

## Computer Supported Methodically Formed Networks

by

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The paragraphs below are a short response to a recent article written in Communications of the ACM, November 2006/Vol. 49, No. 11, by Peter Denning and Rick Hayes-Roth entitled “Decision Making in Very Large Networks”. Articles such as these cross my desk on a regular basis and indicate to me how essential and timely the **Hiveware**<sup>®</sup> technology can be.

These gentlemen explain why the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)’s attempt to quickly create a top-down driven organization failed during the Katrina crisis. Denning, et.al., explains that Hastily Formed networks (HFN) have a fatal flaw that was pointed out already in 1945 by the Nobel prize winner F.A. Hayek. HFN’s fatal flaw is that although decision making scales upwards, but decision quality does not. The bigger the HFN, the worse the decision making becomes. Denning, et.al., also points out the lack of what they call level 4 hyper networks. The definition of Level 4 Hyper-Networks is organizations whose focus is “federated activities toward common goals among multiple organizations that retain their separate identities and have no common hierarchy”. Denning goes on to say that, “Our intuition, based on years of experience and familiarity with hierarchical organization, is that it should be possible to form hierarchical organization at level 4.” The first entries into level 4 networks, they report, were consortia like the W3C and the open software movement. Today other examples include “business-to-business (B2B) exchanges, music distribution centered on Apple’s iPod and iTunes, and the eBay community of participating businesses”. Oddly, the computer gaming community has not yet reached level 4 networking status even though they would be direct candidates for large value-based networks of participants. **Hiveware**<sup>®</sup> inherently forms hierarchical yet peer-to-peer Level 4 organizations.

The obvious incongruity in their article is that a Level 4 network whose group members are based on relationships (i.e., federated activities toward common goals...) takes time to develop and is antithetical to the haste required to get the joint task done. That is why the term *methodical* is in the title, or the Methodically Formed Network (MFN). In other words, the HFN, which was the focus of their paper, is logically inversely correlated with Level 4 network’s fundamentals, which are carefully built cooperative and productive relationships among individuals. The distributed support and growing of these relationships is the end goal of **Hiveware**<sup>®</sup>. **Hiveware**<sup>®</sup> supplies the

electronic networked equivalent of the brick-and-mortar of such a large distributed organization. Let's call this the Computer Support for making Methodically Formed Networks which makes the acronym CSMFN. The hypothetical idea being advanced here is that if FEMA had developed a **Hiveware**<sup>®</sup> CSMFN application, then any number of hives of groups of employees, who had other positions elsewhere, could have been methodically named and called into action when conditions presented themselves where each one of those decisions would have been computer supported in a common distributed yet evolving framework of messaging activity. Each member of the hive would have a virtual position in the hierarchy and be able make original input from their station in that hierarchy. At the same time each would have been able to see and experience instantaneously the input decisions of the others. I submit that the decision making quality of such a hived network would scale upward, which is what is missing in HFNs.