



WHO Staff Development and Learning and Knowledge Management and Sharing invite you to a seminar with

# David Snowden

Founder and Chief Scientific Officer

Cognitive Edge Pte Ltd

Former Director

IBM Institute for Knowledge Management

## Revealing hidden patterns in health

New methods for global and public health practice from advances in cognitive and complexity sciences

**Keynote Presentation**

**Monday 22 October, 15:00 to 17:00 CET**

Salle C, WHO Headquarters, Geneva and available via web conference

**Two Workshops**

**Tuesday, 23 October, 9:00 - 12:30 and 14:00 - 17:00**

Salle C, WHO Headquarters, Geneva. Register for workshops via the intranet training registration (note: only the Monday event is available via web conference; the workshops are limited enrollment in-person only)



From the exhibition "Bangladesh: First and Lasting Impressions"  
Sonogram, Bangladesh, © Michael Reichmann 2005

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## **A Keynote Presentation and Workshops with Dave Snowden**

Chief Scientific Officer and Founder, Cognitive Edge

Former Director, IBM Institute for Knowledge Management

**Keynote Presentation:** Monday, October 22, 2007, 15:00 - 17:00, Salle C

**Workshops:** Tuesday, October 23, 2007, 9:00 - 12:30 and 14:00 - 17:00, Salle C

Register for the workshops by email to [kcsmail@who.int](mailto:kcsmail@who.int)

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### **About the Seminar - a few words on the keynote presentation and workshops**

Cognitive scientists have uncovered startling findings about our ability to pay attention to what matters and ignore what doesn't. In doing so we are able to successfully navigate complex situations without becoming overwhelmed. But this ability sometimes works to our disadvantage: we miss what's important because we don't know (yet) that it is important. Only in retrospect do we discover what we had seen all along, but failed to notice.

Can we act on this insight about our very nature, to change our practices accordingly? Can we evolve to cope with future challenges?

In the keynote presentation and workshops that follow, you will learn:

- How to distinguish between simple, complicated, and complex situations and the different ways to intervene that are appropriate to each case
- The latest insights into why we perceive the world around us the way we do - the very nature of expertise and how it is acquired
- How we make decisions - a first-fit pattern match, blending fragments to deal with situations, versus a selection among rationally considered alternatives
- How categorization has become the dominant sense-making device - putting labels on things and putting them into boxes - and what the alternative is
- How to remain open to weak signals - "anticipatory awareness" - and avoid expert bias leading to ignoring valuable data

Practical methods and applications in health and other sectors will also be discussed, in particular for measurement, monitoring and evaluation.

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## **Keynote Presentation**

Sense-making is defined as "how do we make sense of the world so that we can act in it", it carries with it the notion of sufficiency, not completeness of information. Naturalising sense-making both draws on the naturalising tradition in philosophy (applying insights from the natural sciences, subject to validation and proof) but also opposes approaches to strategy based on idealistic future states, instead focusing on experimental safe-fail approaches that allow novel and innovation futures to emerge in a managed way.

In this presentation Dave Snowden will introduce key insights from complex adaptive systems theory and the cognitive sciences and look at its implications for research and intervention design. He will look at decision models that recognise the important of context and narrative approaches to the measurement of impact based on current projects. Narrative inquiry offers a quantitative approach to research in areas normally only handled qualitatively and is currently in use in a variety of intractable areas. Current examples include Aboriginal Health and issues of child abuse in Australia and understanding patient guilt in the context of cancer treatment in the USA. Planned projects include understanding reasons for refusal of HIV treatment in the South African Mining industry and a series of projects on community support for chronic disease management.

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## **Workshops**

Please note that the workshops may be attended separately (Part 1 OR Part 2) or together.

### **Part 1 - Morning Session: 9.00am - 12.30pm**

Following a brief summary of the previous day's keynote presentation that will serve as an introduction and overview, Dave and participants will specify the agenda based on issues that the participants would like to explore in more depth. Such an agenda may include deeper elaboration of practical methods, specific issues in projects or programs being carried out by participants, or explanations of projects under way in other organizations that may be relevant for participants.

