



**ENTREPRISE
COLLABORATIVE**

Social Learning

Introduction

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COLLABORATIVE ENTERPRISE

Dear reader,

It's with pleasure that I am pleased to announce the birth of **Collaborative Enterprise**. We want to make a cross-cultural idea laboratory to exchange perspectives with experts and practitioners on **Social Learning** and **Networked Enterprise** concepts to develop more resilient organizations.



To encourage debate and exchange, **Ecollab** is a monthly event in the form of a blog carnival, which will bring together all persons interested by these subjects.

Each month, www.entreprisecollaborative.com hosts the Collaborative Enterprise Blog Carnival. We expect to have a new topic at least every month and perhaps more frequently. We will announce it here and you can contact [Harold Jarche](#), the "ringmaster", with suggestions.

We will be asking people to contribute directly if we think the topic is relevant. Feel free to pass on topics to others who may be interested.

You can find more information about **Ecollab** on the [site](#).

In this white paper, which could be the No. 0 of **Ecollab**, our contributors answer the following question:

How would you describe social learning and why is it important for today's enterprise?

A big thank you to them for agreeing to participate in this adventure.

Happy reading and happy to find your comments and feedback on our site.



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Translation : Thanks to Lilian Mahoukou (see P22) and to Liselotte Mas du Puy
« **Translation is the language of Europe** » (Umberto Eco).
Well, this is modestly what I am currently trying to do: travel across Europe and
the world, to help people from Europe and the world travel.
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Harold Jarche

Consultant focused on the integration of learning and working on the Web.

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Networked people and technology are showing that markets really are conversations, while collaboration in the workplace is becoming critical for business success. At **Enterprise Collaborative**, we are beginning a journey to create a cross-cultural idea laboratory to exchange perspectives on collaboration in the enterprise with experts and practitioners.

We will strive to connect **social learning** and **networked enterprise** in order to develop more resilient organizations.

This White Paper is the first in a series on a theme. It provides multiple perspectives on social learning, in two languages and from various business cultures.

Social learning can be viewed as the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes while connected to others (peers, mentors, experts) in an electronic surround of digital media, both real-time and asynchronous.

The contributors to this paper have provided their perspectives on what we believe will be an important factor for the future success of all organizations. One way to read this paper is by using a lens given us by Marshall and Eric McLuhan*. We can ask how social learning will **extend, obsolesce, retrieve or reverse** what we are currently doing in our workplaces. This may afford some ideas as to what we should be doing.

*According to McLuhan's Laws of Media, every new medium:

1. extends a human property (the car extends the foot);
2. obsolesces the previous medium by turning it into a sport or a form of art (the automobile turns horses and carriages into sports);
3. retrieves a much older medium that was obsolesced before (the automobile brings back the shining armour of the chevalier);
4. flips or reverses its properties into the opposite effect when pushed to its limits (the automobile, when there are too many of them, create traffic jams, that is total paralysis)



George Siemens

Enamored with the potential of technology to transform learning and society, he's convinced that existing educational perspectives need to be revised to meet the needs of "today's students". consultant with corporations, government offices, learning associations, and NGOs.

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Harold Jarcho spoke with George Siemens on October 1st, 2009, a few hours before he announced his departure from the University of Manitoba to take on a new role at Athabasca University's Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute.

One reason George is eager to move into applied research is that he feels that we are tool deficient, in that we have the theories, such as his own Connectivism, but lack ways to implement them.

Harold: A growing number of employees are already engaged in a variety of technology-mediated social networks. Is this something that organizational leadership needs to consider?

George: Yes, organizational leaders should consider that there is a different knowledge-exchange structure than what is visible in the official organization chart. Work has been designed from the perspective of physical activities, and hierarchies and jobs have developed from a time when work was more structured. Today, you're hiring people more for their networks than their knowledge and leaders need to recognize people have existing networks. For knowledge workers, there is an ongoing sharing of information through social relationships with peers inside and outside the organization. Leaders need to recognize the validity of social learning and support the use of sharing tools.

Harold: How would you define social learning in the context of today's workplace?

George: Social learning has its sociology. One perspective is that there is no such thing as a pre-existing social space and that it is in constant flux. Another is that existing societal structures have a major influence on learning in a social context.

Social learning on Web is the act of learning driven by regular contact and association with our peers. These relationships are made and re-made as we go. For example, work on a distributed team is not inherently social but we are making our social identity in the process of doing this work. Finally, social learning requires constant work and effort.

Harold: Is social learning of any importance in the workplace?

