



AI++: Innovations in AI through the Lens of Australia and New Zealand

Guest Editors: **Sallie Lee and Dayle O'Brien**

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Positive Psychology**

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Sallie Lee

For fifteen years, Sallie Lee, working through her consulting practice, Shared Sun Studio, has offered creative, practical processes for whole systems, serving as thinking partner, facilitator and strategist for client groups, training over 1000 people in AI. She has worked in Australia annually for ten years. Sallie lives in Asheville, NC.

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Dayle O'Brien

is an Australian OD practitioner introduced to AI whilst working with the ANZ Bank on their Cultural Transformation Team. Her success and affinity with AI inspired her to begin a consulting practice, paint group, which is dedicated to bringing a fresh approach to Change and OD in Australia.

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AI++: Innovations in AI through the Lens of Australia and New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Welcome from Sallie and Dayle to the May 2011 issue. There is such a proliferation of interest in AI and strengths-based approaches in the two countries that the twelve articles contained here provide only a small taste, but a rich one. Our hope is that this issue will shine a light on the intriguing applications being tried, bring more Australian and New Zealand AI practitioners out of the woodwork to participate in the global community and help the AI community in both countries to grow.

The idea for this issue of AIP was born at the 2009 AI Conference in Nepal. It grew from a breakfast conversation Sallie and Dayle had with Anne Radford about Sallie's experience of working with Australian and New Zealand consultants and organizations over the past ten years. She had just completed a workshop series in Perth, Australia, and had a fresh reminder of her sense over the years that the professionals there were some of the most innovative, up-to-date, and well-trained she had encountered anywhere in the world.

The conversation turned into a request from Anne that Sallie and Dayle, who lives near Melbourne, guest edit an issue of *AI Practitioner* on AI evolution and innovation in Australia and New Zealand.

Anne was also curious about their observations on the way many practitioners in the two countries combine AI with other methodologies and approaches, to form what Sallie and Dayle began calling AI ++ (Plus-Plus).

We decided to pull on that thread of innovation and curiosity. We wanted to hear what people were thinking about and experimenting with, in terms of AI combined with other approaches and with new thinking about its principles and practice. So we put out a call to our colleagues and to the whole AI community for stories of AI ++ 'down under'.

This issue is the result.

What's inside

We have categorized the articles two ways: **Whole System Innovation** and **Innovations in Practice**: Leadership; Facilitation; and Community Building.



Dayle participating at her first AI workshop in 2004

Whole system innovation

Four of the articles deal with wide-scope applications of AI, providing some of the most exciting stories we have heard of how AI can make a difference and deliver big visions. They deal with potentially staggering numbers of people in the targeted systems and people taking bold risks to see what might be possible.

Impacting Education

Pathways to Positive Education at Geelong Grammar School: Integrating Positive Psychology and Appreciative Inquiry

Paige Williams brings us an account of a five-year ongoing commitment to applying Positive Education: Positive Psychology to all aspects of school life in a premier school providing education from Early Learning (3-year-olds) through to Year 12. Appreciative Inquiry is one important way through which the school is developing this at an organisational level – a positive institution as a container for positive education. Geelong Grammar has partnered with Dr. Marin Seligman and brought other visiting scholars in positive psychology to the campus to ground and inform their vision of a new model of education.

Impacting a Corporation and its Clients

What Would You Like to Change and Grow? Price Waterhouse Coopers Explores Positive Conversational Habits

PwC Australia has integrated Hope Theory and Appreciative Inquiry to inspire otherwise analytically inclined minds into inquiry-led conversations, to satisfy the changing needs of its clients and develop a habit of conversation. They are part way through a three-year strategy to engage their 6,200 auditors, tax advisors and business consultants in a highly visible brand and culture program centred on the practice of asking clients, staff and the communities PwC serve positively challenging questions. So far, there have been more than 170,000 conversations!

Impacting Communities

Many Voices, One Purpose: Innovations in New Zealand in AI Practice for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

In New Zealand, Jigsaw, an association of over 40 organizations, has chosen to champion a paradigm shift through a national social change strategy called Many Voices, One Purpose. This strategy is based on the belief that 'when we bring together our collective ideas, influence and wisdom, the impossible becomes the possible'. As an agency with a dual purpose of preventing child abuse and family violence, and promoting the safety and well being of children, their families and communities, Jigsaw seeks to coordinate opportunities for local communities to discover, believe in and grow their own capacity to ensure the protection and nurturing of their children.

Impacting a Nation

Creating a New Paradigm of Unstoppable Positive Social Change

Lisa Doig, Karen Muller and team have used AI and an AI summit for the purpose of igniting a nation-wide dialogue to transform the culture in Australia and contribute to unstoppable positive social change. Read about their big vision and tools they have used along the way.



Results from an Oz workshop



Inspire Foundation Summit, Sydney, Australia, 2008. One of the authors in this issue, Lisa Doig, was lead facilitator.



View of Sydney Harbour, from the Inspire Foundation AI Summit

Innovations in Practice

This group of articles captures applications in the areas of leadership, facilitation and community building.

Leadership

Becoming Appreciative Leaders: Integrating AI and Strength-Based Approaches into an MBA Program

Barbara Wood, driven by her desire to teach students to be better leaders in diverse business environments and have them take more responsibility for their own learning, has incorporated AI, VIA Strengths, learner mindset and other strengths-based applications into her MBA Leadership Coaching unit.

Re-Storying for Individual Potential

Dayle O'Brien, when invited to develop an emerging leaders workshop for one of Australia's biggest banks combined AI and Individual Strengths to invite participants to 're-story' and set new and exciting paths for their futures.

