

Innovation in practice, dialogue

Innovation Lab as Case Study

Reinhard, CarrieLynn D.

Publication date:
2010

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):
Reinhard, C. D. (2010). Innovation in practice, dialogue: Innovation Lab as Case Study. Roskilde Universitet.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact rucforsk@ruc.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Innovation in practice, dialogue: Innovation Lab as Case Study

CarrieLynn D. Reinhard
Virtual Worlds Research Group
March 19, 2010



I am here today to continue a conversation that began last June into how the Danish firm Innovation Lab understands innovation in regards to virtual world technology. For the next nearly two hours, I will brief you on what was this conversation back in June – a modified focus group being called a structured group interview – and we will discuss – via activity, lecture and dialogue – the various conceptualizations of innovation discussed by Innovation Lab, and perhaps what led for there to be such a variety of them. Thus, I am here today to talk about how Innovation Lab makes sense of innovation, innovativeness in regards to virtual worlds.

Method & Methodology: The Who

- Innovation Labs is...
 - "an international knowledge centre for new technology. ... Through talks and articles, workshops, seminars and projects we strive to provide a comprehensive list of the potentials and challenges facing businesses and organisations; and here our extensive insight is a valuable advantage. "
(www.innovationlab.net)
 - Innovation Lab was founded in 2001 when IT-guru Preben Mejer teamed up with Mads Thimmer to create a non-profit company to work with local, national, and international companies on how to develop innovative processes, projects, and products.
- Participants were "Lab Agents" from the two offices of Innovation Labs
 - København, business-marketing oriented
 - Århus, product-development oriented



To begin today's discussion, to make sure everyone has the same foundational information, I want to briefly discuss what is Innovation Lab.

Innovation Lab was founded in 2001 when IT-guru Preben Mejer teamed up with Mads Thimmer to create a non-profit company to work with local, national, and international companies on how to develop innovative processes, projects, and products. This network has close to 2500 connections with researchers, designers and entrepreneurs like Sony Ericsson, Samsung and Mars helping them understand what new developments in research and technology will be coming in 3-5 years time. According to their website, they have helped to develop: the first intelligent fire man suit, the first screen made out of concrete, intelligent soccer shirts and water beds connected to the internet to prevent bedsores.

Innovation Lab has two offices: a business-oriented office in Copenhagen, and a product-development office in Aarhus. For the conversation in June, each office became a separate location, and at each location a structured group interview was conducted. At each location, four Innovation Lab employees, called "Lab Agents" by the organization, were recruited to participate. For the sake of retaining their anonymity, the Lab Agents have been given pseudonyms that retain their Danish and sexual identities.

Method & Methodology: The Why

- A report written by Innovation Labs as part of their commitment to the project was unclear as to how they were conceptualizing innovation as it relates to virtual worlds.
- This confusion was also evident in the focus group – such that the ends justify the means...
 - “Lack of understanding of definitions e.g. user driven innovation, user innovation, open innovation etc. Not good if people do know the differences and not addressed the same way towards potential clients or project frameworks.”
 - Frederick, København
 - “You should think that a place like Innovation Lab would have it tied down - although it is pretty clear in the answers that it is still a concept which is widely (mis)interpreted.”
 - Niels, København



The idea for this conversation began a year ago. As part of the research group, Innovation Lab was asked to write a paper discussing how they saw innovation in regards to virtual world technology. However, upon reading the paper, the research group decided there were unanswered questions and confusions on how the organization was conceptualizing innovation – or, at least, in how they were communicating their conceptualizations. Interestingly, in an example of the ends justify the means, this confusion – the reason for this conversation – was even voiced by the participants during the conversation.

At one of our meetings, I proposed to conduct interviews with the authors of the paper using Dervin’s Sense-Making Methodology as a potential method for improving this communication and bridging some of the gaps we in the project were seeing. In discussing this idea further with the project and with Innovation Labs, we decided to utilize Dervin’s approach to focus groups to engage the Lab Agents in a dialogue on this topic.