George: There is a growing demand for the ability to connect to others. It is with each other that we can make sense, and this is social. Organizations, in order to function, need to encourage social exchanges and social learning due to faster rates of business and technological changes. Social experience is adaptive by nature and a social learning mindset enables better feedback on environmental changes back to the organization.

Harold: The Cluetrain Manifesto stated that "hyperlinks subvert hierarchies". If workers connect to whomever they want in their social learning networks, will this subvert the chain the command? Should organizational leaders be concerned?

George: That's a good question. I see two functions for leaders in today's workplace:

1. Enabling: create a space for individuals and the organization to succeed together.
2. Administration: ensure that the organization functions as a unit.

Furthermore, employees connecting with each other and those outside the organization do not subvert the organization but they challenge leaders to focus on linking and connecting. Managing knowledge and creativity is not traditional command and control management.

Harold: Do HR/Training/Learning & Development departments need to change any of their practices to support social learning?

A good example of social HR practices are IBM's Bluepages, the internal use of Twitter and greater transparency of the HR function.

Today, people expect to be informed before things happen. We want to be consulted and we are demanding a greater role in things that may change our lives. We expect a degree of participation.

The Learning & Development role needs to be more transparent. L&D staff need the ability to read the situation and then react. L&D must be adaptive and implement change based on constant feedback. This means that organizations need to get better at listening to the people they affect and improve internal communications. It is the responsibility of the organization to create an ecology that lets people connect with each other and with new ideas.

A successful social learning enterprise:

- is transparent in all activities;
- remains pro-active;
- keeps everyone informed; and
- provides multiple feedback loops.



Bertrand Duperrin

Blue Kiwi consultant who specializes in the operation of the company in its organizational and human dimension, and how it will face these new challenges.

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Learning has always been essential to organizations. Being able to deliver the necessary knowledge to help employees improve has always been a key asset. Businesses have implemented what was needed to train and teach people, assuming the organization knew everything and only had to organize knowledge transfer to employees. But as our economy becomes more of a knowledge economy every day, knowledge now comes in different forms and previous assumptions are no longer applicable. Knowledge is not only owned by the organization but employees own a large part of it. Moreover, learning once in order to endlessly repeat the same tasks is no longer required, instead more work is on-demand and contextualized with fewer repetitious job types. Workers not only need to tap corporate knowledge but also their peers in order to get specific knowledge and experience at the time of need. Consequently, learning is not a single instance (with widely spaced updates) but also a flow of peer interactions.

This new approach to learning has much in common with the social framework of Web 2.0, AKA the social web, and is logically called social learning

Today, most jobs focus on solving problems all day long; each problem being a new and unique situation. There is nothing that can be learned once and then endlessly repeated. Usually, if the enterprise itself does not have the answer, the answer can be found within the enterprise: often current and even former employees may have the answer. Since much knowledge work focuses on narrow and contextualized issues, the only way to get the appropriate answer is through an unmediated and contextualized from the source. Peer to peer learning is efficient because it comes when needed, and only then, and because it involves someone who has already found a solution and used it.

Many organizations have already tried (and some have managed) to implement such practices "in real life", trying to gather people and facilitate more socialized knowledge and experience sharing as well as problem solving. The purpose was quite simple: create a living market where "takers" (people looking for a solution and willing to learn from others) could meet "givers" (those who once "did it"). But even when it was successful, this kind of approach did not deliver its full potential for two reasons: in large organizations, one may have to learn from anybody and gathering everybody in the same place is impossible; second, synchronous interactions and sharing require that people already know each other but people need more time to find each other, and this works better asynchronously.

The "social" of social learning not only means that it's about people to people interactions, but also that social software may help. "May help" because it's only a platform that in can teach nothing to anyone. It is possible to overcome the two



above-mentioned barriers by creating an enterprise-wide space where takers and givers can find themselves and engage in conversations that will be of a benefit to the whole organization, now and in the future. Many problems, solutions and conversations can now stay accessible and it's even possible to learn from former employees. Even if social learning is about people-to-people interactions above all, it helps to understand why social media invited itself into the discussion. In fact, even if social learning is not organizational learning, it sometimes needs an organizational placeholder to ensure the effectiveness of the P2P learning marketplace and the durability of past social learning actions.

Learning has been used to build efficient formal organizational systems for ages, regardless of the people in these systems. Now, the next big step in organizational performance requires us to tap the knowledge that is inside the system, people's knowledge, in order to embed all the collective experience and knowledge into products as well as into daily operations. Employees must now be teachers and trainees at the same time, in an ongoing informal process. That's what social learning is all about.



