

IT-Enhanced Experiential Adventures in People Dynamics
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Abstract

Until recently, simulations in the management development context have been mainly limited to domains in which knowledge and dynamics can be modeled in quantitative terms, such as in finance, economics, but also marketing and certain aspects of general management. In such traditional simulations, managers' effectiveness ultimately boils down to 'decide on the right numbers'. The new type of simulations I will discuss don't ask managers to operate with numbers, but rather challenge them to effectively diagnose organizational contexts as well as to design and implement effective strategies to interact with people in professional contexts. The underlying models are hence not quantitative but rather reflect the insights gained in disciplines such as personality and social psychology, social network analysis and dynamics, providing new ways for validating such models and for designing effective educational experiences oriented towards developing inter-personal skills and the capability to productively contribute to team and community dynamics in realistic organizational contexts.

Developing realistic 'games' enabling managers to experience complex situations involving people and interactions in social contexts is one of the most challenging frontiers of management education. In this talk I will focus on insights gained from experiences with a variety of simulation games for managers and decision makers, addressing domains like change management, collaboration, leadership, innovation, competence development/learning, profiling and knowledge harvesting. My objective is to discuss the design of such simulation games from a variety of perspectives (pedagogical, technological and deployment-related) outlining some of the most relevant research challenges.

Speaker bio

Albert is Swiss, grew up in Italy, and spends most of his time in France. He holds a doctoral degree in mathematics, has been on the faculty of INSEAD since 1989, and is currently professor of Information Technology and Entrepreneurship. He also directs CALT, INSEAD's Centre for Advanced Learning Technologies (www.calt.insead.edu). Currently, he is spending part of his time in the UK as a visiting faculty member at Cambridge University.

One of his passions is the design of games and simulations, as he strongly believes in Learning-by-Doing. His current focus is on games providing rich learning experiences by allowing users to interact with realistically behaving virtual characters operating within realistic contexts and situations - typically an organization, but also in other specific environments, such as social or multi-cultural contexts (as described in the brief article "[Change Management: Bridging the Knowing-Doing Gap](#)").

His current focus is on modeling collaboration dynamics and designing new simulations (codename: **L2C – Learning to Collaborate**) showing how difficult it is to help people engage in productive collaborations, particularly if they are very diverse, geographically distributed, and engage in complex processes such as innovation.

His other interests range from the organizational dynamics of change and innovation, a domain in which he has developed simulations (see for instance www.calt.insead.edu/eis) used in all top business schools world-wide, to the design and study of virtual environments for knowledge exchange, learning networks dynamics, and intelligent agents operating on the web. His research has received several millions research funds from the European Community and brings him regularly in touch with interesting companies such as IKEA, Cisco, a number of banks and car manufacturers, and several innovative start-ups.

More info and an overview of Albert's Research Agenda can be found at www.calt.insead.edu/eis/aaa/.

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