# Evolutionary Guidance Media: An Integral Framework for Foresight Communication

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We are now well aware that advances in information and communication technologies enable us to exercise an influence that extends, not only across the globe, but well into the future. This influence is not limited to a few, but is increasingly becoming the province of many. How can we use our enhanced technologies to communicate the importance of foresight? How do we transmit the "cognition and imagination of possible and desirable futures"? While there are many answers to this question, none is perhaps more fundamental than narrative, for it is through our stories, our mythos, that we co-create our shared experience of the world (Campbell, 1993; Krippner, 1994).

Currently we find our communities, societies, and the natural world, in an unsustainable place, in large part due to continued adherence to outdated positivistic, mechanistic, materialistic worldviews—narratives that support fragmentation and competition. Foresight, by its very nature, requires something more than opposition and struggle for resources— It requires cooperation, empathy, and the willingness to share resources. Thus, if we are to effectively communicate foresight, we must begin by communicating the holistic narratives that have unfolded within and throughout the scientific and philosophic communities (Laszlo, 1972; Bateson, 1979; Capra, 1982; Bohm, 1980; Macy, 1991; Wilber, 1995; Sahtouris, 2009).

Holistic, systemic, integral, and planetary narratives posit competition and cooperation as equal partners in the on-going dance of life—of evolution. Unfortunately, while experts have applied these narratives in most major disciplines, adoption of the new narratives, or paradigms, by the mainstream (academia, governments, private industry, and individuals) has been slow. While many factors are involved in this "changing of the guard" one of the most serious, is a lack of public awareness of, exposure to, and knowledge about, these narratives. Although tremendous efforts have been and are currently underway to create and disseminate these narratives, for the most part the creators are working within a media communication system that was itself designed in keeping with the reductionist paradigm. To be the catalyst it *can* be, media, broadly conceived to include information and communication technologies (ICT) requires frameworks designed with holistic, systemic, integral, planetary paradigms/narratives.

"Evolutionary guidance media," (EGM) more recently referred to as "EGM-Integral," is one framework designed for that purpose. Specifically, it is designed to enable individuals to "consciously create, use, and evaluate, media that aims to guide the evolutionary development of body, mind, and spirit, in self, culture, and nature" (Klisanin, 2010a, p.

148). Foresight is an integral component of the EGM-Integral framework in that it arises from evolutionary systems design (Bánáthy, 1996; 2000) and integral epistemologies, of which "conscious evolution" is a guiding principle:

> "The purpose of [conscious evolution] is to learn how to be responsible for the ethical guidance of our evolution. It is a quest to understand the processes of developmental change, to identify inherent values for the purpose of learning how to cooperate with these processes toward chosen and positive futures, both near term and long range. (Hubbard, 1998, pp.57-58)

Hubbard's "ethical guidance of our evolution," synonymous with "foresight," permeates the fabric of evolutionary systems design and integral epistemologies, which recognize a *teleos* of ever-increasing complexity within the natural world.

Specifically, the EGM-Integral framework brings together and builds upon the work of two theorists: Béla H. Bánáthy, in the area of evolutionary guidance systems, and Ken Wilber, in Integral theory (Klisanin, 2010). Research in this area began with sentiments that echo those of Ramos (2006), "all the valuable insights in the world, all the deepest understanding of the challenges we face in the 21st century, are worthless if they cannot be communicated more broadly and influence change" (p.1119). One of the design imperatives of "evolutionary guidance systems design," is that of enabling individuals to participate in the design of their own systems (Bánáthy, 1996), thus the initial design process involved seeking out and integrating the concerns of stakeholders calling for similar change in media, for example, Ervin Laszlo, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Duane Elgin, Norman Lear, Stephen Simon, and the National Organization for Women (Klisanin, 2005).

While there are many buzzwords used to refer to media designed to promote holistic narratives, for example, conscious media, green media, transformative media, socially-responsible media, and *edutainment*, there is little available in the way of guidance for such creation. The EGM-Integral framework provides one possible approach. Like many theoretical frameworks designed to promote holistic, planetary narratives, EGM-Integral is transdisciplinary and has been published across a range of disciplines including psychology, systems science, futures, and integral studies (Klisanin, 2005; 2009; 2010a, 2010b). The EGM-Integral framework is continually evolving, in keeping with the meta-framework from which it issues; it currently consists of 3 major structural features 1) consciously-curated databank 2) Wilber's Integral, or AQAL model and 3) transception.

