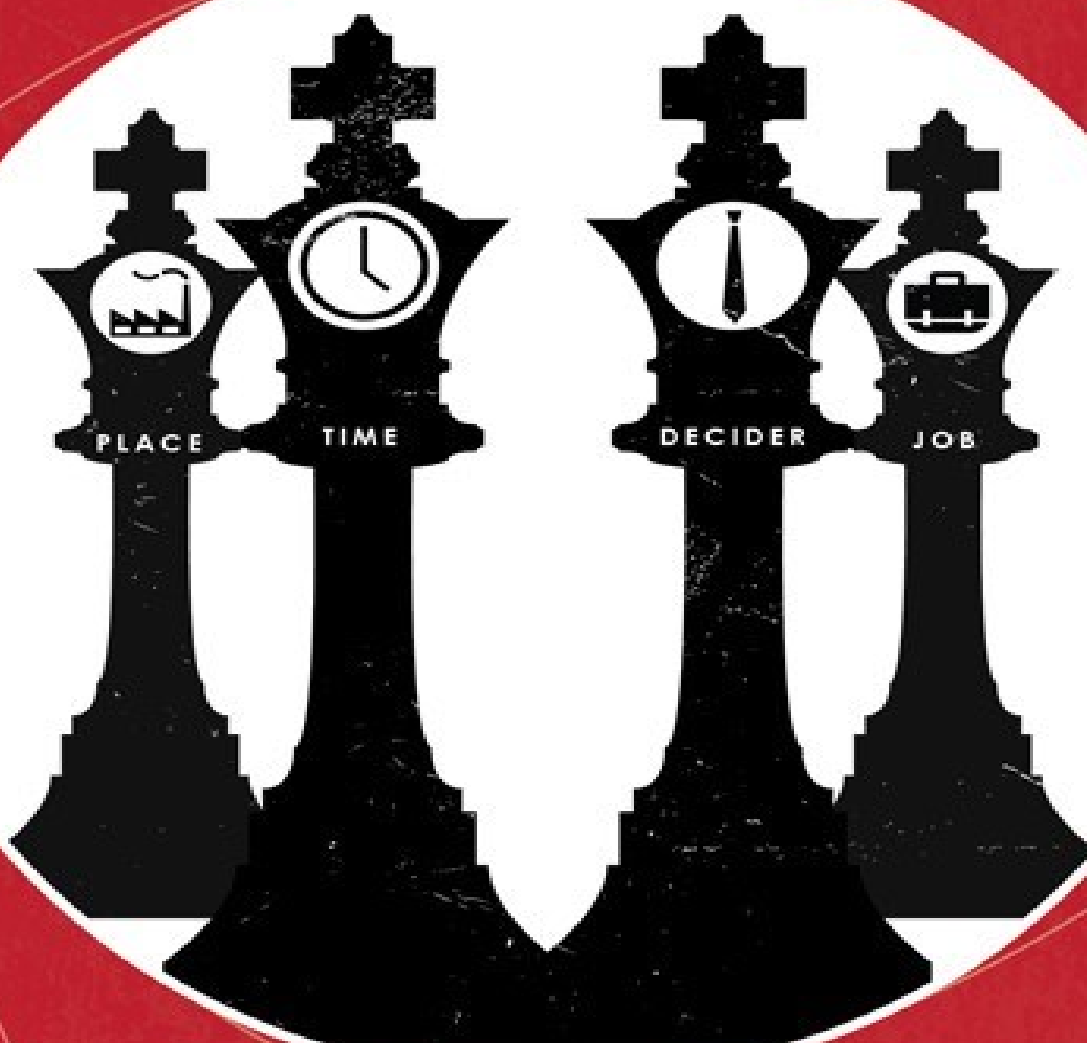


FOUR DEAD KINGS

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Four Dead Kings at Work

The Decentralization and Blending of Work in the 21st Century

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Four Dead Kings at Work: The Decentralization and Blending of Work in the 21st Century

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What Shall Become of Us?

Preface

Why *Beige*?

I use the term *beige* throughout this book to represent the *decentralizing* and *blending* that is occurring in many different ways in the workplace. I chose the term based on a common theme that occurs in science fiction books. These books envision a time in the future when the world no longer has distinct races; rather, by then we are all beige.

The most fundamental trends in the workplace today are the tendency to decentralize all aspects of work, and the associated tendency for those decentralized elements to blend together until everything is *beige*. This book is about the forces that are driving the “beinging” process, the longstanding “kings” of the workplace that are being killed off by these forces, and what will arise to replace them.

Introduction

Beige

Not a very exciting topic. In fact, everybody knows that *beige is boring*, and not exactly what you'd think of as the key to understanding the way the world will work in the 21st century. But let me tell you why I think it is.

There are radical changes coming to the workplace. The key to understanding how these changes will impact your life is to understand that the world *is* beige. Work in the 21st century will be decentralized and blended – or *beige* – in several different ways.

1. *The Workplace is now the Beigeplace*

There was a day when the average worker “went to work” every day of the workweek. The lines between home and the workplace were visible and distinct. Now, those lines are rapidly blurring. In the 21st century the workplace can be anywhere. It certainly can be in that old traditional office. But it can also be in a car, in Starbucks, or even in a bed. The workplace has become the *beigeplace* and it will never go back again.

2. *The Segmented Life is now the BeigeLife*

Just as home used to be separated from work by clear lines, work life was also separated from home life. Those lines will be relics of history for life in the 21st century. As the future unfolds, we will all experience being of life where work, pleasure, social interaction, charity activities, and all other aspects of life are blended together in one continuous stream.

3. *The Expert Decision is now the Beige Decision*

In days gone by, “expert decisions” were generally made by individual experts who expected those decisions to be accepted by customers and partners without question. In today's world, decisions are often challenged by non-experts using information derived from the Internet. For example, the Internet has become a *de facto* second opinion for almost all medical assessments and decisions. In most

cases, today's patients will arrive at the doctor's office with a wad of printouts under their arms. The result is that there is much more involvement from customers, clients, patients, and partners in the decision-making process. What in the past would have been a simple case of an "expert decision" has become a "beige decision."

4. The Company Employee Is Now the Beige Employee

In days of yore, there was an implicit contrast that existed between employer and employee. The employee gave loyalty to the company and gained job security in exchange. Even though that contract was implied rather than stated, it did have enormous influence on employees. The duty of loyalty produced company employees who worked for one employer, and only one employer, for their entire working lives. Those days are gone. Employees in the 21st century will engage in many different kinds of work and will work for many different organizations or even for multiple organizations simultaneously. The prototypical worker of the future will be a beige worker who serves many masters.

Four Dead Kings At Work

The first four chapters of this book explain **why** these changes are occurring. They describe the tectonic forces that are fracturing and reforming the world of the past. These forces include the basic growth of the Internet, the explosion of mobility, the migration of data and applications to the cloud, the evolution of the relationships between company and employee, and the explosion of crowd sourcing.

Each of these forces tend to make some aspect of the world more beige by blurring what were previously bright lines of demarcation. All of this blurring, when taken together, is having a radical impact on the workplace and on our lives in general. In particular, several of the huge assumptions that we've always made about our work lives (the "kings" that ruled the workplace) are about to be deconstructed. The impact on our lives will be huge.

Following the chapters about the forces are four chapters that describe the *dead kings* – the major established bedrocks of work that will cease to

exist over the next few years. The last chapter describes how the future will evolve after the kings have been dethroned. Let's begin!

