

2013 ASC Annual Conference
in Bolton, UK
28 July - 03 August 2013

Acting - Learning - Understanding
reflecting, collaborating, conversing, doing



Welcome

Welcome to the American Society for Cybernetics (ASC) 2013 annual conference, being held with the great help of our friends, the Institute for Educational Cybernetics an Bolton University, UK, with the theme Acting, Learning, Understanding (note the use of active verbal forms!).

Here, in this booklet, you will find an ambitious menu of events that we hope will bring enjoyment and learning. Please look through what's on offer, and who will share this conference with you to best understand the possibilities.

Amongst other things, you will find

- the timetable for the main conference, as well as the pre- and post-conferences. Please keep an ear and eye open for possible changes in schedule, and also for more details such as the performances and the paper presentation schedules together with the dinner menu. We ask you to be on time, for the timetable is rather tight!
- biographic information, a photo and the expression of interest of all registered attendees as of our press date, 20 July 2013. Note: we will consider applications after this booklet has gone to press, but of course they will not appear here.

We have designed the conference to be more cybernetic in its behaviour form than most conferences are. So we aim to be responsive, to accommodate as best we can. There will be a board in the registration area on which we will write updates, additions and latest changes, and where we will give you information about wifi etc.

In return, the conference expects all of us participants to act in a more cybernetic manner, to keep in mind the famous remark of the great German artist, Joseph Beys, who reminded us that a conversation depends on listening, not on speaking.

The ASC is a small society in need of new blood and more members. If you value what we do and what we offer, please consider joining us. You can find a link on our home page at www.asc-cybernetics.org.

Welcome to Bolton and its university, the ALU conference, and welcome, also, we hope to the ASC membership.

Ranulph Glanville (ASC president, ALU conference co-chair)

Dai Griffiths (ALU conference co-chair)

Next year will be the 50th anniversary of the ASC. We plan to hold a special conference in Washington DC, 3 to 9 August inclusive. The founding and incorporation of the ASC took place on 6 August 1964 in Washington. We intend a rich menu. We also plan satellite conferences in different localities, before. You can already register interest in being kept informed at www.asc-cybernetics.org/2014.

Conference Organizers

American Society for Cybernetics

Founded in 1964 and by now completely international, the ASC has long been particularly associated with so-called Second Order Cybernetics. Our conferences are experimental and attempt to capture the spirit and understandings of cybernetics in how we behave. Our members come from many backgrounds, and we have a strong commitment to relating to both arts and sciences.

Institute for Educational Cybernetics, University of Bolton, UK

The conference is hosted by the Institute for Educational Cybernetics, University of Bolton, UK, whose goal is to develop better understandings of how information and communication technologies affect the organization of education at all levels.

Program Committee

From the ASC

- Professor Dr Ranulph Glanville (ASC President, conference co-chair)
- Mr Philip Baron (University of Johannesburg, RSA)
- Ms Delfina Fantini van Ditmar (Royal College of Art, UK)
- Professor Dr Thomas Fischer (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China)
- Dr Michael Hohl (Bauhaus University, Germany)

From IEC, University of Bolton

- Professor Dr Dai Griffiths (conference co-chair) Email (general inquiries)
- Mr Paul Hollins (IEC Director)
- Dr Mark Johnson
- Professor Emeritus Oleg Liber

Coordinator, Bolton

- Ms Jan Hollins

International Advisory Board

The conference is honored to have collected a most distinguished International Advisory Board of practitioners. We gratefully acknowledge the advice and support of all members of the IAB:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Edith K. Ackermann | Javier Livas |
| Roy Ascott | Tshilidzi Marwala |
| Dirk Baecker | John Mingers |
| Mary Catherine Bateson | Joy Murray |
| Margaret A. Boden | Sudhakar Nadkarni |
| Mark Burry | Pauline Oliveros |
| William L. Fox | Andrew Pickering |
| Charles François | Lars Qvortrup |
| Rom Harré | Peg Rawes |
| Richard Jung | Bernard Scott |
| Kalevi Kull | David Weinberger |
| Alexander Laszlo | Youmin Xi |
| Loet Leydesdorff | Gerard de Zeeuw |

Organizers and Sponsors



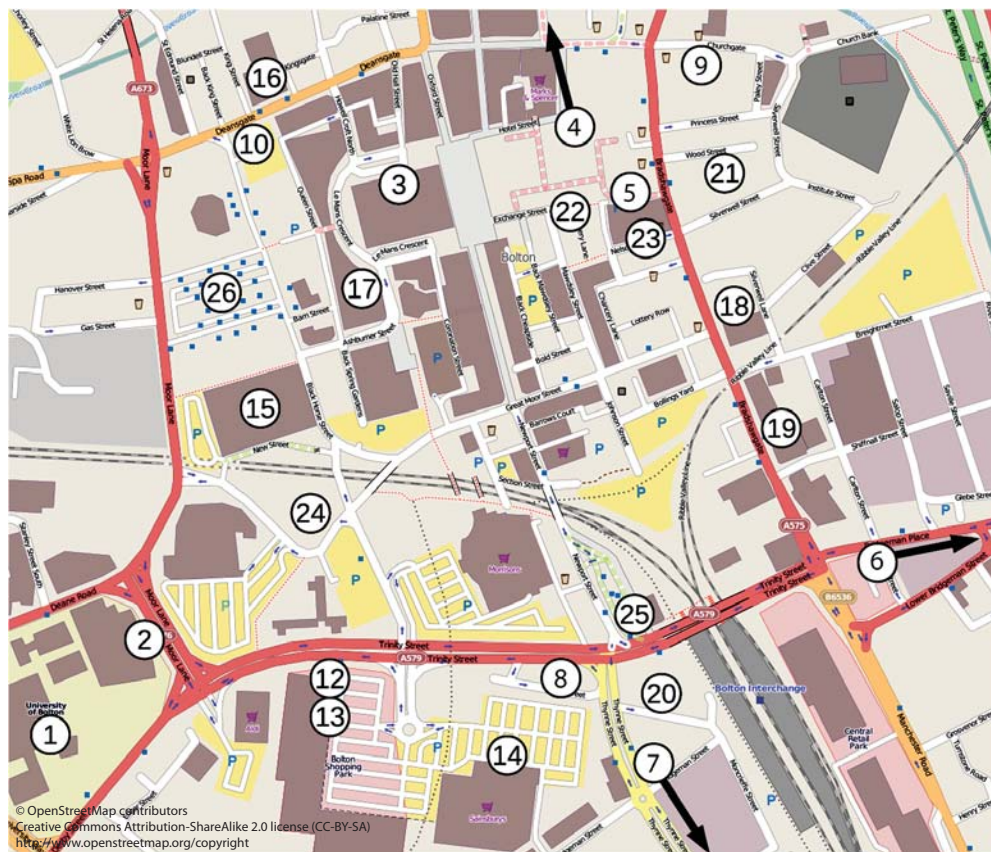
e c h o r a u m

heinz von foerster
gesellschaft am Institut für Zeitgeschichte
Altes AKH, Spitalgasse 2-4
A-1090 Wien



The Open
University

Restaurants and Locations



Conference location

1. University of Bolton
2. Jason Kenny Centre swimming pool & gym
3. Albert Halls (Bolton Town Hall).
Conference dinner location

Accommodation

4. Holiday Inn (5 minutes walk)
5. Packhorse
6. Travelodge (just off map)
7. Orlando Village (just off map)

Pubs and coffee

8. The Sweet Green
9. Ye Olde Man and Scythe
10. The Hen and Chickens
11. The Spinning Mule
12. Costa coffee bar

Shops and Museum

13. Decathlon (sports shop)
14. Sainsbury's (open till 23.00)
15. The Market (closed Mon & Wed)
16. Central post office
17. Bolton Museum

