

Social Hacking: The Need for an Ethics

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Abstract

Online groups, particularly mailing lists, are key spaces for working with others to "get things done". They have effective and stimulating moments, and assemble wonderful people, but often the whole is less than the sum of the parts. The activity of the group is shaped by laws, and terms of service, but especially by norms and expectations. We examine the typical norms, and how they shape a presumption of a "group mind" that is, unfortunately, incapable of active decision-making, for example, granting permission. We show how proactive individuals are openly interacting in ways that disturb existing norms, but encourage constructive activity within and amongst groups.

Introduction

This is an apology for social hackers, a coming out for us, a celebration, self-critique, inspiration, blessing and sending forth. It is a rough cut document that needs to be rehashed, tested and tried. As such, it is entirely in the Public Domain.

In 1998, the author founded Minciu Sodas, an open laboratory for serving and organizing independent thinkers around the world. He organized and moderated a system of online groups, and championed endeavors through a variety of online and offline venues. He observed, again and again, that group norms made it awkward to advance outside endeavors. In his own groups, he learned what an important role a moderator plays for a constructive group, and how long it took for himself and others to become aware of this.

In 2003, he came in closer contact with Bala Pillai, and was surprised by his bluntness in decrying the general lack of "acumen", and his open efforts to elevate people. The author grew appreciative of Bala's unusual vigor and straightforwardness. He found in Bala a blatant example of his own implicit stance. Essentially, the whole of human society is dysfunctional. Individuals are actively engaging online groups to restructure society so that we might find each other and help each other remake our lives and our world. We speak of this as "social hacking". We need to develop a fine and pure ethics to ground a human protocol for thousands of social hackers. We might then semi-automate our behavior and extend our reach to thousands of online groups.

Social hackers vs. Social architects

Social hacker, as the term is used in this paper, is a person who encourages activity amongst online groups, and is willing to break social norms in order to do so. This term draws on the use of the word hacker to describe a programmer who relishes coming up with idiosyncratic solutions, often through creative use of trial and error. The hacker approach is bottom-up, special-case, practical, piecemeal,

nonstandard, unschooled, unexpected, solve-the-problem, write-efficiently, value-the-coder's-time, build-on-what-exists (or even what does not officially exist!), as opposed to the architect approach, which is top-down, general-case, theoretical, grand vision, master plan, unlimited resources, question-the-problem, and start-from-scratch.

Andrius: Do you think "social hacker" is a suitable term, or do you have a better one?

Bala: I think that is a great term

Andrius: Why?

Bala: hacker -- lights up someone who chops to me :: to many it will light up someone who is like a computer hacker :: one who challenges :: and we imagine them to be bright :: unconventional
Andrius and Bala chat about social hacking

An engineer, at his or her best, works as both an architect and a hacker. The hacker side is most evident upon breaking the architect's norms, as in making use of undocumented functionality. However, if laws and morals are thought of simply as norms, then breaking norms can turn into breaking laws and breaking morals. Just as hackers define themselves through the behavior that makes them distinct, the media similarly latches onto the most sensational behavior, so that hacker has come to have a second meaning, a meddler who breaks into computer systems (hackers call the latter crackers). In this way, the term social hacker has been used to describe those who lie and otherwise manipulate people so as to get privileged information, such as passwords, which makes it easier to gain access into systems. In this paper, we consider such behavior to be wrong. More generally, we are troubled that an unchecked willingness to break social norms can falsely justify and encourage the manipulation of people. We seek an ethics that would provide social hackers with self-checks and sound motivations.

Social hackers are connectors. In "The Tipping Point", Malcolm Gladwell describes how the interaction of mavens, connectors, and salesmen allows small causes to yield large effects in society. A connector may participate in half a dozen groups and work actively to bring different people together. Additionally, a social hacker attempts not only to opportunistically connect individuals, but to connect whole groups, and encourage their members to likewise act as connectors, extending everybody's reach. In this sense, social hackers are also salesmen, evangelists, missionaries. They work to reshape and restructure the groups for the long term. Social hackers are also willing to break social norms. However, they always run the risk of being trolls, the people who participate destructively in groups for the sake of attention and have nothing better to do. The best social hackers, much like the best hackers, are often invisible, for they work with such love, honesty, grace and tact, that they never actually break any norms.