Force 1

Connectivity: The Earth Flattener

One of the best-selling books of the last decade is Thomas Friedman's *The World Is Flat* [2.1]. Although Friedman's excellent book is the best-known reference for the concept of Internet-based globalization, the basic concept of connectivity is actually what drove the formation of the Internet long before Friedman articulated it.

Two decades after its inception, the Internet was still largely unknown and unused by most people. The user interface was arcane and complex, and typically restricted to government programs. The Internet we know and use today was not available. The real impact of the Internet began in the early 1990s when it was opened for commercial use with easy-to-use graphical interfaces that were developed that allow the average consumer to access the vast wealth of information and connection online.

The initial growth of the Internet was staggering. By the end of 1993, the number of users was doubling every three months, and that growth trend has remained ever since. At the time Friedman claimed the world was flat, only 15% of the world's population was connected to the Internet. In the intervening decade, the world has gotten much flatter. Almost eight people are added to the Internet every second. As of 2012, there were about 2.5 billion people (33% of the global world's population) connected to the Internet.

While it's interesting to observe the growth of the Internet in terms of raw numbers, it's also interesting to note *where* the growth is occurring. Growth in North America during the last decade is an impressive 153%, but the growth in Africa during the same period was 3607%. During this same period, Latin America experienced growth of 1311%, Asia saw growth of 842%, and the Middle East surged with growth of 2640% [2.2]. It's also interesting to note that beyond Internet connections, Africa now has about 700 million cell phone connections [2.3]. This type of growth begins to bring the *entire* world together, not just the developed world.

As of 2012, the Internet was a network of computers. There were almost a billion computers – some of which were smartphones and other mobile devices – but still, only computers [2.4]. In the near future, the Internet will begin to connect billions of devices that aren't computers of any form. Most of these devices will be some type of sensor that allows someone at a great distance to get detailed data about some aspect of some spot on the planet. These sensors will be connected to a myriad of people and devices. Devices as disparate as washing machines, heart monitors, cars, and train tracks will all become part of the Internet.

Historically one of the great dividers of civilization has been language. There are currently around 7,000 spoken languages in the world today [2.5]. As the Internet has expanded around the globe, it has flattened the languages of the world in two ways:

1. *Standardization of English* – For many years, cultural researchers envisioned the development of a single common language that would unite the world. Given the interconnection provided by the Internet (and its initial dominance by the Western world), English is rapidly being adopted as the *lingua franca* of the world. Business people from around the world are gravitating toward English as the common trade language for their global work.
2. *Automated translation* – We are finally living in the day when automated translation is possible. Applications such as Google Translate already provide extensive online translation services and a number of companies are showing early versions of real-time translation [2.6]

The trend toward rising interconnectivity has also driven the emergence of a new global elite – the *beige business leader*, who understands the coming together of once-separate cultures. These hybrid individuals understand multiple cultures, and are comfortable dealing with diverse business environments around the world. In many cases, these beige leaders will have lived in several different regions of the world.

In the future, no one country, culture, or people group will dominate. The future belongs to those who are beige. Future companies and future leaders will only be successful if they can effectively manage in a beige environment that will have increasingly complex cultural and geographic characteristics.

All of these elements of connectivity are hammering down the earth so that it becomes flatter and flatter every day. The simple magnitude of the Internet connects people around the globe in ways that could only be imagined 30 years ago. Soon the availability of sensors (and other devices on the Internet) will bring fundamentally new forms of connectivity that could only be imagined five years ago

That connectivity has massive secondary effects, including the blending of languages, companies, and cultures. Thus the future is about a beige earth where all aspects of humanity are blended into one homogenous whole. *Individual* countries, cultures, languages, families, and organizations will become increasingly insignificant.

Force 2

Mobile + Cloud: The Anywhere Twins

Over the last few years, most of the growth in connectivity has been in the mobile sector. This phenomenon will have an enormous impact on all aspects of our lives, including the way we work. In 2000, there were less than one billion mobile subscriptions in the world. In 2012, the number of mobile subscriptions exceeds six billion and the number of mobile devices in the world will soon exceed the number of people on earth [3.1]. In 2012, 5.1 billion people owned cell phones whereas only 4.2 billion owned a toothbrush [3.2]. As of 2012, more children owned cell phones than books [3.3].

Mobile connectivity to the Internet began when WiFi was first introduced into laptops. This move toward mobility was important, but the real spark that drove a dramatic social change was introduced in 2003. In this case, it took black to make beige. The Blackberry phone was an amazing device that made it possible to read email on the fly. Blackberry users could read work and personal emails at home, on the subway, or out at dinner. In fact, by 2006, reading emails on the Blackberry was so addictive that it became affectionately known as the “CrackBerry”.

The introduction of the Blackberry also introduced the capability to access the Internet on a mobile device, providing the spark for the mobile Internet revolution. Once the spark was introduced, the fire spread quickly. Soon, other mobile phones and tablets were introduced, causing the average person to have email, Internet access, and image transmission capabilities with them and available all the time.

Today, there are 1.7 billion mobile Internet connections. Almost 300 billion emails are sent every day and are being read on a mobile device [3.4]. The availability of this huge number of mobile Internet connections provides a foundational capability, but the real utility comes with the availability of software *applications* on mobile devices. The explosion in growth of these types of applications lead to what is now a standard expression: “There’s an app for that.”

The last piece in the “mobile everything” puzzle was the availability of *cloud-based* applications and data. For years, we’ve made claims that the availability of the Internet made working from home just like working from the office. And, for all those years, those statements have been only partially true. The availability of email and other forms of basic connectivity made it possible to stay connected. But, in many cases, there were key applications and data that were available only in the office. In fact, they were often only available in specific offices that were connected to a particular computer system. Not only was it impossible to access those applications and data from home, it was also impossible to access them while on a business trip.

For example, in the past, many companies had internal databases that tracked information for thousands of customers. In most cases, that information could only be accessed from inside a specific company office. With the introduction of Salesforce.com, all that information was stored in the cloud and became available to any authorized user at any location with an Internet connection. Many other applications that support cloud-based data have since emerged. For example, consider a simple but extremely powerful application such as Dropbox [3.10]. With Dropbox, a user can simply drag and drop a file onto the “dropbox” location on a screen. It is then available to that user, and other authorized users, anywhere in the world. Not only is that data available both at home and in the office, but it is available anywhere through the use of mobile devices.

The final nail in the “place” coffin was driven when these applications became available on mobile devices. Today, a huge percentage of applications are available anywhere either as apps running directly on a mobile device or as SaaS applications that run through the cloud. The basic connectivity afforded by the Internet drove the being of the *world* overall. The wide availability of the Internet on mobile devices coupled with the cloud-based availability of data and applications on those Internet-connected devices changed the lives of *individuals*. It removed the natural barriers that have always prevented various aspects of life from intermixing. Once it became possible to read work emails and run work applications from any location, the mixing of work time and personal time (and thus the emergence of the *beigelife*) became inevitable.

Force 3

Social: The Anytime Driver

The availability of the Internet on mobile devices started the ball rolling, but it took social networking to drive the truly fundamental changes in society. In 2003 we saw the introduction of MySpace, one of the first major social networking sites. Wordpress emerged as the major catalyst in the growth of blogging that same year. One year later, Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook from his dorm room in Harvard.

In 2005, we saw the introduction of YouTube. In 2006, we saw the birth of Twitter. A continuous stream of social networking sites then began to appear, and showed no sign of slowing. The social networking explosion is striking not only because how rapidly it developed, but also because the number of people who participate. Consider, for example, the growth of Facebook: It had 50 million users by the end of 2006, its first year of general availability. Only two years later, there were about 425 million users on Facebook.