Restaurants

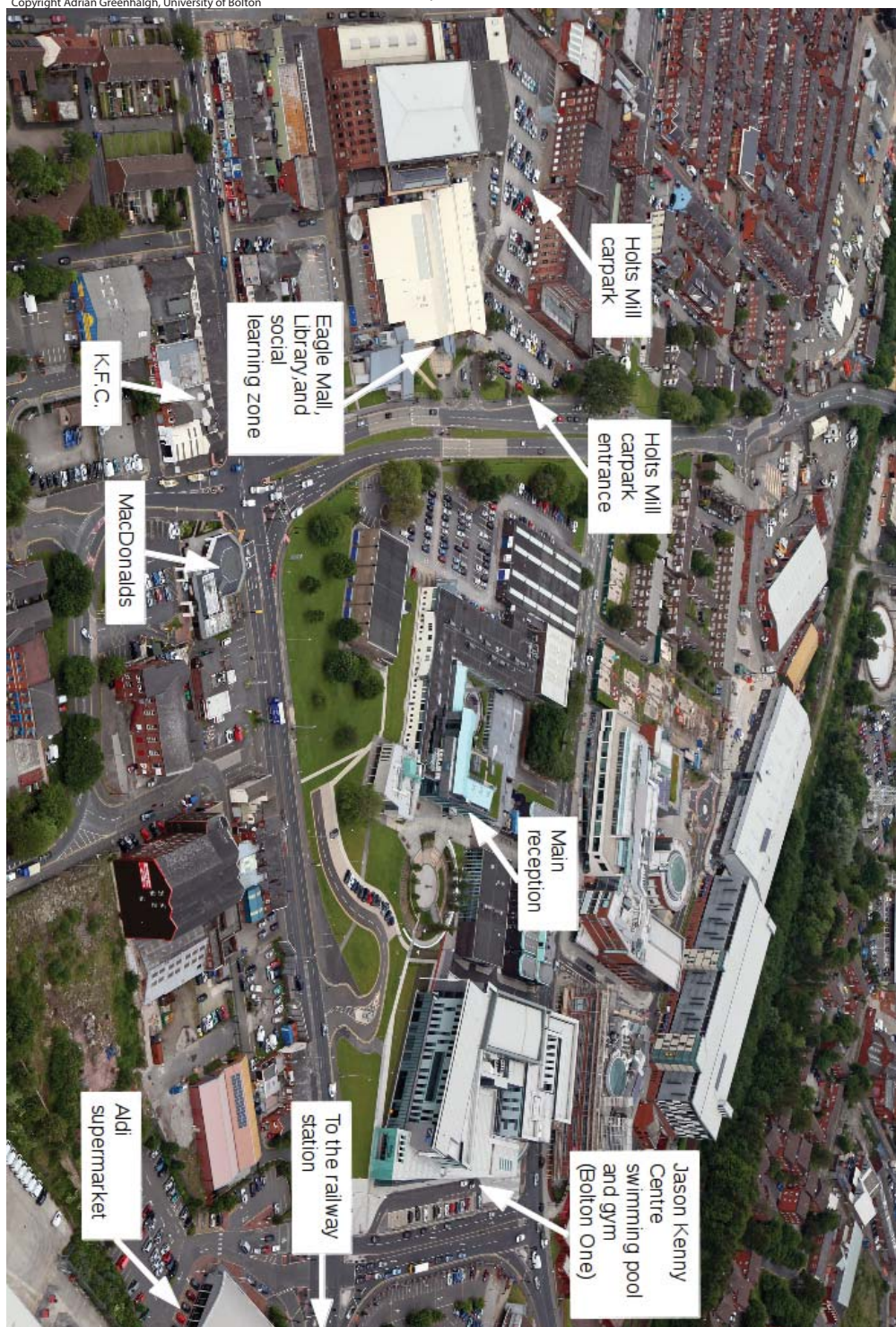
18. Laibaz (Indian)
19. Leena (Indian)
20. Achari (Indian)
21. Pizza Express
22. Ciao Napoli (Italian)
23. The Spinning Mule (pub food)
24. Braza (Persian)

Transport

25. Railway station and taxi rank
26. Bus station

Bolton University Campus Map

Copyright Adrian Greenhalgh, University of Bolton



Pre-Conference (28Jul-29Jul)

To registered conferees there is no charge for attending the Pre-conference.

Pre-Conference Day One: 28 July

The first day of the Pre-conference (Sunday 28-Jul-2013) has two main functions. The first is for the ASC to transact its social and societal business. The first element of the Pre-conference is the General Business Meeting of the ASC (in the afternoon of Sunday 28-Jul-2013), which consists in main of the President's report. It is open to all, though only members in good standing may vote.

Pre-Conference Day Two: 29 July

The second is a chance for members and friends of the ASC to meet informally, to catch up and to re-establish old (and form new) relationships. We usually go to a local restaurant in the evening (individual payment) to continue this social event. This dinner is to provide an opportunity for people to tell the stories of the ASC, maintaining our "Oral Tradition". The second day of the Pre-conference (Monday 29-Jul-2013) is given over to tutorials in preparation for the conference. Many who have attended our conferences in the past have felt an empathy for our theme and subject, but have found it beneficial to attend an introductory tutorial in which the basics of cybernetics are introduced and discussed.

There are three tutorial options available:

- Beginners' Tutorial – Mon a.m. + p.m.
- Advanced Tutorial 1 – Mon a.m.
- Advanced Tutorial 2 – Mon p.m.

Barbecue

We will end the day with a Barbecue for conferees and their families. The Barbecue also serves as the welcoming event for the main conference. Please help us by indicating if you will attend and how many will be in your party on the conference registration site (after setting up your account there).

Schedule Pre-Conference

Sunday, 28-Jul-2013

- 15:00 – 18:00 Registration
- 15:00 – 17:00 ASC General Business Meeting
- 18:00 – 21:00 Dinner and oral tradition (optional extra)

Monday, 29-Jul-2013

- 09:30 – 13:00 Two parallel cybernetics tutorials:
Cybernetics for Beginners (with Ranulph Glanville) and
Advanced Tutorial 1 “Cybernetics and Learning” (with Bernard Scott and Dai Griffiths. (Tutorial abstracts in the following.)
- 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 17:30 Two parallel cybernetics tutorials:
Cybernetics for Beginners continued (with Ranulph Glanville) and
Advanced Tutorial 2 “1st and 2nd Order Cybernetics; Science 1 and Science 2” with Stuart Umpleby and Karl Müller. (Tutorial abstracts in the following.)
- 17:30 – 19:00 Registration
- 19:00 – 22:00 Welcome barbeque for attendees and their families

Tutorial: Cybernetics for Beginners

by Ranulph Glanville

Time: Monday, 29-Jul-2013, 09:30 – 13:00 and 14:00 – 17:30

The intention of this tutorial is to bring some key cybernetic ideas, and the vocabulary and concepts associated with them, to those who are attending our conference without much working knowledge of cybernetics.

The content and form of the tutorial will be improvised with those attending. We will try to find examples in your living and working that help us explore these ideas. We will determine what these ideas should be when we meet and during the tutorials. So there is no syllabus, just a wish to explore and develop these cybernetic ideas together.

There will be 2 sessions of up to 3 hours length.

Attendance: maximum 10 people. Please do not join this tutorial if you are familiar with cybernetics. This really is for beginners, to help them understand, contribute to and enjoy the conference discussions better.

Advanced Tutorial 1: Cybernetics and Learning

by Bernard Scott and Dai Griffiths

Time: Monday, 29-Jul-2013, 09:30 – 13:00

The workshop will address the questions: What is learning? What do we learn? What helps us to learn? How to design effective learning experiences? The workshop will include activities and time for discussion. There will be some flexibility in the topics explored, depending on participants' interests. Likely topics include: the relevance of cybernetics for understanding learning (featuring the work of Gordon Pask, Heinz von Foerster, Laurie Thomas, Ranulph Glanville and Bernard Scott, and Botlon's IEC); the dynamics of learning; conversation theory; learning to learn; socially situated learning; learning communities.

Advanced Tutorial 2: First and Second-Order Cybernetics & Science I and Science II

by Karl H. Müller and Stuart A. Umpleby

Time: 14:00 – 17:30

Revolutions in the political sphere are usually immediately recognized as such and are perceived as revolutions as they unfold. Revolutions in the science system, however, become manifest only long after their occurrence. For example, Nicolaus Copernicus did not think of himself as the originator of the Copernican Revolution when he published finally "De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium" in 1543. More than fifty years after the publication very few scholars reacted either positively or negatively to Copernicus' work and no one perceived the Copernican theory as one of the major revolutions in science. Within this context of silent revolutions in science the tutorial will be focused on two broad issues.

The first one is the question whether we are experiencing another silent revolution in science and the emergence of a new cognitive architecture of science in general. Here, the concepts of Science I and Science II will be introduced and discussed as a possible difference which makes a significant difference.

The second general problem to be addressed in this tutorial is the role and function of cybernetics within this silent revolution in science. First-order cybernetics was an inter- or transdisciplinary field with a clear focus on controlling and regulating technical, biological or social systems. The tutorial will explore possible roles and functions for second-order cybernetics or, as Heinz von Foerster called it, "the cybernetics of observing systems". But who is observing what? What does it mean to include an observer into cybernetic investigations? Are we confronted with logical paradoxes and with insurmountable barriers by bringing an observer back in? And what could be the goals of cybernetics as a "theory of the observer"?

