

Evolutionary Guidance Media: An Overview

Dana Klisanin, Ph.D.

*Correspondence can be directed to this author, as the primary contact.

Abstract

Students of history are taught that the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand sparked the beginning of World War I. Today, we might wonder if the students of tomorrow will be taught that 12 cartoons ignited World War III. The importance and power of media continues to expand exponentially, increasingly asserting itself as a critical factor in our lives. As the world continues to interconnect, the potential exists for media to impact the individual and global psyche in a manner hitherto fore unimagined. Creating a new guiding mythos that promotes psycho-spiritual growth is considered necessary to create a sustainable world. Utilizing evolutionary guidance systems design, evolutionary guidance media (EGM) has been designed both in context and content specifically for the purpose of promoting planetary consciousness. This paper provides a brief overview of EGM for the purpose of generating strategic and evolutionary conversations within the international community.

Background

In the fifty years since the first conference of the International Society for the System Sciences (ISSS), media has morphed into an entity with more power, influence, speed, and agility than Superman himself! Indeed, media is not media anymore; it is a high tech enterprise with a surprise following each and every click of a mouse (as anyone submitting papers to this conference can attest). If we need proof of the power of today's media we need look no further than the twelve cartoons that have instigated demonstrations, protests, boycotts, resignations, arsons, death threats, and murders around the world -- all within months of publication¹. "Complexity, Democracy, & Sustainability" - the theme of this seminal conference - is prophetic where media is concerned. Perhaps nothing has brought more complexity to the lives of human beings than today's new media. And perhaps, nothing offers more promise for promoting a truly participatory democracy and the values/conditions necessary to create a sustainable world.

Decades ago, media studies pioneer, Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) prophesied that media would become a seamless web and ultimately an extension of humanity with the ability to alter the human mind (McLuhan & Fiore, 1966). Through "cyberception" Ascott (1994) suggests that just such an alteration is occurring. Cyberception "involves transpersonal technology, the technology of communicating, sharing, collaboration, the technology which enable us to transform ourselves, transfer our thoughts and transcend the limitations of our bodies" furthermore it is "a matter of high speed feedback, access to massive databases, interaction with a multiplicity of minds, seeing with a thousand eyes, hearing the earth's most silent whispers, reaching into the enormity of space, even to the edge of time" (Ascott, 1994, p. 1).

Cyberception is impressive, but seeing into outer space and under the seas may only serve to facilitate the prevailing value system described as based on expansion, competition, domination, and exploitation (Capra, 1989). As agents of our own evolution, can we consciously create media that promotes a new guiding mythos - a mythos that promotes planetary consciousness? Can we envision cyberception becoming *transception*² - the seeing All-Is-One with a thousand *compassionate* eyes? Couldn't such media create avenues for unprecedented peaceful social action on behalf our planet?

I began to research the application of evolutionary guidance systems to media at Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center under the tutelage of Bela H. Banathy (1919-2003) in 2000³. Banathy inspired many, myself included, with his tremendous vision of transcending existing systems and creating evolutionary guidance systems (EGS). EGS are those that guide the development of human systems such that the systems created are able to encourage the holistic development of both individuals and their systems. An EGS serves as a "magnet that pulls us toward it. It is our guiding star toward which we travel" (Banathy, 2000, p. 345).

In seeking such a guiding ideal, I coined the term evolutionary guidance media (EGM) (Klisanin, 2003) to refer to media designed both in content and context specifically for the purpose of guiding and/or facilitating the societal emergence of transpersonal consciousness - specifically planetary consciousness: "the knowing as well as the feeling of the vital interdependence and essential oneness of humankind, and the conscious adoption of the ethics and the ethos that this entails" (Laszlo, 1997, p. 143).⁴

The design of EGM was achieved through imaging/visioning, data/literature review, integration, use of creative imagination, and data synthesis in the following spaces of evolutionary guidance design architecture: Exploration/Image Creation Space, Design Solution Space, Organized Knowledge Space, Evaluation/Experimentation Space and the Space of the Future System (Banathy, 1996, pp. 329-330). In addition, a system of

interactive dimensions capable of facilitating multidimensional unfolding characteristic of evolution was utilized. Those dimension, proposed by Banathy (1996) are described in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Interactive Dimensions of an Evolutionary Guidance System.