Moreover, social networking is clearly a global phenomenon. By the end of 2012, Facebook was approaching one billion users, meaning that one out of every seven people on the planet was on Facebook. Mark Zuckerberg likes to point out that this would make it the world's third largest country.

The growth in social networking has not diminished over time. If anything, it is intensifying. As noted in the previous chapter, the wide availability of the Internet on mobile devices made it possible to work outside the office, but most of the interest in mobile devices has nothing to do directly with work. The main attraction of mobile devices is all about connecting with people (social networking).

Facebook now sees half of its traffic coming from mobile devices. Texting for social contact on mobile devices has reached enormous proportions. Four billion people (more than half the world's total population) now use texting as an important method of communication. America alone sends almost 200 billion texts per month.

Just as the availability of work email on mobile devices had the secondary effect of forcing the intermixing of work and personal lives, the availability of social connectivity on mobile devices had the secondary effect of creating new social *expectations*. For most people, their mobile device is almost a fifth appendage. Note that it takes about 26 hours for a typical person to report a lost wallet, but only 68 minutes for them to report a lost phone [4.1]. Many people carry their phones or tablets with them at all times. Their day begins by checking their phone and it ends that way as well. The availability of social connectivity on a device that is always with us results in a population that is *always connected* to each other. This constant connectivity makes it possible for people to provide rapid responses to any communication from someone in their social network. Moreover, the availability of that constant connectedness, and the associated capability to provide rapid responses, generates a growing social *expectation* of continuous availability and rapid responses.

The result of constant connectedness and the expectation of rapid responses is the being of time. No longer are there discrete blocks of time in which different activities occur. Rather, all the time in our daily lives is blended into one cohesive mass, and our “friends” are able contact us anytime during the day, expecting a rapid response. The primary social impact is the disappearance of down time and the emergence of a continuous sense of stress that permeates every minute of every day.

In the good old days, there were places and times when we unplugged from work and disconnected from friends. And, it was perfectly okay. Those days are gone.

Force 4

Crowd: The Anyone Driver

The *constant connectedness* of massive social networks has rewritten our concept of time, but it has also changed the basic nature of human relationships and interactions. In the past, societies were largely defined by physical boundaries. Travel was difficult beyond the physical boundaries and, as a result, almost all social interaction occurred within

them. Human relationships were, by necessity, formed almost exclusively with people in a particular, geographic area.

Horizons expanded as technology improved. Travel distances expanded, and with that expansion the scope of potential interactions grew as well. It became possible to develop relationships beyond an immediate geographic area. This trend was accelerated by the advent of the telephone. Suddenly, it was possible to interact with people who were far beyond the limits of routine travel. This transition caught fire with the coming of the Internet and the availability of social networking on mobile devices.

One result of this transition is that electronic communication is increasingly becoming the standard form of human interaction. Many people email or text others who are sitting in an office next to them or even sitting in a room with them.

In today's world, people often have *fewer* relationships with those who are immediately around them and *more* relationships with people who are at a long distance. The fact that people are forming more relationships with distant people—and spending a lot of their available time communicating with those people—disrupts the communication within their natural relationships. This tends to reduce the significance of the natural relationships in people's lives.

It also creates a tendency for people to dissolve and change relationships more easily. People increasingly feel that they are connected to the “crowd” in general, and anyone within the crowd will do. Additionally, the *Crowd* force has oddly impacted the rise of the personality who isn't actually a person at all. Miku Hatsune, an incredibly popular Japanese singer, doesn't really exist. In spite of the fact that Miku routinely sells out concerts to tens of thousands of people, she is fully virtual. She exists only as a hologram.

The emergence of “the crowd” has also led to the concept of crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing began to become popular in 2006 [5.3]. It involves the outsourcing of tasks or other goals to a group for resolution,

usually through the use of the Internet. Crowdsourcing is essentially the idea of explicitly soliciting *anyone's* opinion from the Internet. Specific variants of crowdsourcing are based on specific applications. For example, crowdsourced design employs the crowd to make design decisions and crowdfunding sites such as Kickstarter are using the crowd to raise money [5.1].

The overall impact of the crowd force is the beiging of relationships and the exaltation of the crowd. We increasingly use the Internet and social networks to connect with *anyone* from the crowd. The specific individual connections tend to come and go over time, but this has little impact because our “relationship” tends to be with the overall crowd – the beige blend of individual people. As a result, individuals tend to matter less and the crowd tends to matters more. We increasingly trust the opinion of the crowd and rely less on the opinion of specific individuals.

The Dead Kings

All of these forces have a significant influence on our lives. They impact our world largely by removing constraints. As constraints are removed, the old assumptions and conventions that were based on those constraints begin to fade and eventually die.

There are four huge assumptions that we make about work that will soon be gone (the dead kings). The basic forces have begun to push them off the throne and the increasing presence of younger Internet-native workers will accelerate their demise. These “kings” have a terminal illness – they’re not dead yet, but they’re on their way.

Dead King 1

One Place

Ever since the industrial revolution, the first *king* of work has been *place*. For all those years, work was restricted to one specific place – the place you went to every day to work.

King # 1 – **Place** – is dead. Or at least his prognosis is terminal. He was killed by the *Anywhere Twins* (mobile + cloud) and the *Anytime Driver*. Today's physical workplace is increasingly becoming a beigeplace. Knowledge workers still have cubes, but in many cases the cubes don't have knowledge workers. Studies have found that in most large offices, most of the cubes are empty the majority of the time [6.1]. They are empty in large part because today almost *everyone* is *virtual*, at least part of the time. The cloud has freed workers from the need to be in the office, weakening the concept of *work* as a place. The Mobile half of the twins makes *place* almost completely irrelevant.

Today's workplace includes Starbucks, a commuter train, restaurants, and baseball stadiums. The possibilities are nearly limitless. Today, *work* is any location with cell phone service. This newfound sense of mobility is already having an enormous effect on how physical offices are designed. The death of *place* means that offices today are more like bird perches, where workers stop occasionally to conduct some concentrated effort.

Enterprises are moving away from the idea of workers being assigned to a specific cube. New offices are being designed under the assumption that most of the workers will be mobile, and old offices are being retrofit based on that assumption. Many enterprises are revamping almost all of their office space to emphasize shared cubes and mobile worker – a tangible sign of the death of *place*.

Benefits of death of place

As the dedicated work place fades into history, various forms of virtual work are replacing it. Telework is the traditional term for working outside the normal office. Sixty three million Americans (45% of working Americans) hold jobs that are suitable for at least part time telework. Studies show that 26,200,000 Americans were engaging in at least some telework in 2011, with 2.9 million considering home to be their principle workplace. It has been increasingly recognized that having the option to choose telework is appealing to employees. But, the reality is that it is ultimately a win-win-win for employees, employers, and society.

Employees see value in the ability to work in a geographic area that meets their personal desires, and in an environment that gives them increased work-life balance, reduced stress, and increased autonomy and control. Beyond those benefits, the average employee could double their vacation time-without any loss of productivity-simply by saving two to three work weeks a year in commuting time. Beyond the time saved, studies estimate that if 50 million American worked from home 50% of the time, they would save hundreds of billions of dollars annually in reduced commuting costs.