Premise



This conference is designed around the exploration of understanding and acting as circularly conjoined. Acting and understanding will be given equal weight, with each framing the other. The processes of learning are a major means of moving between the two, and take place in an environment, often framed as formal or informal education. Discussion of these processes and context provide a means of relating practical proposals for interventions and theoretical debate.

The conference will be conducted in a conversational style. We will work together (collaborate) in small groups and through plenary sessions, to improve understanding and acting, explored together. This conference is not about paper presentations but about conversations. Participants should share an interest to listen and to converse. The premise is not to listen to known answers, but to become involved in developing new questions.

Main Conference (30Jul-1Aug)

The fundamental position taken by the conference designers is based in circular causality, which was at the heart of the concerns of the Macy Conferences (1946 to 1952) where cybernetics took its contemporary form.

It is easy to talk about circular causality, but to live within it is harder. In part this is because to use the word “apply”, as in applying theory to practice, is to use the linear logic of power. All too often, we see doing as inferior to thinking. (This is one reason that the conference is not a paper conference with one telling many what he/she knows; but a conversational conference in which the exchange of understandings can lead to new concepts and new agreements: a very cybernetic way of acting.) Thus, we all too often seek theory to justify practice, prioritising understanding over action in such sayings as “Before you act you should understand”.

Perhaps the most important contribution of Jean Piaget (1959) is his explanation of the mechanisms of the “Construction of Reality in the Child” (republished by Routledge in 1999 in London): children don’t come with built in understandings, but act in the world both to define that world, and to develop his/her understanding. In this view, action has, if anything, precedence over understanding: doing comes before thinking. The mechanism through which action and understanding can be worked together is through learning. Precedence and superiority are probably unhelpful concepts. In our conference we will consider the conference theme “Acting—Learning—Understanding” through both the way that action leads to understanding (sub-theme 1), and understanding leads to action (sub-theme 2), bringing the two together in a circular form where each can be seen to cause the other (Concluding Unification). We will do this through talking and through acting together.

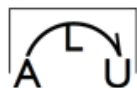
In our conference we look for new questions we can work on, rather than reports on already decided answers to old questions. We are looking to move forward-together-towards new questions.



Schedule Main Conference

Tuesday, 30-Jul-2013

09:00 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 11:00	Welcome and introduction
11:00 – 12:30	Special activity
12:30 – 13:00	Form groups
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch



14:00 – 16:30	Work session 1.1
16:30 – 18:00	Presentation 1.1
18:00 – 19:30	Dinner
20:00 – 23:00	Performances

Wednesday, 31-Jul-2013

09:00 – 11:30	Work session 1.2
11:30 – 13:00	Presentation 1.2
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch



14:00 – 16:30	Work session 2.1
16:30 – 18:00	Presentation 2.1
18:00 – 19:30	Dinner
20:00 – 23:00	Paper presentations

Thursday, 01-Aug-2013

09:00 – 11:30	Work session 2.2
11:30 – 13:00	Presentation 2.2
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch



14:00 – 16:30	Assembling it all
16:30 – 18:00	Feedback and farewell
19:30 – 23:00	Conference dinner (optional extra)*

*The conference dinner will be held in The Albert Hall (Bolton Town Hall) on Thursday 1 August. The cost will be £35.00 per head including a 3 course meal and half a bottle of wine per person (soft drink option available). Please book and pay for the dinner on the Conference Registration Site, where you can also enter any special needs you may have.



Theme and Sub-Themes

The Conference Theme

Acting—Learning—Understanding:
reflecting, collaborating, conversing, doing

As individuals, we may aim to share our ideas with others and develop them together, without losing the origin in individual difference. We can talk, make, think, all together.

Sub-theme 1 (24 hours)

From Acting to Understanding

We will explore

- what it means to move from acting to understanding
- how we can do it
- how we can make it easier to do, and more effective
- the sort of knowledge that can result, and its value
- how we can show this move in how we talk about it
- where the learning is and how it operates
- and other topics you bring

We will present our group findings in a plenary.

Sub-theme 2 (24 hours)

From Understanding to Acting

We will explore

- what it means to move from understanding to acting
- how we can do it
- how we can make it easier to do, and more effective
- the sort of action that can result, and its value
- how we can show this move in how we talk about it
- where the learning is and how it operates
- and other topics you bring

Again, we will present our group findings in a plenary.

Concluding Unification (4 hours)

Living with the circularity

We will consider how the two sub-themes can be brought together, and what this means not only to the concepts of acting, learning and understanding, but also to the way we may look at the world both to accommodate both linear causality, and circularity. This will bring the conference to a close, and raise not only new findings, but also new questions that we can derive from these findings (and which we will pursue in the post-conference).

Activity

As a collaborative venture between participants, the conference is intended to generate proposals for ways of acting and to develop understandings in the context of the environment within which the conference takes place. The challenges faced by the participants in their learning activities (and, of course, experiences), as well as by the University which is hosting the conference will provide rich opportunities to reflect on socioeconomic, technological, political, historical, designerly and educational concerns in a unique, delightful and exciting way. How does understanding shape acting? How does acting shape understanding?

Style

The conference will be a conversational conference. We will work together (collaborate) in small groups and through plenary sessions, to improve understanding and acting, explored together.

Sound and Vision

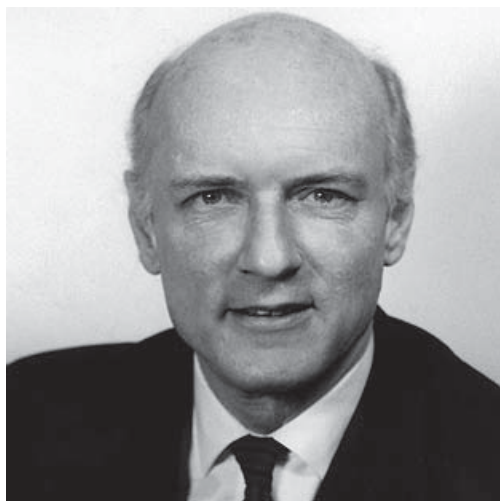
We invite each conferee to make, decorate and bring with them a home-designed and constructed musical instrument. By a musical instrument, we mean something with which you will want to make sounds with other people. It may be any type of instrument, but you should be able to tell a story about it, reflecting who you are. We invite you to keep in mind that others will be playing along with you and should not be drowned out by your sounds.

These instruments serve 3 purposes:

First, we will play them in a structured improvisation, a way of beginning to work together and to lose some of our inhibitions. In the past we have done this by singing (see [here](#) and [here](#)), and even the most reluctant singers have found it valuable.

Second, we will place the instruments on exhibition. The ASC has always been interested in the arts (at recent ASC conferences participants introduced themselves with self-made standards and ties), and this allows us all to give a place to the arts that belongs to all of us who join the conference.

Third, we will find a time for each conferee to share his/her story with other conferees.



Heinz von Foerster Award

The ASC makes an award at our annual conference to the young person who, in the view of the judging panel, has made the most significant and richest contribution to any and all aspects of the conference. The award celebrates Heinz von Foerster, who was one of the founders of the ASC and of second order cybernetics, who founded and ran the Biological Computer Laboratory, and whose contributions to cybernetics, both public and academic, are outstanding and also beautiful. Heinz von Foerster Award winners of previous years are:

- 2004: Elizabeth Simpson
- 2008: Lee Worden
- 2009: Kate Slaymaker and Melanie Meltzer
- 2010: Robert Helland
- 2011: Delfina Fantini
- 2012: Philip Baron

We define young as under 36 on January 1, 2013. We offer up to \$500 towards attendance at next year's conference, remittance of the fee for that conference, and a year's free membership of the ASC.

The judging panel will be made up of senior members of the ASC and of the conference committee. You must tell us, on Your ASC2013 Profile, if you qualify to be considered for this award. This is particularly important so we can make sure judges are present where you are!

Conference Dinner and Lecture

The conference dinner (optional extra) will be held in The Albert Hall (Bolton Town Hall) on Thursday 1 August. The cost is £35.00 per head including a 3 course meal and half a bottle of wine per person (soft drink option available). Please book and pay for the dinner on the Conference Registration Site, where you can also enter any special needs you may have. Through the good auspices of Prof Ray Ison, Professor of Systems at the Open University, we are being given the opportunity to host, right after the conference dinner, the John Beishon Memorial Lecture in memory of John Beishon, first professor of systems at the OU. The John Beishon Memorial Lecture is sponsored by the Open University. The speaker is Prof Noam Cook.