Frédéric Cavazza

Independent consultant based in France, specializeing in project management, marketing and usability on the Web,who maintains several blogs on a variety of topics such as social media and Enterprise 2.0.

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Social Learning may be defined as follows: "Practices and tools to take advantage of collaborative knowledge sharing and growth".

This should be the essential component of a company's HR strategy as it generates added value based on employee know-how (and is very difficult to copy or subcontract), as opposed to production capacities (a competitiveness factor of the last century).

The goal of social learning is to extract knowledge from individuals and documents and to classify them and make them available to all employees, so all can benefit and add their own content.

Prerequisites of Social Learning are:

- a strong commitment of top management communicated to middle management;
- incentives and recognition validated by the HR department;
- tools to facilitate / encourage sharing

The tools related to social learning practices are numerous and correspond to different objectives :

- Blogs, wikis and collaborative FAQs to store and organize knowledge;
- Social bookmarks to pool external sources, to encourage collaborative filtering;
- Chat rooms for fostering long-term sharing
- Social networks for a transparent view of contributions

Above all, social learning is a comprehensive package that has a direct impact on the collective performance of employees and indirectly improves individual performances in the long run (as attitudes and work habits evolve and adapt to dynamic collaboration).



Clark Quinn

Clark Quinn earned a PhD in applied cognitive science at UCSD, and brings a deep understanding of learning as well as experience designing technology solutions to ensure that the learner, learning, and user experience are integrated into a successful performance solution.

<http://blog.learnlets.com/>

Inspiration Infrastructure

As the rate of change increases, the contexts in which we operate are getting less predictable, and more nimbleness is required. Optimal execution in creating a total experience is going to be just the cost of entry, and continual innovation will be the differentiator. This requires creating an infrastructure that scaffolds creativity. We need to be continually adapting: flexibly reading the environment and making course corrections. The obvious win is seen in facilitating dialog, to leverage the knowledge in people to achieve the goals of an organization; we need to be continually coming up with new inspirations. Is this learning?

There is a problem with the term 'learning'. Too often, that label relegates the discussion to formal learning - training and instruction - and puts it into the 'nice to have but not essential' category, when the outcomes we are looking for include problem-solving, design, creativity, research, experimentation, or innovation. Yet, those really *are* learning; the answer isn't known yet, and will be developed. It's discovering something new, and that's learning. The other case is when one shares knowledge with another in action, and that is not considered formal either, yet it too is learning. However, it may be expedient to talk about inspiration instead of learning, e.g. we need continual inspiration, both in what we are about, and in how to do what we need to do.

When you learn with others, you co-create your understanding, and this has implications for formal and informal learning, as well as organizational and societal effectiveness. The effect of the internet, the flattened world, is that we can learn socially in new ways with new people, creating new understandings, new 'inspirations'. The challenge is to harness these capabilities in useful and meaningful ways, both old and new. We need to work inspired, creating new ideas that lead us to new opportunities.

We know that social learning has power. Theories from psychologists starting as long ago as Vygotsky & Bandura, frameworks including constructivist and connectivist approaches, and empirical work in educational psychology, organizational learning, and now neuroscience, tell us that the the outcomes can be richer than learning alone, when well-designed or when we're effective social-learners. It's the key to more inspiration.

Taking learning-together skills for granted, however, is a mistake. Just as making our cultural values clear to facilitate acting in alignment with those values, so too being explicit about learning skills facilitates assessing and developing those skills. And, frankly, the fact is that those skills aren't necessarily well-developed, even in the so-called 'digital natives'.

As mentioned, in informal learning, there are the two basic categories: to open up communication, and to facilitate collaboration. When one person has the answer another needs, whether leaders with vision, or experts with detailed understanding, this knowledge can (and should) be shared with those who need to align action and improve understanding. Similarly, when there are new problems to be solved, whether with existing products or services, but also in creating new offerings, what's needed is innovation or creativity. In both cases, demonstrably, the learning happens socially. Consequently, social learning is the big organizational opportunity.

However, another opportunity should not be neglected. When we examine the continuum from novice, through practitioner, to expert, the role of formal knowledge is highest for the novice, and falls away. While social learning obviously is the critical element to support informal learning, it also leads to better formal learning outcomes. When social learning is wrapped around formal learning and serves as the segue to the broader community of practice, we're creating a seamless environment to scaffold performance. That, I suggest, is a performance ecosystems, or an inspiration infrastructure.