Businesses could also reap huge benefits from having employee telework. A recent major study shows that if 50 million US workers spent half their time working virtually, US business would see a financial improvement of \$664 billion per year, roughly equal to the combined profit of all Fortune 500 companies [6.2]. Although it is less obvious, the potential for vastly improving continuity of operations is one of the largest benefits of supporting telework. An organization that has an effective teleworking process in place has the potential to greatly reduce the impact of human attacks or natural disasters. The benefits of telework to society, in general, are overwhelming. Studies indicate that 50% of eligible workers teleworking 50% of their time would reduce vehicular travel by 91 billion miles a year. This would save 1500 lives a year, reduce the strain on the crumbling US highway infrastructure, and dramatically reduce congestion [6.3]. This reduction in congestion would also improve emergency responsiveness and reduce the need to spend vast sums expanding the transportation network.

In addition, telework is one of the most practical ways of accomplishing “green” goals. The commute reduction from 50 million virtual workers working 50% of their time from home would eliminate 50 million tons in greenhouse gases and would save 281 million barrels of oil (46% of all the oil the US receives from Persian Gulf sources). The savings in energy from this reduction in commuting would be approximately twice as much as is currently produced from all renewable sources combined. Beyond the transportation-related benefits, teleworking would also reduce pollution from road and office construction, provide fuller employment opportunity

for rural and disabled residents, increase gender equality, and reduce pressure to offshore jobs [6.4].

Virtual work can also take on specialized forms where the form depends on the specific type of work being performed. For example, *telemedicine* is a form of virtual work that is specifically oriented to healthcare.

Historically, medical care has only been provided in medical offices and hospitals (or, many years ago, in patients' homes). Using telemedicine doctors can provide medical care without regard to place, usually by using the Internet to connect with distant patients.

Telemedicine has a number of advantages. The most frequently quoted benefit of telemedicine is that it "brings care to where the patient lives." This may mean providing Internet-based sensors that are worn continuously by critical heart patients. It might also mean providing medical care to those in rural or impoverished areas, which would otherwise have little or no medical care available.

This approach has clear benefits to the patient, but it also has benefits for society. For example, by providing this kind of monitoring a nurse can detect changes and take action before an emergency visit is required. Telemedicine is one of many types of virtual work that take advantage of the anywhere twins.

eLearning is a form of virtual work where the work to be performed is education. There are a number of important subsets, including *online learning* – providing education over the web and *virtual training* – using the web and simulation technologies to train a particular skill or activity. Some of the online activities do little to change the pedagogical approach. They simply do traditional teaching online. Others, such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) are designed to serve thousands of students simultaneously, with little or no interaction with the teacher. Course help is crowdsourced by students helping each other [10.4].

eLearning is growing very rapidly. Much of the eLearning discussion centers around development in the US, but the reality is that the eLearning community outside the US serves 1.4 billion students and 62.5 million

educators. The current global market for education is almost 4.5 trillion dollars and is the fastest growing segment in eLearning [6.5]. Like every other form of virtual work, eLearning is taking advantage of the anywhere twin forces.

Challenges that Result from the Death of Place

The being of the workplace has enormous potential advantages, but it is not without its challenges. One of the challenges associated with the death of place is that managers are having great difficulty adjusting to the new paradigm. They can no longer see or drop in on their employees, which makes them worry that virtual workers aren't really working. There is also a concern that increased off-site working will reduce the level of collaboration that should exist among team members. There may no longer be a concern for the specifics of place, but there is a concern about the need for team members to meet and work together.

Another major issue is the concern for security. Historically, enterprise security officers have relied on the fact that they physically controlled all the corporate devices within their corporate walls. With the death of *place*, this is no longer true. Mobile employees may use a laptop at a public place and inadvertently allow others to read confident information from their screens. 86,000 laptops per year are lost, and the average cost of dealing with a loss is about \$25 million – most of it spent to deal with possible security issues.

As more and more workplaces are going mobile, the tendency to “Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)” increases. Security officers are faced with serious security challenges that result from the fact that BYOD devices are inherently beige. They include a combination of personal and corporate information. There is an inherent tension between the users who actually own the devices and the corporation who wants to maintain control of a device that they don't own if it has their confidential data on it. In this regard, the potential for a security breach associated with a privately owned smartphone is even greater than the risk for a company laptop.

Building the Post-Place World

The workplace is evolving in a number of ways in response to the lifting of the “one place” constraint. Many business people are expending a lot of energy in an attempt to resist the inevitable evolution. Others are busily laying the bricks of the walls that will become the cities of the future.

For example, several companies are now providing 3D virtual workspaces to improve the effectiveness of virtual workers. A 3D workspace is a graphical model of an office area that appears on a computer screen and looks a bit like a 3D video game. The workspace looks like an office area and participants appear within the virtual office area as avatars. Meetings held in 3D virtual workspaces provide almost all the capabilities of audio or web conferences, but they also create a strong sense of presence. Virtual meeting participants feel like they are in one room together in much the same way that they would in a physical conference room. There are other benefits that may be less obvious. People who are naturally introverted tend to be much more assertive when acting behind an avatar.

Workspaces could be very valuable for the billions of business people who live in cultures that do not approve of having men and women in the same meeting together, for example. They also hold great promise for bringing more disabled people into the workforce, as well as for supporting continued employment for retiring baby boomers. Flipside Workspace [12.1] is an example of 3D virtual workspace. Beyond meeting spaces, Flipside addresses one of the major challenges of the post-place world by providing persistent offices that allow supervisors to maintain awareness of an employee’s activities.

Email and telephone are still the most widely used telework tools. Part of the reason they are still so popular is that they are *perpetual* and *personal*. “This is MY phone number and MY email address.” Flipside, for instance, provides *passive perpetual presence* by assigning each member to his or her own permanent office. Participants occupy *their* virtual offices for most of an entire workday, just as they would at a physical office. Given this approach, they can be found without having to continuously set up meetings, hangouts, or calls. It is the home base where workers can direct

their colleagues, supervisors, and clients, “I’m in MY Flipside Workspace office 8-5”.

Summary and Takeaways Regarding the Death of One Place The movement away from the “one place” constraint began with telecommuters who worked from their homes. It accelerated with the explosion of mobile devices and the ubiquitous availability of Internet connectivity that they provided. We are already at the place where a great deal of work gets done outside traditional work locations. The near future will bring much faster mobile devices and with that even more mobility and even less awareness, much less concern, about the question of *where* someone is working.

The final transition from the traditional place to the virtual workplace will be driven by Millennials. They have a natural affinity for virtual environments. As those workers move up to dominate the workplace, they will insist on the ability to work virtually and they will be expecting something like a 3D virtual workspace to support it. The impact of the death of place will be staggering.

A huge set of societal mechanics is based on the assumption that people work in one specific place. A huge part of Urban Planning revolves around forming residential areas and business/commercial areas, along with the transportation mechanisms required to move masses of people between them daily. Large, expensive, high-rise office buildings are built on tiny plots of mega-expensive urban-center land because of the place constraint. Other tiny plots of premium land are used to house companies that provide services for the workers in the densely populated office buildings. What if suddenly they don’t all need to be in the same physical place to work together? Removing this constraint will cause us to completely re-envision the cities of the future. Moreover, it will have a profound impact on the distribution of people on continents as well as on the relative distribution of wealth and power among nations.

Huge numbers of people would love to live on some tropical island, by a beautiful mountain ski area, or near their family members in some rural location. They don’t live out those dreams because they need to live near

a large urban employment center to find a job. As the place constraint fades, people will move in many different directions to realize those dreams and society (along with land values) will change dramatically. Residential communities are already being developed in “prime living” locations under the assumption that their residents will be working for home most of the time, while making occasional trips back to their urban offices.

