Democratizing Organizations

All of us live and/or work in some variety of organizational structure whether it be a family, a small not for profit or a large corporatized formal place of employment. Most of these structures with the exception of many families and voluntary organizations are top down hierarchies of dominance where those above in the hierarchy have the right and the responsibility to tell those below them what to do and how to do it.

These structures which embody inequality are totally at odds with the notions that:
- All people are created equal, and
- Humans are open purposeful systems who can behave in the same or different ways in the same or different environments, in other words, they display will.

The nature of these dominant hierarchies becomes even more incongruous with common sense when we realize that in every other facet of their lives we trust people to behave like responsible adults, yet when they go to work they are treated as stupid or naughty irresponsible children.

Ever since these structures became the predominant form during the industrial revolution there has been increasing concern, and the evidence to go with it, that these structures are detrimental to human health and well being. Consequently, research into viable alternatives to dominant hierarchies began and after many long years resulted in the discovery of the genotypical organizational design principles by Fred Emery, first published in 1967.

Australia became the hub of a huge creative wave of exploration of the viable alternative to dominant hierarchy based on the second design principle, and in an attempt to keep some track of those explorations we compiled a book called *Participative Design for Participative Democracy* (*PD for PD*) which was published by the Centre for Continuing Education at the Australian National University. The first edition was in 1989 and the second in 1993.

Because it encapsulated so much of the experience at the time and conveyed something of the changing nature of the world of work during those heady periods, we are republishing many of the papers in *PD for PD* as the first set of papers in this section. Others that were included then have been moved to different sections as the field and OST have moved on. Because OST is an ever dynamic body of knowledge and know how, some papers have simply been superceded as new knowledge and methods have replaced the old.

The introductions to the 1989 and 1993 editions are historically rich and may serve as a good introduction to the field of democratization. We start there and will add in other chapters of *PD for PD* and additional new papers written at later dates.