

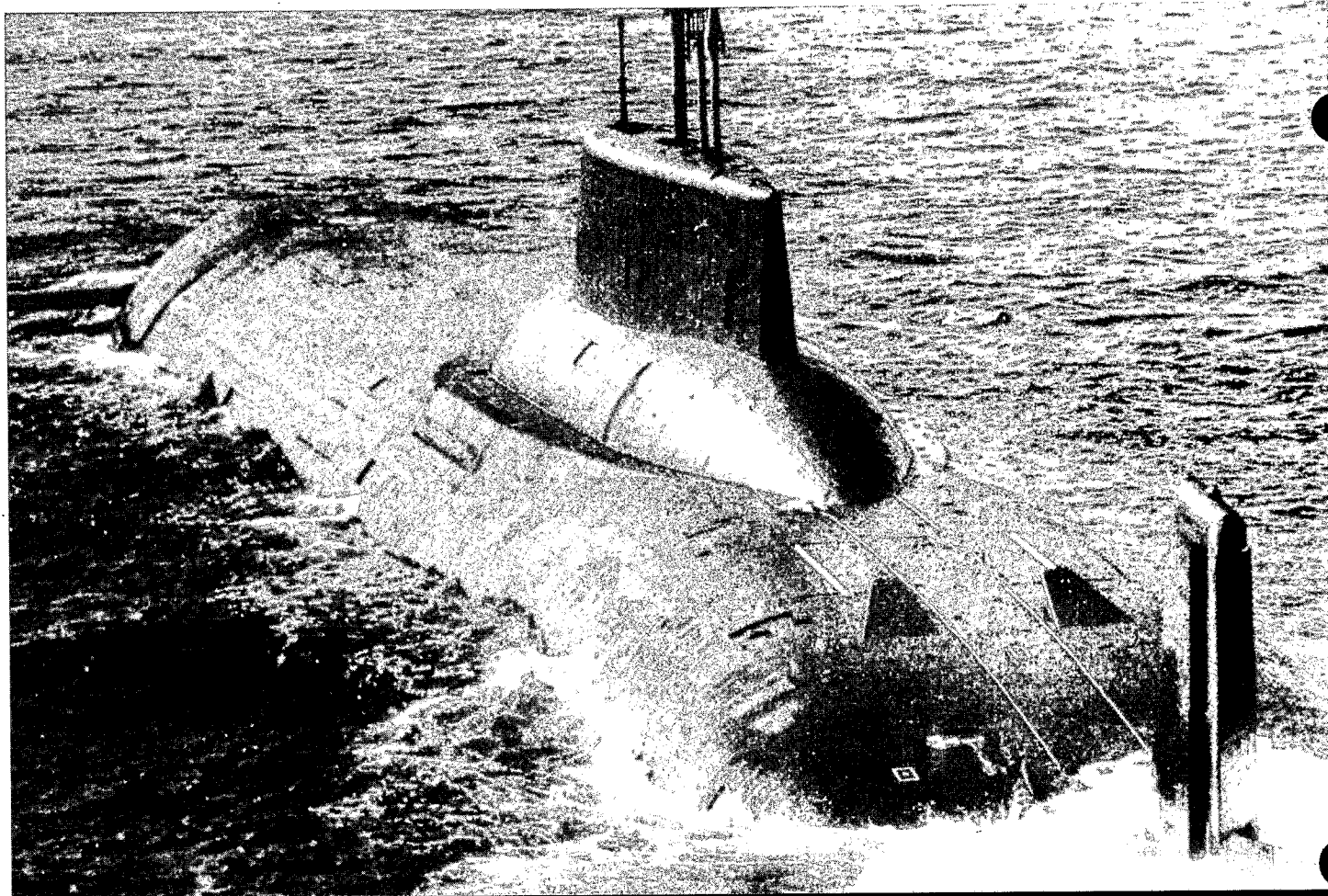
EDGES

NEW PLANETARY PATTERNS

Research Soundings

Can we bend the trends of history or are we at their mercy?

