desired functioning and consequential architecture are still severely handicapped by the prevalence of a public networking methodology that does not yet permit the full implementation of Engelbart's individual and collaborative authoring of documents. The "funny purple numbers"\*[\\_](#), quite aside from their immediate utility in identifying any document's elements, also serve notice that this format is but a step toward a progressive use of a superior mode of authoring and publishing. In the spirit of Engelbart's lifelong mode of working ever so fruitfully, keywords here are and remain: *experiential* and *evolutionary*. [*vE*]. [2K](#)

**December 31, 1999**

Reasons for action [3](#)

The way Doug Engelbart perceives it: [3A](#)

- Our world is a complex place with urgent problems of a global scale. [3A1](#)
- The rate, scale, and complex nature of change is unprecedented and beyond the capability of any one person, organization, or even nation to comprehend and respond to. [3A2](#)
- Challenges of an exponential scale require an evolutionary coping strategy of a commensurate scale at a cooperative cross-disciplinary, international, cross-cultural level. [3A3](#)
- We need a new, co-evolutionary environment capable of handling simultaneous complex social, technical, and economic changes at an appropriate rate and scale. [3A4](#)
- The grand challenge is to boost the collective IQ\* of organizations and of society. A successful effort brings about an improved capacity for addressing any other grand challenge. [3A5](#)
- The improvements gained and applied in their own pursuit will accelerate the improvement of collective IQ. *This is a bootstrapping strategy.* [3A6](#)

- Those organizations, communities, institutions, and nations that successfully bootstrap their collective IQ will achieve the highest levels of performance and success. [3A7](#)

It is essentially these perceptions that have underlain the researches by Engelbart and his team, work that laid to many innovations in computing and is now continuing in the development of an open hyperdocument system. [3A8](#)

**December 31, 1999**

## Our mission [4](#)

In accord with the above reasons for action, Doug Engelbart developed throughout a lifetime a sense of mission, which the Bootstrap Institute seeks to implement. Some terms used in the following mission statement are briefly explained in footnotes appended to this page. [4A](#)

The Institute's mission is to: [4B](#)

- Promote awareness of the scale, urgency, and complexity of the challenges we face. [4B1](#)
- Catalyze, launch, and shepherd an active, strategic pursuit of boosting the collective IQ on a scale commensurate with the rate,

scale, and pervasiveness of change. [4B2](#)

- Create an exploratory environment where participants can collaborate, experiment, and set in motion *advanced pilot outposts\** in diverse application areas. [4B3](#)
- Enable a whole new way of thinking about the way we work, learn, and live together. [4B4](#)
- Promote development of a collective IQ among, within, and by networked improvement communities. [4B5](#)
- Cultivate a knowledge environment that includes a shared dynamic knowledge repository (DKR). [4B6](#)
- Foster development of an open-platform information system infrastructure based on an open hyperdocument systems (OHS) framework. [4B7](#)
- Share the *A-B-C's of bootstrapping\** and support co-evolution of human organizations and their tools. [4B8](#)
- Enable sharing of effort, cost and risks of advanced exploration among a diverse set of organizations and improvement communities. [4B9](#)
- Push the scaling of bootstrapping toward what could become national

improvement  
infrastructures, as well as a  
global improvement  
infrastructure. [*DCE, CE,*  
*PR. MD, PY*] [4B10](#)

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**Footnotes:** [9](#)

***Re Engelbart and the Institute.***

Douglas Engelbart and his daughter, Christina Engelbart, incorporated the Bootstrap Institute in 1988 as a California corporation. However, it actually functions more like a non-profit organization in their quest to form strategic alliances aimed at dramatically improving the performance of organizations and, thereby, society at large. This is accomplished through a collaborative Alliance Program, as well as through development projects, management seminars and expeditions, consulting, speaking, and publishing. The work is funded primarily through government R&D contracts and Alliance sponsors. For details, see the sections named *Service* and *Alliance*.  [9A](#)

***Re purple numbers.*** Formally named location numbers (also statement numbers, structural statement numbers), these identify in a document such structural elements as titles, paragraphs, graphics, *etc.* Accordingly, the primary purpose of a location number is to specifically target a component of a document by hyperlinking from a source document currently in use. Conversely, right-clicking on a live location number permits putting the referenced address (URL) into a buffer whence it may be copied into other documents - even, with appropriately receptive documents, as another live link to the original target. For example, right-clicking on a live, *i.e.* hyperlinked, location number in a *Netscape* web page brings up a small

window that offers the option to *Copy Link Location*. This option retains the live characteristic of the link when the copying is done into the browser's *Composer*. [9B](#)

Many older documents found on this website contain location numbers that are not live. The beneficial use of location numbers was originally designed as part of *Augment*, a text processing system for co-operating, networked professionals engaged in such knowledge work as planning, analyzing and the designing of highly complex systems. [9B1](#)

**Re collective IQ.** The abbreviation *IQ* in the term *collective IQ* should be interpreted as a generic synonym for intelligence, not as in its original meaning as a measure of an individual's intelligence. [9C](#)

**Re advanced pilot outposts.**

Strategically placed outposts in time. These outposts are staffed by people well qualified to get a best possible fix on the futuristic outlook of especial concern to a particular organization and thereby ought to provide a superior insight in how an organization may move ahead. Advanced pilot outposts may be financed by a number of commercial organizations or public bodies with common interests. Universities are seen as suitable locales for such outposts. [9D](#)

**Re A-B-C's of bootstrapping.** Any organization's stock in trade is called here an *A-activity*; its ordinary R&D work to improve on *A* is called a *B-activity*. The bootstrapping strategy serves to improve on *B* and is called a *C-activity*. The value of *C* may be perceived as garnering compound interest on an organization's intellectual capital. One advocate of that perception is Dr. Curtis Carlson, President and CEO of SRI International,

see [What is the value proposition?](#) in the *Colloquium* section.  [9E](#)

*Imagine what we can accomplish  
together*

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Above space serves to put hyperlinked targets at the  
top of the window

| [top of page](#) |