People in distant developing countries will use eLearning to gain a strong education and will then turn to virtual work to allow them to participate in first-world employment in spite of the fact that they live in a third-world country. The impact of this trend is that wealth, power, and influence will transition from the currently rich and dominate nations toward those that are currently more economically depressed and powerless. As time moves forward, the impact of the death of place will only grow larger and larger.

Dead King 2

One Time

Just as there has always been a work *place* there has also been a work *time*. People who went to work were on the clock as long as they were in the office. When they weren't at the office, they weren't expected to be working. Nine to Five: It's been the work time "King", the standard workday, since the 8-hour work day was enshrined by the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938.

But now, that has all changed. The time King is dead. Time has fallen victim to the *anytime* force. A combination of the ubiquitous presence of constantly connected mobile devices coupled with the expectations of instantaneous responsiveness has killed the *time* king. Just as work *place* has become beige, so has work *time*.

With the introduction of the Blackberry phone, employees began to read work email on their mobile devices at all times of the day. Once it became possible to read email at all hours, it became *expected* that people would read emails at all hours. In today's world, most people are reading a constant beige stream—a collection of work and personal emails—from early morning until late at night, often seven days a week. 50% of Americans admit to reading work emails in bed, and 75% say they do work email while in the bathroom.

Even though people are continuously reading emails throughout the day, that doesn't necessarily mean that employees are actually working all those hours. It means that the typical person is processing a beige stream, working off and on, over a very long period of time. It's very hard to say how much of that time is work and how much is personal because it is all comingled. Of course, there are often a number of hours during the day when a typical worker applies a higher percentage of their attention to work issues and other hours that are predominately personal, but overall they will still be working a beige stream from morning until night.

It might seem that the inevitable result of this transition is that workers are working many more hours per day than they did in the past. That would be true except that workers are subject to beige streams during *all* hours of the day. It was always a myth that workers spent all their *work time* working. Workers have always spent time throughout the day doing things other than working such as talking to coworkers, taking personal calls, and attending to personal errands. This situation has been greatly exacerbated by the arrival of the beige stream.

Today, workers spend 25% of their “workday” reading personal email, surfing the web, engaging on social networks, and doing other personal activity [7.1]. Other studies find that telecommuters spend time playing games, cleaning the house, and caring for children, but they still actually outwork their office-bound colleagues [7.2]. The situation is not so much that workers are starkly working more hours, or starkly wasting more time at work. Rather, workers are engaging in a beige life from morning to night. Their time is no longer divided up into discrete work time and home time boundaries; so they are free to (or burdened by the need to) switch between work and personal matters throughout the day. There are people and organizations that are doing everything possible to revive the fallen king of time, but these efforts are as hopeless as trying to hold back the tide. The notion of One Time is dead.

Benefits Of the Death of Time

The single greatest advantage of the death of Time is that it provides workers greater flexibility in managing their work schedules. This gives them the opportunity to manage their life priorities and improve work-life balance. This can be especially valuable for parents and others who have caregiver responsibilities. For example, a test telecommute program called **eWorkPlace** was conducted in Minneapolis, Minnesota [7.3]. The program worked with 48 employers and over 4,000 of their employees to support the adoption of telework and flexible work schedules. The primary purpose of the program was to reduce peak period commuting on congested roadways [7.4]. While the data did demonstrate the effectiveness of telecommute in terms of reducing traffic congestion and pollution, there was also one interesting tidbit of data included in the

report. Over 75% of the respondents were working women; most of them working mothers.

This observation (and the discussion that accompanied) provided evidence that the death of Time is especially valuable to working mothers. This value results directly from the fact that flexibility in work timing allows them to improve work-life balance. Even if telework and beige scheduling does not reduce the total number of hours worked – in fact, even if it *increases* the total number of hours worked – it still provides flexibility that can greatly reduce the stress of those who are responsible for providing care for others. For example, a working mother might begin working early in the morning, take a half an hour to deliver her children to school, return to work during the day, and then take another hour off to pick up the kids at school. The flexibility of work time empowers working mothers to remain in the workforce while caring for children, which is true as well for those fathers who are the primary caretakers. This type of flexibility will be assumed for most employees in the future.

Challenges Associated with the Death of Time

The primary challenges that result from the death of One Time are the difficulty of employees managing a beige life, and the difficulty of managers managing beige employees. Managing a day that is stuffed full of comingled activity raises many issues and concerns. For example, there have been lively discussions about *work-life balance* for many years. The beiging of time clearly provides workers with increased flexibility. Workers are now free to choose workplaces and work times that best fit their lives. On the other hand, the expectation of a rapid response – even though it was established in non-professional social networking, may still impact workers. As the expectation of rapid response to communication comes to be the social norm, it migrates to the business environment as well. Many workers feel compelled to monitor their email at all hours lest they fail to meet a customer's expectation of a rapid response. This can damage work-life balance not only by adding actual working hours, but also leaving workers with a sense that they are always on call and are never off the clock. Workers tend experience a certain level of "beige stress" that extends throughout the day.

Meanwhile, some managers become stressed when they can't watch their employees working. This is basically the same issue that managers have relative to the death of One Place. Many managers have always relied on what is now known as "presentism" to judge the level of effort that their employees were applying. It was assumed that if an employee was at his desk, he was working. An employee that wasn't at her desk wasn't working. The beige world is much more complicated, and managers will have to learn to apply more sophisticated techniques – for example, management by results – to deal with it.

Building the Post-Time World

Many developers are working on products that are designed to take advantage of the death of One Time. The beiging of time provides increased flexibility for employees, but represents a real challenge to people who need to know—and be able to document—how much time they actually spent working versus engaging in personal activity.

Conceptually, the principle of management by results is correct. As long as an employee produces the desired results, it makes no difference when, where, and how those results were achieved. However, there are practical problems with this approach. Existing labor laws in many areas place various limits on working hours, and many contracting jobs are paid by the hour. Many state tax agencies charge taxes based on when and where work is performed. Even if there is no hourly pay issue, there is often a desire to track the number of hours spent working to better understand where available resources are being expended. Accurately tracking the hours worked becomes much harder when work and personal activity are comingled into a single beige stream.

iJobber was developed to address exactly this problem. It allows the user to easily and quickly track the time spent on both professional and personal projects. It will also track the location at which the work is done. Because iJobber is designed to serve a beige environment, it executes on an iPhone under the assumption that the user will always have it with them. With a few simple clicks the user can start hourly accounting, and allow it to run in the background while other tasks are being performed.

The results can then be easily exported to Excel or other accounting software.

A number of manufacturers are building cell phones that support both work and personal emails on a single physical device. The devices support completely independent partitions for each area so users can have completely separate environments, but still carry only a single device [7.5]. Applications such as Divide perform a similar function for any Android phone by creating a business persona and a separate personal persona, dividing functions between them. MagicConnect is an example of applications that allow users to connect to and operate their PC's from an iPhone or iPad.

Lastly, there are groups that are taking on the underlying management challenge. CultureRX has created The Results Only Work Environment (ROWE), which is a collection of tools, training, and processes that empower managers to manage by results. It is being used successfully by a number of large companies that ignore the hours worked and focus only on results.

Summary and Takeaways Regarding the Death of One Time

The death of One Time will have a far-reaching impact because it affects all aspects of life. It shifts the onus of time management to the individual. When work times were rigid, the individual didn't really have to make decisions about how much work was enough. As the world becomes more beige, individuals gain more freedom and flexibility. But, each individual will also have to become more involved in deciding when to stop answering emails and when to turn the phone off. This will be a source of consternation for many people.