You need tools, processes, organizational development, and more. It's not easy, but it is the key to success. Consider this a call to arms: you need to facilitate the inspirations in your organization, and social learning is the key.



Anthony Poncier

Consultant in management 2.0 and competitive intelligence, specializes in information management (enterprise 2.0, collaboration, Web 2.0, e-reputation, economic intelligence, ...).

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The EU definition of e-learning integrates social learning: "E-learning is the use of emerging Internet technologies, in order to improve learning quality, on one hand by enabling access to resources and services, and on the other hand by distance communication and collaboration"

In reality, e-learning has evolved to asynchronous distance learning (often in instructor-led teaching), with some practical exercises. Given the original definition, if access to resources and services became a reality, sharing is often unilateral and collaboration non-existent.

To bridge this need, companies should use a method of blended learning. This is the use of e-learning followed by more traditional support. It alternates between online sessions and face-to-face sessions with a trainer, implementing, in a more participatory way (exercises, role playing ...), the concepts explained in e-learning. This meets the needs of employees who wish to interact with their colleagues. In e-learning, as currently practiced, they are left alone at a computer (at home or at work).

What we have is the traditional education system of the European culture, with the exception of some alternate examples such as the Freinet or Francisco Ferrer schools, where teachers (virtual or not) hold the knowledge and give exercises and assessment.

If Americans are more receptive to the social learning concept, it just may be because teachers (at least at the college level) usually base their classes a series of texts from which they will hold discussions where everyone can participate to enrich their learning and that of others. Today, social media can support and replace e-learning, adding collaboration and more 'social' in our learning styles:

- Self-learning (VCAST, podcast, social bookmarking, ranking, tutorials ...)
- Discussion groups and sharing (social networks, microblogging, forums, wikis, blogs, chat, exchange files, VOIP ...).

All this informal knowledge can be capitalized for and by the community of learners and enriched by all who participate. Indeed, each person generally organizes his or her own learning. We must give the means and the desire to share or "socialize" this personal work, to all learners (that is the role of the trainer). The goal is to organize ourselves to build collective and collaborative learning, a first step towards collective intelligence.

Social learning also meets the need of companies to strengthen social ties within their teams. This is especially important if relationships continue beyond training sessions. Social learning develops a more proactive learning style as well as another way to organize and work: building project teams, setting up communities, and doing collaborative work in the company.

One of the lines developed in the official texts of the National Education in France is to put the student at center of the system. Thanks to social media and social learning, employees can become active learners and work together. Social learning allows a true paradigm shift, can enhance training, both collectively and individually, where each person:

- can take control of her or his training (selecting information, planning needs, sharing and networking ...)
- can learn to work collaboratively (which in turn can make the company more agile)



Cédric Deniaud

Internet Consultant in webmarketing, communications consultancy brand on Internet and Internet projects (ergonomics, development projects, community management, e-trade).

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Social learning includes both of these notions: that of collaboration between the employees, from which springs an improvement in good practices and the processes linked to the company or the project.

The difficulty both resides in the understanding, by everybody, of these issues (change of the culture of collaboration within a company), and in the adoption of the tools implemented. Because collaboration, at the time of net working, implies the use of efficient tools. But to be adopted and used, a tool must be useful for each person, should it be for the promotion of one's knowledge, the ease of sharing, searching information, or interacting with colleagues.

Like any step that is taken, reflection must first and foremost be guided by its use and benefits, before thinking of its functional and technical aspect. Whatever one considers - content sharing platforms, wikis, social nets...- the tool must be adapted by the person who will use it and for the use he or she makes of it.

Knowing how to collaborate, share one's knowledge and promote it, are part of the true skills that are required today. The employee is a human being who learns continuously and who must be constantly questioning how work is done in order to adapt to changes in the work environment. Collaboration tools are needed to help the employee take this step: then, these tools must be helpful, serve as a support, and provide an opportunity rather than a threat or a restraint. In implementing change initiatives, collaboration tools must be fully understood by their users.

To sum up, Social Learning must include:

- Implementing tools that meet company needs and aim at improving the existing learning and collaborating processes.
- Supporting the individual adoption of these tools to enable mastery.



Jay Cross

Jay Cross, with a Harvard MBA and decades of experience in business, has written books on both implementation, ensuring the organizational change is managed, and informal learning, covering the picture beyond the formal course.