Dimension	Description
Social Action	ensuring social justice and an increase in cooperation, leading to the integration of our societal systems.
Economic	focusing on economic justice and integrated and indigenous development
Moral	strengthening self-realization and social and ecological ethics.
Wellness	nurturing the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being of the individual and society.
Design (Learning and Human Development)	nurturing the full development of individuals and social groups and enabling them to develop a design culture and attain evolutionary competence.
Scientific	manifesting ethical science that serves human and social betterment.
Technological	placing technology under the guidance of sociocultural intelligence and in the service of the nonviolent resolution of conflicts, and the improvement of the quality of life for all.
Aesthetic	pursuing beauty, cultural and spiritual values, the various forms of art, the treasures of humanities, and the enrichment of our inner quality of life.
Political	promoting self-determination, genuine participation in self-governance, continuous action for peace development, global cooperation and integration, and governance for the improvement of human conditions.

These nine dimensions were suggested by Banathy as a starting point for designing EGS, they were not considered to be the only possible dimensions.

In this paper I have focused on describing the results of work within two of the aforementioned design spaces: the Exploration/Image Creation Space and the Organized Knowledge Space. It is important to note that EGS design architecture is not linear but recursive. Thus, the following material was articulated as a result of interaction with all the spaces of design architecture in multi-directional feedback spirals.

Exploration/Image Creation Space

The Exploration/Image Creation Space (EICS) is the design space utilized for an exploration of the intent, articulation of the core values and ideas, and the creation of an ideal image of the evolutionary guidance system being designed. Because a core value in the design of an EGS is the contributions of ideas by stakeholders in the system, throughout the design process I researched the "voices" of others (individuals as well as organizations) calling for a not merely a change in media, but a transformational change - a change indicative of evolutionary stewardship. Examples of some of those hearkening for evolutionary stewardship include: Association for Transformative Media Arts (2005), National Organization for Woman (2005), Our Media Voice: Campaign for Accountability (2005), Barbara Marx Hubbard (1998), Foundation for Conscious Evolution (2005), Duane Elgin (2000; 2002), Ervin Laszlo (1997), and Stephen Simon (2002). Through applying the input of these voices, as well as others, the following core ideas, ideal images, and core values were articulated .

Core ideas of EGM (a) the manner in which media is produced (by whom, where, how) is held to be of central importance; (b) media producers and creators should have access to up to date research/information that will enable them to incorporate potentially conscious-raising data and transpersonal ethics into their organizations and/or media products: (c) all of the systems' stakeholders should have access to input regarding the media creations.

Ideal image of EGM is that of a framework designed for use by media companies for the creation of media that seeks to advance an evolutionary guidance, and transpersonal ethic within the structure of their companies, organizations, and creative products. EGM is enlightened by the utilization of resources and information in each of the nine dimensions of an evolutionary guidance system (EGS) that expresses the goal of advancing the evolution of humanity in a transpersonal direction. It is not limited by resources exclusive to the stated nine dimensions, but rather continually seeks to include new dimensions, as interested stakeholders in the EGS make them apparent.

Core values include the promotion of values that support conscious evolution, planetary consciousness, transpersonal experiences, and superconscious learning. These include but are not limited to being-values,⁵ compassion, love, personal and social responsibility, creative altruism,

conflict resolution, gender and racial diversity.

EGM can be defined as (a) media designed both in context (organizational structure) and content (creative product) with the intent of promoting conscious evolution and transpersonal ethic while advancing the evolution of human consciousness in the direction of planetary consciousness, and (b) media awake with the purposeful intent of facilitating the values/qualities/education/ethics necessary to create peaceful planetary co-existence for all beings.

