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Send editorial items to the editor, Richard A. Swanson, University of Minnesota, 1954 Buford Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108. Telephone 612-376-5065. A broad range of contributions are accepted for the *Journal*, brief news items, opinion articles, letters to the editor, data-based articles, papers of a theoretical nature, tips for technologists, poems, humor, and other original items. Manuscripts submitted for the Research and Theory Department will be refereed. The *Journal* generally cannot handle manuscripts over 2000 words (eight double-spaced, typewritten pages). The APA style of documentation is prescribed. Author guidelines are available from the editor.

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Doing What Comes Artificially

If expanding technology is fun to watch, it must be even more fun to build. Imagine the excitement, right down to the pumping blood, that inventors of the new technology must feel.

Regardless of the hoopla surrounding our present technology revolution, life goes on for most of us as we comfortably absorb change. Even I have a miniature PLD (personal listening device) to soothe the irritable tasks of life.

In the late 1940's my grandfather thought television was the work of a magician. Today most of us really don't know how television works, but we think of the hardware as comprehensible (given a bit of study on our part). We live in a human-made world and accept the wonder of it, day in and day out. In characterizing our circumstances, Simon observed that "A plowed field is no more a part of nature than an asphalted street—and no less" (1981).

In the midst of the artificial, human performance technologists are not fundamentally concerned with the way things are. Rather, our concern is for how things might be in the form of individual or collective performances in an organization. Our focus is on problem definition and problem solving. Another way of viewing our role is to think of ourselves as professionals who create the artificial in an already artificial environment for the purpose of enhancing human performance.

In our present day artificial world we are witnessing a comprehensible merger of several technologies. Among these are video, computer, audio, robotic, satellite, planning, and learning technologies. Orchestrating these technologies to enhance human performance requires composers and maestros with a new vision and an expanded repertoire of skills.

The *Performance & Instruction Journal* has the mission of presenting the latest in "artificial thinking"—both conceptual and hardware. At this particular time many professionals in our field are experiencing a designer's heyday. Conversely, it must be a bafflement to those entrenched in the past. The gap between magical and comprehensible is wide, but once demystified, new technology can be immediately absorbed. In mystical P&I form, it lurks, leaps, and threatens.

Richard A. Swanson
Editor

Reference

Simon, H.A. *The sciences of the artificial—2nd edition*. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1981.