

**TTN Virtual Knowledge Team  
Expert Questions**

**Experts Name: Doug  
Drukenmiller  
2009**

**Date: 22 August**

**Interviewers Names: Gordon Harper & John Epps  
Experts background or experience: Professor, ICA-USA Chairman**

Please capture the highlights of your interview. Below are the questions identified by the knowledge team, feel free to adjust or go deeper depending on the expertise of your interviewee.

1. How do you elicit and sustain productive engagement? My most frequent use of virtual facilitation is in teaching a course. I have teams of students (mostly diads) doing projects to analyze a company and identify its challenges. They're in different locations. We meet f2f 3-4 times, and this really helps groups to jell. When that's impossible, I do 1X1 on Skype. Team meetings are usually done in Skype Chat or Instant Messaging which has the advantage of keeping a record. documentation and history is really helpful. I've used it with a trans-Atlantic team that's been meeting weekly for 2 years, and there are 170 pages of documentation available. It's an excellent record.  
visual displays of ideas with a modelling tool are useful -- it provides people something to look at while we discuss.
2. How do you design a virtual meeting? It's like any meeting: You first identify your rational aim and your existential aim. The issue is which tool supportt which aspects of the meeting. for example some tools support brainstorming, but aren't so good at organizing; you need something different for that. We use Group Decision Support Tools so that a;; can see; but they're text-basede and have little or no graphic capability. You will need to know the limitations of the tools you use. Transitions have to be much more intentional in a virtual meeting to be sure everyone is on the same page (literally). Stuff that can go wrong in a f2f meeting are amplified in a virtual meeting -- they go REALLY wrong!
3. What resources have you found most helpful? Huddle is a good virtual team platform for asynchrous sessions. Skype has lots of possibilities, and some interesting add-ons. We need to find one for synch and asynch sessions. Group Systems is good but VERY expensive. A group at U. Neb. is working on an open source version. We need something that is inexpensive or free.
4. How do you accommodate a variety of learning styles in your virtual facilitation? Provide multiple ways of access to information -- verbal, visual. It's really important for conceptual models. In virtual meetings, one difference

is that you get little or no feedback. We need more channels and new ways to use them to be able to get participant feedback. Second Life has some free resources; some at De Paul are trying to use Second Life and developing free resources there.

5. What criteria do you use in choosing tools for virtual facilitation? You have to be cognizant of the group. There is not one tool that will do everything you want to do. The least competent member of the group has to be able to get on and participate. You probably need a one-hour pre-meeting to orient people to the tool. There's a list of 200 + tools that Danny has. Even Skype, which seems so simple, gets very complex when you add some new wrinkle. Once people get accustomed to one tool, it's hard to get them to switch and try another
6. What else do we need to know about virtual facilitation? These are unique times: software geniuses now sense the importance of procedures. Previously they looked only at their interest. Now some key tool builders are master facilitators and understand the importance of procedures. They understand that the process is important. ToP isn't totally unique, but one unique aspect of it is the imaginal nature of what we do. That has to be maintained and supported.
7. What do you find most critical in choosing tools for ToP Virtual Facilitation? (ToP Experts only) The only way is to decide on the design patterns so we know the process. That sets up the requirements for tools. Trying to find as few tools as we need. We can be flexible in combining design patterns, but need the tools to provide support at that level. We can sort of implement ToP on lots of platforms. The most difficult step is organizing. Most tools are set to operate vertically, so it takes some work to find those that do it our way. The next step with the design patterns is to get them into a data base online, then identify the next level up as "methods" then several methods become an application.
8. Who are other experts we might want to contact?
9. What other critical documents, articles, books or resources should we read? There is a Culture of Collaboration Science at University of Nebraska: Omaha that has many resources.

?>