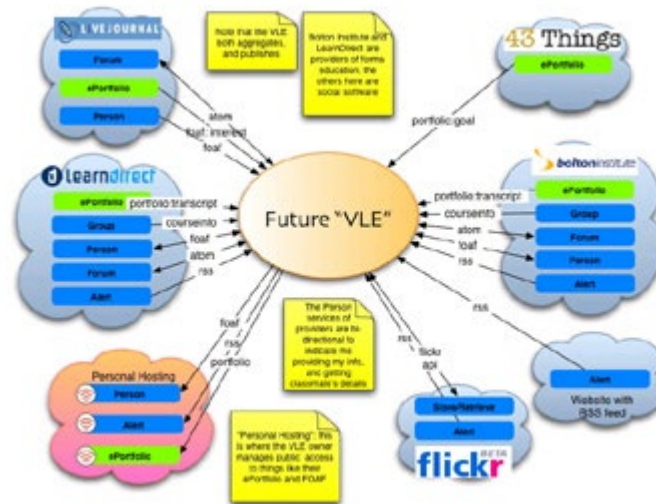
The background features several large, stylized, overlapping swirls in shades of green, purple, and blue. Interspersed among these swirls are numerous small, yellow, triangular shapes that resemble sun rays or sparks, scattered across the white background.

# Web 2.0 and your own Learning and Development

Stephen Downes  
National Research  
Council Canada  
June 19, 2007

# Three Principles:

- Interaction – participation in a learning community (or a community of practice)



# Three Principles:

- Usability – simplicity and consistency



# Three Principles:

- Relevance – or *salience*, that is, learning that is relevant to you, now





## Interaction:

“... the capacity to communicate with other people interested in the same topic or using the same online resource.”

- *Why do we want it?*
  - **Human contact ...**  
*talk to me...*
  - **Human content ...**  
*teach me...*



# Interaction: How to Get It

- You cannot depend on traditional learning for interactivity...
  - Most learning based on the broadcast model
  - Most interactivity separated from learning





# Interaction: How to Get It

- Built your own interaction network
    - Place yourself, not the content, at the centre
- 
- 



# Interaction: Your Personal Network

- Email and mailing lists – eg., DEOS, wwvedu, ITForum, IFETS, online-news, RSS-DEV...
- 
- 





# Interaction: Your Personal Network

- **Weblogging** – reading your subscriptions, leaving comments, longer responses in your own blog



# Interaction: Your Personal Network

- Personal communication – instant messaging, Skype
- 
- 



# Interaction: Your Personal Network

- **Online Forums** – Using, eg., Elluminate, Centra – examples, CIDER, Net\*Working
- 
- 

# Interaction: Principles

- Pull is better than push...
- Speak in your own (genuine) voice (and listen for authenticity)
- Share your knowledge, your experiences, your opinions
- Make it a habit and a priority



# Interaction: Guerilla Tactics

- If interaction isn't provided, create it...
  - Eg., if you are at a lecture like this, blog it



# Interaction: Guerilla Tactics

- If your software doesn't support interaction, add it
  - Eg., embed Javascript comment, RSS in LMS pages



# Interaction: Guerilla Tactics

- Use back-channels
  - Private lists, Gmail accounts, Flickr, IM, more...



# Usability:

"... probably the greatest usability experts are found in the design labs of Google and Yahoo!"

- *Elements of Usability*

- **Consistency** ... *I know what to expect...*

- **Simplicity** ... *I can understand how it works...*



# Consistency? As a Learner?

- Yes! Take charge of your learning...



# Consistency? As a Learner?

- Clarify first principles...
  - for example, how do you understand learning theory? Eg. [Five Instructional Design Principles Worth Revisiting](#)



# Consistency? As a Learner?

- Organize your knowledge
  - For example, build your own CMS (using, say, Drupal)



# Simplify the Message

- Summarize, summarize, summarize
  - (and then put it into your own knowledge base)

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide features three balloons: a light green one at the top, a light blue one in the middle, and a light purple one at the bottom. Each balloon is connected to a streamer that ends in a yellow triangular flag. The balloons have a subtle gradient and are surrounded by small yellow triangular flags.