Organized Knowledge Space

The Organized Knowledge Space is set aside for the collection, organization, and synthesis of information and knowledge pertinent to the nine dimensions of an EGS (see Table 1). The nine dimensions are by definition value laden, they infer inclusion, rather than exclusion, thus I have come to refer to working in this space as drawing Markham's circle (Klisanin, 2005), a name derived from Edwin Markham's (1936) well known poem "Outwitted"

He drew a circle that shut me out-
Heretic, a rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

Each of the nine dimensions are envisioned as an arc in Markham's circle. The circumference of the circle expands as information/research/knowledge is collected in any given dimension. Additionally, as more dimensions are added by stakeholders of the system, the circumference will continue to expand. The original research (Klisanin, 2003) examined the implications of data to both the macro level (organizational) and micro level (media product), however the following summary may address either one or the other.

A tremendous amount of research in the areas of *social action* and *economics* is available to be applied to the creation of media that supports Banathy's description of these dimensions (see Table 1). For example, in establishing the macro level of an EGM-oriented organization, Maslow's (1971) outline of the theory-z organization provides direction as well as seeming to be a harbinger of what may well be our "socially-responsible" businesses. The latter are defined by Brown (2001) as businesses that encourage the involvement of both social and environmental ethics with economics. Establishing an organization and creating products that harmonize with the tenets of these dimensions is not only achievable, it is already being accomplished in many fields (Cohen & Greenfield, 1997).

The *moral* and *wellness dimensions* require broad yet specific knowledge bases. In the *moral dimension*, one suggested ethical base is that of the global ethic called for by the Parliament of World's Religions in 1993. Based on "a culture of non-violence and respect for life; a just economic order; a culture of tolerance and life of truthfulness; and a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women" (Laszlo, 1997, p. 65), it offers one useful framework for the moral dimension. The *wellness dimension* seeks to nurture the whole person, thus the integral practices outlined by Murphy (1993) have been suggested as useful for further investigation at both the macro and micro levels.

The *design or learning and human development dimension* is at the heart of EGM. Fluency in design and evolutionary learning are basic necessities for promoting the aims of this dimension. Because creativity is crucial to the design process, the burgeoning field of creativity is suggested as offering an extensive database. Apropos to our topic, creativity may be cultivated by specific types of media, for example, Murphy (1992) cites "writing that recontextualizes ordinary experience" such as "fantasy," and "science fiction" as potentially capable of enhancing creativity (p. 576). "Synaesthetic media" (Waterworth, 1997) is also suggested as another avenue for the radical recontextualization of ordinary experience, i.e., promoting creativity.

The *scientific and technological dimensions* are particularly close, each partnering the other, in an seemingly endless dance. Research in the scientific dimension continues to pave the way toward radical shifts in consciousness. An example of research related to such shifts, Laszlo cites the "*nonmaterial foundations of physical reality . . . the subtle linkages of life . . . and the newly rediscovered powers of the mind*" (1997, p. 99, italics in original). In addition to promoting scientific knowledge, where EGM is concerned, it is equally important to promote a sense of mystery, of wonder, and of awe at all that remains to be explored. An important bridge linking the scientific and technological dimensions is the emergent field of media psychology, a field dealing with the "study of how the mind and emotions respond to a multiplicity of sensory stimuli" as well as the "...outcome of the human-machine interaction" (Luskin, 1996). The amount of data accruing in this field is truly remarkable, data with important implications for the future development and refinement of EGM. In several dimensions (social action, wellness, political) research revealed the importance of interpersonal contact. For example, research by Finger (1994) suggested that the most significant factor in predicting environmental behaviors are experiences in and with the environment. While additional research by Carr and Sarvela (1991) iterated the importance of "face-to-face contact strategies as well as grass roots participation" for success with wellness campaigns, and finally, researchers Cvetkovich and Earl (1994) suggested that social action (political) can be facilitated through encouraging public discourse - discourse designed to facilitate the emergence of social trust. Thus, technology may best serve people when it serves to connect them to each other. Certainly the interactive nature of media technology has the potential of establishing rapport between people and perhaps between humans-beings and the natural world.