Hactivism is a related word used to describe the fusion of hacking and activism. It is an electronic civil disobedience that is still finding itself, with tactics that range from overwhelming or defacing websites to posting banned material. Much of this makes sense as the tail end of the postmodern reaction to broadcast media and mass-produced consumer products, the reaction which treats any thing or truth as raw material for reconfiguration. In contrast, social hackers may be harbingers of something new, a network society, one that gushes forth from the creativity of individuals, so that they create and link up their own local worlds, rather than flail against mass culture.

Social hackers live as examples

Social hackers are driven by the will to care. They share a personal sense of mission to not only influence individuals, but to transform all of society, at least that which is around them, as if to turn it inside out. In order to spread and deepen their reach, they look to share this impulse with others, and "awaken" them to behave this way. They work openly so their examples might catalyze a critical mass of people who care.

In order to draw on all of their ability, and to make a way for others to do so, they may seek to make a living from working openly. In theory, this makes wonderful sense, but in practice, it adds a personal urgency that pushes the social hacker to brush aside as many social norms as possible.

They take the attitude of entrepreneurs who are willing to do what others are not. Morally, they must therefore look for the good they might do that others will not. In making maximal use of minimal resources, they build on people working for free, or on speculation, instead of for pay. They think of wealth as relationships, and offer team-building services that draw on their global networks.

Social hackers struggle to find a place in the business world, which favors closed rather than open systems. Many key Internet services for the public, such as Google and YahooGroups, have Terms of Service that prohibit commercial use. Of course, the large corporations can buy what they need. It is the grass roots entrepreneurs who are not served.

Social hackers look at content as a way to engage others, nurture community, and shuttle energy from one group to another. They need content that places no restrictions on commercial use, nor taxes them by requiring they ask for permissions or track rights. They are glad to promote the author whose material they use, but they wish to be efficient and rely on their own judgment. Optimal for them is a free trade zone of ideas. This is why they either take and use material without reservation, or they labor to find and generate material in the public domain.

Social hackers focus on discussion groups, as opposed to bulletin boards, because they want to engage others, evoke responses that go beyond any particular concern. For the same reasons they prefer unmoderated groups over moderated ones. Also, discussion groups rely on email instead of the web, and therefore include people with marginal Internet access, which makes for a wider range of participants.

Andrius: Who do you think are great examples of social hackers?

Bala: I hardly see them Andrius -- hardly hardly -- other than me :-)

Andrius: That's why I'm asking you!

Bala: and I have been in many groups :: most don't have the stamina to be :: they call it a day and go back to their cocoon :: many of my ideas of better connecting and structure solutions come from having to adapt to the failures I have faced as a social hacker :: for example many in the Tamil community hate me.. :: many respect me too

Andrius: Like a magnet :: repulse or attract

Bala: because I didn't put up lowest common denominator :: and 2 wrongs don't make a right :: I

deliberately challenged :: my goal was to get folks seriously thinking :: and I was willing to pay a high price for it :: most are not.

Joy Tang, Dennis Reinhardt, Neil McEvoy, Anthony Diaz, Josef Davies-Coates act with a vigor that goes beyond the norms, and marks them as social hackers. They all happen to be entrepreneurs who seek to awaken people. Joy and Dennis are addressing the global HIV/AIDS crisis, Neil is jumpstarting a loosely coupled federation of businesses, Anthony is bridging the Hispanic digital divide, Josef is saving the world through radical democracy. Other connectors to study who are breaking new ground but in gentler ways are Jerry Michalski, Flemming Funch, Tom Munnecke, Shannon Clark, Denham Grey, Franz Nahrada, Lucas Gonzalez Santa Cruz, Scott Allen, Tony Judge and Leon Benjamin. There are the bloggers, such as Doc Searls, David Weinberger, David Winer, who give of their prominence to act as catalysts for intergroup activity. They do not need to reach out to any group, as the readers come to their blogs. They might be labeled positively ornery, and to the degree they are, they may express that tension between the will to care, and the business pressure to stay interesting as public persona. Social hacking from their lofty crags is more like sniping than wrestling. Very effective for particular angles. Ryze and Ecademy, for online business networking, are good venues for finding and engaging social hackers.

Disturbing a world-onto-itself

A group is a world-onto-itself, with its own sense of purpose, time and authority.