Method & Methodology: The How

- Structured Group Interview incorporating Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology
- 2 Types of Experiences at 2 Locations
 - When experienced virtual world technology consider to be innovation, innovativeness
 - First discussion about **consumer** experiences
 - Second discussion about **producer** experiences
 - Resulted in 4 structured group interviews
- Used Dervin's SMM to probe experiences
 - No time explain SMM Triangle approach
 - Uses specific inquiries to surround and probe recollection: ex. Questions, Conclusions, Helps, Hinders, Expectations, Past Experiences
- Probed with 3 Rounds of Structured Discussion



Thus, the conversation in June consisted of a series of structured group interviews – modifications of the standard focus group method via the use of Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology. With Dervin's SMM, each interview typically focuses on the participants' experiences with a specific type of situation. For these interviews we decided to understand how the Lab Agents experienced innovation in regards to virtual world technology from two user positions: as a consumer, and as a producer. This was chosen because Innovation Lab employees are positioned as having dual user identities with regards to this technology – a duality that occurs increasingly due to Web 2.0 applications and mindsets, but is particularly present within Innovation Lab as the Lab Agents both seek out and consume new technology in order to consultate and produce new technologies.

For each location, the four Lab Agents were asked to think of and discuss specific experiences of dealing with innovation in regards to virtual world technologies from both of these identity positions: first as a consumer, then as a producer. Each of these types of situations served as the foundation for one structured group interview. Thus, across these two types and two locations, a total of four structured group interviews were conducted. I'll call each of these four structured group interviews sessions.

Each session consisted of three rounds of discussion structured a priori by questions informed by the SMM Triangle approach. I don't have time now to go over the ins and outs of this methodological approach. I will comment on the structure of having three rounds. Originally, the SMM approach to focus groups was being developed by Dr. Dervin with two rounds: in the first round, each participant discusses his or her experience without interruption from other participants, and in the second round the participants discuss how what was said in round one was similar and dissimilar to their individual experiences. Last May, at an SMM workshop, I began experimenting with using three rounds, where the final round is to further reflect in an abstract way what was discussed in the group.

I'll move on now to discuss how this template was put into action in this conversation.

Method & Methodology: The How

- For each session, at each location, 2 rounds:
 - Round 1, each person answers SMM inquiries about experience
 - Other participants fill out worksheet with inquiries to promote comparing/contrasting to the experience of the speaker
 - Round 2, each person compares/contrasts their experience to each other's in that structured group interview session
- After all sessions, interviews transcribed, sent to all participants for last round:
 - Round 3, each person answers inquiries to compare/contrast all experiences from the 4 sessions, and to analyze their experience in the interviews



As I mentioned, Round 1 provides the time and space for each participant to discuss his or her experience without interruption from myself or another participant. In this conversation, Round 1 began with an SMM inspired interview where the Lab Agents were asked to describe what occurred in the situation when they were a consumer or a producer. After this description, I asked them a series of follow-up questions using the SMM Triangle to surround and probe their experience.

During Round 1, while one participant is speaking, the other participants fill out a journaling worksheet that has a preset series of questions designed to have the participants reflecting on how what they are hearing relates to their own experience. Then, for Round 2, the participants read off their journalings to share with the group. In each session of this conversation, Rounds 1 and 2 were conducted with all the group members physically present to hear what each other was saying. For each location, each group of Lab Agents had two sessions, and each session had two rounds – all of which was audio-recorded and transcribed.

However, each location's group of Lab Agents were interviewed separately, both in terms of space and time. This meant that although they were discussing the same types of situations, they were not hearing what the other was saying.

Thus, for Round 3, it was determined that these different locations should be brought into dialogue with each other. All Lab Agents were sent the transcriptions along with a series of questions they were asked to answer after having read the transcripts. These questions were designed to have the participants compare/contrast each group's discussion from each of the identity positions, as well as to reflect upon the utility of the structured group interview.