## Consciously-curated Databank

The consciously-curated databank is a repository of data drawn from ten or more dimensions of human activity (i.e., social action, economic, wellness, moral, environmental, learning/design, scientific, aesthetic, technological, polity). The purpose of the databank is to collate data that supports conscious evolution. The vision being that of the data serving as a creative substance, analogous to pigments, with which conscious media creators can envision or enhance narratives such that they promote holistic, systemic, integral, planetary narratives. For example, a writer working on a script that involves an economic narrative (e.g., Wall Street), might access the "Economic dimension" and in doing so, learn of economic theories

considered to support conscious evolution, for example the works of Herman Daly (1977), Paul Hawken (1993), Hazel Henderson (1995) Lester Brown (2001), and Riane Eisler (2007). Being fabricated of mental materials, the databank is flexible, open, constantly in-flux, always seeking and welcoming emergent data.

The salience of this component of the EGM-Integral model is evidenced by the success of an unrelated initiative that utilizes a similar approach to getting "expert data" into the hands of writers.[1] The initiative, Hollywood, Health & Society, had its inception in 1997, when the director's office of the United States' Center for Disease Control (CDC)

> Launched a pilot project that provided information and expert consultants to writers in Hollywood. The pilot project was successful, so in 2001, the CDC awarded the USC Annenberg School's Norman Lear Center a five-year cooperative agreement grant to lead this project in Hollywood. Since then, Hollywood, Health & Society has turned into a full-blown program, with funding from . . . federal agencies, partner organizations and private foundations" (Hollywood, Health & Society, 2012).

The EGM-Integral framework posits an expansion of expert knowledge sharing, such that those seeking to create and/or facilitate the creation of narratives that support conscious evolution (foresight practitioners, media creators, et.) have access to expert data (specifically collated to promote holistic approaches across a diverse disciplines). The EGM-Integral framework is particularly suited to participatory communication platforms arising from Internet and mobile technologies. It is considered to support the emergent "peer-to-peer" or P2P culture (P2P Foundation, 2012), and P2P networking to support the collection, curation, and sharing of data that supports the development of planetary consciousness.

## Wilber's Integral Model

While not the only "integral" component of the EGM-Integral model,[2] Ken Wilber's Integral model (1995) is particularly useful for practical application. Although a complete overview of the "Integral" component of the EGM-Integral framework is beyond the scope of this article, the following highlights shed some light on its usefulness. In keeping with the foregoing discussion, Wilber's Integral Model, also known as AQAL (All Quadrant, All Levels, All Lines) provides a *context* within which "consciously-curated data" can be better *assessed* for application across a range of developmental stages/levels, as well as lines of development. This is a crucial feature, for although a significant amount of foresight-communicating, planetary narratives are conceived, produced, shared, and/or marketed (as socially responsible, positive, green, and/or transformative media) much of it appeals solely to individuals who have already embraced holistic, integral, planetary worldviews. Through acknowledging differentials in stages of development, as well as addressing various lines of development, we can better communicate conscious narratives to a broader audience.

Another salient feature of Wilber's AQAL model, the four quadrants, provide a series of lenses through which foresight practitioners, and/or media makers can gain a greater sense of perspective, taking into account their interior goals and aspirations, (e.g., "I", or upper left quadrant), the intersubjective and/or cultural

context of their creation (e.g., "We", or lower left quadrant), the design, fabrication, and impact of the creative artifact (e.g., It, or upper right quadrant), as well as the social and institutional significance of the creation/artifact (Its, or lower right quadrant) (Klisanin, 2010).  Such perspective-taking is vital to the communication of foresight for we cannot hope to change antiquated mindsets through words alone. Our narratives must be vivified through example: we must live our stories.  To do so requires 1) self-analysis, contemplation of our interior motivations and goals (I), 2) modeling our narrative in our interactions with others (We), 3) a keen awareness of our physical footprint  (It), and 4) recognition of the systemic context within which we find ourselves (Its). Foresight practitioners in particular, and conscious media creators in general, are especially tasked to walk "our talk" − the "four quadrants" of Wilber's Integral model provide a practical means for incorporating these perspectives in our life and work and thus are an important feature of the EGM-Integral framework.