Distinction Not Separation:

The Need to Make Systems Thinking Even More Influential

Professor Noam Cook

Synopsis

Gregory Bateson once expressed to Sir Geoffrey Vickers a concern that systems thinking might be “counter-intuitive”. Sir Geoffrey shared Bateson’s concern, at least in seeing systems thinking as counter-intuitive to Western technological culture. In the years since, work on systems by a growing range of scholars and practitioners has made systems thinking both more intuitive and more influential. Yet, how we treat nature, deploy technologies, and place demands on our institutions continues to make “the systems” upon which we depend increasingly unstable, and our ways of living unsustainable. This is not a failure of systems thinking (intuitive or otherwise) but a clear indication that more work needs to be done. Part of this work is displacing some still dominant ways of thinking—many with origins in the West, now grown global—with ones that help make systems thinking and practice more intuitive and more publicly influential. I offer a few suggestions in this effort. First, we would do well to think more in terms of distinction than of separation. Breaking things down into their supposedly separate and fundamental parts is still too often embraced as an obvious virtue. Unlike “separating out”, I believe “making distinctions within” is inherently cybernetic and should more fully inform how we understand and act on the world, our technologies and ourselves. Second, we ought to balance our interest in finding unifying characteristics across all “systems” with drawing distinctions among different kinds of “systems”—in particular: natural, artifactual, and human. Each can be understood to have distinct characteristics that are keyed to its requirements for stability and sustenance and to the increasing interdependence of all three. Lastly, we need to resist thinking that seeing systemic patterns in nature means systems thinking and practice are objective and thus “value-free”. Indeed, we need more broadly to take as intuitively obvious that the stability and sustenance of “the systems” upon which we are now utterly dependent requires that we make moral judgments about our practices with respect to them. I characterize this as learning to make publicly understandable distinctions between responsible and irresponsible ways of acting. I explore these themes and some of their implications for understanding, learning, and acting systemically through two very different examples: the practices of a small craft workshop that makes one of the world’s finest flutes; and—briefly—the current public environmental, technological and political challenges of a proposed massive water project in California.



Join the ASC

Join a unique society with an outstanding history and an interesting future!
Become an ASC member and

- be part of a community of people who care for cybernetics and cybernetic thinking
- pay a reduced rate for attendance at annual conference
- gain the possibility of attaining fellowship of the society
- gain access to a back list of important publications and lectures in cybernetics and related fields
- correspond with people with similar interests
- be able to develop cybernetic resources and bring them both to members of the society, and to the world at large
- receive occasional extra benefits such as a free copy of the post-conference book from the Troy conference (2010), "Trojan Horses".
- Our trustee Michael Lissack offers free access to his online library for new members and those who propose them: You can read from a library of over 1000 books in the general area of cybernetics. Michael offers access to the library to our members for \$100 per annum, and free access to members who introduce a new member who joins the society, and also to new members.
- Michael also offers use of his research interest matching software, which will find suitable books that match your research interest, and which you can access without fee at <http://epi-search.com>

Talk to us at the conference registration desk or join the ASC online:

<http://www.asc-cybernetics.org/organization/membership.htm>

ASC President, **Ranulph Glanville**, in person at the conference or via
asc-president@asc-cybernetics.org

ASC Vice President **Timothy Jachna**, via secretary@asc-cybernetics.org

Would you like to join the Executive Board of the American Society for Cybernetics?

ASC board member positions will become available at the end of 2013. We welcome those enthusiastic about cybernetics and willing to help run the society to apply for nomination.

Post-Conference (2Aug-3Aug)

The Post-conference (Friday 02-Aug to Saturday 03-Aug-2013) provides a chance for conferees to reflect together on the conference, on what has been and what might be learnt. It also provides a chance for us move forward: if we have found new questions, we may begin to find answers for them. This may lead to some distinct and identifiable outcome: the 2010 conference in Troy, NY lead to the publication of a book "Trojan Horses" (ed R. Glanville), Vienna, echoraum|WISDOM, 2013 and the creation of a video that may be viewed through this link [C:ADM2010](#) by Lev Ledit and Judy Lombardi. Often, conferees leave conferences with complaints that there were few chances to consider what we learnt, either individually or in a group. The Post-conference is an attempt to alleviate this, so that we can better move forward. To registered conferees there is no charge for attending the Post-conference.

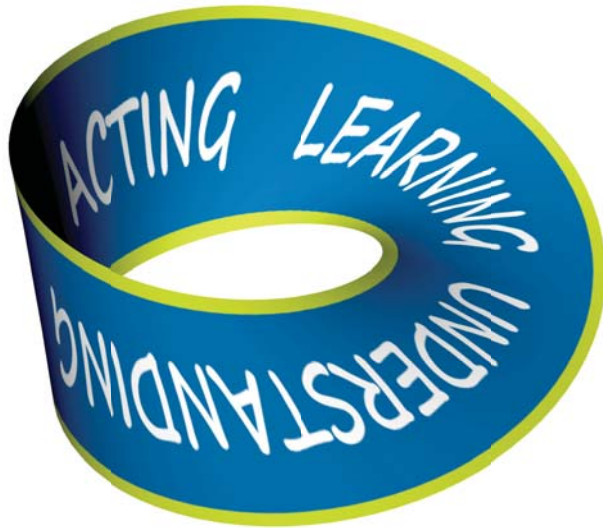
Schedule Post-Conference

Friday, 02-Aug-2013

- 10:00 – 13:00 Post-conference work
- 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 17:00 Post-conference work
- 18:00 – 23:00 Blackpool evening (for post-conferees)

Saturday, 03-Aug-2013

- 10:00 – 13:00 Post-conference work
- 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 15:00 Post-conference work
- 15:00 – 17:00 Post-conference close



Participants

The following pages contain the statements of interest with which participants of **Acting - Learning - Understanding** have applied to participate in the conference. Conference participants can see each other's full biographical statements, and discuss each other's statements of interest and paper proposals after logging onto the conference website at:

<http://www.asc-cybernetics.org/2013>

The website will remain open after the conference.

Philip Baron is working on a paper proposal entitled
A Second-Order Cybernetic Approach to Social Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Statement of Interest

I have a multidisciplinary background enjoying engineering and psychology as my favorites.

I enjoy art and music. I am working on cybernetics in relational therapy and would like to incorporate the things i learn from the conference into my therapeutic work.



Lecturer
University of Johannesburg
South Africa
pbaron@uj.ac.za
www.ecosystemic-psychology.org.za/

**Philip
Baron**

Statement of Interest

Last year I went to Asilomar, before the ISSS meeting in San Jose. This year I will go to Hai Phong for the next meeting of ISSS, and when I return to my country (Argentina), my flight will arrive on Amsterdam. So I can go to Bolton and reinforce my interests and thinking vision in the field of cybernetics and systemic.



**Dean of Faculty of Economic Sciences
Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia
Public Accountant
Professor of Systems Thinking
Past president from 2009 to 2011, ALAS
Coordinator from 2006, CESDES
Member from 2005, ISSS
rbarrera@rbya.com.ar**

**Ricardo
Barrera**

Peter Bednar is working on a paper proposal with Christine Welch entitled
Contextual Inquiry and Socio-Technical Practice

Statement of Interest

In organizational environments people act and work with problems on daily basis. I am interested in the reflective process when professional knowledge workers are engaging with purposeful change activity in their organizational environment. When people who work with complex and uncertain problem spaces make an effort to together pursue desirable change including the development of better problem solving capability in practice. This usually starts with action which is reflected upon and explored from multiple and holistic perspectives as part of a continuous change activity and ongoing problem resolution.

**Senior Lecturer
University of Portsmouth, UK
Research Associate
University of Lund, Sweden**

peter.bednar@ics.lu.se

**Peter
Bednar**

Statement of Interest

In the last decade I have become more and more deeply engaged in a kind of “action research” of what it means to teach and to learn. Thus the theme of this conference is of great interest to me, and I wish to explore further with stories and explanations among colleagues.



**Adjunct Professor
Royal Roads University
Core Faculty
Chair of Academic Programs
SelfDesign Graduate Institute
Board Member
Self Design Foundation
life.works@mac.com**

**Pille
Bunnell**

Jerome Carson is working on a paper proposal entitled
Stress in mental health professionals: from researcher to sufferer

Statement of Interest

I have been researching the field of occupational stress in mental health professionals for several years. With others I have conducted several large stress surveys and also designed and carried out two small randomised controlled trials. This research has had a very negative focus. We have tended to look at the percentage of staff experiencing burnout, the numbers who might be seen as “psychiatric cases” given the severity of their scores on questionnaires, such as the “misnamed” General Health Questionnaire. This is really a measure of “psychiatric caseness.” Having developed an interest in Positive Psychology and wellbeing in recent years, I think this calls for a paradigm shift in occupational stress research in mental health. Concepts such as resilience and recovery, may have as much to offer mental health professionals as they do for people who use mental health services. Working with psychiatric problems can be inherently stressful. Personally, part of my own decision to take early retirement was that I was becoming burned out myself, even though I was engaged in pioneering work around mental health recovery. Patient suicide and attempted suicide and an increasing workload caused me particular stress. Along with Professor Bill Ollivier, we have discussed trying to use our own University here at Bolton as a “laboratory” for studying occupational stress and its alleviation through the use of Positive Psychology and other interventions. Thus far we have not succeeded in getting this approach established and maybe it can only really be attempted in an external academic setting.