Today's Discussion

- Reporting from all 3 rounds
 - How participants defined "innovation, innovativeness" in regards to virtual worlds
 - Where differences in definition can be seen
 - By myself
 - By the participants
 - What potentially accounts for these differences
 - Explained by the participants
 - Explained by myself
 - Discussed by us



With the conversation from all three rounds transcribed, I am here today to talk about the following three points of analysis:

- How the the Lab Agents defined, directly or by example, what they see as innovation, innovativeness in regards to virtual world technology, with quotes identified by pseudonym, location and identity position session;
- Where the differences in these definings can be seen, both by my own quick quantitative assessment, and in the Lab Agents' own words; and,
- What potentially accounts for these dfferences, as explained by the Lab Agents, by myself, and open to discussion amongst all of us.

Innovation Lab's Definitions

- Coding of 3 rounds resulted in 6 categories of definitions
- As Users Driving
 - Seeing innovation/ive as user centered participation, design, control
- As Breaking Rules
 - Seeing innovation/ive as a disruption of tradition, breaking the rules.
- As Modifying
 - Seeing innovation/ive as modifying, combining, synergizing existing entities.
- As Capitalizing
 - Seeing innovation/ive as capitalizing for profit, implementing ideas, building business models.
- As Perspectives
 - Seeing innovation/ive as providing different experience, perspective.
- As Openness
 - Seeing innovation/ive as changing minds, being open-minded.



Now we turn to what the Lab Agents said and what was the result of the conversation. In going through the entire conversation – all three rounds, all sessions – I was able to build from the bottom-up the following six categories of how the Lab Agents were defining innovation, innovativeness in regards to virtual world technologies.

As Users Driving

- "What I think is the most innovative part of virtual worlds is basically having people creating exactly what they want in a completely free-form world."
– *Jesper, København, Consumer*
- "...this is a result of when you let loose the users and have online tools – if you can imagine a kind of world where you only have the online game and you didn't have kind of all the other communication challenge, I think this would never have happened."
– *Frederik, København, Consumer*
- "I think reversal of roles is definitely an innovation."
– *Preben, Århus, Consumer*
- "So I think that, yeah, the online communities in itself is an innovation made by the users. ...but if you didn't passionate users that in some way connect, it won't live. So you need to have the users. And in that way we ourself create this, these societies."
– *Maren, Århus, Consumer*
- "I find innovative is, maybe, the fact that it's really co-creative."
– *Anina, Århus, Consumer*
- "...to remember the fun and the play in innovation. And at the same time you set people free to do whatever they might think of, but there's a need of some kind of base or security to feel free, because if you are totally free, you get insecure. And that's very much enacted also in the online worlds because they do make rules here and there, they're not ruleless."
– *Maren, Århus, Consumer*
- "So the innovation part would be how to extract values from a various group of people and how to take those values and create them into something that they will all want to be a part of, even though it's not like 100% their own basic values."
– *Karin, Århus, Producer*



Here we have the Lab Agents focusing on the user and the ability of the user to gather, control, shape, and drive the technology as being the innovation and an innovative aspect of this technology compared to others. In this definition, the user is being constructed as central to how this technology is defined as innovative: were it not for user-driven innovation, then these Lab Agents may be less likely to see these particular virtual world technologies as an innovation compared to other "traditional" websites and digital games. In a way, user-driven innovation is a technological feature that is innovative, but it is also the innovative practices of the users that are foregrounded as important to understanding this technology.