<http://jaycross.com/>

Surprisingly, the word social first appeared on the scene a mere five hundred years ago. Naturally, social has always had to do with getting other people involved. But when it was invented, the word social also implied being characterized by friendliness and geniality. We humans enjoy one another's company.

People have always learned to do their jobs socially. Workers talk with one another, mimic the behavior of successful performers, ask questions, converse, gossip, and collaborate. The fact that it's fun encourages us to continue with the practice.

The current buzz around social media, social networking, and social software can trick one into thinking that Social Learning is web 2.0 phenomenon. That puts the cart before the horse.

Most of what we learn, we learn from one another. Bringing people together, whether on a sofa or on Facebook, makes it happen. The social aspect of learning is fundamental.

The most common refrain I hear when talking about learning in organizations is "It's not about the technology." It's always about the people.



Florence Meichel

Consultant - speaker and coach in the field of education 2.0 and 2.0 training 2.0.

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I look at social learning from the perspective of organizational design, in what I call learning networks.

This form of social organization exists on social sites (like Ning, Elgg, Buddypress or others), around a network of individuals connected to each other thanks to the Internet. Network members come together to share certain ideas, experiences and resources. They also cooperate on initiatives and they can generate powerful learning dynamics at both the individual collective levels; mixing formal and informal, face-to-face and distance, synchronous and asynchronous, etc.

To be efficient, learning processes must integrate two complementary dimensions. We learn by doing and talking to others and at the same time, we learn how to learn. From these two approaches, we have double-loop learning processes, (individual and collective), which enable organizations to develop permanent and relevant adaptive skills.

Basically, a community leader should manage these formative processes, and the best situation would be that players gradually become both co-learners and co-trainers for each other.

In a complex world that continuously changes, those learning skills become essential for organizations to survive and thrive on a sustainable way. It's a good reason for companies to get involved in this new way of learning.

The implementation of these new processes, however, requires significant changes as they challenge many habits and perceptions, particularly related to bureaucratic organizations.

The collective action of change associated with social learning must be built over time to leave room for all the necessary adjustments. But it is the first step toward a Learning Organization.



Charles Jennings

Independent consultant and past CLO of Reuters with deep experience in both the business and learning practitioner sides of planning and implementing world-class performance solutions for organizations.

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Social and Experiential Learning - The New Golden Age

The vast majority of our learning comes about not through passive knowledge acquisition but through a myriad of our own experiences combined with practice, interaction with others and through the opportunities we have for reflecting on all of these.

Learning is both an active and social enterprise.

This is not new. It has been the case for our species since the origins of man. Humans learn primarily through exploring and sharing. It has also been the case for each of us individually since we began to try to walk and talk or ride a bicycle, and failed, and started over and tried again and again until we succeeded.