Professor of Psychology
University of Bolton
j_carson@o2.co.uk

Jerome
Carson

Statement of Interest

After several discussions about music and cognition, Dai Griffiths suggested to me that I might like to participate in this conference, and he was right.

I can bring to the conference my way of thinking about interactive group improvisation, which looks at the the musical context, and how that influences what the individual musician does within that context. Of course that musical context is, in part, constructed by what the individual musician does. We can see the circularity of “Action – Learning – Understanding” in process in any musical group improvisation. What we do contributes to what we hear, and what we hear influences what we do.

I recognise that there are other musical contexts to be thought about – e.g. that of the individual musician’s internalised understanding of music, then how that interacts with the internal frameworks of other musicians through the music they each play to allow a mutually constructed external context to emerge. This provides the potential for the music making experience even before we take into account, the range of internalised musical contexts of the listeners in any audience, what they produce, and how that might reflect back into the performance, or inform the musical experience of those listeners.

It is also useful in teaching approaches to improvisation, where I am often concerned with getting students, in practice and study sessions, to focus on internalising the principles of musical relationships (as well as their techniques on their instruments), while shifting that focus in performance to the musical context being constructed by the other members of the group, and trusting their own internalised system enough to allow it to contribute to the overall sound of the band without conscious direction.

This approach regards the conscious mind, or awareness, as a monitor of the music making system rather than the creator of the music itself. It is the placing of our attention, directing curiosity, maintaining interest, and asking questions. This feedback system depends on aesthetic judgements about what both the individual’s contribution to the music, and those of the other group members, is doing to the group sound. I see this as a metaphor for many other group dynamics.



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**Graham
Clark**

Statement of Interest

Noam Cook will give a lecture entitled “Distinction Not Separation: The Need to Make Systems Thinking Even More Influential” at the conference dinner on August 1 in memory of John Beishon, sponsored by the Open University.



**Professor
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**Noam
Cook**

Statement of Interest

I am a body and mind therapist and was trained in Diafreo fifteen years ago. Diafreo is the work which developed from the method of work called 'anti-gimnasia' established by the physiotherapists Therése Berterac and Francoise Mezieres. They named the work after observing how the accumulation of tensions and stress often results in deformation to the shape of the body. They describe how the body develops compensations in order to remain standing and avoid pain. They propose that the personal history of physical and emotional stress on muscle and bone is carried with us, and has an important impact on how we feel and function.

I trained in ayurveda abyanga massage and studied its philosophy on nutrition and as a way of life in Kerala in 2006.

I have also qualified as a gestalt therapist at the Escuela de gestalt mediterraneo in Palma de mallorca in 2009.

I apply these three traditions in my practice as a therapist. In the course of my study and work I have frequently encountered systems theory and I have come across the writings of Gregory Bateson, Ronnie Lang, Humberto Maturana and Stafford Beer. I would like to participate in the conference in order to explore how this tradition can inform my practice, and my understanding of my work as a therapist.



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**Xesca
Deya**

Statement of Interest

Having already had my first taster and experience of cybernetics through my participation on a workshop with Dr Mark William Johnson I am intrigued to know more. I am most interested in understanding how cybernetics can blend with research/psychology and create new ideas.



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**Mark
Durkin**

Thomas Fischer is working on a paper proposal entitled
Learning: Variety-Amplification in Autonomous Systems

Statement of Interest

I attend ASC conferences since 2008, and co-organised them since 2010. Besides the valuable encounters and ideas I enjoy at our conferences, I appreciate very much the “slow-cooking” if ideas leading from our conferences to publications. In recent years, I developed a glowingly coherent view on the co-existence of linearly and circularly causal structures, particularly with a view to learning and creativity. This conference is a valuable opportunity to continue this line of thinking with others, and I am looking forward to it.



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Thomas
Fischer

Statement of Interest

Ever since I met cybernetics 20 years ago as part of my formal electrical engineer curriculum, it remained with me as an invaluable tool to understand and cope with difficult aspects of my professional and personal life. Today in my role of CEO of a mid sized company going through turbulent times, I'm relying more than ever on my understanding of cybernetics to deal with the complexity we face. Surprisingly for me, I have never seen myself more as a variety engineer than now. Not even in the times when I was a practicum "engineer. Now I don't deal any more with machines and automation, but with people, and culture. Organization, and particularly, conditions for variety coping as an emergent phenomenon is my main interest.



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**Santiago
Garcia**

Statement of Interest

I consider cybernetics to be intimately concerned with circularity. I don't believe in application, but in the bringing together of, for instance, theory and practice. I also believe we should live what we say and say what we live: thus, these ASC conferences are about sharing and developing; and I believe cybernetics is not simply "a way of understanding" as Ernst von Glasersfeld wrote, but a way of living: we have to learn to live our understandings, and to understand our living.

So, for me the theme and way of working of this conference exactly present the world as cybernetics tells us it can be. But to learn to live this way, within this understanding, is the challenge. To bring this circular understanding and to develop it in our living is part of this: but it's richer, for this way of looking suggests ways we might aim to live, and to live better. Ethics is part of this, too.

I come to learn.



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**Ranulph
Glanville**

Statement of Interest

I'd like to join my IEC / CETIS colleagues and learn more about how this area of work interacts with mine.



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Simon
Grant

Dai Griffiths is working on a paper proposal with Francisco J. García-Peñalvo entitled *Informal learning recognition – From theory to practice*

Statement of Interest

Computing has expanded the resources available in intellectual endeavor, but also radically increases the variety of educational management and its ability to control educational processes. Learning activities mediated by technology leave traces which can be used to create 'actionable intelligence' for managers (including teachers managing learners), and decision making can be automated. I fear that this will close up the uninspected space in the educational system which provides opportunities for creative individual endeavor, and move the purpose of the system into a still less desirable space. This lines up with commercial interests, and with risk management (education and certification as a system for apportioning blame?). Which is why I see more potential distopias than utopias.

We can wait for the education system to collapse under the weight of its own internal contradictions (though it may be a long wait).

Or we can follow Belloc's advice
'And always keep a-hold of Nurse
For fear of finding something worse.'

But my intention is to apply cybernetics and its fellow travellers in an attempt to defend educational activities which we see as valuable, and to make an informed argument for interventions in the activities, technology and organisation of the education system.



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Dai
Griffiths

Michael Hohl is working on a paper proposal entitled
Designing, acting, understanding: Reflections on the relationship between practice and theory in the design process

Statement of Interest

I will bring to the conference an improvised musical instrument, openness, curiosity and critical listening as well as my own experience and thoughts about acting, learning and understanding.

I am interested in learning more about the relationship between acting and learning and how they inform each other creating understanding. This is of particular interest to me on multiple levels. As an educator and phd supervisor I would like to get a better understanding and approach on how acting can facilitate understanding and how this may inform new ways of teaching. As a designer & researcher I am interested in how implicit knowledge gained through practice, can be made explicit and in this process perhaps link theorising and practice in a more intuitive manner. When is acting a way of theorising? When does theorising become a way of acting?

I am looking forward to hearing new perspectives on these and other themes from different disciplinary backgrounds and fields and trust that some of these will help to enrich my own understanding.



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**Michael
Hohl**

Jason Hu is working on a paper proposal entitled
Multi-level Self-Organizations in Human Interactions

Statement of Interest

The Chinese media is currently debating whether China should have a constitutional government. Chinese people started struggle [the Action] of trying to build a constitutional government since the beginning of 20th century. Many mishaps [the Learning] happened during the previous 113 years, but until today they are still not able to reach to a full consensus [the Understanding] of the necessity of a true constitution. Why? Two economists, one from Harvard and one from MIT, co-authored a 570-page tome "Why Nations Fail" last year, refuted a number of popular hypotheses and promoted their own institution hypothesis. The book has been praised highly by a big number of scholars, including at least FIVE Nobel laureates, and opinion leaders such as Francis Fukuyama. However, the book fall short to explain my question above, i.e., why Chinese people cannot build a true constitutional government in mainland for more than 100 years? [They did succeeded in Taiwan though.]