As Breaking Rules

- "...you might say, also, it's often disruption as innovation...innovation is about, you might say, breaking the rules..."
 - Frederik, København, Consumer
- "Because, as Frederik says, they broke the rules, they did not follow a line, a path of what someone was expecting them to do. They got to a virtual world, and then they thought what you need to do in this virtual world is not obeying what someone else thought they should do. And that, in my mind, is innovation."
 - Niels, København, Consumer
- "Speaking to my extremely formal and rigid rules, but, anyway, the main point is that we actually broke the dominant way of doing competitions. ... But I think that we're seeing a new wave of innovation where we're turning the whole thing upside down..."
 - Lauritz, København, Producer



Here we have the Lab Agents at Copenhagen discussing a point brought up first by Frederik, in seeing an innovation as being something that, compared to other products and processes, departs from tradition to try something new. Frederik's bringing this definition into the discussion in the Consumer session highlighted a tension in the group, as this definition was put into contrast with another, the more "formal" definition that I am discussing here as Capitalizing. This definition is also very similar to the next category.

As Modifying

- "And so I think this is a good example, maybe, of how innovation is an extension of something else or it's a synergy between two different instances or two different technologies, or the same technology but it's in a different, you might say, format."
 - Frederik, København, Consumer
- "...here they just have a lot of building blocks and a lot of creativity and freedom. And that brings about weird looking houses and whatever, but it sort of releases a lot of, where you could call it creativity, but also just random thoughts of people..."
 - Jesper, København, Consumer
- "Does that constitute some kind of new foundation? Has technology moved us to an extent where the internet and the sharing technology has propelled a new way of constructing, and also overcoming and fathoming some of the very real challenges that the previous modes of operandi in the human race has brought about."
 - Preben, Århus, Producer



Like the previous category, this definition also revolves around the idea of something new being generated. However, instead of breaking from tradition, the new here comes from a process of modifying or synergizing what already exists to create something different, but without the radical rhetoric that accompanies the notion of "breaking the rules". This definition was not quite as contested as the previous when put into relation with the next – the idea of capitalizing – perhaps because it does not contain the radicalness in rhetorical tone.

As Capitalizing

- "I disagree with Frederik, it's not about breaking rules, it's not about combining the elements. It's about introducing something new to the market."
 - Lauritz, København, Consumer
- "How to actually get that from evolving from something, which is just that [creativity in Second Life], and into something which is more valuable, because that's really what I think innovation is all about."
 - Jesper, København, Consumer
- "But when you synthesize virtual worlds, if you look at it in a very, you might say, relative view, is definitely, you might say, an innovation because with Ultimo Online, you had a completely new business model. ...in terms of the other innovation, is that, an entire industry of third party companies is feeding off a single virtual world."
 - Frederik, København, Producer
- "And I also think what drives innovation is profit."
 - Frederik, København, Producer



Here we have the København group – perhaps because Frederik spoke first and thus first brought up the notion of breaking the rules – being the group to discuss a more formal definition of innovation as the introduction of new products and/or processes that can be commercialized. However, while not included here, is Frederik's questioning the difference between invention and innovation: "...something is brought to market but is it innovation or is it invention. I think we need to also distinguish between – or is it a distinction between the two of those? That an invention sparks multiple innovations." Thus, there may be conceptual overlap between these two different terms, especially as they both relate to the interest of the innovator to capitalize on the innovation, that only furthers the confusion about what is innovation, innovativeness.

As Perspectives

- "But from a personal view I think this was quite exciting at the time so I was really focusing on these things, relating to the newness, to the new perspectives, to the new ways of seeing worlds, of the virtual worlds as it was. ... So I think the reason why I saw it as being innovative was also related to the fact that I was confused on some levels – confused or not sure what to see, what comes next, what came next."
 - Lauritz, København, Consumer
- "My definition of innovation in this context – it would not be about commercialization, but more about seeing things I myself could never have thought of."
 - Niels, København, Consumer
- "And then, of course, the thing about not already having imagined what something is or isn't when you're trying to innovate, because when you see a product or a thing or a certain... just a certain value and respond in one way, and it's normally used like this and that, and so you put a lot of values into something without knowing it, and then when you take the product that you're innovating on out of the context, you still keep the values surrounding it. So you need to totally remove all those values and try to see the basic problem once again."
 - Karin, Århus, Producer



The last two categories are similar to the first as they both concern users – only here the focus is not on users being in control as the innovation, but that innovation is an interpretive reaction to the virtual world technology. In this category, the Lab Agents were discussing how they themselves have a new experience and gain a new perspective on what is possible. The interpretive component lies in having one's horizons expanded, so to speak.

