

## 2012 School Seminar Series

Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa



THE UNIVERSITY OF

WAIKATO

Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

# Innovation and the Authoring of the Large Organization, Why the Problem?

Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012

2.00pm – 3.30pm

MSB.4.02

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### Abstract:

We are unaccustomed to thinking of it in this way, but the authorship of organization is not a privilege of some special group, such as a policy task force, or a strategy committee. Everybody is authoring their own organization, all the time; if they were not, there would *be* no organization. The authoring occurs at three levels. First, every individual understands his or her experience with others by formulating it as a personal narrative, or account. Second, as those same people collectively engage with each other to construct a shared world of practice, anchored in materiality, they interactively make sense not only of what is happening but come to identify their own place in the community, as well as its powers and its limitations. Third, until these disparate, typically geographically dispersed communities manage to organize themselves as a collectivity they possess no common organizational identity. But because this more extended establishment of organization is loosely coupled it can quickly develop settled patterns of interaction and distribution of privileges of authorship, typically inscribed in texts that are supposed to embody the established authority. The problem here, however is that the resultant hierarchy reflects only where the organization has been, not always where it is now.

When the organization ventures into new domains of practice, typically as a consequence of technical innovation, it is the local communities who learn first, and it is they who develop new kinds of expertise and a different understanding of the organizational order. What happens to an organization when local expertise comes up against the established régimes of authority, when, in other words, expertise and corporate position contradict each other?

### Biographical note

James R. Taylor, Ph.D., F.I.C.A, is the author, co-author or editor of eight books, including *Une organisation n'est qu'un tissu de communications: essais théoriques* Taylor, J.R. (1988), *Rethinking the theory of organizational communication, How to Read an Organization* (1993), and (in collaboration), with M. Chevalier, *The Dynamic of Adaptation in the Federal Administration* (1970), with E. Van Every, *The Vulnerable Fortress: Bureaucratic organization and management in the information age* (1993), *The Emergent Organization: Communication as its Site and Surface* (2000) and *The Situated Organization: Case Studies in the Pragmatics of*

*Communication Research* (2011). Other edited books include *The computerization of work: A communication perspective* (Taylor, Groleau, Heaton & Van Every, 2001) and *Empirical explorations into the dynamic of text and conversation* (Cooren, F., Taylor, J. R. & Van Every, E. J., eds, 2006). He is the author of more than ninety scientific articles, published in four languages, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. He has received several "best paper" awards at ICA and NCA. He is a fellow of the International Communication Association, an Emeritus Professor and "Pioneer" of the Université de Montréal (as founder of its Department of Communication), he has also been voted outstanding member of the Organizational Communication Division of the International Communication Association.

**Presenter:** James Taylor