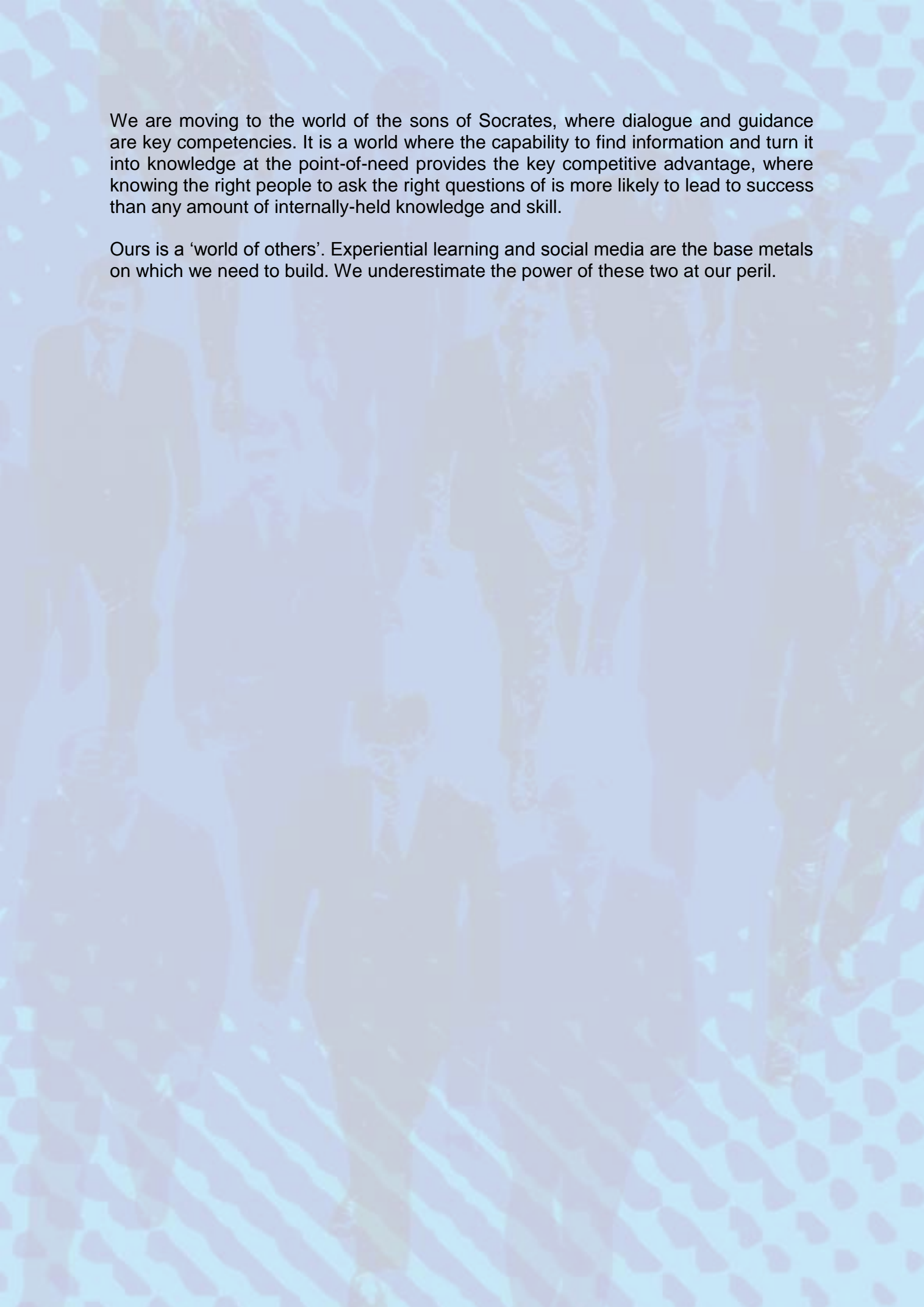
However, since the time of Plato's Academy more than two thousand years ago the dominant model for teaching and learning within organisations has been that of knowledge transfer and acquisition. One dominated by teaching rather than learning. The assumption of this model being that more information and greater knowledge inexorably leads to increased skills and better performance.

However, we are learning that this not necessarily the case. The link between knowledge and skills, and between skills and performance, need to be forged, and are best forged through experiences and through our interaction with others. They don't happen by magic, or simply through information and knowledge acquisition.

We know that information is important, but we also know now that it is better kept in libraries (increasingly in virtual libraries) than in heads. Most of the information and knowledge we need to work with is short-lived and likely to be either of no use or simply wrong by the time we need it. In today's rapidly changing world it is better to access information and knowledge when we need it, just-in-time, rather than try to store it in our heads.

We are living in a world where access trumps knowledge every time. Those who know how to search, find and make the connections will succeed. Those who rely on static knowledge and skills alone will fail.

In an information-rich and 'always on' world, Plato's model of teaching and learning is no longer valid. We are moving to a world where the power of experience and conversation is far more effective than knowledge and skills as drivers of performance.



We are moving to the world of the sons of Socrates, where dialogue and guidance are key competencies. It is a world where the capability to find information and turn it into knowledge at the point-of-need provides the key competitive advantage, where knowing the right people to ask the right questions of is more likely to lead to success than any amount of internally-held knowledge and skill.

Ours is a 'world of others'. Experiential learning and social media are the base metals on which we need to build. We underestimate the power of these two at our peril.



Christophe Deschamps

Economic intelligence, personal organization and web 2.0 consultant.

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“Organizations learn only through individuals who learn”

Peter Senge

From the multiple researches he has done on knowledge workers, Peter Drucker has inferred that they are, for sure, linked to the organization that hires them, but that their main longing is first that of sector of knowledge in which they have specialized. Logically, a job that does not enable them to be on top, to make progress is therefore considered restrictive and not very attractive. The issue is that, because of insecurity, what is in play here is much more than the traditional contract of “work for income”: a knowledge worker will, from now on, accept to work in exchange of guarantees for the future. Since the worker is aware that he will not spend his whole career in one and the same company, he expects from those who hire him or her that they do their best to make his or her stay there beneficial and help him or her increase his or her skills and opportunity to be hired again.