The *aesthetic dimension* is concerned with "the pursuit of beauty, cultural and spiritual values, the various forms of art, the treasures of humanities, and the enrichment of our inner quality of life" (Banathy, 1996, p. 324-325). The process of creating "visionary art" as described by Alex Grey (1998) as well as the nine constant subjects of such art including "transformative beings and realms, scenes form inspirational stories, clairvoyant

visions and portraits of the soul, visionary abstraction, visionary inventions, divine calligraphy, infinite patterns of connectedness, cosmograms and mandalas, divine light (pp. 161-166) are considered important directions for this dimensions. Potential has also been cited for this dimension in Metzner's (1980) outline of ten classical metaphors of the transformation of human consciousness. The power of art to generate emotion is well known, a lesser known fact is the potential of aesthetic experiences to contribute to profound changes in consciousness, as validated by White's (2000) research in the area of exceptional human experiences.

The *political dimension* has an extensive agenda. Research congruent with "promoting self-determination, genuine participation in self-governance, continuous action for peace development, global cooperation and integration, and governance for the improvement of human conditions" (Banathy, 1996) is applicable to this dimension. Some areas previously examined include the possibility of creating New Agoras (Banathy, 2000) as macro level structures, as well as examining the use of technology to promote participatory democracy. One organization currently using ActionForum software to offer members a voice in political participation is the MoveOn.org family of organizations.

Table 2 provides a summary of the data reviewed and applied to both the macro and micro levels.

Table 2: Summary of data applied to Macro and Micro levels

Dimension Designer	Macro Level (Organizational)	Micro Level (Media Product)
Social Action	Socially responsible or Theory Z organization	Media promotes social action and interpersonal contact
Economic	Socially responsible, eco-economic policies	Percentage of revenue from media product allocated to benefit stakeholders
Moral	Organizational ethics based on global ethic or similar	Media promotes a global ethic, being-values, positive qualities
Wellness	Wellness programs based on holistic systems such as integral practices	Media promotes integral practices and interpersonal contact
Design (Learning & Human Development)	Organization promotes and facilitates creativity	Media promotes and facilitates creativity
Scientific	Organization maintains a staff of experts in all nine dimensions of an EGS as well as a data base available to researchers/designers	Media promotes scientific data related to the nonmaterial foundation of physical reality, as well as other findings supporting the advancement of planetary consciousness including wonder, awe, and the mysterious.
Technological	Technology is used to develop the concept of transeption vs. cyberception. Media psychology is studied as a possible avenue for promoting compassion	Media utilizes technology to promote interaction among humans and other species. Relevant findings from media psychology are applied to product.
Aesthetic	Aesthetics are based on beauty, guidelines for the creation of "visionary art" are employed	Media reflects an interest in the subjects of visionary art & metaphors of consciousness
Political	Organizational polity based on "visionary politics" and the "New Agora"	Media promotes participatory democracy

Important media is being made around the world that highlights both the triumphs and challenges experienced by human-beings across time and cultures. Numerous individuals, partnerships, organizations, and corporations are engaged in creating media with the intention of creating positive changes in humanity and the world-at-large. Without infringing on artistic freedom or integrity, EGM seeks to offer a sketch or blueprint of some of the important areas media creators might investigate if they are interested in creating media that promotes planetary consciousness. Although this paper has provided but a brief overview, it is my hope that it will generating strategic and evolutionary conversations within the international

community leading to the further design, iteration, and refinement of EGM. Some of the suggested aims of and purposes of such collaboration:

1. To encourage the application of perspectives from transpersonal studies, systems sciences, evolutionary guidance, integral studies, humanistic psychology, and other pertinent fields of research to the creation of media.
2. To develop theoretical and applied research in the nine dimensions of an evolutionary guidance system (as well as other dimensions when appropriately added) pertaining to media.
3. To facilitate and promote relationships and cooperation with other groups and organizations having similar aims.
4. To facilitate the creation of evolutionary guidance media organizations and media products.

Notes

- ¹ Referring to the twelve editorial cartoons (re: Muhammad) published in the Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten September 30, 2005.
- ² *Transception* indicates cyberception infused with qualities of high spiritual development such as compassion (Klisanin, 2005).
- ³ The preliminary research became my doctoral dissertation, which was supervised by Bela H. Banathy, Stanley Krippner, and Bela A. Banathy.
- ⁴ It is important to state that EGM was not designed as a tool for censorship, nor is it concerned with censorship. Rather it is a system designed for those persons interested in creating media that guides the advancement of planetary consciousness. In no way is EGM designed to be a system imposed upon others, rather the creation of an EGM organization or creative product is completely voluntary. If otherwise, it would no longer be considered EGM.
- ⁵ Being-values is a term coined by Maslow (1971) to represent human values including: truth, goodness, beauty, wholeness, aliveness, uniqueness, perfection, completion, justice, order, simplicity, richness, effortlessness, playfulness, self-sufficiency (pp. 133-135).