The theories of self-organization hold the key to answer this question. This is a question highly relevant to "Action-Learning-Understanding", with a very real non-abstract case right in hand.

Therefore, I would like to discuss a theory of multi-layer self-organization that describes the processes of human behaviors in their interactions, not only communication, but also behaviors in political and economic activities, controlled by their cultural-behavioral gene code. The theory may answer the question "why nations fail" better, and may provide better strategies for policy makes in both developing countries as well as developed countries.

What I'm looking for is sincere interests from ASC colleagues to discuss this topic. By sincere I mean that you are willing to read the handout pages that I shall bring to the conference, or even better, that I email you before the conference per your request. My email is jjh at wintopgroup dot com. You would kindly provide your opinions, correct my mistakes if any, and perhaps contribute your insights to improve the explanatory power of this theory.



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**Jason
Hu**

Statement of Interest

This year's conference theme is close to my heart. Experience as the source of learning is something I encounter daily in my work as a physiotherapist in a residential school and in my life too. Being in the circularity of experience through action, learning and understanding is how I try to live.



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**Aartje
Hulstein**

Statement of Interest

We have a new research project, CADWAGO – see <http://www.cadwago.net/> in which we are concerned with effecting the conditions for more systemic governance of water catchments understood as a structurally coupled social-biophysical systems. The praxis of systemic governance is a major concern, especially how different policy imperatives such as flooding, water quality and quantity, climate change adaptation, food security, biodiversity etc can be joined-up in place-based adaptive ways. To this we add a concern for how governance learning can be understood and enacted.



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The Open University
Professor, Systems for Sustainability
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**Ray
Ison**

Statement of Interest

Acting, Learning and Understanding are all worthy (but very difficult!) topics. But basically I'm asking "what matters?"



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Mark
Johnson

Faisal Kadri is working on a paper proposal entitled
*Understanding and Learning to Reconcile Differences between Disciplines through
Constructing an Artificial Personality*

Statement of Interest

Interested in the cybernetics of Artificial Psychology; the creation and validation of an artificial personality model with motivational and cognitive components.
An artificial personality is a dynamic design structure mimicking real human behavior. I intend to talk about the interface of the artificial personality with language on one hand and the expression of feelings or the emotions on another, Language offers near infinite diversity of expressions, the emotions offer a diversity which is comparable with the types of motivation. Cybernetics as the study of information processing has to tools to address the contrasting diversities and suggest the mechanisms that may explain how they are linked.



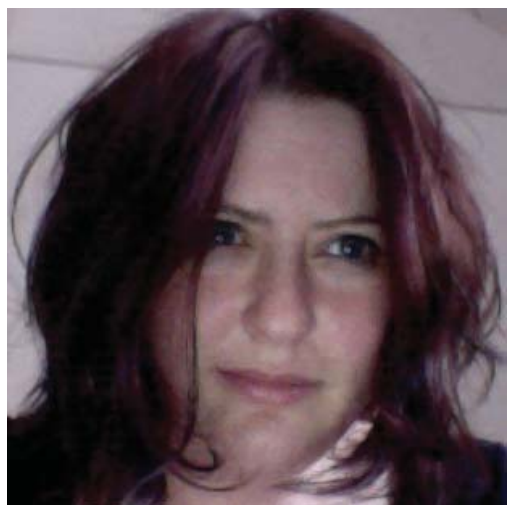
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**Faisal
Kadri**

Jennifer Canary is working on a paper proposal entitled
Labyrinth Psychotica, Simulating Psychotic Phenomena

Statement of Interest

I visited my first ASC conference when it was held in TROY NY, the alternative conference structures made a lasting impact on me, on the level of intellectual stimulation and interaction, as well as simply meeting wonderfully interesting people, many of whom I still correspond with today. Now that ASC is so close to home, I am eager for more explosions in the brain, in particular because of the Acting-Learning-Understanding theme. I have a particular interest in alternative forms of learning in an art science context. I have taught creative philosophy to children, as well as guided Art and University students of Amsterdam for 3,5 years in the honours programme Art and Research. What I bring to the table is practical knowledge on how to combine artistic and academic methods in knowledge production practice, with an emphasis on collaboration.



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Jennifer
Kanary

Statement of Interest

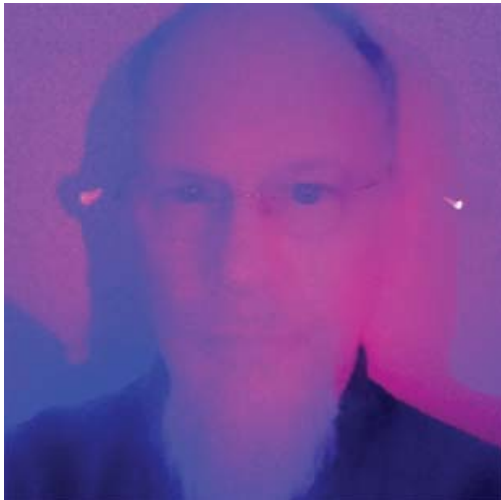
This International Conference is going to be my first attending international conference after I started my PhD. I am keeping my mind open to various types of inputs and experiences which I would gain during the conference. I believe, this is an advantage that I have obtained the opportunity to take part in the Cybernetics conference 2013, which will of course add more to my experiences and exposure. I am also interested on the theme and excited about the research discussions and papers. Looking forward to the new experience, meeting experts from different backgrounds and networking.



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Chathurika
Kannangara

Statement of Interest

As an educator with 25 years of experience teaching (and considerably more on the receiving end), I come to the conference prepared to unlearn even more.



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**Ted
Krueger**

Statement of Interest

I'm a practical cybernetician who applies cybernetics in day to day work with clients. I have a large experience in designing cybernetic dialogue-protocols. With my colleague, Mike vd Wijnckel, we designed "Workspace". A set of cybernetic interventions based on measurables.



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**Jan
Kuiper**

Statement of Interest

I am especially interested in broadening the channels between theoretical and practical applications of cybernetics. Transparency, accountability, seeking out and integrating multiple perspectives and negotiating appropriate means of measurement are key to this effort. I am also interested in seeing how books and articles linked to, if not directly connected to, an understanding of systems and cybernetics can be used as a means of making these approaches more accessible to public dialogue. It seems to be very risky that public debate on everything from ecology to macro economics is polarized around dichotomies that are partial and confusing. This makes it very difficult to exercise responsible citizenship and make good choices.

The role of the arts is very important here. Although that is not an area where I can make much of a contribution, it is very important both as an expression of where things are and might be and of the connections that exist among all of us.



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Complementary Set
Director**

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**Allenna
Leonard**

Loet Leydesdorff is working on a paper proposal with Inga A. Ivanova entitled
*Mutual Redundancies in Inter-human Communication Systems: Steps Towards a Calculus
of Processing Meaning*



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**Loet
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**Oleg
Liber**

Michael Lissack is working on a paper proposal entitled
A Cybernetics View of Explanation

Statement of Interest

I hope to partake in a conversation with a prior beginning and a later end which involves the ideas of reflexive anticipation and how that affects affordances for action.



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Executive Director, ISCE
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**Michael
Lissack**

Statement of Interest

Being a teacher who have taught for more than 10 years in universities, I always expect to use all kinds of theories and tools to improve my teaching and facilitate students' learning. Although Cybernetics is a new theory for me, quite different from learning theories, there could be some new implication of Cybernetics for my teaching practice, especially for remixing and developing OER for undergraduate students and post-graduate students in China. So my interest is what kind of new perspectives Acting-Learning-Understanding model and other Cybernetics models can give us on teaching and learning, and how these human knowing models could be used effectively to facilitate students' learning in classroom setting and online setting. In other words, I am looking forward to the practical value of Cybernetics on teaching in face-to-face, online or blended situation.



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**Hongliang
Ma**

Ludmila Malinova is working on a paper proposal with Antonin Rosicky entitled *The Application of Social Cybernetics in Organizational Analysis*

Statement of Interest

I am working on my dissertation thesis and I need to get some experience from so great experts from ASC environment. My master thesis was based on second order cybernetics theory. In my master thesis I prepared structured questionnaire in consulting company. I got really interesting results which I would like to share with you (experts) and to consult it for my further research. My mentor was Antonin Rosicky, who helped me with his priceless advices in this field. Now he is bedridden and I need to find some experts from your community to discuss my dissertation topic. I want to prepare some methodology or tool for organization to imply second order cybernetics combined with information management and social networks. My goal is to be able persuade managers, that they need sociocybernetics for understanding their employees, processes and business. I would like to find at the conference inspiration for my thesis and also to find new colleagues or hopefully friends.