Lifelong training is absolutely significant in this case, and companies - which are already confronted to the loss of abilities due to baby-boomers' retirement- must more than ever take this into account if they want to keep their talents within the company. But the good news for them is that the tools that will enable the implementation of this long learning are now available. Blogs, wikis, company social networks, and bearing in mind micro-blogging, can become the vectors of a social learning which were proved, according to the work of a certain Richard J. Light, to be much more efficient than the classic individual learning. Less formalistic than knowledge bases, these tools which convey conversation within organizations enable us to understand formal knowledge and also the informal context that drives them, and give them all their meaning. When you know that American employees estimate that only 25% of the knowledge used at work come from their initial education and that the rest has been learnt on the job, it is easier to understand the importance that these new tools may have in the future (survey by Capital Works – 2000). Indeed, these tools generate spaces in which situations of “legitimate peripheral participation” naturally “install”, and whose importance for the acquisition of new skills has been shown by Etienne Wenger.

The only thing that is left is to hope that organizations will not start to use them right and left, but rather in a thoughtful and volunteer way, which will be the only guarantee for their relevance and efficiency.



Julien Pouget

Independent management consultant based in France. Generation Y expert.

<http://lagenerationy.com/>

Social learning can be considered a way of learning that is based on collaborative practices and internet technologies associated with them (wikis, bookmarking, blogs, etc.).

Constantly evolving with technology, this way of learning is naturally “nimble”. It enables both individuals and organizations to learn more efficiently in quickly changing contexts.

Moreover, the emergence of social learning echoes a real desire of many employees. One of these is the quest for meaning and the desire to have more influence in one's profession. Empowerment occurs when a worker manages his or her ability to be employed and his or her professional future. It is interesting to underline that this point of view is also shared by management when placing the employee in the heart of a continuing education system.

Though, prior to gaining acceptance in companies as a credible way of learning, social learning will have to overcome several obstacles:

The traditional concept of information, which views the person who knows as the one who holds the knowledge to the exception of all the others. This concept, in total contradiction to the collaborative knowledge, is still seen in companies. The typical example concerns managers' access to information and the way they share it. In most companies, the manager still is the one who “knows first” or “is the only one who knows” certain information.

- But this is not only a question of change in attitude. This traditional concept of information underlies many HR policies (i.e.: the basis of salaries) which could potentially be questioned by the implementation of social learning.

Reluctance to use new technologies or the internet. This brake is generally underestimated by web 2.0 users, since they could hardly imagine that any economic decision-makers could have a negative image of the internet. Still, many managers would rather limit the internet's presence in the company in the name of productivity.

- Confidentiality issues. On this point the wealth of “social” learning and the bridges it builds run up against the legitimate worries of companies that wish to protect their competitive advantage.

However, social learning has a major ally in getting inside companies: the arrival of “digital natives” in the corporate world. This phenomenon is likely to modify the situation for the following reasons:

- “Digital natives” more easily promote the notion of sharing and broadcasting of information: youngsters confront the traditional creed “I think, therefore I am” to “I share, therefore I am” that underlines the ability to transmit and the reputation that arises from it.

Because they have faced the constant evolutions of technologies and standards since they were born, they are generally less reluctant to adopt technology.

- Finally - and this is probably the most conclusive element – the new generation thinks, works and interacts spontaneously on a more collaborative way. Therefore, social learning is their natural way of learning; consequently, they will be the apostles of social learning.

Since this generation will stand for nearly half of working people in 6 years, the question of social learning is now being asked with a stronger intensity. The matter is no longer whether you are pro or con; but to know whether a company that wants to be competitive can avoid it.



Lilian Mahoukou

Passionate about social media and their impact on organizations, he worked on various projects oriented "social web" (marketing, community management, economic intelligence).

<http://www.lilianmahoukou.net>

As I've been involved in twitter chats

I quickly realized that social media could bring more value to active learners; those willing to share, collaborate and express their opinions on specific topics. The Internet enables us to learn better and faster, with people throughout the world.

About #lrnchat

Learn Chat or [#lrnchat](#) (which is still running), founded by Marcia Conner ([@MarciaMarcia](#)), was my first experience. Learning specialists and interested people focus on a few questions on a theme they discuss every Thursday. All this is via Twitter, with a known hashtag (#lrnchat), that everyone adds to their tweets.