References

- Ascott, R. (1994). *The architecture of cyberception*, viewed July 10, 2005, <http://www.retortmag.com/mindcandy/essay03.htm>
- Association for Transformative Media Arts viewed July 6, 2005 from <http://www.transformedia.org>
- Banathy, B. (1996). *Designing social systems in a changing world.* Plenum Press, New York.
- Banathy, B. (2000). *Guided evolution of society: A systems view.*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York.
- Boulding, K. (1997). *The image: Knowledge in life and society.*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.
- Brown, L. (2001). *Eco-economy: Building an economy for the earth.* W.W.Norton, New York.
- Capra, F. (1989). "Interdependence of world problems," *The Elmwood Newsletter*. 6-7.
- Carr, K.C., & Sarvela, a. (1991). Marketing & promotions. *Wellness Perspectives*, 7, 126-238.
- Cohen, B., & Greenfield, J. (1997). *Ben and Jerry's double dip: Lead with your values and make money, too.*, Simon & Schuster, New York.
- Cvetkovich, G., & Earle, T.C. (1994). The construction of justice: A case study of public participation in land management. *The Journal of Social Issues*, 50(3), 161-178.
- Elgin, D. (2000). *Promise ahead.*, HarperCollins, New York.
- Elgin, D. (2002). The self-guiding evolution of civilizations. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 20, 323-337.
- Finger, M. (1994). From knowledge to action? Exploring the relationships between environmental experiences, learning, and behavior. *Journal of Social Issues*, 50(3), 141-160.
- Foundation for Conscious Evolution viewed July 11, 2005 from <http://www.evolve.org>
- Grey, A. (1998). *The mission of art.*, Shambhala Publications, Boston.
- Hubbard, B.M. (1998). *Conscious evolution.*, New World Library, Novato, CA.
- Klisanin, D. (2003). Designing media with intent: Evolutionary guidance media for the creation of planetary consciousness. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 64(08), 2691.
- Klisanin, D. (2005). Transpersonal Artistry: Designing evolutionary guidance media., *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. 37(1):52-77.
- Laszlo, E. (1997). *3rd Millennium: The challenge and the vision.*, Gaia Books Limited, London..
- Luskin, B. (1996). Toward an understanding of media psychology. *T.H.E. Journal*, 23(7), 82-84.
- Markham, E. (1936). Outwitted. In *The best loved poems of the American people*, (Editor H. Felleman), Doubleday & Co., New York.
- Maslow, A.H. (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature.* Viking, New York.
- McLuhan, M., & Fiore, Q. (1966). *Understanding media: The extensions of man.* Penguin Group, Toronto.
- Metzner, R. (1980). Metaphors of self-transformation. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 12(1), 47-62.
- Move On, viewed November 26, 2005 from <http://www.moveon.org>
- Murphy, M. (1992). *The future of the body: Explorations into the further evolution of human nature.* Tarcher/Putnam, New York.

- Murphy, M. (1993). *Integral practices: Body, heart, and mind*. In *Paths beyond ego: The transpersonal vision* (Editors R. Walsh & F. Vaughan) Tarcher/Putnam, New York.
- National Organization of Women, viewed October 7, 2002, <http://www.now.org>
- Our Media Voice viewed November 10, 2005 from <http://www.ourmediavoice.org>
- Simon, S. (2002). *The force is with you: Mystical messages that inspire our lives*. Hampton Roads Publishing Company, Charlottesville, VA.
- Waterworth, J. (1997). Creativity and sensation: The case for synaesthetic media. *Leonardo*, 30, 327-330.
- White, R. (2000) viewed November 28, 2005 from <http://www.ehe.org/display/ehe-page.cfm?ID=3>