## Transception

The third structural component of the EGM-Integral model is transception, "the fusion of cyberception with the moral values arising form mutual causality, including, but not limited to, loving-kindness, compassion, self-restraint, social responsibility, and generosity" (Klisanin, 2007, p.2). In practical terms transception can best be understood as a way of approaching the design of software and hardware such that design is inspired by *nurture*, in much the same way that biomimicry (Benyus, 2002) is design inspired by *nature*. One fairly simple example of transception is found in the inclusion of web links that enable viewers to access a hotline, or learn more about an issue. Hollywood, Health & Society (2012) has incorporated 800 such links to public health information on shows websites. Additional examples of transception can be found in websites designed to support "digital altruism" i.e., altruism mediated by the Internet or mobile technologies (Klisanin, 2011). Digital altruism includes the ability to contribute to charity (without donating money) through clicking-to-donate, watching ads, playing online games, conducting web searches, and so forth.

Research indicates that the average global citizen "watches 3.4 hours of television, listens to 2.2 hours of radio, uses the Internet 1.7 hours, reads magazines and newspapers for 1 hour, and watches 8.5 minutes of cinema" (State of the Future, 2011, p.61). This level of media saturation is unlikely to decrease (at least in the near future) thus the fusion of transception within it provides the everyday citizen with an increasing ability to participate in changing social structures, particularly as the public begin to recognize its ability to place demands upon the industries vying for its attention.

Transception encourages the expansion of the moral imagination such that information and communication technologies are recognized as capable of reflecting the farther reaches of humanity's moral line of development. This is particularly important in light of the ever-evolving, more closely-knit relationship between the physical and virtual worlds that continues to emerge, in large part due to social media. Bauwens (2007) has pointed out that religious and spiritual structures are rooted in societal structures and postulates that the rise of peer-to-peer networking − having changed social structures − is currently changing spiritual expression and the

religious organizational context in which it occurs. Transception and digital altruism are ways of thinking the moral line of development into our technology such that we are consistently engaged in healing the split between science and spirituality—a split that belongs to the reductionist paradigm of the past.

## Summary

In response to our opening question, this essay has suggested that one valuable approach to the communication of foresight is through placing it within the context of holistic, integral, planetary narratives—narratives that support conscious evolution. It has been further suggested that to effectively communicate such narratives new communication systems are necessary. A brief overview of one such system, the EGM-Integral framework was presented. The framework is unique within the fields of media and communications research because it is designing using epistemologies (e.g., evolutionary guidance systems design and Integral theory) that embody foresight, or conscious evolution.

The EGM-Integral framework brings together many of the components Ramos (2006) presented in his essay, "Consciousness, culture and the communication of foresight." In the essay, he suggests the importance of taking into consideration "the perspectives people hold, their worldview, their ideology," their "interior value systems" and "intersubjectivity—culture". Rather than Integral theory as delineated by Wilber and included in the EGM-Integral model, Ramos' points to the method of Causal Layered Analysis delineated by Inayatullah (pp.1120-1121); both integral systems are valuable reminders of the crucial role of perspective taking (among other valuable contributions).

Ramos also discusses the role of participation, citing Slaughter's reframing of futures research (via Habermas) "as 'communicative action' and a dialogue-generating activity, rather an instrumental one." Furthermore, he points to the need to pay special attention to the aesthetic, economic, and political dimensions of communications—all three of which are included within the ten dimensions of human activity in the EGM-Integral framework.

In summary, EGM-Integral is a meta-framework for media communication designed to support conscious evolution, integral development, and planetary consciousness. The framework is intended to add to the creative process, enabling individuals to weave conscious, holistic narratives on a loom that has been designed specifically to support such creation. Mature creativity is the matrix of foresight practitioners. EGM-Integral offers one approach with which foresight practitioners may yet light the fire of planetary consciousness in the global imagination.

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## Notes

1. During the initial design phase of the evolutionary guidance media framework, this initiative was not found in the literature, however an initiative focused on promoting environmental themes in media, Environmental Media Association (EMA), founded *by Cindy and Alan Horn and Lyn and Norman Lear in 1989* was included in the design process. Among other strategies, EMA provides expert data to writers and media makers. Information about this organization is available online at the following address: http://www.ema-online.org/about-us/
2. For more background on integral thinkers whose works were formative in the design of evolutionary guidance media, please see detailed footnote in Klisanin (2010b).

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