Netiquette is a cute name for the core set of online manners that steer us away from social blunders, from unintentionally offending others or taking offense. Online, our physical interface gets collapsed into text, and it's tricky to reconstruct. We can forget that other people are engaged, and we can have trouble finding our own voice, expressing our cares. It takes practice to get a sense for the rules. As in grammar, learning the rules allows us to break them, and accept the consequences.

Norms do evolve, as the Internet expands to include more people, groups grow in cultural variety, people get used to larger volumes of email, they make use of filters to separate messages into folders, read groups online, and send links instead of materials. What is universal is the responsibility to support the culture of the group.

Social hackers are upsetting because they intentionally and repeatedly break out of the frame of the group. They can't be fit into the norms. They wrench the group out of isolation. However they might try to be respectful, and they do try, it is not a pretty sight.

First, they draw the group's attention away from itself to other groups. They make it evident that the group has a boundary, and then they blur that boundary by stepping in and out. The group has its own sense of purpose, which they veer away from. Social hackers venture off-topic by connecting ideas with larger issues, such as making-a-living, life purpose, moral judgment, people-in-need, and other taboo subjects. They openly recruit others to their own groups.

Second, rather than serve as a hub, they try to make relationships structural and not personal, so they might walk away from them. "Talk amongst yourselves", as if to say. They try to be friendly, but don't seek to make friends. They treat the group as a meeting place, and work to promote outsiders and get them included. They address messages to multiple groups and individuals, which helps make them aware of each other, and a stream of knowledge they share, but generally makes it awkward how and where and why to respond. They avoid responding personally, embed remarks to individuals into

messages to groups, reply to questions on-list instead of off-list, and take the liberty to openly post what normally would be private correspondence. Doc Searls says blogging is "like answering email in public", and that sounds like social hacking (indeed, if getting a reply to an email means having to follow somebody's blog, then it sounds like Doc is pushing his blog as much as he is pulling with it). Social hackers seek to change the group norm so that various paths into and out of the group would become normal. They do this by appealing to individual morals as a shared and absolute foundation that, when made public, puts the social norms in perspective, and opens them up to change. They want to build a public network that can move ideas to where they can get best response.

Third, they operate under their own constraints, rather than those of the group. Everything they do gets exacerbated by their need or greed to operate effectively. They want to reach a wider audience, in less time, and with greater effect. The group has its own sense of time, its own pace and culture, which they do not keep to. They participate without being sure of the culture of the group or having paid their dues. They send long messages or articles with no or minimal explanation. They don't treat people as equal in terms of "consciousness", but make it evident that there is quite a range of "awareness" amongst the participants. Social hackers use a wide variety of channels to show our freedom to control time, commitment, purpose, culture. They use instant messaging for quick engagement, and may then post the transcripts. They may be slow to respond, hoping for a more thoughtful rhythm, and opening gaps for others to jump in. They think out loud, pondering murky ideas, sending out rough drafts without editing them for the group. They don't value people's voice or time equally, but in terms of how much they are getting done. Unless the moderator demonstrates effective control, they tend to step around them and work directly with the group. Social hackers are looking for genuine leaders, and fostering them. They want to connect and collaborate.

Social hackers may surely rankle those who do follow the norms, some of whom are establishing themselves through long hard work. Norm breakers need to care about all who deliberately uphold the norms, and the attractive environment they make for. In just this way, they are appreciated by those who do have trouble being included, heard, loved, or are sympathetic to such.

Organizing a network of conceptual meeting places

Before we condemn social hackers, or lecture them, we hope to understand them. Why do they pursue this pattern of behavior?

*a group should reach outside itself,
or otherwise it's not complete in itself,
there's something missing, there's an itch to scratch.
Lucas Gonzalez Santa Cruz*

Social hackers want the group to serve as a meeting place within a network of such. They need the group, and the group is not serving.

Social hackers usually do have their own groups, but generally prefer to also build on and with existing groups. They are trying to meet halfway with what is already available. They feel it is easier to meet at existing groups than to organize their own. The fact that, when they feel unwelcome, they do not simply go to some other group implies that there is a shortage of groups. Truly, each group takes up "conceptual space". People avoid creating or joining new groups for some endeavor when a group already exists.

In this sense, each group has an obligation before all to be true to its purpose. Social hackers hold the group accountable. Usually, the deepest ideas get no response. They are original, insightful but foreign and often unclear, a lot of work to understand, and even more energy to respond to. Profound or pressing needs are likewise left unanswered, as is anything that evokes commitment, that challenges us to grow, share, or act. They are all treated as unreal. Whereas the group is very energetic to respond to small talk, flirting, hot-button opinions, news of the day, or flame wars. Small talk is important for keeping a channel open, and for understanding a culture. But we should be able to say more. Within a group, individuals can and do respond, when they behave as such, stepping outside the group's frame.