As Openness

- "Innovation is also about changing mindsets, or, you might say, to formalize innovation you need to change mindsets."
 - Frederik, København, Producer
- "And really to be aware of how then to go another way around. To find solutions, to create solutions that engage with the user in a proactive way, instead of pushing them away from the product."
 - Maren, Århus, Producer
- "And if we're open enough in the process, we might find out that we were not addressing the right questions and we need to change sort of our perspective on what the real problem is. And that's something we need to be aware of in the innovation process."
 - Anina, Århus, Producer



In this category, the interpretive focus is similar to broadening one's horizons, only the individual in need of this broadening isn't the person speaking: it is the person the Lab Agents are dealing with who need to be more open and have their minds changed as to what is possible with virtual world technologies. Again, innovation appears to come in not through characteristics of the technology, as it does with user-driven innovation, but in characteristics of the people using the technology.

Differences in Definings

- Comparing # times each definition said in Rounds 1 & 2
- Locations
 - København > Århus
 - As Breaking Rules, As Modifying, As Capitalizing
 - Århus > København
 - As Users Driving, As Openness
- Sessions
 - Consumer > Producer
 - As Users Driving, As Perspectives
 - Producer > Consumer
 - As Openness
 - Consumer = Producer
 - As Capitalizing
 - All due to the København group



With those codes representing definitions, I wanted to get a sense of where are the differences in the conversation. One way of doing this was to use as a basis for comparison two of the defining features of the conversation: the differences in geographical location (i.e. different teams) and the different experiences for the two user identity positions.

I should qualify this discussion that this is not a rigorous quantitative analysis. What I have done is tallied the frequency by which a code was mentioned in Rounds 1 and 2 for a particular session. I then compared these numbers to see if the code appeared more often in one location or one identity position than the other. Based on this analysis, I see the following differences.

København had an interesting contradiction, in that they were referring to innovation, innovativeness as both breaking the rules and creating something new while also focusing on how to make profit. Århus, on the other hand, never really spoke to either of these points, focusing more on user-driven innovation and on the need for openness in the innovative process.

København's discussion on how to capitalize on new products as not unique to either user identity position, indicating the overall prominence of this concern to this group of Lab Agents compared to the Lab Agents at Århus. There were some differences comparing the user identity positions. When as a consumer, the Lab Agents tended to speak more about user-driven innovation and seeing innovation, innovativeness as new experiences. When as a producer, they tended to speak more about the need for being open-minded about new products and processes.

Differences in Definings

- “Very focused on aspects of theoretical innovation. Disagreement on whether innovation is disruptive or incremental in essence – some put significance on virtual worlds as innovative contributors, others argue that they aren’t really innovation if they don’t introduce something successful in their own right.”
 - Preben, Århus
- “The understanding of the innovation drivers in the virtual worlds. Some believe it to have arisen from a money/profit perspective, others believe the engagement and fun to be the key driver.”
 - Karin, Århus
- “In general there are different perspectives on innovation. Is it about breaking the rules, going off the beaten path, daring an surprising, or is it about following a strict and structured plan towards developing a valuable and successful product goal. It is said that mass entrepreneurship happens with the lack of rules and systems that are hindering or supporting creativity. In a higher perspective it seems like a specific difference between focusing on the innovative process, and the innovative result.”
 - Anina, Århus



For a more qualitative view on the differences, we can look to Round 3, when the participants were asked to reflect on the entirety of the conversation. Out of their reflections come these discussions of where there are differences.