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**Ludmila
Malinova**

Narayana Mandaleeka is working on a paper proposal entitled *Achieving organizational excellence by adopting "Values to Value™" framework.*

Statement of Interest

I am happy to note that 2013 ASC Conference has set the theme as Acting-Learning-Understanding and I am interested to participate in the deliberations at this conference. I am a firm believer that every idea born gets done twice. It gets done first in the mind before it gets manifested in a physical/tangible form. How things are to be done? Means are as important as the end, for the success is very much dependent on what one intends as envisaged in the goals setting and how one performs as per values.

In our center (Business Systems and Cybernetics) we believe "Values to Value™" as a working philosophy to design the offerings that interests our associates to help them to solve their client problems. The second term in the above working philosophy, "Value" refers to the stakeholder value that should come out holistically. A key component in problem solving is to understand the problem from different perspectives / dimensions. Learning takes place by designing the solution with this understanding and performing as per the design. In reality, achieving the goal may not be as simple as it thought out to be. In the complex and uncertain situations the goals may be evasive till the point a good enough understanding of a situation is arrived. With each successive action cycles the learning deepens the understanding and prepares one for the next cycle of action bringing close to targeted outcomes. Thus achieving goal is a journey involving reflection on the results, conceptualization of the reality followed by experimentation (innovation). The goal itself may be changing with changing environment (in businesses or otherwise) My idea of attending the conference is as much to learn as to contribute on the aspect of knowledge creation that takes place while the entity (organization, individual) is seeking a goal. By being in the software industry for the last three decades and by having served various roles as programmer, designer, architect, practitioner, and consultant and now as researcher I feel that I will be able to contribute by my participation. The insights that I may gain by networking and interacting with the fellow participants will be some useful takeaways in terms of right questions that need to be addressed. I look forward to the invitation to attend this conference and wish the conference a great success.



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Narayana
Mandaleeka

Ann Morrison is working on a paper proposal with Hendrik Knoche entitled
Learning as Outcomes: Addressing Discarded Ideas in the User Centered Design Cycle

Statement of Interest

I will bring a paper. My interest is in the meta-level of the conversation as I see it applies widely and too many aspects of for example; teaching, learning, research, project development and design. I am looking for conversations, inspiring discussions and presentations and possibilities for further projects, collaborations and publications.

Keywords for the intended paper: Design Cycle, User Centered Design, Learning, Design Problems, Sketching, Prototyping



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Ann
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Müller**

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**Irene
Müller**

Karl H. Müller is working on a paper proposal entitled
Understanding Understanding. Exploring Second-Order Science Fields

Statement of Interest

The main interest lies in three domains.

First, there is a vivid historical interest in the early texts of second-order cybernetics and in the differences and similarities between authors like Heinz von Foerster, Gregory Bateson or Gordon Pask.

The second area of interest lies in the production of a toolbox with the necessary instruments for being able to operate with and in second-order cybernetics.

And the third and by far most important domain for me lies in a series of actual second-order investigations in the field of the social sciences which are able to show the comparative advantages of second-order cybernetics and the profound new insights which can be gained through it.



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Karl H.
Müller

Statement of Interest

I will film at this year's conference with the help of my frequent collaborator, filmmaker, Dirk Peuker. My knowledge of cybernetics is new, but at this point in my research my main interests are in the connections between performance, movement and cybernetic and the "cybernetic" way of ethical understanding and philosophical thinking, and, of course, the relation to art, film and sound. As an artist, participating at the conference is a great opportunity for my research and to further my understanding of where my main interests lay. As a filmmaker, I look forward to meeting interesting people and learning from experts in this field. I am excited at the prospect of conversation and sharing ideas. In the end I will make a film for and about the ASC conference, which will be made available to all the conference participants.



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**Bettina
Nürnberg**

Mercy Kesiena Clement Okooboh is working on a paper proposal

Statement of Interest

I am a PhD candidate in the institute for educational cybernetics in the University of Bolton, and my expression of interest is to learn more on how to adapt the cybernetic models to training practices in organizations. In my PhD research that is currently undertaken in my organization, some of the principles of cybernetic systems are apparent in this study as it informs a mechanism for continuous improvement for every evaluation of training program conducted. This cyclical continuous enhancement process illustrates the changes and improvements as they occur.



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Institute for Educational
Cybernetics (IEC)
University of Bolton**

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**Mercy Kesiena
Clement Okooboh**

Statement of Interest

I will help filming at this year's conference as assistant for filmmaker Bettina Nürnberg.
My first contact with cybernetics was during a lecture by musician Brian Eno in 1996.



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**Dirk
Peuker**

Magnus Ramage is working on a paper proposal entitled
The rise of the infoborgs: post-humanism and materiality in the age of ubiquitous information

Statement of Interest

I have been interested in learning processes considered in a cybernetic manner for many years, both in organisational learning and in formal education. One of my first introductions to cybernetics was through the learning theory of Gregory Bateson, and also through the organisational learning work of Argyris and Schön (which ultimately has its roots in Ross Ashby's work). In recent years, much of my research has focused on information and the way it is treated by a variety of disciplines. It seems clear there are close parallels between information and learning. Taken together, this makes the centrality of learning in the conference theme of great interest to me.

Moreover, I have long been puzzled and fascinated by the relationship between acting and understanding (or, put another way, between theory and practice) and their mutual dependence. I am much more of a theorist than a practitioner, but I am very interested in how practitioners behave and act, and what is the relationship between their work and my work.

Lastly, I am keen simply to continue conversations with ASC members. Having recently become editor-in-chief of the journal *Kybernetes*, I find the ASC a very important body to keep in contact with. I learnt a great deal from attending the Asilomar conference in 2012,



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**Magnus
Ramage**

Martin Reynolds is working on a paper proposal entitled
Triple loop learning and the politics of systems practice

Statement of Interest

My particular interest is in looking at the value of triple loop learning for systems practice, and in particular exploring the relations of power exercised through systemic learning processes



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**Martin
Reynolds**

Larry Richards is working on a paper proposal entitled
From Doing to Knowing and Back: The Cybernetics of Wisdom

Statement of Interest

While I attend ASC conference primarily to listen, learn and have conversations, I also look for ways to participate more “formally”. I have given pre-conference tutorials at numerous past ASC conferences and am willing to do so again at this one if a need arises; these tutorials include prepared materials but are more conversational than presentational and can happen one-on-one or in small groups.

For this conference, I am particularly interested in pursuing the notion advanced by Humberto Maturana that : “all doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing.” My instincts tell me that unravelling this notion will require an alternative way of thinking about learning, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and thinking itself—that is, an alternative to the common way of thinking about education and its value. This alternative will bring “doing” (and action) to center stage and even address thinking as a type of doing. If I can find the time, I may prepare a paper on this topic and its implications for both educational processes and the prospects for a new society (see abstract).



**Executive Vice Chancellor
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**Larry
Richards**

Statement of Interest

I am interested in the exchange and the development of understandings and in the mechanism through which action and understanding can be associated together through learning.



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Academic visitor
Portsmouth University
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**Moufida
Sadok**

Bernard Scott is working on a paper proposal with Abhinav Bansal entitled *Learning About Learning: A Cybernetic Model of Skill Acquisition*

Statement of Interest

As a cyberneticians, psychologist and educationalist, I have longstanding interests in all aspects of human learning, human interaction and human communication. My research has included work on computer models of learning processes, studies of learning strategies and individual differences in learning style, the design of interactive learning environments and principles of course design for effective learning. I also have interests in the conversational processes that constitute social systems. I am looking forward to engaging in constructive conversations about these topics.



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Bernard
Scott

Bill Seaman is working on a paper proposal entitled
Insight Engine

Statement of Interest

This research seeks to work toward the digital authorship of a tool to empower insight production, distributed interdisciplinary team-based research, and to potentially enable bisociational processes as discussed by Arthur Koestler in *The Act of Creation*. The goal of the 1st year of research is to create an interactive system to enable intelligent juxtaposition of relevant media elements via focused interaction, dynamic computational functionality, and intellectual “seeding” of the system.