Does an understanding of the deeper trends drive us to action or to despair?



Plumblining the '90s

BRIAN STANFIELD

What is really going on in the world today? What are the main trends emerging that are shaping the future and changing the familiar structures of society? In our everyday lives what are "indicators of social change"—things that point to something different happening in our world?

You have passed a dirty yellow garbage truck a thousand times; then, suddenly, one day, the truck is not yellow: it's shiny green, and painted on the side is "Metro Waste Resources Management." There's an indicator of social change. When you see it, you are startled, confused, or delighted, depending on your perspective. When you come upon a whole bunch of these indicators of something new happening in particular domains of society, you may be able to name a trend. And if you do this

IF THE WORLD HAS NOT APPROACHED ITS END, IT HAS

process on a systematic basis, using a sound methodology, a comprehensive screen of societal domains, and a good sampling of the population and the field, you have a social research process.

Different images characterize this social research process. Some liken it to taking a series of soundings on society using a methodological plumb line (that line with a ball of lead on the end that seamen swing when nearing land to determine the depth of water under the keel). There certainly needs to be depth in the data. Others have likened the process to the blips on a radar screen, or pings on sonar, that indicate the direction, size and relevance of something out front. Others again compare the trends to smoke signals sent from the future to warn society of what is coming.

REACHED A MAJOR WATERSHED IN HISTORY, EQUAL IN

Processing the data from such a project is like trying to drink from a fire hydrant. The flow of data has to be stepped down, sorted, named and written up in some way so you can see what's there.

The following paragraphs are sample pull-togethers of research data collected on 9 x 5 inch cards over the past nine months in answer to the question, "What are indicators of social change or a key trend, going on today?" This question was sent out by e-mail, popped onto bulletin boards and online conferences, asked at dinner parties, and workshopped at several meetings of ICA Canada members. Over a thousand pieces of data were collected, put on a database, written up and distributed to participants.

This marks the infancy of a social research process, initiated by the Board of

ICA Canada. We are now expanding the process to a wider audience for a more comprehensive data sampling. Here are three sample soundings taken in the initial phase.

SAMPLE SOUNDING #1:

The Changing World of Work

As globalization strides across national economies like a colossus, jobs migrate to countries where labour is most cost-effective (cheap); and workers easily become pawns. Companies are streamlining, downsizing, reengineering and right-sizing for global competition, which means increasing profits through decreasing employment, all at the employees' expense. Massive layoffs, downsizing, and cutbacks imply that human resources are expendable. We are in the era of the throwaway job and the throwaway worker. Middle management has been given the axe time after time, which has resulted in a tragic loss of needed wisdom. Downsized firms are now beginning to experience the results.

The key insight here is that the "job" or "secure position" in the firm as we have known them is disappearing, and giving way to the concept of employability. Work is no longer a synonym for "job." Work for many people consists of a multiplicity of short-term projects, or contract after contract with firms who are outsourcing their work orders. Natural smarts and the right attitude may be more important to employability than a postgraduate education. In addition, more and more people are taking their courage in their hands and starting their own businesses.

Where jobs are plentiful, as with programmers and software designers, highly skilled people readily find work wherever they want it, but they may have to work up to 80 hours a week; in these situations there is a high degree of burnout. At the same time technology is allowing more and more people to work at home on their small business or work projects—a return to cottage industries. Work at home can be just as stressful as work away.

Work is becoming increasingly a stress factory: you are stressed if you have work (if you have a job, you are ex-

pected to over-perform) and doubly stressed if you don't. The future of work seems to lie in multi-skilling and multi-tasking and people have to learn to keep many plates spinning at once. The faithful repetition of the same task from 9 to 5 is giving way to the human being as whirling dervish.