### **Part 2 - Afternoon Session: 2.00pm - 5.00pm**

The afternoon session will focus on the topic of primary health care and the World Health Report 2008. As such, the agenda for the session is to work through issues raised by participants in relation to primary health care and the report. Frameworks introduced by Dave Snowden will be used to do so. In addition to the contributors and writers of the World Health Report, others sharing an interest in the topic are welcome to join this session as well.

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## Attending via Web Conference

The seminar will be made available live through the University of Iowa Global Campus. To connect to the seminar, you will need:

- A computer connected with the Internet (a dialup connection of at least 28.8K is enough, although faster is better);
- Audio speakers connected to the computer to hear the audio portion of the presentations
- (optional) A microphone connected to the computer to participate in discussions
- (optional) A headset with earphones and a microphone can be used alternatively.

It is very important that you complete a simple configuration procedure as follows:

- Go to <http://globalcampus.uiowa.edu> and click on "KM4PH Knowledge Management for Public Health - WHO"
- Enter your name as you prefer; we suggest adding your location so everyone can see where you are (eg: John Doe UK)
- NO PASSWORD is required so leave it blank and click the Login button (if you enter a password, you will receive an error message.)

The first time you use Elluminate via the University of Iowa Global Campus, it will install Java Web Start automatically during the login process. This can take anywhere from 2 to 20 minutes depending on your internet connection speed.

Once you are logged in, you may be prompted to select your internet connection speed. Be sure to select the correct choice so that you will have optimal performance.

This online meeting session is open 24 hours a day and can be used to practice using Elluminate.

Additional information:

If you wish to make a comment or ask a question, you may do so either with a microphone or by sending a text message. Here are a few additional tips regarding the use of speakers and microphones:

- Make sure all cable connectors are securely seated and plugged into the correct sockets
- Check the speakers' indicator light (if you have one) to see that it is functioning OK, that the power switch (if you have one) is on, and the volume is at an appropriate level;
- If your microphone has a switch, make sure that it is on and that you have the correct drivers for your sound card
- Once connected, the software provides a utility to help configure and check your audio settings. You can access this utility at anytime during your session by going to the TOOLS menu, then AUDIO, and then SET UP AUDIO. The instructions will walk you through the process.

For more in depth training on using Elluminate, there is a training resource on the internet comprised of recorded instruction sessions and print documents. It can be found at the following link: <http://www.illuminate.com/support/training>

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## **Biography of David Snowden**

Dave Snowden is the founder and chief scientific officer of Cognitive Edge. He works on the application of natural sciences to social systems in both industry, government and NGOs. He works in the areas of pre-hypothesis research, weak signal detection and decision making as well as innovation. He is an entertaining speaker and a formidable realist, and one of the few thought leaders who can bring together the academic and practitioner perspectives into a single, comprehensible purview.

He left IBM in July 2004 having been a Director of IBM's Institute for Knowledge Management and the founder of the Cynefin Centre for Organisational Complexity. The Cynefin framework that he created has been acknowledged as one of the first practical applications of complexity theory to management science. He is an acknowledged pioneer in the use of narrative and one of the leaders of the naturalistic approach to sense making in organisations.

A native of Wales, he is a leading keynote speaker at major conferences around the world and is known for his iconoclastic style, pragmatic cynicism and extensive use of stories to communicate what would otherwise be difficult concepts. Tom Stewart, the new editor of Harvard Business Review in his latest book states in the context of tacit knowledge "Dave Snowden, the best thinker I've found on the subject ..." although by way of counter he also comments "he is Welsh and a bit mad".

Dave Snowden has an MBA from Middlesex University and a BA in Philosophy from Lancaster University. He is adjunct Professor of Knowledge Management at the University of Canberra, an honorary fellow in knowledge management at the University of Warwick, Adjunct Professor at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and MiNE Fellow at the Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore in Italy. He is an adviser to the Singapore government on sense-making and is a visiting fellow at both Nanyang University and the Civil Service College in Singapore. In addition he teaches on various university programmes throughout the world. He was director of Research for the EPSRC's programme on emergence and sat on the NSF panel allocating money to research on complexity theory in social systems. He was the lead author on the EU report on the knowledge economy.

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## **Further Information**

Articles by Dave Snowden are available on the Cognitive Edge website at <http://www.cognitive-edge.com/articlesbydavesnowden.php>