Social hackers think they can get the group to perform by hooking up the group norms to individual morality. They hold the group behavior accountable to individual determinations of right and wrong. It is individuals, not the group, who have to scratch the itch. Social hackers do not want to have everybody within a single space, but rather work in a network of spaces. Then each group can perform through the individuals who meet there.

Self-defense against anxiety

Social hackers imply that groups are, of themselves, degenerate.

In what sense, if any, is this objectively valid?

In his keynote address on social software at the O'Reilly Emerging Technologies conference on April 24, 2003, *A Group is Its Own Worst Enemy*, Clay Shirky points to the work of psychologist and group therapist W.R.Bion.

The thing that Bion discovered was that the neurotics in his care were, as a group, conspiring to defeat therapy. There was no overt communication or coordination. But he could see that whenever he would try to do anything that was meant to have an effect, the group would somehow quash it.

W.R.Bion observed three patterns by which the group defeated its ostensible purpose: Sex talk, or "pairing off"; identifying and vilifying external enemies; nominating and worshipping an icon or set of tenets. Clay notes that the Internet is full of such behavior.

Let us note that neurosis is simply a self-acknowledged failure to satisfactorily defend against anxiety. The self-acknowledgement is at least a partial success, which is to say, neurotics live a mixture of failure and success. Apparently, they are able to thrive in groups. What does this say about groups?

An individual may advance a purpose through cycle after cycle of taking a stand, following through, and reflecting. A group may nurture such self-commitments.

*Bala: Ask yourself what is it that has a group (people) who are in a physical office to work? :: And what would most likely happen if the same people without any briefing were asked to work from home :: what has them to work? :: some keys:- :: the thought of facing a project leader or a peer.. :: and repeatedly giving excuses :: Key: ****facing**** :: the emotive deterrence of facing the repercussions of letting someone down :: so.. :: how do we recreate that virtually? :: ok..if there were spaces online :: where we could see people in a group.. :: committing to themselves and to each other :: and these commitments are tracked for each other to see :: and they have a communication mechanism.. IRC or IM :: and people who are able to see the group planning and achieving..*

Note that the therapy defeating patterns just so happen to let the individuals be at a stand still. If I work myself up against an enemy, then I do not have to take a stand "for" anything or anybody. If I exhaust myself with others on inside jokes, winks, banter, gossip, chores and innuendos, then I do not have to follow through on anything of my own. If I hold an icon, or a set of tenets, beyond criticism, then I do not have to reflect on anything I manage to relate with it. In all these ways, I may hand over to the group my purpose, and defend myself from personally having to deal with it. Standing still is a wonderful strategy for disengaging from anxiety, unless we need that anxiety for our growth, or others need for us to grow.

In breaking social norms, social hackers are simply refusing to join the therapy defeating patterns. They point to other groups not as our enemies but as our friends that we might be "for". They shake off personal exchanges and instead conduct themselves transparently to mark out the way for structural relationships for use by all. They act from their own culture, and never actually take up the group dogma.

Social hackers live as isolated therapists in a land of neurotics.

At this point, we wonder, who is correct? The neurotics or the therapists? The neurotics live a mixture of failure and success. What about the therapists? Let us examine their world view, if they offer any alternative.

The group mind is a real fiction

For social hackers, individuals are real, and the group mind is a real fiction. Groups are important as meeting places for individuals to interact. In particular, in groups they can find each other to create or join other groups. The Internet makes it possible and efficient for a wide variety of individuals to form groups and interact.

A group is a shared outlook. It is a fiction supported by a set of individuals who belong to that group, perhaps influenced in part by other individuals outside of the group. It is a fiction in that recognizing the reality of the group is ultimately a matter of choice, and can be dismissed. We forget this, and to that extent the group is "real", it is real as fiction. For example, the Soviet Union, a neighborhood, a church, a circle of friends, a family, are all "real" to the extent that we choose them to be so. The group is just a social interface. We can get sucked into that, but as soon as we step out we realize that ultimately it's a bunch of individuals going through their motions.

