

Club of Amsterdam

the future of Business Meetings

October 2006



Although business meetings come in many sizes and have a range of measurable parameters distinguishing them from one another, they share the common objective of **accelerating and enhancing human communications**. Attempts to improve meeting logistics and the use of networks to reduce the need to physically bring together people who are at a distance reduce meeting overhead and increase participation but, unfortunately, everyone has both positive and negative meeting experiences. In the future, there will be many new processes and technologies to help participants and organizers prepare and manage meetings for superior communications and outcomes.

► **Des Leach**, Research Fellow, Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield
Meetings and their Participants - the Balancing Act between Business and Personal Factors

Work meetings are fundamentally a communication tool with which to accomplish a range of organisational goals. Despite this practical importance, the meeting has been largely overlooked as a topic of inquiry in organisational research. In this talk, I will present recent research findings on (1) the effects of meetings on employee well-being and (2) factors associated with meeting effectiveness. Issues for future research in connection with meeting outcomes (e.g., job strain, performance) and the AMI project will also be discussed.

► **Pierre Wellner**, Senior Scientist, IDIAP Research Institute, Martigny, Switzerland
The Whole Meeting in Half the Time

People often feel that half the time we spend in meetings is wasted, but it's not easy to identify which half. The AMI project is developing and testing recognition and browsing technologies to help us find what parts of a meeting are most important and interesting. This talk will begin with quantitative evidence showing how much time is "wasted" in typical meetings, and then describe several approaches we are investigating to help filter out the most important parts. These techniques can be used to browse previously recorded meetings, and may also improve the efficiency of attending remote meetings and presentations.

► **Wilfried Post**, Researcher, TNO Human Factors
Join Multiple Simultaneous Meetings Without Neglecting Your Personal Priorities

Imagine that you could work alone, wrapping up a report or analyzing the last minute financials of your next investment while also giving many simultaneous meetings your partial attention. What would your working environment look like? How would it help you to meet your most urgent deadlines without permitting you to slip terribly behind on other project responsibilities? During this session we will examine a simulation of just such an environment, discuss fundamental requirements together with ways of performance evaluation, and explore its implications for businesses.

19:00 - 20:00

Welcome by our Moderator ► **John Grüter**, Systems Thinker, ICT Generalist, Technology Afficionado, Change Agent and Principal of Digital Knowledge

Part I:

► **Christine Perey**, AMI technology transfer specialist

Introduction

► **Des Leach**, Research Fellow, Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield

Meetings and their Participants - the Balancing Act between Business and Personal Factors

► **Pierre Wellner**, Senior Scientist, IDIAP Research Institute, Martigny, Switzerland

The Whole Meeting in Half the Time

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20:00 - 20:30

Coffee break with drinks and snacks.

20:30 - 21:15

Part II: Panel followed by an open discussion.



Christine Perey

AMI technology transfer specialist

Christine Perey is an independent consultant and analyst with over 15 years of experience in the field of multimedia communications technologies and their application in business. She provides business development, market development and strategic planning support to a wide variety of clients in the videoconferencing, collaboration and networking industries. She has published over 40 articles in business and technology magazines and authored full length reports on the potential for multimedia technologies in business communications.

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Des Leach

Research Fellow, Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield

Desmond Leach is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield, UK, and a member of the Economic and Social Research Council Centre for Organisation and Innovation. His research interests include job and work design, creativity and innovation, work meetings, and organisational change. He has published articles in journals such as *Ergonomics*, the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, and the *International Journal of Innovation Management*.

www.shef.ac.uk/departments/academic/iwp/staff/desl.html



Pierre Wellner

Senior Scientist, IDIAP Research Institute, Martigny, Switzerland

Dr. Pierre Wellner is a Senior Researcher at the IDIAP Research Institute in Martigny, Switzerland, working in the areas of Multimodal Interaction and browsing of recorded meetings. Prior to joining IDIAP, Pierre worked for AT&T Bell Labs in New Jersey, Xerox PARC in Cambridge UK, and was a co-founder of Spiderphone.com, a web-enhanced telephone conference call service company. His PhD in Computer Science is from the University of Cambridge Computer Laboratory.

www.idiap.ch



Wilfried Post

Researcher, TNO Human Factors

Dr. Wilfried Post is a researcher at TNO Human Factors, the Netherlands, since 1995, where he performs basic as well as applied research on group decision making, team communication and co-operation, and computer supported collaborative work. From 1988 to 1995 he worked as a researcher at the dept. of Social Science Informatics at the University of Amsterdam and participated in projects funded by the European Commission in the field of (medical) knowledge engineering. In 1996 he was awarded a PhD on the thesis entitled "Knowledge Technology in Pre-Hospital Emergency Management".

www.tno.nl/defensie_en_veiligheid/index.xml

John Grüter

Systems Thinker, ICT Generalist, Technology Affectionado, Change Agent and Principal of Digital Knowledge

Member of the Club of Amsterdam Round Table

Digital Technology is changing our lives and work fundamentally. However, we are slow to act upon the opportunity or leverage the true potential. The emerging Digital Society will certainly be different from society as it has been for the last few centuries. Digital Technology has the ability to empower us all or enslave us.

Digital Technology applied to organisations has the ability to change organisations beyond recognition and create new, sustainable value. However, post-industrial organisational structure requires radically different design and implementation paradigms. These new paradigms are based on knowledge sharing and barter, flexible and decentralised infrastructures and contextual fit. John helps organisations to leverage digital technology and help them to transform into knowledge driven, process and services oriented entities.

As it is, most organisations still think in the industrial paradigm, so there is a lot of opportunity.

www.digital-knowledge.com