In their concern to extract maximum value from workers, some corporations are investing in their staff as the new "wealth of nations" by lavishing time, training and resources on them to stir their creativity toward new products. Other companies are creating ownership patterns for all stakeholders in a business. And far out on the edge some are starting to build communities in the workplace: for example, "communities of practice"—groups of people within an organization informally bound to each other and learning from each other, or, the work of Scott Peck's group in turning organizations into communities.

SAMPLE SOUNDING #2:

The Tyranny of the Financial Sector

The globalization of the economy, the increase in free trade zones, and the internationalization of exchange mechanisms seem to be key factors affecting the distribution of wealth as global corporations replace nation states. Hand in hand with globalization goes the increasing concentration of wealth and power, manifest in large financial conglomerates and global corporations. Nothing new in this. What is new is the logarithmic increase in these multinationals. Just over a decade ago, the United Nations calculated there were some 7,000 transnational corporations in the world. Now there are 40,000 with over a quarter of a million affiliates. Of the top 100 "economies" on this planet, 50 are not productive nations, but individual transnational corporations. Over 70 per cent of global trade in goods and services is controlled by just 500 of these corporations. In turn, 350 of them control over half of the direct foreign investment around the world.

The upshot is that wealth is being distributed unevenly. The economy of the 90s rewards capital more than labour. As profit is increasingly priva-

tized, costs are socialized and passed on to the taxpayer. We have a runaway economy.

The tyranny of the financial sector becomes more apparent every day; resources in the financial sector outweigh the production sector by 70:1. A rise in the stock market no longer indicates a rise in employment. While banks make huge profits, North American consumers have racked up half a trillion dollars in credit-card debt. At the same time the international banking system sometimes seems like a house of cards on the verge of collapse—witness the Barclays' Bank debacle. World financial markets are susceptible to chronic manipulation. More money can be made from trading in money than from investing in technological and social innovation. As trillions of dollars hurtle round the world in nanoseconds, the economy becomes psychotic, more and more detached from the real world. The global economy is still in its Wild West stage.

As high interest rates increase public debt, leveraged buyouts destroy good companies. The preoccupation with the bottom line and the focus on investors puts a low value on human resources and labour. Hence the throwaway job and the throwaway worker, and the increasing economic insecurity of the middle class. In the United States, income increases over the last ten years have all gone to the rich. While some companies have benefited from less hierarchy, the quality fad and team operations, increasingly the only responsibility acknowledged by big business is to the shareholder. The public is looking to corporations to take responsibility for the human resources they so blithely lay off.

As wealth multiplies in the world of global corporations, governments are urged to become fiscally responsible so as to create a positive environment for business. Urged to balance out past deficits, Ontario and Alberta have made massive budget cuts to municipalities, just as the Federal government has cut its transfer payments to the provinces. The government is urged to privatize public assets, such as Ontario Hydro. University students and parents are disturbed about the rising cost of schools and education. There is a sense of a rapidly growing underclass. As more and more people show up on picket lines or on the street, fi-

nanciers and "symbolic analysts" live in fortified enclaves, isolated from the consequences of their actions.

SAMPLE SOUNDING #3:

The Shift from Education to Life-Long Learning

The first major change in education is the shift from school-bound, child-bound, time-bound education to life-long learning. One result is that the "three phases of life" approach—school, work, retirement/leisure—is obsolete. As we move into a learning rather than an education mode, learning of every kind—practical, professional, civic and spiritual—will enhance every aspect of living, including early childhood and prenatal stimulation of faculties.

Work, learning and living can now all be carried on in our homes. There is a substantial increase in home schooling and other alternatives for children, and in self-development courses, Internet cruising, writers' groups, and independent research by adults. The monopoly of schools and colleges over learning is being broken. The "shadow education" system of business and industry already enrolls as many students and has as big a budget as all of higher education. Companies for some time have been taking on a university role, though with a different context. The Bank of Montreal's Institute for Learning is at one end of the scale and McDonald's "Hamburger University" is on the other.