An individual is real, as is the totality that they interact with, which is bigger than them. And to the extent that they cannot encompass this totality, there may likewise also be "others" in such condition. We allow for others. Even babies admit of others, which may be toys, animals, not only people.

Very young children do not form groups, however. They play by themselves or, at most, with an individual, but not in a coordinated way. It takes a lot of work and skill as an organizer to teach them to play as a group. Group activity, arising either naturally or with guidance from older children or adults, occurs when the activity of individuals supports each other, creating a frame for a shared "game". Each individual has their own attention that works with their own activity, but if the activity is mutually supportive, then there can be shared attention on the "game". Attention can be directed within that framework to sustain a shared fiction, which of course may be taken quite seriously.

The group brings together people to this framework with a kind of gravitational pull. "Hey, if you're not

doing anything, there is something going on here." The framework for shared attention becomes ever better defined. This is because there is a continuous choice - "If you're not happy playing, then why don't you leave?" However, the effect is inevitably to reduce the scope of the game to zero. So groups collapse into fixation, stagnation, inactivity. So long as they can pull in new people, new outlooks, they can bring in new energy. Or if they can keep churning with new activity, they can sustain themselves. This is a bit like the evolution of a star.

A group may converge in such a way that it generates a lot of excitement. The volume of the letters may shoot way up to dozens of letters a day. We might think of such hyperactivity as a supernova. Unnoticed to many, subscribers leave the group because they can't handle the volume. The quality of the letters suffers, as the remainder write without any restriction. The people who drive activity with serious concerns get overwhelmed. What is left is an empty core after everyone has walked away. The group is destroyed, and there may be nothing much to show for it.

The group, of itself, will not hold together people with a variety of interests. There needs to be somebody to care for the members of the group. Many groups have moderators in name only. Often, those moderators are ineffective, as they do not feel they can speak for the group. They might say, "I have to consult with my group", but the group does not respond to consultation. In most cases, the group has no effective way to make a decision, such as to grant a request for permission to use materials generated by the group.

Morally, people "sucked into the group" have lost the ability to have a balanced mind. They are like tired children, intoxicated adults, people under mood swings, excited, delirious or enraged. Under such circumstances, the usual litmus test of "asking for permission" doesn't serve the purpose of getting a balanced self-appraisal from the person of what they want. (Although a self-check of "am I willing to ask them for permission?" still holds.) Moreover, the members feel that the group has the mind. And yet it is a mind without structure, thus without a will.

In his study, W.R.Bion concluded that group structure is necessary to defend the group from itself, and keep to its purpose. Clay Shirky quotes Geoff Cohen: "The likelihood that any unmoderated group will eventually get into a flame-war about whether or not to have a moderator approaches one as time increases." Actually, most groups simply die down into a state of inactivity if they have nobody to tend them, much like a campfire. Somebody needs to take action and impose structure to keep the group to its purpose.

Structure for people-in-general

Social hackers want to live as people-in-general and seek to evoke structure which supports that. They do not want to distinguish between themselves and others who they know or may not even know. They do this by advocating for others, constructing a social reality by which we can be supportive of "others", reach out to them, and help us all grow: be alive, sensitive, responsive, and reaching out to others. They think of this as "getting things done".

Andrius: Do you think that a single group can get anything done? Or a group of groups? What does it mean to "get something done"? :: And what does it take to get something done?

Bala: Yes single groups can :: with good cop/bad cops :: i.e. the Linux movement from its early days :: the czar is essential :: many won't like the czar :: but enough of the doers will :: and then enough others who don't like the czar will go set up their own groups :: which is also good :: and then

when the czar and the dedicateds deliver, more join the group :: sense-of-presence rich communication is essential :: for the Linux movement it was IRC

Structure helps people make commitments, both within the group, and beyond the group.

Andrius: What is happening different, qualitatively, when somebody reaches out to bridge groups? :: If anything?

Bala: There can be differences, but I think you are talking mostly about online groups. :: And with online groups, nearly all don't have structure :: compared to a village :: a village of 500 people can and have been self-sustaining in history :: if we provide some basic structure to them :: so that we move from from a talking environment to a mix of doing and talking.. :: and even better exchanging :: then connecting groups will be so much easier :: because we will be connecting doer pools with each other :: just as a road connecting 2 villages :: and the road will be used by the doers who want to bridge, exchange with the other village :: and the connectors in turn provide opportunities to others in the village that previously wouldn't have occurred. :: If we stick to mostly uncommitted talking groups, they stay levels lower.