It's the perfect blueprint of what social learning is :

- a clear topic and ongoing conversations
- no teacher but a community leader (usually leading from the back)
- self-selected and motivated learners
- diverse profiles for opening perspectives
- a few champions to promote the sense of community
- social tools to communicate, share and collaborate
- knowledge flowing within the community

Forget about the "social" word

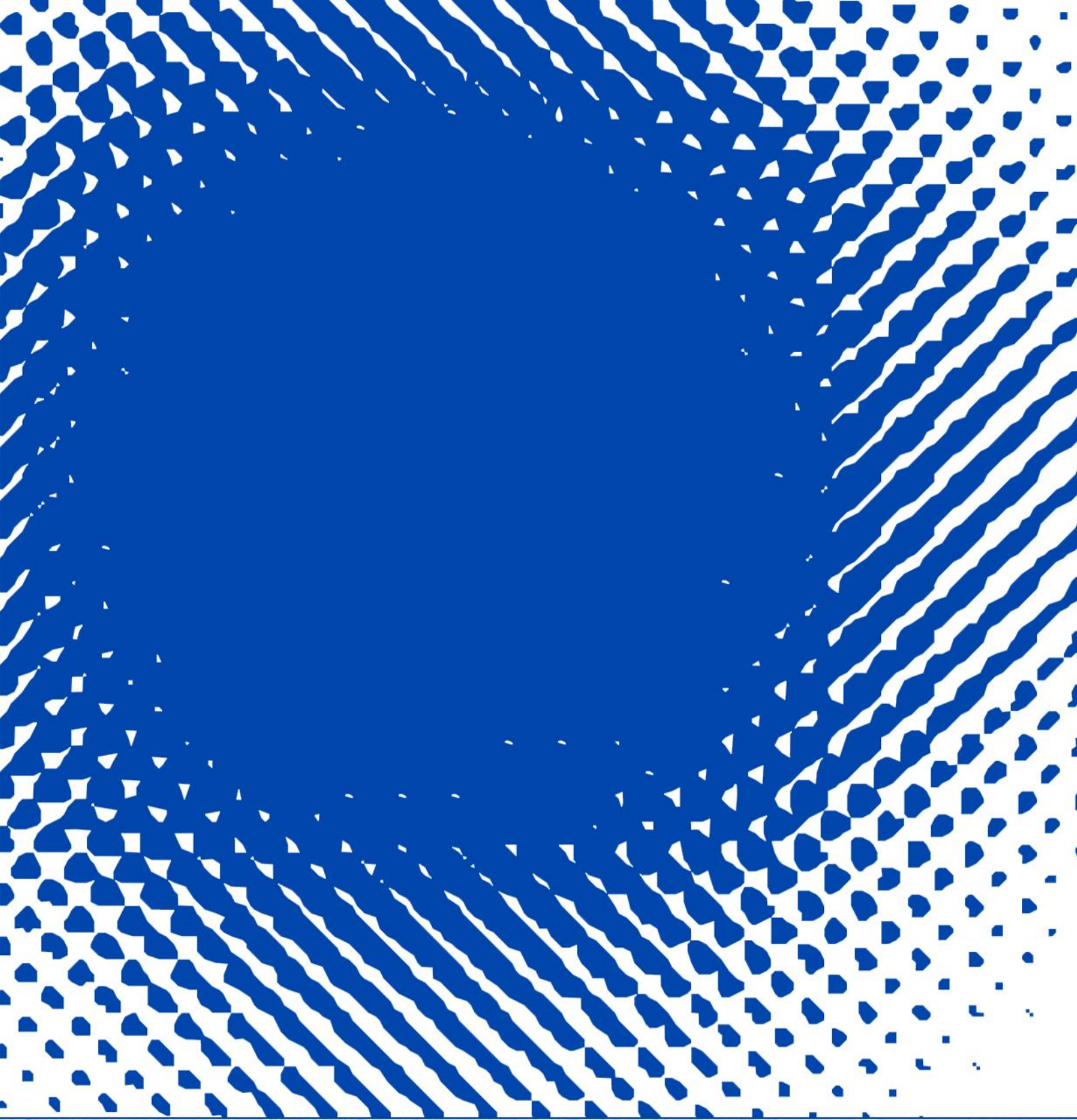
If you follow all the conversations in the blogosphere, it's all about "social" and not "2.0" anymore.

Surely we have to give a name to the current shift happening in the learning sphere. The word "social" means more people-generated content, less control and less hierarchy; which is fundamentally different from current training modalities.

It's a huge challenge for trainers who need to first understand the stakes and start listening to the conversations around social learning.

It's always tempting to jump on the bandwagon. There's a risk of getting focused on tools instead of the objectives.

Social learning, or whatever you want to call it, is far from being in fashion. It is an emerging trend that will transform organizational learning.



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