

irm SIG

*Human factors and  
communication*

NEWSLETTER No 47

Late Sept/early Oct 2009

(Formerly the *People, Communication and Behaviour* SIG)

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## 1 of 2 – Forum and the Future

## 2 of 2 - Google's innovation (editorial comment)

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## 1 of 2 – Forum and the Future

A number of our members were able to get together at the informal SIG lunch meeting amongst the hustle and bustle of an exciting event in the RM calendar, held this year at the Uni of Warwick in Coventry. Now this is behind us we can look forward to the immediate future over the Winter season of 2009/10:

**The quad-core approach** – we will now be getting down to some serious research in our two core subjects of Human Factors and Communication, both enabled by our twin process of continuation of the International *E-NEWSLETTERS* and a series of London meetings (possibly a provincial location later on). The first two are mentioned below:

\*\*\*\*\* **an early date for your diary** \*\*\*\*\*

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October** A SIG meeting will be held at 2.00 pm (till 4.00 pm) situation: [Room 2.07, Garrod Building, Medical School \(Barts and The London School\), Turner Street, London E1 2AD - off Whitechapel Road, access from Whitechapel Tube Station \(there is no car parking\).](#)

Our member and host for the afternoon is Richard Mackie MIRM, Director of Risk, QM Innovation Centre and I understand the event will include recollections of some of his earlier experiences at Essex Fire and Rescue.

**About our hosts** – Queen Mary University of London (of which the above Medical school is part) was established from a merger of a number of institutions in 1995 including the oldest remaining hospital in the country, St Bartholomews, dating back to 1123 and one of the medical schools in the grouping to 1785. I believe this university to be amongst the world leaders in a number of medical disciplines which is evidenced by their being currently shortlisted for five of the Times Higher Education Awards in 2009. **Should be an interesting meeting - something a little bit different**

Contact for further details and confirmation of attendance to [r.d.mackie@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:r.d.mackie@qmul.ac.uk) or tel 07793 124288 (including for late directions on the day)

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**January 2010** – meeting to be advised at the Offices of BDO Stoy Hayward in Baker Street, London, at the slightly later time of 5.00 PM one afternoon. A great

opportunity to start off the SIG's business in the New Year and a full preview of this event will be provided to members along with the actual date in a future issue.

## **2 of 2 - Google's innovation (editorial comment)**

In the context of corporate culture, recent press reports have commented on Google's new system for fostering innovation from within its 20,000 strong workforce. The previous, rather informal, process of ideas percolating upwards from Googlers (now there's a nice name for you) was reported as being at risk of becoming stifled by burgeoning bureaucracy.

Regular meetings are now held at which employees are encouraged to present new ideas to Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the two co-founders and to Eric Schmidt, the CEO who is quoted as saying, "we are actively trying to prevent middle-agedom."

One media report continues about the **Google Wave** product billed as a revolutionary way to collaborate on-line. It is reported that when users access the service they see three columns in their screen: the left-hand one contains folders and address books, whilst the middle one is a list of "waves" being online conversations users have set up.

### **Editorial Comment**

Under the definitions on communication to be used within the Guide, this would actually class within the same section as "freedom of retribution for reporting" – an employee may have similar fears on an idea being regarded as "silly" as for informing on a colleague."

Interestingly, in issue number 43 (June 2009), I commented on a talk in London about "Communication" where there was mention of "organisations have lifecycle curves from growing to ageing", so this is clearly an additional dimension we will need to allow in the Enabling Section of the Guide.

There could be problems with worldwide organisations for staff from the far outposts, but then of course we already have the *Delphi* (Issue Number 28, June/July 2008) and pre-meeting audio-visual approach from the *Three horse* (Issue No 31, October 2008) concepts on our records (and also to be incorporated within the Guide). The credits for these works were given in the issue at the time, we are indeed very fortunate to have access to a great depth of knowledge from within the membership. Additional input from an organisation like Google must of course be considered with care as an ongoing development which will provide some benefit rather than a rival to our existing methodologies. The good Risk Manager will use judgement to select the best of all available tools in organisational communication.

NB. There has been no recent news from Lloyd's Avenue about approval for the Guide

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### **And lastly, a thought to leave you with:**

Little boy: "Why do motorcyclists have to wear crash helmets?"

Father: "To protect their heads in they have an accident"

Mother (RM): "It is to enable the rider, through provision of best possible assurance, with greater self efficacy thereby allowing greater understanding to identify and effectively analyse all road and other conditions to implement the safest passing places in the pursuit of overall performance objectives".

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Further editorial comment: Two words will appeal to the bosses in this scenario – "passing places", especially if we are asking for more resources!