It is also inevitable that the beiging of time will force a discussion of the current structure of our labor laws and labor-related organizations. The concept of "management by results" flies in the face of current labor law and union policies for some employees. Although the intent of these laws and policies is to protect the employees involved, there will be enormous pressure for these to change in the face of a beiging world.

Dead King 3

One Decision Maker

The idea of having one clear decision-maker for difficult issues has always been a strong and compelling notion. It is most established in the military. While the concept of the “ultimate decider” has been romanticized in novels and films, the fact is that it is conceptually true. Military organizations have been based on a hierarchical collection of increasingly powerful deciders for countless generations. During all of those generations, military organizations have been successful by teaching new recruits to respect and obey the decisions of the decision makers.

President George W. Bush epitomized this concept when he famously said in 2006, “I’m the decider and I decide what is best.” Starting early in the 20th century, industry began to adopt a variant of the military model. Enterprises began to emerge that were based on the now-familiar inverse pyramid organizational chart where those at the top of each organizational unit were decision makers. Corporations continued to follow the hierarchical model for a century because it worked. Over the years, the hierarchical corporations developed structures and standard business processes that directed and coordinated the activities of thousands of people who were often scattered across thousands of miles of geography. Hierarchical operations, with decision power concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, have produced thousands of complex products cheaply and effectively decade after decade.

Those involved in the arts tend to reject this hierarchical structure. There is a strong sense among artists that organization and structure stifles artistic freedom. Moreover, art is inherently something that has less clear definitions of right and wrong, good and bad. Artists tend to think of themselves as free spirits living in a world that does not include those decision makers. But, the reality is that decision makers exist in artistic communities much as they do in industrial communities, even if they are less obvious. Ultimately, the decision makers decide which artists will be given a shot and which will be forced to remain in obscurity.

Editors at news agencies prescribe truth for the nation. The world is as they say it is because they decide it is so. Movie company executives decide which movies the masses will watch. Record company executives prescribe the musical taste of a nation, while fiction editors decide which novels people will read on airplanes (most fiction is read on airplanes).

In spite of the fact that the Decision-Maker King reigned for a century, he is dead now. With the advent of global access to the Internet and social media, it is possible for anyone to comment on decisions. People's views have been given increased legitimacy by the tendency of social media to validate anyone relationships and crowd sourced news and viewpoints. The *anyone* force has driven a general decline in the role of hierarchies and "designated deciders" throughout society.

Even the military, the most hierarchical of organizations, is becoming more beige. The concept of a hierarchical and absolute command remains strong in critical, tactical situations. However, in more steady state, less intense situations, they are beginning to encourage a flatter organizational structure with multiple decision makers [8.1].

Industry is racing away from hierarchical structures even faster than the military. Corporate organizations and cultures are flattening and being by the moment. The *anyone* force drives expectation of flatness. Employees may see famous people from their organizations on Twitter and feel a personal connection. The crowd comments on all things and expects to be heard. Younger people, in particular, have little tolerance for hierarchical distinctions or the trappings of position and power [8.2]. Even the arts are feeling the effects of the demise of the Decision-Maker. The *anyone* force has removed much of the power of the creative moguls and has opened the world of arts to the crowd. Justin Bieber, for example, was discovered on YouTube and has grown to reach superstardom [8.3].

The death of the decision-maker has also changed the world of expert professional. Many of today's healthcare providers have seen the Internet become a de facto second opinion for virtually every case. Most doctors feel that the Internet is encroaching on doctor-patient relationships. Doctors are all too familiar with the phenomenon of patients entering the

examination room with wads of Internet printouts tucked under their arms.

While many doctors accept the fact that the Internet is the de facto second opinion, the reality is that in many cases this isn't quite true. On the contrary, 77% of patients reach for the Internet for medical information before opening the doctor's door, it's often the doctor who is really providing the second opinion [8.4]!

Educators also find that some problem parents search the Internet for information to be used to challenge the teacher. Dentists who declare that a patient's teeth "can't be straightened" are likely to see a pile of teethstraightening printouts in a heartbeat. This process is fundamentally altering our perception of expertise. Suddenly, anyone can challenge expertise and, potentially, be taken very seriously.

Advantages of the Death of The Decision-Maker

One of the benefits of the death of the Decision-Maker is simply that it satisfies people's inherent need to be heard. More importantly, it forces a more collaborative approach to decision-making and problem solving. Encouraging a broader set of inputs provides the benefits of additional creativity and cognitive conflicts, often resulting in better decisions.

It also has the effect of involving patients, customers, clients, partners, and the community more in decisions by encouraging experts to provide more information and to explain the basis for their decisions. Many researchers have concluded "the Internet offers far-reaching potential to engage patients more fully as partners in medical decision-making and in their course of treatment" [8.5]. Beyond these indirect forms of increased collaboration, the Internet also increases opportunities for direct and explicit collaboration. For example, telemedicine applications allow doctors to collaborate together on specific cases and allow expert specialists to assist general practitioners located in rural areas where specialists are few and far between. Similar approaches are used in various e-learning systems and other virtual work applications. All of them result in more client involvement in decision-making processes, and in clients having a better understanding of the decisions that are made.

Challenges Associated with the Death of the Decision-Maker

The fact that so many people use the Internet to do self-diagnosis for medical conditions creates serious problems for professionals and patients alike. There is a growing tendency toward “cybercondria” – people incorrectly concluding that they have a serious medical condition based on reading information from the Internet [8.6]. Given that typing “flu-like symptoms” into Google returns almost 20 million results, it’s easy to see how there could be a lot of confusion and misunderstanding.

It turns out that there’s a reason that doctors spend half their lives going to school. Through this process they gain deep, complex knowledge that simply isn’t available to everyone. If you have lung cancer you have lung cancer, whether the crowd likes it or not. There’s a reason that engineers need to decide on the size of the cables for the next massive suspension bridge. If you are a passenger on a 747, do you want the crowd to decide if it is safe to land during a storm in New York? The crowd’s choice of Justin Bieber as a superstar is perfectly fine since the choice is really a matter of taste; however, there are many decisions that really do require expertise and the significance of that expertise is being diminished by the anyone force.

CEOs exist for reasons beyond expertise. While they may, in fact, have expertise (and information) beyond that which is available to the crowd, they also exist so that someone, somewhere, actually makes a decision. One of the challenges associated with the death of the Decision-Maker is that it can lead to decision paralysis where time marches on and no clear decision is made. The paralysis may occur because no decision is made or because a decision is rendered, but the debate continues. There are examples of this type of paralysis that extend from the US Congress to corporations and organizations of every type.

Finally, the death of the Decision-Maker also means the death of One Responsibility. If no one is clearly empowered to make a decision, then there is no one clearly held responsible for the outcomes of that decision. It won’t take you long to discover that this will not move culture in a positive direction.

Building the Post-Decision-Maker World

Pebble Smart Watch is a great example of the evolution of the world following the death of the Decision-Maker. The Pebble Watch is designed to work together with a smartphone, connecting with Bluetooth technology. It trades information back and forth with the phone, allowing it to control the operation of the phone or display information from the phone [8.7]. The Pebble will display text messages and emails and it can be used to answer calls from the phone. It can also be used to control music on the phone and will perform functions such as keeping track of running distances.

