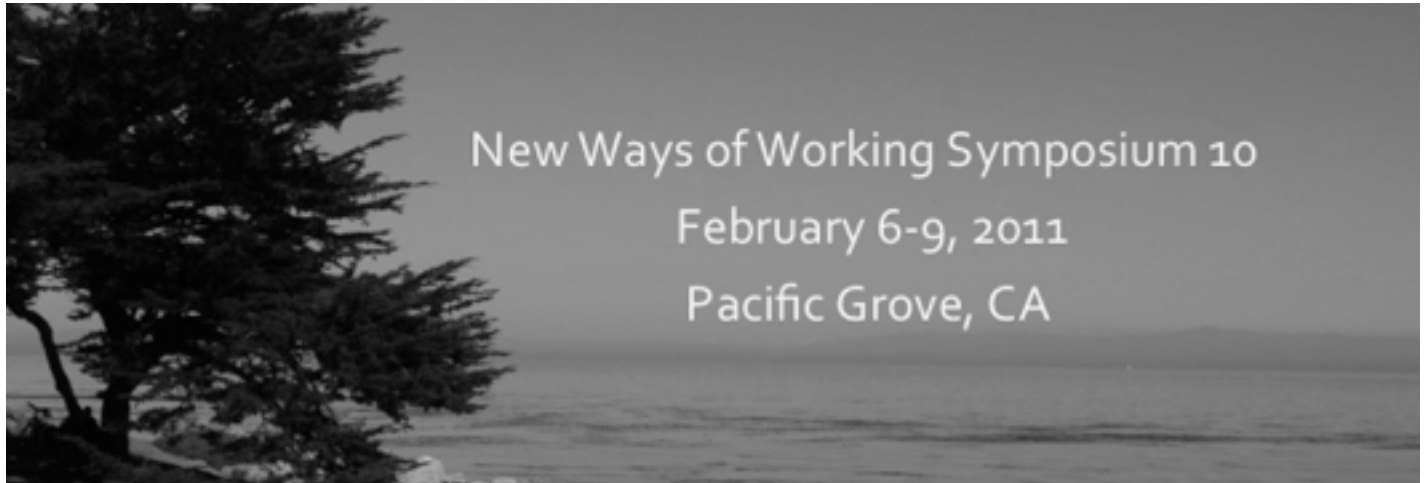




**NEWWOW**  
*New Ways of Working*



In February 2011, thought leaders from around the world converged on the Asilomar Conference Grounds at Pacific Grove, California. They met to network, share learnings, investigate new ideas, try out new technologies, work together, argue, agree, and have fun.

Forty experts from the intersection of architecture, workplace design, information technology, psychology, engineering, human resources, and organizational development shared experiences and collaborated to develop a methodology for examining work performance.

This was the most international group ever – fully half of the attendees came from Europe—Finland, France, the Netherlands and Spain. The Finnish delegation nearly matched the numbers of those from the United States.



### **Cool tools**

SMART Technologies shipped in three Smart Board Interactive Whiteboards for our use. Think Tom Cruise in *Minority Report*. The Boards could be used as whiteboards to capture information but also as projectors to display video, presentations, graphics and the like. What was cool—think Tom Cruise in the movie *Minority Report*—was the ability to rearrange the data on the fly. Remote attendees were patched in using SMART's Bridgit Conferencing software and could add their thoughts to the mix. These interactive tools elevated the symposium to a new, higher level of collaboration.



## Meet and greet

As per tradition, NewWOW's symposium opened with a Sunday night mixer, dinner and brief introductions. Each person described an interesting recent project. Here's just a few: politics of sustainability, anthropology of work, open innovation design, workplace acoustics, tools for real-time workplace measurement, a kit of parts for workplaces that support engineering groups, and an improved collaboration toolkit. One person was even working on a funeral home design employing new workplace concepts.



## "Aha" moments

Jan Johnson: *"Be careful what you measure."*

Jay Brand: *"If measures are contingent - dependent on context – then our quest for prediction remains elusive."*

Joe Ouye: *"I've learned that the problem is not the lack of measurements. There are many. There is pretty much a tool to measure anything you want-- from social networks to cultural dimensions. The real difficulty is not measuring but understanding what the problem is in the first place. It's all too common to measure something just because you have the tool. It's far more difficult to understand the problem sufficiently to the point where you can define the few measurements that will capture the problem. If you end up with more than five measurements, you probably don't really understand the problem."*

## Keynotes and power speakers

**Tim Springer**, Ph.D., President of Human Environment Research Organization, summed up the core challenges of work performance measurement and provided a framework for developing a methodology. This involved answering six basic questions every reporter knows, but with the order changed significantly. The questions: why, who, what, how, when and where? A key takeaway: keep in mind that we need to analyze work before we can begin to measure it. Springer described a number of useful measurement tools and methodologies including cognitive work analysis (CWA), work shadowing, ethnography, concept maps, and social network analysis. He ended by sharing some questions for further research. For example, how might technology change to facilitate better, unobtrusive performance measurement?

**Judith Heerwagen**, environmental psychologist with the United States General Service Administration Office of Federal High Performance Green Buildings, talked about the performance paradox. Most organizations rely on teams to carry out mission-critical work yet performance (and performance measurement) is largely based on individual contributions.

**Jay Brand** and **Gabor Nagy** demonstrated some of Haworth Ideation's new web-based measurement tools. One tool is used to assess workplace satisfaction, work-styles (including mobile ones), and organizational culture. Gabor also shared preliminary results of workplace social network analysis using the Hitachi Business Microscope.

**Joe Ouye**, cofounder of New Ways of Working and **Eric Richert**, founding partner with Co3 Group, discussed the characteristics of wicked problems and how these problems affect work systems measurement. They described several case studies that illustrated wicked problem issues.

**Marie Puybaraud**, Director Global WorkPlace Innovation for Johnson Controls Global WorkPlace Solutions, shared preliminary findings of a study of innovation and collaborative working. She observed that working collaboratively can be a powerful enabler of improved business performance, but successful collaboration rarely emerges out of the blue and should not be taken for granted.



### Group activities and presentations

Participants gathered in teams to work through different performance measurement issues. They discussed performance measurement challenges and identified criteria for measuring group performance for a software development group. Innovative group presentations followed. On the final day, all hands compiled a list of desirable tools for measuring work and work performance for future development.

### Inspiring surroundings

The Arts & Crafts meeting room was filled with light and close to nature though it was sometimes hard to pay attention to a presentation when a family of mule deer grazed just outside the window. Breaks were taken outdoors. Lunches included a short hike to the dining hall designed by architect Julia Morgan. Longer breaks could include a quick walk to the beach. An afternoon off featured a trip to the world famous Monterey Bay Aquarium.



NewWOW members can view a detailed summary of the event on the member's website. [www.newwow.net/members/node/1969](http://www.newwow.net/members/node/1969). Members may also download a copy of Tim Springer's white paper, Measuring Work and Work Performance, available at [www.newwow.net/members/node/1921](http://www.newwow.net/members/node/1921)

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