

# Editor's Note (1.4)

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1 Emergent Publications

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The merger of America OnLine and Time Warner (announced as this journal went to press) suggests that complexity-oriented thinking has a bright future in managerial circles. The manifold interrelationships, networks, layers, and subtleties that pervade this linkage of old and new media are ripe for complexity-oriented perspectives. Even the popular press has echoed this theme in its reaction to the news. These perspectives are probed in the six articles in this issue. Taken together, they provide a window on the conjunctions of research and practice awaiting us in the century ahead.

Eric Dent's "Complexity Science: a Worldview Shift" differentiates two worldviews, the emerging and the traditional, and suggests a change in mental models to enhance the possibility of organizational success. Dent argues that executives typically use traditional worldview assumptions in situations where those assumptions are not appropriate, resulting in ineffectiveness. He then illustrates how strategic planning, problem solving, and performance appraisal are transformed when a manager makes emerging rather than traditional worldview assumptions.

In "Piggy and the Eternal City: Science Fiction as Testing Ground for New Management Theory," John Keane introduces a new approach to metaphorically analyzing theories of organizational management. He examines two theories, order-through-fluctuations and autopoiesis, and by revealing discontinuities and unpredictable tangents in the theory's application within metaphorical environments, succeeds in redefining the theories at a conceptual level.

Adam Koch's "Strategic Management System Enhancement and Strong Influence Strings" introduces a new analytical tool, strong influence strings. Using this tool, Koch provides an operational definition of strategic management enhancement and seeks to answer: What is the logic of strategic management system enhancement? and What is (are) the correct sequence(s) of steps in strategic management enhancement?

In "Organizational Extinction and Complex Systems," Russ Marion and Josh Bacon examine how extinctions occur among formal social systems. They attempt to understand the dynamics of extinction as a function of complex interaction among multiple organizational actors, and argue that it is the breakdown of such networks that is ultimately responsible for organizational extinction. Marion and Bacon expand on the thought that "Fitness is not the result of a few, simple, localized causes, and neither is decline."

Tom Rand presents an argument for alignment in his "Why Businesses Fail: an Organizational Perspective." He suggests that businesses fail because neither management nor employees have effective control. Aligning elements in the organizational structure will provide apertures through which management and employees alike can see conditions as they change and reallocate resources effectively. Rand argues that when management has acquired the requisite visibility (the capability to see and to understand what is going on), it will have attained the capability to make the future.

Finally, Hiroshi Tasaka asks us: What is "complexity knowing"? In this thought-provoking piece, Tasaka suggests that complexity is a new paradigm of knowing or, rather, a new way of conceptualizing knowledge. Accordingly, what complexity will bring about is nothing less than a shift from old ways of thinking to new ways of thinking in all domains of knowledge. Tasaka cites seven key ideas as the foundation for this shift:

1. As something becomes more complex, it acquires new properties.
2. The spontaneous behavior of individuals produces the norm for the aggregate.
3. Coherence stimulates self-organization.
4. Fluctuations at the micro level can sway macroscopic trends.
5. The whole and its parts co-evolve.
6. The process of evolution also evolves.
7. The best way to predict the future is to invent it.

With these six articles, Emergence has reached a new milestone: the conclusion of Volume 1. The year 2000 and Volume 2 will

see a continued exploration of how complexity ideas continue to evolve and what that might mean for managers and researchers of management.

To our readers and authors, thank you, it has been an exciting year!