Learning is no longer confined to a school for one portion of one's life. Partnerships between schools and business are becoming more common and the centuries-long dominance of the curriculum by academics paid to do research is being replaced by applied research likely to generate more immediate profit. The challenges of living in a world of permanent future shock are becoming the real-life curriculum. At the same time, the isolated competitive learner is becoming overshadowed by collaborative mutual learning as in problem-solving task forces. A great gap in past education is being corrected—that "no one ever taught us how to learn and how we learn." ♦

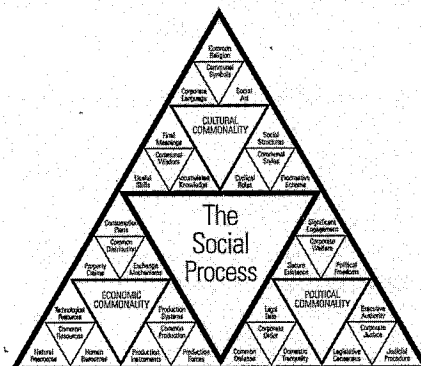
Note: A full printout of the 21 trends, entitled 21 Smoke Signals for the 90s is available from ICA Canada at \$10 a copy.

Social Research for Everyone

Instead of a market driven trends analysis of economic factors, we need a comprehensive picture of the future that speaks to every person.

In the late '60s and early '70s, ICA mounted a major research effort to discern the major trends in society and to map out appropriate responses. The research process involved ICA staff around the world in a massive literature review of 2000 books covering all aspects of the workings of society. They used this data to create a triangular model of the Social Process down to six levels. With this tool in hand, 1000 people spent July of 1971 using the screen to develop a practical vision, obstacles, proposals and tactics for bringing off major social change. Out of this research process came the ToP facilitated planning methods and ICA's philosophy and practice of sociological change. This research set out the mission and philosophy of the organization for the next quarter century. Now it is time for this kind of social research again.

What continues to give form to the data as social research (as distinct from any one person's opinions about life in general) is the full-blooded enumeration and systematization of social processes found in the social process triangles—economic, political and cultural. The categories work like glasses or lights to illuminate different aspects of society rather than to categorize. Each of these three main processes is further split up or triangulated into component parts: For the economic, it is resources, production and distribution; for the political, it is order, justice and welfare; for the cultural it is wisdom, style and symbol. These triangles and their further sub-parts provide a framework to systematically organize collected data and insights into a database.



The research project is coordinated by a small group of ICA Canada Board, staff, and members who meet monthly to plan the next steps. The group is looking at three main possibilities for expanding the scope, reach and depth of the research within Canada and around the world.

1. A series of one-day social research events across Canada, which would take a series of soundings on what is emerging in Canadian society.

2. A home page on the World Wide Web with a participatory set of questions. Users would be invited to answer the questions, then click on a box to see how their answers fit into the database. In this way, contributors not only participate in the social research, but experience the values and methodology that ICA stands for.

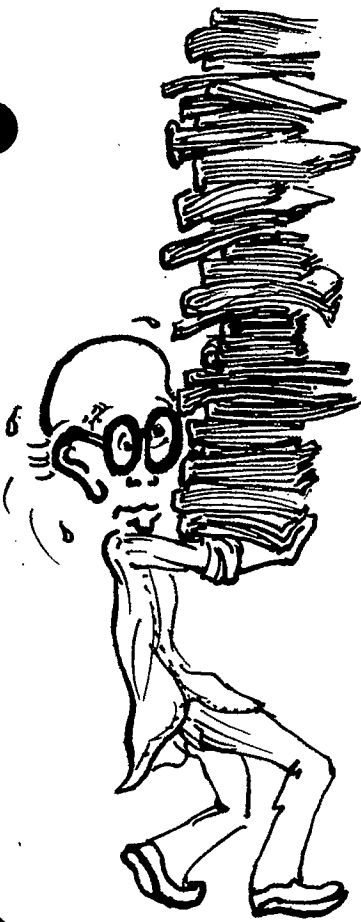
3. Book reviews of scores of books for key insights on trends and indicators of social change. Wide-reaching invitations would be extended to select, screen and send in reports on books, and the information added to the database. In addition to working with the triangles, reviewers will be asked a series of common questions.