Here we see Lab Agents reflecting on the differences in disruption versus capitalization versus having fun as being integral to innovation, innovativeness. These Lab Agents are seeing the same pattern of differences in definings that are hinted at with my basic quantitative analysis. Anina points out something additional by seeing a difference in defining innovation in relation to products versus processes. Based on their discussions, it would appear the København Lab Agents were more focused on the end result in their definings while the Århus Lab Agents were more focused on how to get that end result. Given the different foci of the locations, and what their job requirements are, this difference makes sense.

Explaining Differences: The Participants' Explanations

- “Well, first of all, I have to say that it’s kind of hard to difference here between being a consumer or designer...”
 - Lauritz, København
 - Problems separating experiences because of dual user positions
 - Said right away in Round 1
- “People associate differently (in Århus and Copenhagen). In Århus the talk is mainly about innovation on an abstract level and in Copenhagen it is more focused on the online part.”
 - Maren, Århus
 - Seeing differences in how participants at each location speak
- “That people within the same organization has very different perspectives on the same thing – perhaps because virtual worlds and innovation are fluffy concepts. Also however because we have different tool boxes that we use then analyzing and evaluating a new technology.”
 - Jesper, København
 - Blaming the concepts and entities themselves for not having strict conceptualizations



Now that we have talked about where differences lie, let’s talk more on what could be the various reasons for the differences. We’ll begin with what the Lab Agents said are the reasons. I should make clear first that any comments and interpretations I have are theoretical and open to discussion to ascertain both their utility and validity in understanding what happened in this discussion. Aside from the first comment listed here, all these comments come from the Round 3 final reflections.

- Consumer versus Producer identity positions reflects the rise of the prosumer identity where people, especially in positions similar to those of the Lab Agents, cannot clearly distinguish what was production versus consumption into two mutually exclusive categories – thus, any defining from the one overlaps with defining the other. Naturally, as it is one individual experiencing both, such overlapping would occur as the individual attempts to make sense moving from one experience to another.

- What different locations talk about, and how they talk about them. This is an explanation brought up several times, by the participants and myself as the analyst.

- The problem with “fluffy” concepts – with the idea being that if the discussion was on a concept that a priori had a more solidified definition, that this conversation would not have seen the gaps in definings that it did. However, the differences seem to indicate a level of subjective evaluation when it comes to identifying innovation, innovativeness that cannot be adequately captured by an objective definition.

Explaining Differences: The Participants' Explanations

- “It seems – on a very general basis - that one group focus more on interaction, experience and the social and emotional effects, where as the other group is more focused on the business innovation and the development of economic models. Economy and structure vs. experience and personal value.”
 - Anina, Århus
 - Business orientation versus non-business orientation
 - Her group, Århus, rarely discussed business, focusing instead on users
- “There is something interesting in the balance between process and result. In general it seems that the “creative” element of being innovative is linked to the process, but quite often in the evaluation of the product or end result there tend to more focus on the rational value, the economy and the functionality. The end result “just” being disruptive, surprising or interesting, does not seem to be enough for it to be considered “innovative”.”
 - Anina, Århus
 - Process versus end result, also reflected in the Consumer vs Producer, and København vs Århus comparisons
- “That the concept of innovation is pretty much a free interpretation and it would have been useful with some sort of framework for the discussion to keep it better aligned – although – that could also have been limiting for the response.”
 - Niels, København
 - Blaming the construction of the structured group interviews for not providing guidelines on how to define



And we continue with:

- The Business versus Non-Business orientation, which I have mentioned before, appeared to coincide with the København versus Århus location split, as the København Lab Agents talked more about business matters as innovation related than the Århus Lab Agents, who focused more on users driving innovation.
- Process versus Result is again the observation of Anina from Århus, and here it ties in with the Business versus Non-Business orientation that she also commented on.
- Problem with the structure of the conversation, as there was no a prior definition of innovation given that the Lab Agents could base their conversations around. The goal of the structuring was to provide space/time for individuals to express their own definitions to this “fuzzy” concept so as to help the group, who potentially are required to act with a unified definition, to understand the individual differences and work with them. The question remains – did this goal work?