Resilient Leadership: Grounded in a Strength-based and Appreciative Life

Wendy Campbell's personal life experiences and reflections have spawned a new on-line leadership program, targeting resilience-building in leaders of social and environmental change. She shares a very personal account of her path of discovery and reflection.

Facilitation

'Being' AI To 'Do' AI

Max Hardy has written an article that is likely to be of interest to all AI facilitators. He shares what he has learned and noticed so far about what it takes to 'be' AI. His tips can encourage readers to think about their own techniques for 'being AI'.

Facilitating Strategic AI Interventions

Liz Mellish, one of the pioneers in AI applications in Australia, brings us her wisdom on maximising the interplay between knowledge of the strategic context, professional facilitation competence and the application of Appreciative Inquiry to benefit the organisation. She walks us through windows of possibility for planning effective strategic interventions.

Building the Optimal Cricket Operation

Building on his years of experience as a sports psychologist and AI practitioner, Sandy Gordon brings us insights into the Western Australia Cricket Association's [WACA] workshop to look at their operations and how he worked with appreciative facilitation to do it.

Community Building

AI and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) in the Defence Community Organisation

The Defence Community Organisation has been focusing on building self-reliance and broader community engagement within families of Australia's



Sallie and Dayle in Barwon Heads, Australia, 2008



Bondi Beach, Sydney

Defence Forces. This article outlines the way in which the Family Action Centre drew on AI and ABCD in a workshop series that challenged some traditional thinking and generated some exciting possibilities for Defence Force families.

Creating a Professional Learning Community: Embedding AI In A Complexity Thinking Framework

Chris Jansen, from the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, provides a wonderful introduction to complexity thinking, using an approach integrating an AI framework with complexity thinking to inform professional learning processes.

Sallie and Dayle: personal history and connection

We first met in 2004 when Sallie was consulting to ANZ, one of Australia's top five banks, headquartered in Melbourne. It was a long-term project that included a workshop series – that Dayle attended. Sallie's long-term love affair with Australia and New Zealand began in 1971 when she took time off from university studies in the US and went 'down under' on a year-long adventure. Despite lots of travel elsewhere, including six years living in South America, she never forgot the dynamism and draw of those two fascinating and refreshing cultures.

It took until 2001 to make it back to the region. Invited by several Australian colleagues, she found herself in Sydney teaching an AI Foundations workshop. This small workshop spawned others and a network of friendships and professional connections that has brought her back to the Australia/New Zealand at least once a year since then. One connection created a long-term project with ANZ, one of Australia's top five banks, headquartered in Melbourne – where Dayle and Sallie met in 2004. Dayle spent the first 15 years of her OD practice working as an employee of some of Australia's best-known corporate brands. It is only in the last few years that she has stepped out into her own consulting practice (paint group), focusing on AI and strengths-based approaches to change. Her intrigue and connection to AI was sparked when she attended that very first workshop with Sallie, in 2004.

We connected at many levels and have enjoyed evolving from student/teacher, to friends and colleagues. We continue to learn from each other and enjoy the times when our work and teachings bring us together, somewhere in the world: actual or virtual summit planning; meeting up at the AI global conferences; or simply sharing thoughts and updates over Skype. In 2008, we were invited to be a part of the support team for the Inspire Foundation (AI) Summit, whose mission is to help millions of young people lead happier lives. We have also co-facilitated AI introductions and trainings in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth.

AI in OZ/NZ

Our hope for this edition is that it will shine a light on some of the innovative and exciting work being done with AI and strengths-based approaches in Australia, and draw more Australians and New Zealanders into the global network and community – adding to its richness and diversity. AI networking within Australia is in its infancy. David Cooperrider came to Australia for the first time last year – invited by PwC. An AI Certificate Program through Case Western was also introduced in Melbourne. We look forward to a continuing presence from Australia and New Zealand in the coming years. We hope you enjoy the collection of articles. **Sallie Lee and Dayle O'Brien** Guest Editors, May 2011

**Mette Jacobsgaard**

is a lawyer and social scientist who has worked with development aid for 28 years especially in Africa and Asia. She has used AI in her practice as a consultant and trainer since 1994.

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About the August 2011 Issue

The Impact of AI on International Development

The conflicting paradigms of international development are addressed in this issue of *AI Practitioner*: on the one hand, the underlying paradigm that the Third World is a problem to be solved; on the other, the paradigm of public participation which believes that the peoples of the Third World need to take ownership of their development and more actively participate in the projects and programmes that are supposed to aid them.

Mette: I first came to AI in 1994 when returning to Cambridge University for research. Tired of years of 'trying to solve the problems of the Third World', I was looking to find ways to change my approach. I met fellow student Jane Magruder Watkins who introduced me to AI. The concept was not only a revelation, but also finding something that I had long been looking for. At the time the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) programme was being tested by USAID in the developing world, with great success. Jane, together with colleagues in the US, was instrumental in taking the philosophy of AI into practice, especially in the Third World. Together with Dr. Charles Elliott from Cambridge University, Jane and I tested AI in some pretty extreme environments and situations – and it worked wonders.

Our experience since then has time and again proved how AI can accommodate empowerment and participation in beneficiary communities.

Irene and Mette were curious about other practitioners' experience with applying AI in their projects and programmes in the Developing World. They asked a number of practitioners to tell their stories, especially with the following focus:

- How the use of AI has influenced target group participation and ownership in the project or programme or specific intervention
- What the effects and impact were;
- What surprises they and the groups had; and finally
- What lessons were learned and their reflections on how AI could be carried forward in international development practice.



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IAPG Contacts and AI Practitioner Subscription Information



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Purpose of AI Practitioner

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