Much of the trend analysis happening in the '90s is market-oriented. (e.g. Popcorn-Marigold, or John Naisbitt) The usual market-oriented approach is to "braille" the culture to see which way humans are trending, determine the relationship to needs and wants, and then get your company to hop on the trend and bleed it for profit.

But there are other reasons for being alert to trends. In the first place, a trend analysis developed from wide-reaching public participation can be invaluable for guiding policy; it can provide direction to governments, especially for social governance. In the second place, such analysis can help integrate business and social prosperity, so that economics is viewed as a servant of society rather than the dominator. Trends analysis can also identify the real breakthroughs needed in society. Further, it can identify early warning signs of change, and the repercussions of that change, which can guide an organization's mission and philosophy. ♦

Mining the ICA Global Archives

There's gold in those files...50,000 person years of action research on some of the world's most urgent problems. But how can you separate the bullion from the dross?



Deciding to tackle a global organization's archives and bring order to them is a daunting task. The core of ICA's archives were located in the 1000 drawers of 200 file cabinets in a basement in Chicago, Illinois, and most of them were not in good shape. For one thing, over 40 years, ICA had operated in several hundred locations in dozens of countries of the globe, using a bewildering array of methods, programs, and resources. There were lecture transcripts, there were course manuals, there were planning documents, including 5000 community forum documents and several hundred community development documents put together by local people facilitated by ICA staff. In addition there were songbooks, videos, films, decor, tapes, rituals, posters, charts, drawings, books, study papers, brochures, correspondence, deeds, letters, pictures and thousands of reports of meetings, conferences, and assemblies.

The task of whittling them down was taken on by a small taskforce of volunteers with the assistance of a professional archivist who worked with the staff to develop a catalog code system for organiz-

ing the files. For the database, the ICA team chose Minaret, which is used by the National Library of Congress and many universities. The catalogue code system is now shared with all ICA offices in order that records may be networked and made globally accessible. The 200 file cabinets of yore have now been whittled down to 144 file drawers of archives, which are located in the Global Archives Resource Centre in ICA Chicago.

The team working on the archives has a very wide-ranging vision of what it is about, viz.:

- Initiating a retrieval and exchange of the earth's best wisdom on how to develop human potential
- Interchanging products among a wide range of clients and associates
- Introducing exercises, rituals, and processes that integrate spirituality with secularity
- Providing services required to equip and train those engaged in building the whole earth society.

The Global Archives Resource Centre is located at 4750 N. Sheridan Ave, Chicago, Illinois, 60640. The files deal primarily with the evolving wisdom, lifestyle and spirit prowess of individuals and groups and include materials that will enable humankind to live life more creatively and abundantly. Anyone is welcome to come and browse or look for specific subjects or items. Decor, pictures, charts and posters line the walls. Bookshelves contain books inscribed by ICA's original mentor/founder, Joseph Mathews. Lodging is available in the building for those who wish to do extended research.

Although not allowed to leave the archive area, documents and program records are available for a copying fee.

At present, a team is working on assembling material for a CD-ROM product which will feature over 1000 of ICA's most illuminating documents. The CD will sell for US\$150, and will be available towards the end of this year.

In addition to the Global Archive Resource Centre, there are archival records extant in 31 places round the globe in the following countries: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Egypt, Germany, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Taiwan, UK, USA, Venezuela, Zambia.

A Global Advisory Board is exploring options relative to the next phase of the work related to product development. The archives have proved to be a gold mine, not only of memories, but of invaluable wisdom, and all kinds of tools, waiting to be transposed to fit current needs. This latter work is now in progress; the results are to be seen in the increasing number of new courses, publications, booklets and methods emerging from ICA centres all over the world.