Pebble is interesting as an example of a modern mobile device, but what is more interesting is *how* the device was developed. Pebble was developed using funding from Kickstarter, a crowdfunding site [8.8]. It went up on Kickstarter in April 2012 seeking to raise \$100,000 in a month. It raised that amount in only two hours and eventually went on to raise \$10.2 million from 69,000 funders providing an average of \$150 each [8.9]. Seven months after raising the funding, Pebble had a product and sold 85,000 units in its first offering. This development is a great example of life postDecision-Maker.

Takeaways Regarding the Death of the Decision-Maker

Crowdsourcing and crowd opinion input are here to stay. At a broader level, the uniqueness and value of individual expertise is fading due to both the availability of information from the crowd and the fact that eLearning is bringing specialized education to more of the world's population. The primary impacts on the workplace will be the flattening of organizations and the increasing expectation of collaboration and client involvement in key decisions. As an expert, you will need to find new, clever ways to exert (and create value) with your expertise.

Dead King 4

One Job

Do you remember the gold watch? The one they give out at a retirement ceremony after someone puts in forty years of faithful service on the job? That, of course, is long gone.

People no longer work for one company for life. In fact, many of them no longer even work for one company at a time. Increasingly, people work as contractors and temporary employees who serve many employers simultaneously. Even people who think of themselves as being permanently employed by a single employer will change that permanent employer many times in life. They work for one employer only in that they work for one employer at a time.

The *One Job King* is dead. He's most surely and completely dead, killed off by the *anywhere, anytime, and anyone* forces. In days gone by, there was an implicit contract that had employees exchanging company loyalty for job security. In those days, many employees would shop at the company store, and often lived in communities that consisted almost entirely of company housing. It wasn't unheard of for several generations to spend their lifetimes at the same company.

That contract has dissolved in recent years. American companies have moved quickly toward downsizing and outsourcing to reduce operational costs. Employees have moved away from company loyalty as a result, and toward individualism. Employees now market themselves to companies, rather than the other way around.

In the recent world recession many employees lost their jobs, including many knowledge workers and white-collar employees. Many of these employees accepted part-time and contract work as it became available. As the economy improves and these individuals begin to return to full-time work, many of them have come to enjoy the freedom and flexibility associated with contracting.

Job changing has become the norm. Today, the average American will hold seven to eight different jobs *before* age 30 [9.1]. The other significant trend is that companies are increasingly turning to part-time workers for tasks that they don't consider part of the core activities of the company.

They are building teams from a combination of permanent workers and part-time, contingency, and contract workers.

There are 28 million temporary workers in the US today. This represents over 20 percent of the total workforce, up more than 400 percent since 1980. Also, interesting is the fact that these temporary roles include employees of all types and levels, including professionals and high-level executives [9.2]. Experts believe that almost half of workers will be contingent workers by the year 2020 [9.3]. The result is that the composition of company workforces is increasingly beige. As a result of this beiging, a growing number of people are working as contingency workers, working on projects for a variety of different companies.

In the past, people who wanted to do volunteer work for non-profit organizations generally had to become full-time members of large organizations such as the Peace Corps. The forces that have impacted the workplace are impacting the world of charities as well. Many people are doing short-term volunteering assignments that combine service with vacationing (“Voluntourism”). Many of the individuals who return from such an experience want to continue doing volunteer work on a part-time basis. The availability of virtual connections has made it possible for people to remain engaged their favorite projects, while still maintaining paid employment. This trend beiges the life of the participant, but it also results in more beiging of the non-profit teams as they are formed by combining volunteers and paid participants [9.4].

Advantages of the Death of One Job

The death of One Job will have benefits to both employee and employer, although the employer may feel that the benefits are less obvious. The primary benefit is that it allows for a better fit between a workers and roles. In the old One Job paradigm, workers often spent large parts of their work life working in a job that was not the best fit for them. Even if they were a good fit at one point in time, that fit might become very unfitting as changes occur in the industry, the company, or the worker.

When workers have more flexibility to change jobs as conditions warrant, it is much more likely that the right person will end up in the right job.

Workers will no longer stay in inappropriate positions and companies will no longer be forced to retain employees in positions where they simply don't fit. Moreover, the availability of virtual workers means companies can search for these good fits over a much wider geographic region. Also, there are clear advantages to society in that the added flexibility that allows workers to pursue other professional endeavors while still serving in nonpaid community roles at the same time.

Challenges Associated with the Death of One Job

The chief challenge associated with the death of One Job is the difficulty that individuals may have in sorting out their work lives. The life of the average employee was already complicated due to the being of place and time. It becomes even more complicated with the being of organizational affiliations and relationships. This complication can be simply about time and focus, but it can also be about much more serious and pernicious issues such as security and the maintenance of confidential information. When all aspects of life are beige – place, time, relationships, employment, etc. – it can be very difficult to sort them all out and ensure that no confidential information is bleeding across the boundaries.

One of the most difficult aspects of “beige management” is the need to maintain a duty of loyalty to the various players involved. Should employees be allowed to share their opinion of a company matter on social networking sites? Should employers be allowed to access those sites to review employee information? What if a contract employee works on several different projects simultaneously for competitive companies? These issues will grow in significance, as all aspects of life become more beige.

Building the Post-One-Job World

There are a number of different groups that are developing applications that are intended to help deal with the post-one-job world in one way or another. Tracky (9.5) is a great example of a product that was born to deal with the beige world. Tracky is a collaborative task management tool with all the pieces that are required for a group of people to work together on a complex project. Rather than using a collection of Outlook, Basecamp,

Yammer, and Dropbox, the team can rely on Tracky for all of these capabilities in one integrated environment.

The most important aspect, as it relates to the unraveling of beige lives, is the group-management component at the heart of Tracky. It allows users to establish Groups of people who will work together on some program. Tracks can be marked as “secret” so that just the people assigned to it can view the project. Or, it can be marked as “public” so that it can be discoverable by the entire online community. This provision supports powerful internal collaboration, but it also takes advantage of the *anyone* force.

It is certainly true that the average person consumes a lot of valuable time dealing with multiple tools to complete a complex task, but the real killer is the fact that the average user is struggling to try to keep up with multiple lives; or, more accurately, with the being of life. Almost all of the existing tools assume that the user is working within one specific activity context, for example, a specific company, a specific charity, or personal friends. This makes it very difficult to move among these various contexts. For example, Facebook makes it very difficult to separate personal and professional lives. Facebook forbids multiple accounts so a user that wants to connect with both personal and professional friends must comingle them, and comingle the communications that go out to them. This can create serious issues with both the personal and professional communities. Tools like Tracky allow an individual to manage his or her various lives, including those that involve personal activities and those that involve one or more companies without any unintended interaction among them.

Summary and Takeaways Regarding the Death of the One Job

The tradition of One Job has led to many situations in which workers remained in jobs for which they were not well suited. In many cases, these mismatches remained for many years, and in some cases for a lifetime. One of the most important results of the death of One Job will be a weakening of this traditional effect. As companies begin to form teams on a project basis, they will make every effort to find the best fit between employees and roles.

Once the project is completed many of the team members will move on to other roles where again they will be assigned based on a best fit.

No longer will employers leave employees in place simply because they don't know what else to do with them. No longer will workers stay in roles that are not appropriate for them simply because they think of themselves as working for a single company forever. After the death of One Job, the relationships between employee and employers will be dynamic, and roles will be staffed by workers that are the best fit. This will have huge benefits for companies and workers in the long run.

What Shall Become of Us?

