A Dog's Breakfast
Roles and Responsibilities for Managers in the Cyber Era

Stephen Downes

Sunshine Coast University

September 20, 2004

Turning Techno

- The issue – managing the deployment of technology in the workplace
- Not a talk about management, a talk about managing in the tech era
- Begins and ends with… good tech, good management

… always available

- Not like the equipment cart, which is only free a week next Friday
- Not like the bus, which arrives only on a set schedule

… always on

- Not something that takes a long time to get going (like Windows)
- Think of things like streetlights, which respond automatically, or telephones, which are ready with a dial tone

… always connected

- A fire alarm works only because it is always connected
- Not like the 'cog in the machine' but like the 'node in the network' – ready to receive information, ready to transmit

… standardized

- Think light bulbs, batteries, the gasoline in cars
- People know what to expect

… simple

- The elevator – people don't consult a manual to operate one
- 'Simple' doesn't mean simple in function, but rather, that the use is obvious in the design

… doesn't require parts

- Eg. Car gas and oil, printer cartridges, disposable batteries, etc etc

- Today's new generation – licenses that expire

- Good technology is complete, functions out of the box

… personalized

- Like, say, the ATM or the telephone
- Allows you to have an identity

… modular

- The bane of ed-tech – enterprise systems
- Should be able to mix and match components
- Each bit is a part of a network
- Small pieces, loosely joined

… does what you want it to do

- Better, eg., if airplanes take you to the advertised destination
- What is the function…? I submit – communication, provision of resources