A booklet, *The Global Archives of the Institute of Cultural Affairs*, is available at ICA offices. It is an anthology of ICA's symbols, icons, stories and methods. It sells for \$25.00

The CD mentioned above will be available from the Global Resource Centre, 4750 N. Sheridan Rd, Chicago, IL, 60640, USA. Telephone: (312) 769-6363.; fax: (312) 769-1144; e-mail: icaarchives@igc.apc.org ♦

Creating Eventfulness

WAYNE NELSON

Effective facilitation is interesting, engaging and exciting. Ineffective facilitation is deadening and boring. When participants are bored, they become restless and often retreat into passivity. The *content* of the discussion is always the most important thing, and ensuring high quality content is a facilitator's first responsibility. In addition, an effective facilitator uses a variety of methods and techniques to nurture active participation and involvement in the group and hold boredom at bay.

Here are six tips on keeping the group engaged.

Balance Types of Activities

Variety is the spice of life. Shift activities to keep the overall momentum going. Use a variety of activities to keep the group interested and engaged—discussions, presentations, workshops, individual reflection, pair exercises, small group work, and whole group plenary discussions. Using a variety of techniques enables people with different learning styles and comfort levels to participate.

Keep People Moving

You want to catalyse real creativity in your participants' responses, so you have to find ways to stimulate fresh attention and imagination. Nothing is so deadening as sitting in the same seat for hours on end. New faces and new perspectives keep people interested and enhance the dialogue. What can be done? Time your activities so people have natural opportunities to move. Schedule breaks where appropriate, and do light stretching and breathing exercises to keep the body alert and lighten the mood.

Then, if you can use more than one room or your space is large enough, hold different activities in separate spaces to get people moving around and mixing with others. When participants work with as many people as possible, creative thinking is encouraged.

Use Humour

Laughter is good for the soul, and, apparently, it keeps us healthy. Participation

can be a pleasurable experience. Groups that can laugh at themselves have a healthy perspective. While you can use prepared jokes and one-liners sparingly, the best humour wells up in the facilitator and the group out of the process itself. The intentional use of humour has been known to backfire, so make sure you know the group and the topic well enough to use humour appropriately. Cynical, belittling and misplaced humour is clearly out of place. Be sensitive to the mood—sometimes humour is needed and other times a more serious tone honours an intense discussion.

Be as Visual as Possible

People can hold visual images much more easily than they can the details of a complex discussion. Such images access different parts of the brain and keep the mind active. Whenever possible, use graphs, pictures, charts and diagrams. A clear display of results helps people integrate new ideas and decisions and take action. Use graphics to display the agenda, the schedule, the process, ground rules and values throughout the session. If your handwriting is not easily readable, ask someone else to do the writing.

Celebrate the Group's Work

We thrive on acknowledgment and affirmation. Affirming people's contribution is a sure way to encourage involvement. Use every opportunity possible to affirm positive participation. Receive and acknowledge individual ideas as they are given. When a small group makes a report, it is quite appropriate to encourage applause. Find appropriate ways for groups to celebrate achievements. At the end of a session, enable the group to reflect on its progress and celebrate its work.

Make Each Event Special

People tend to invest their time and energy in situations that they believe are worthwhile. Try to make each event worthy of their effort. Inauthenticity is transparent, so create drama and excitement with honesty. Trying to whoop up a contradictions analysis (which can be

quite painful) may not go over very well. But, in general, much life can come out of an event, when much life is put into it. Build anticipation for an event from the first invitation. Special snacks or meals are ways of caring for people. Some groups use prizes and games very effectively when they contribute to a desired mood. Words of encouragement from symbolic leaders can be helpful, especially one who is genuinely concerned or involved.

Some facilitators who have a charismatic or dramatic bent have no trouble in creating eventfulness. But for those of us who distrust charisma or who are not good at drama, these six tactics offer more structural ways to help a group stay involved and engaged throughout the facilitated process. ♦

1996 Annual Facilitators Conference

The ICA Canada 1996 Annual Facilitators Conference will be held on October 26-27 in Toronto.