The being of the world is accelerating. In the very immediate future, the most significant change will be dramatic improvements in the quality of virtual meeting environments. There are two different approaches that are currently being developed. One is to use image recognition software to add real-time realistic human expressions to the avatars that represent the participants in 3D virtual workspaces (each participant will be tracked by the software using a normal web cam and the expressions on the faces of the participants will be mapped automatically onto the avatars). Using this approach, the avatars will look very much like real people and the environments will look much more like real face-to-face meetings.

The second approach is to use projected holograms to represent each of the participants. This approach produces very realistic, life-like representations of the participants that once again create an environment that is very similar to a face-to-face meeting. These improved environments will see the addition of gesture-based interfaces and advanced embedded capabilities such as real-time natural language translation. It is often assumed that face-to-face meetings are the gold standard of meetings. All other approaches seek to replicate the face-to-face experience. Once these capabilities are added to virtual environments, they will begin to surpass face-to-face as a meeting style. Ultimately, the virtual meeting environments could be much *better* than face-to-face for a variety of reasons such as convenience, lack of commute, and overcoming language barriers.

So far, most of the impact of the transition to a beige work environment has been on knowledge workers. That impact will expand as the beige trends are combined with other trends that are currently developing. For example, the growing use of robots for a myriad of uses will extend the reach of the *anywhere* force. Robots already attend meetings in the place of individuals, provide nursing services in hospitals, provide various forms of elder care, and provide emotional companionship to those who have limited opportunity for social interaction due to physical disability.

3D printers can now be used to print every imaginable object from houses to cars to kidneys. In the future, they will extend the *anywhere* force by making it possible for those who deal with 3D objects to print them in a remote location. As we see these changes moving forward, it will be interesting to step back from technical discussions and assess what the social impacts will be.

The beiging of the world will drive changes in language and other aspects of culture. For example, it will bring English to many more cultures, but it will also change the language itself as it is colored by the accents and usage patterns of groups that were not previously native English speakers. Urban and environmental planning will undergo a mini-revolution as society seeks to decentralize. Some aspects of this decentralization are positive from an environment and urban planning viewpoint; others will introduce new challenges.

Beyond the obvious social impacts, there will be others that are less visible. These changes will be more profound because they are much more fundamental. Some of the changes will impact the basic state of current society. One of the most important changes will be elimination of the remnants of various forms of discrimination and the empowerment of elements of society, which have historically disadvantaged. Society has long struggled to eliminate all vestiges of racial prejudice. In many virtual environments, the participants are not directly visible and so their race is not an issue. Also, it isn't known to any of the other participants. Even in 3D virtual workspaces, where participants are represented as avatars, there is no need for participants to choose an avatar from their physical race (and many do not). Moreover, as the beiging of the world routinely exposes people to a broader collection of races and cultures, it will be harder to maintain sustained racial prejudice.

Beiging of the world will drive radical realignment of power, dominance, and wealth among the countries of the world. Online education will make advanced skills available in all areas of the world, and virtual work will make it possible for people in developing areas to apply the skills gained with online education to high-paying jobs around the world. This effect will benefit developing regions, but will present a challenge to those regions

that are currently dominate. The *anyone* force, and the availability of talent throughout the world, will make skill sets that are present in the currently dominating regions less unique and, therefore, less valuable. The availability of virtual work will also increase the influence and position of seniors in society as it makes it possible for them to continue part-time employment into advanced age. A number of programs are already underway to encourage retiring baby boomers to use virtual work to continue their participation in the world of work. Lastly, the availability of virtual work will make it possible for disabled people to participate in the workforce in ways that have not been possible in the past.

The beige world will also have two huge impacts on the nature of important personal relationships. First, the *anyone* force will tend to broaden the network of each individual. Social networking and global interconnections will drive individuals to form more relationships – both personal and professional – with more people in more areas. As individuals spend more time interacting with beige relationships, the amount of time spent with family and close friends will necessarily decrease. Beyond the shrinking importance of the family is the accompanying shrinking importance of the individual. As the *anyone* force makes it more possible for people and organizations to reach out and connect with anyone in the world, the importance of any one specific individual tends to decrease. This introduces the possibility that some individuals in the beige world will feel constantly connected and personally disconnected at the same time. The second major impact results from the fact that the nature of beige relationships tend to be not only more numerous, but also more ambiguous than the nature of relationships in the past. The presence of a greater number of relationships (especially ambiguous relationships) will put more pressure on marriages and other situations that call for unique bonding.

In conclusion, individuals will deal with an increasing pressure due to the *buffet effect* that comes from a combination of all four of the beige forces. Each of the beige forces presents the individual worker with a buffet of choices. In tomorrow's world, it will be possible to work anywhere, to work all the time, to participate in a host of commentaries and decisions, and to work simultaneously on many different jobs with many different

people. This has the prospect of being very valuable and exciting, but it also has the prospect of making some of us very stressed and metaphorically fat. The beiging of the world may reduce the relative significance of an individual on the global scale, but it greatly expands the role of the individual in making choices from a widening array of possibilities. Some of us struggle with buffets. We tend to want to take at least a little of bit of everything just to try it out. Overeating is the inevitable result.

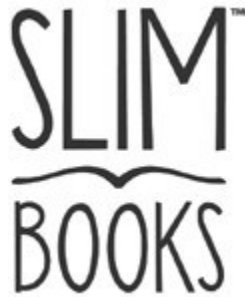
As time goes by, people and organizations will develop new and interesting ways to deal with these challenges. As these developments move out into the future, they will learn to deal effectively with many of them. Meanwhile, back in the world of the present, we are already seeing the decentralization of the workplace as the beige world expands in many different directions. We are already reaching the point where it is possible to work anywhere, anytime, with anyone, and on anything. This beiging will present significant challenges, and will put pressure on individuals to be their own masters, but it will also bring new and exciting possibilities that could only be imagined even ten years ago. Best of luck to you as you navigate a prosperous future.

About the Author

Dave Rolston is originally from New River, Arizona. He received his PhD in computer science from Arizona State University, and is a registered civil engineer. Dave has worked in agriculture, urban planning, education, defense and intelligence, medical devices, semiconductors, cell phones, and gaming consoles. He worked on early stages of the Internet, more than 100 films, and many video games.

Relevant to this topic, he was CEO of a company that built 3D virtual worlds to support the virtual workforce. Dave has been CEO of four earlystage companies and has been the GM of three large corporate divisions. He currently is an advisor to a variety of startups, and a Senior Director at Intel.

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3.4 <http://goo.gl/gdwl4>

4.1 <http://goo.gl/mjiFD>

5.1 <http://goo.gl/LaCOH>

6.1 <http://goo.gl/PtWVj>

6.2 <http://goo.gl/PBhTF>

6.3 <http://goo.gl/PBhTF>

6.4 <http://goo.gl/rgDHx>

6.5 <http://goo.gl/yd6CF>

7.1 <http://goo.gl/G3p0R>

7.2 <http://goo.gl/nF99B>

7.3 <http://wp.me/p2nZ8P-bX>

7.4 <http://goo.gl/EzlCQ>

8.1 <http://goo.gl/Xtu6G>

8.2 <http://goo.gl/3R0Do>

8.3 <http://goo.gl/YTusd>

8.4 <http://goo.gl/dkirH>

8.5 <http://goo.gl/VCqGV>

8.6 <http://goo.gl/dkirH>

8.7 <http://getpebble.com/>

8.8 <http://www.kickstarter.com/>

8.9 <http://goo.gl/GAu2S>

9.1 <http://tinyurl.com/cz4f5ng>

9.2 <http://goo.gl/fZWJl>

9.3 <http://tinyurl.com/22kxg2e>

9.4 <http://goo.gl/FtSks>

9.5 www.tracky.com