# Simplify the Message

- Use your own vocabulary, examples
  - You own your language – don't let academics and (especially) vendors tell you what jargon to use

# Simplify the Message

- Don't compartmentalize (needlessly)





# Usability: Principles

- Usability is Social:
  - Can you search your own learning?
  - Do you represent similar things in similar ways?
- Usability is Personal:
  - Listen to yourself
  - Be reflective – eg., is your desktop working for you?

# Usability: Guerilla Tactics

- Important: your institutional CMS is almost certainly dysfunctional – create your own *distributed* knowledge management system...





# Usability: Guerilla Tactics

- Create a blog on Blogger, just to take notes



# Usability: Guerilla Tactics

- Store photos on Flickr



# Usability: Guerilla Tactics

- Create a GMail account and forward important emails to yourself (and take advantage of Google's search)





# Usability: Guerilla Tactics

- (Maybe) use Google desktop search

# Relevance:

“... learners should get what they want, when they want it, and where they want it “

- *Generating Relevance*

- **Content** ... *getting what you want*

- **Location, location, location...**



# Getting What You Want

- Step One: maximize your sources – today's best bet is RSS – go to [www.google.com/reader](http://www.google.com/reader), set up an account, and search for topics of interest



# Getting What You Want

- Step Two: filter ruthlessly – if you don't need it now, delete it (it will be online somewhere should you need it later)

# Getting What You Want

- Important: Don't let someone else dictate your information priorities – only you know what speaks to you





# Getting It Where (and When) You Want

- Shun formal classes and sessions in favour of informal activities



# Getting It Where (and When) You Want

- Do connect to your work at home (and even on vacation) – *but* – feel free to sleep at the office
  - Most work environments are dysfunctional
  - Your best time might not be 9 to 5 ...
  - Ideas (and learning) happen when they happen

# Principles of Relevance

- Information is a flow, not a collection of objects
  - Don't worry about remembering, worry about repeated exposure to good information
- Relevance is defined by function, not topic or category
- Information is relevant only if it is available where it is needed

# Relevance: Guerilla Tactics

- Develop unofficial channels of information (and disregard most of the official ones)





## Relevance: Guerilla Tactics

- For example, I scan, then delete, almost all institutional emails (and everything from the director)

# Relevance: Guerilla Tactics

- Create 'project pages' on your wiki (you have a wiki, right?) with links to templates, forms, etc.



# Relevance: Guerilla Tactics

- Demand access





# What I'm Really Saying Here...

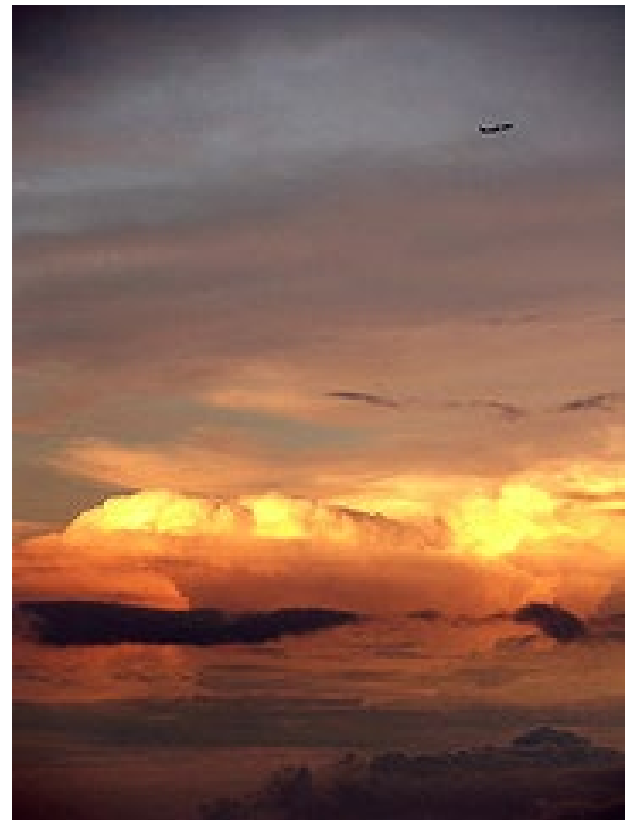
1. You are at the centre of your own *personal learning network*





# What I'm Really Saying Here...

2. To gain from self-directed learning  
you must *be self-directed*



# What I'm Really Saying Here...

3. These principles should guide *how we teach* as well as how we learn



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