Structure allows people to empathize both with those in the group, and those outside of it. When we are "stepped in" the group, immersed in that game, then we lock our attention into that shared frame, and we viscerally live out and feel our own activity as part of that, which may be our personal testimony. When we are "stepped out" of the group, we can reflect on that game, and consider how it might look to others, how it might affect them, how it is progressing, what it is achieving, how it might be restructured.

If we are only "stepped in", then we can't interact with what is outside the group. We can't reach out to others, we can't understand what the role of our group might be in a bigger reality. If we are only "stepped out", then we can't connect with the group members through the activity which brings them together.

The ability to "step in" and "step out" is what gives life to the group. There is a perceptible fluttering of spirit as people alternately step in or step out, so that there are always some of both. This means that nobody can take credit for it, only the totality which is both in and out.

Social hackers foster structure to help us step out and think of others. In a group, there are no "others", by default. Hence, social hackers participate as those "others". In everything they do, they act as a variable, not a constant, so that other might participate in their place just as well. They open up the group to the concerns of those outside of it. They show that we are free to "step out" and care about anybody. Also, they show that somebody may take the group seriously, that as individuals we may "step in" to take up the purpose of the group. We, stepping into ourselves, are able to make commitments to others, stepping out of ourselves.

A group is not helpful as a world to belong to, but as a frame to step in and out of. As social hackers we are engaging group members to "step out". We may do so only if we are willing to "step in" accordingly. In this sense we equalize the boundary, we make the "inside" and the "outside" of equal value.

One way to encourage this boundary crossing is to encourage people's attention to move back and forth from one group's frame to that of another.

Andrius: I'm thinking of social hackers :: as people who are working to connect groups :: so that they benefit from each other's energy :: and can get things done. :: Do you think of yourself as working to connect groups?

Bala: Yes, very much so. :: organising structures -- plugs and sockets between them..so that we systemically increase connecting :: i.e. raise the water level and the lotuses rise :: instead of just working on the lotuses. [...] ..lift the stage instead of tinkering with the actors

Social hackers evoke structure by conducting themselves in ways that might be replicated, and thereby evoke structure. They look for others with whom they might, in an open conspiracy, beat down such paths between groups.

Conclusion: The Need for an Ethics

Social hackers encourage activity amongst online groups, and are willing to break social norms to do so. They are, by their nature, controversial. They break norms because they want to live in a network of conceptual meeting spaces. They imply that groups are, of themselves, degenerate. The group mind is for them a real fiction. They want to live as people-in-general and seek to evoke structure which supports that.

Social hackers are disruptive to the extent that they act by their own culture, rather than that of the group. The proper excuse is that they might participate in the group as people-in-general. Hence, the proper ethic for social hacking is to foster structure that supports the individual activity that is framed by the group purpose. This means contributing to the coevolution of that culture through genuine activity. Any semi-automated social hacking should be sensitive to the coevolution of the group culture.

Ethics is a most profound and intensely individual responsibility. It is quite a challenge to clarify such principles for ourselves, and then formulate them generally, so that we might apply them as a network of social hackers leveraging software tools to engage online groups. Social hacking is a behavior open to all. We social hackers must seek and find a universal ethic, a social protocol by which we conduct our open conspiracy.

About the author: Andrius Kulikauskas is Direktorius of the Minciu Sodas laboratory for serving and organizing independent thinkers. Engage him by email MSatMSdotLT or at his laboratory's open gateway. Acknowledgements: The author wishes to thank Bala Pillai, a living inspiration for this work, and also many contributors to the development of this paper: Merilene M. Murphy, Robin Good, Josef Davies-Coates, Lucas Gonzalez Santa Cruz, Franz Nahrada, umesh rashmi rohatgi, Annette Robinson, David Ellison-Bey at Minciu_Sodas_EN, Eric Armstrong, Peter P. Jones, Tom Munnecke, Jack Park at Blue Oxen Associates, Bruce Schuman, Gary Alexander, Jan Hauser at Augmented Social Networks and also Mark Gehrke, Anthony Judge, Christian Hauck, Sarah Amira De la Garza and Dennis Reinhardt. Author's note: This paper was originally prepared for Open Source Contents, December 9, 2003, and a version will appear in the proceedings. Thank you to organizer Paolo Pumilia for granting permission - in the spirit of social hacking! - to share the version below with our readers.