The system seeks to reverse engineer some of the processes that we use as researchers. It then works toward a human / machine symbiosis where the machine presents an interface to many different researchers work. It does so in a way that enables the human user to playfully explore many different areas of research that may or may not be relevant to their current work in a novel interactive manner. The system presents a “word swirl” in 3D for each different researcher. These can be called up and displayed in the interface or put away. These word swirls have buzz words or titles (that you will supply for your own papers/ or I will add if need be) at the top of the hierarchy (one can also look deeper in the hierarchy with multiple finger touches) and even read an entire paper if it is of interest. Often new knowledge arises in the space between fields—in interstitial zones of knowledge. If one choose one “buzz word” or Paper Title from “your” word swirl and one from another researcher that looks to be of interest, the system will seek to find the most relevant examples in the database [by making both a statistical and semantic comparison] (and eventually searching the internet, in the next iteration of the system) and provide those papers for you as a new word swirl of the most relevant juxtapositions. The system seeks to be a learning system, where as you use it, you generate new word swirls of papers or media, that we hope to be relevant to you, in a playful iterative manner, or you can throw things away that are not relevant. The goal is in generating “intelligent research juxtapositions” that may arise through the use of the system – either for you or for a person who might learn from your work. This seems to me to be a situation of mutual intellectual gain between differing researchers...



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Statement of Interest

I was at the wonderful ASC C:ADM 2010 conference at Troy and look forward to a similar experience.

I am particularly interested in something I find fantastic in cybernetics: that, understanding epistemology in terms of circularity, one both rejects objectivity and escapes subjectivity in the same terms (that being part of the world we are neither apart from it in the sense of an independent observer or in the sense of an isolated subject). This is manifest in the conference theme—in the acting and understanding present in the circularity of learning; that we must act to understand as well as understand to act.

It seems to me that this reflects on our relations with others (that is in ethics but also in the example of design). While cybernetics and ethics have been said to coincide, the consequences of cybernetics for ethics have only been put tentatively (understandably given one of these is that “ethics cannot be articulated”). This can become confused with an ethical reticence—to avoid impacting on others at all costs (or at least, I have confused it with this in the past). While we often spend too much time talking and not enough time listening, the opposite can also be the case. This observation returns to circularity—that in order to act we need to listen and in order to listen we need to act.



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Statement of Interest

I am relatively new to Cybernetics, but I am intrigued by the relevance of it as a theory for design, and for the research that I am doing. In particular, I am interested by conversation theory, and the encouragement of conversation between designers and consumers in order to mutually participate in the process of design. The conference focus on circular causality between acting and understanding is pertinent not only to my own processes of learning and approach to research, but also specifically to my research topic, in the differences in approach between the professional and the amateur, operating at different stages of the acting-learning-understanding continuum.



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Statement of Interest

I bring varied organizational and personal sets of experiences developed over 50+ years living in three countries and visiting and working in many more, always looking for the practical ways to apply systems and cybernetics ideas and approaches. So in a sense I have been acting – learning and perhaps understanding all along....

I am looking for 1. Ways and means to make these ideas more relevant to more people

2. Evolve the ideas to meet the demands of a more rapidly changing, interconnected, interdependent, technology rich, nature knowing poor, global experience.

3. Explore circularity and our connections/relations to spirit and emotion in communication and decision making. .

4. How to best shape my activities in (the) future in light of the above and the experience of the conference.



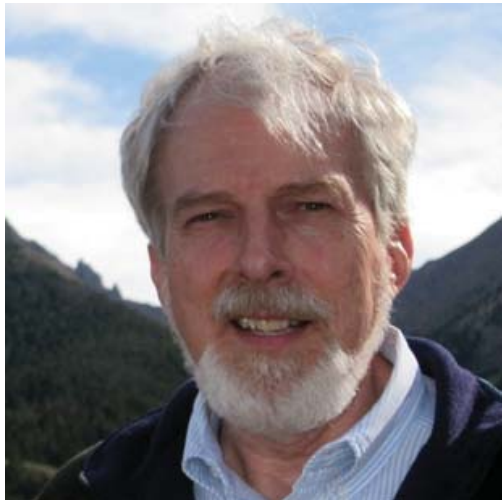
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Statement of Interest

Acting, learning, understanding fit well with reflexivity theory and the idea that people both observe and participate in social systems.

I am interested in the past, present, and future of cybernetics. I'll be giving a tutorial with Karl Mueller.



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Tirumala Vinnakota is working on a paper proposal entitled
A cybernetics framework to analyse the relationships between 'actions/activities and understandings' and vice-versa for holistic learning considering risks

Statement of Interest

I am interested to participate in the ASC 2013 conversational conference to see how the cybernetics is at work in real life scenarios that takes the concepts of acting and understanding, and forming circular causality using the linear causality between them, all this by way of talking and acting together. I strongly believe in that, acting will lead to a rich understanding due to unique and enormous possibilities that exist in the environment. This is one of the learning. The other learning is that we get from applying the understanding to be used for acting. To be holistic in learning, we need both kinds of learning's. But main problem in today's world is that these two learning's are seen as independent and without circular conjoining, what we call as separate linear causalities, leading to reductionism.

Unless these two learning's are conjoined in a circular fashion, there won't be holism, which is a risk. In other words, we need to feedback the understanding that we gained from acting back to the understanding to be used in future for acting and this journey goes for continuous improvement of each other bringing in real value.

I will also be interested to know the risks associated with improper acting and understanding that will ultimately lead to improper learning, as risks is my broad area of research.

I will bring in my knowledge on Cybernetics , Systems and Conversation theory that will be useful for this conference to develop new questions acting collaboratively on the theme and sub-themes. I would like to contribute different ways of acting, different types of understandings based on my work experience in cybernetics and systems, both as a practitioner as well as researcher. ASC 2013 will put me in touch with many interdisciplinary professionals outside my field with whom I will collaborate by way of listening and conversing. I am very happy and thank the organizers for choosing the main theme as Acting—Learning—Understanding: reflecting, collaborating, conversing, doing, as this is very useful in all types of work. I have even used the conference sub-themes, 'action leads

to understanding' and 'understanding leads to action' to write this expression of Interest statement. I am looking forward to participate in this conference and am hopeful that I will contribute in an emergent way that is: From ASC conference to Participant (me) and from Participant (me) to ASC conference in circular conjoined way.



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Statement of Interest

What I can bring to the conference

Over the past ten years, working with a number of other researchers, I have been exploring, developing and writing about ideas related to contextual inquiry from an open systems perspective. Our work has engaged with human sense-making and the ways in which people approach problem spaces within which decisions are required. We have noted how sense-making has been examined by others through a number of reductionist lenses, e.g. psychological or sociological, but these always leave unanswered questions and unexplained gaps. Systemic approaches to analysis of human problem spaces have also tended to be unsatisfying since the idea of human systems as 'elements coming together' to form a larger emergent whole somehow makes the people disappear. We have therefore chosen to look at human systems as collectives emerging from interactions among human individuals, and recreated/renewed on a continuous basis – an open Systems view. In the course of reflections, discussions and analysis in the field of contextual inquiry, common themes of acting, reflecting, learning and achieving some understanding have been surfaced. I hope that this experience of studying and writing about human sense-making in context will enable me to contribute to ASC2013.

What the conference will do for me

In my work over the past ten years, I have encountered many other researchers who inquired into sense-making and learning but mostly from reductionist or systemic perspectives, and mostly to pursue some stated purpose in the field of business, e.g. managing organizational change or deploying IT effectively. Some of the foundations upon which my work has been built would be situated in what is termed 'cybernetics', e.g. Gregory Bateson's idea of information as 'a difference that makes a difference'. However, I have not considered acting, learning and understanding in human endeavour through a lens of performance and feedback on performance. I am hoping to be able to engage with other delegates in relation to the activities outlined in the conference description, and in so doing flip my own perspective on sense-making, learning and appreciation.



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Statement of Interest

This will be my first time participating in an ASC conference (or any ASC event for that matter). My close friend and colleague Jan Kuiper made the suggestion to go to Bolton together to participate. As fellow cyberneticians, our relation is based on "living second order cybernetics" so the style of this conference is attractive for us. Shortly after Jan made his suggestion, Ranulph Glanville invited me to meet him and Michael Hohl in Gent (BE). We had a nice evening with good conversations about our work. These two interactions have made me "feel at home" to participate in this conference. In my work as consultant, organizer and facilitator I want/can/do work in a congruent way with conversational principles that I learn from second order cybernetics. I have quite some experience with designing and delivering work forms that make conversations work better for individuals, teams and larger groups (in business, non-profit and education). Based on those experiences, I want to construct an agenda of relevant topics with the other participants for further exploration. In my daily work I sense new potentials to further integrate second order cybernetics, for which I do not always find requisite time, space and conversation to articulate them in a workable fashion. I hope this conference gives me an opportunity to generate new questions and insights to go and realize these potentials. In the last years I have studied the works of Heinz von Foerster, Humberto Maturana and in particular Gordon Pask's Conversation Theory and Interactions of Actors Theory. I find these concepts rich and useful to support me to reflect on my work as a practitioner. I want to contribute by fulfilling the purpose of this conference in making it circular and conversational, which is very aesthetic for me and have in-formed me to embody second order cybernetics as a person.



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