Facilitation is emerging as a discipline. Join with other Technology of Participation ToP™ facilitators to share experiences and learnings as well as exploring new edges in facilitation. Engage in meaningful interchange and become part of this exciting learning network.

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for information.

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For ICA's catalogue of courses, ask for our 1996-97 Facilitation Skills Training Catalogue, or browse our internet home page.

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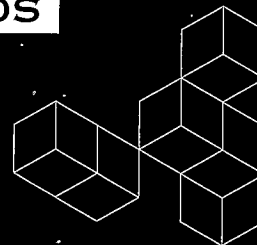
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For ICA members

1996 Annual Facilitators' Conference

The second annual ICA Facilitators' Conference on October 26-27 will be a great opportunity for members to get to know ICA better, to brush up on their facilitation skills, to share experiences and learnings and to engage in meaningful interchange with their colleagues.

A list-server network was launched during the 1995 conference. We asked on-line participants about topics for this year's event. From answers received, four main areas of interest are emerging:

The impact of ToP™

We want to discover how best to document the impact that the Technology of Participation is having on communities, organizations and society.

Approaches and applications that work
This includes sharing methods and case studies on specific applications and practical solutions to facilitation problems.

Quantifying the Technology of Participation ToP™

How much more effective is it to use the Technology of Participation ToP™ than top-down, hierarchical decision making? This is an important question for people who are trying to decide about an investment of time and money learning participatory methods. The only ones who can really give an answer to the question are ICA methods practitioners.

How long did it take you to develop a major program? How long does it take you now when you use ToP™?

How many hours per week did you spend leading meetings that were unproductive? How many hours do you spend now?

What percentage of your time did you devote to "putting out staff brush fires?"

Electronic Discussion Group

An electronic mail discussion group has been operating for several months for exchange of news, ideas, and information. Members of ICA Canada can join by contacting Niky Melichar at McMaster University, who will forward the procedures for registration and participation.

Contact Niky by:
E-mail: melich@mhs.mcmaster.ca

Social Research Project

The Social Research Project (see page 3 for details) is guided by an open group of staff

Professional development and ongoing support for ToP facilitators

This includes marketing, positioning, presenting facilitation and ToP methods and telling the story, as well as professional development, facilitator competencies and ongoing support and dialogue among facilitators

The spirit or soul of the facilitator

This covers the complex of values underlying the methods, the interior preparation needed to facilitate a group, to elicit the deep wisdom of a group, stylistic qualities and guidelines, and how to *hear* beyond the obvious.

The planning for the conference is not set in stone. We need your input on the intent and structure of the '96 conference. Please call, write or e-mail. ♦

What percentage do you devote now, since you've started getting staff insights up front?

What projects have you launched that you directly attribute to your use of ICA methods?

Quantifying quality is difficult at best. Quantifying gains in human potential is an enormous challenge. But those of us who have already realized exponential gains must jump hoops to attract top-down fencesitters away from their old habits. Society needs it and their employees deserve it.

Whenever you have a breakthrough or an insight in how to document or quantify ToP™ or other ICA methods, drop a line to ICA, by mail, e-mail or phone. ♦

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and members. Call for autumn meetings dates if you would like to join. ♦

EDGES

NEW PLANETARY PATTERN

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Statement of Purpose The mission of *Edges* is to help people facilitate a culture of participation.

A wave of change sweeping through societies has shaken the foundations of civilization. Every facet of existence is being challenged to evolve into new planetary patterns of knowing, doing and being. The Institute of Cultural Affairs weaves new relations between individuals, organizations and communities. At the core of ICA's work is spirit, sustained by the myths and techniques of many cultures, helping to shape social transformation. ICA's research, education, organizational change, and international linking programs work together to elicit new planetary patterns.

The opinions in *Edges* articles do not necessarily represent the policies or views of ICA Canada.

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