Explaining Differences: My Observations

- Different foci of two locations
 - København as business management versus Århus as academic research
 - 3 Århus participants academics, have academic perspective on innovation and virtual worlds technology
- Consumer vs. Producer focused experiences
 - Easier for consumer to say what is or is not innovation because not trying to defend self as producer who is trying to be innovative



I have already been discussing the difference between the two locations in terms of the business versus non-business orientations – an explanation that some participants also discussed. To add to this distinction is the fact that of the Århus group, three participants are academics, and cannot help but approach the topic of the conversation as academics. Indeed, after those two sessions, the academics and I discussed the methodology used to create the structured group interviews. Their interest in the conversation was qualitatively different than the participants at the København location.

Another explanation I see centers on the difference between experiencing virtual worlds as a consumer versus as a producer. This was a difference even highlighted by one of the Lab Agents. However, I would take it further by theorizing that the different user identity positions impacted how comfortable they felt discussing what is and is not innovation, innovativeness about virtual worlds. As a consumer, you can be in the position of being able to criticize the product you are using, whereas as a producer you are in the position to possibly answer the criticism of a product you created. Thus it may be easier to discuss what is innovation, innovativeness as a consumer than as a producer. This appears more likely for the København Lab Agents, who more easily spoke about innovation, innovativeness during the consumer session, as they were also less likely to discuss the innovative process as were the Århus Lab Agents, who are more involved in creating innovations.

However, these are just my quick ideas that need further analysis of the data to test their validity. I am curious if any of you have any additional ideas for what could explain these differences in definings – even though you have only what I have presented here to go by.

Conclusions

- In discussion today, we debated whether or not innovation can be defined, and should it be.
- Which is better for the organization:
 - The ability to present to clients a unified definition on innovation
 - The ability to reflect upon a variety of definitions to meet flexibility of variety of clients
- Perhaps the importance is not in having one crystalized definition, but in understanding how the individuals make sense of innovation to reflect and act, as a group, with this understanding.



From our discussion today on what is innovation, innovativeness in regards to virtual world technologies – in our brainstorming activity, our general discussion, and in what I have presented to you, the following conclusions seem to arise.

First, there was an overall discussion, elicited during the brainstorming activity, as to just what is innovation and being innovative – and does it really matter to have a this or that definition? We debated if innovation can be defined, or if it is a "fuzzy" concept that is both subjective and subject to contextualization. We also discussed that if innovation cannot be subjected to defining, is it even a useful concept to researchers and designers, or is it just a buzzword for business, useful only in a marketing context? And in particular to Innovation Lab, what course of action is better for their organization? Does having a unified definition within the organization help them to present their services to potential clients? Or is it better to have a reflective understanding of the variety of definings used by their Lab Agents to make sense of innovation so as to address, with some flexibility, the various needs of potential clients?

Those members of Innovation Labs present today have indicated a desire for a unified definition, with the assumption that it would help in the marketing and application of their services to the needs of potential clients. However, perhaps the success of Innovation Labs has been due to its flexibility, to not having a unified definition of just what is "this thing" the business world deems as innovation. Instead of moving forward with a unified definition, the organization may be better served by reflecting upon what was discussed in this conversation about the various ways their Lab Agents make sense of innovation. Hopefully, this conversation will have helped Innovation Lab develop reflexivity within their organization that is needed to sponsor communication about the various sense-makings of their Lab Agents; such communication and reflexivity could promote a flexibility in dealing with their clients that is based on understanding what their Lab Agents can bring to each client to better serve their needs.