

## **WHEN GOOD ENOUGH IS BETTER THAN BEST: CYBERNETICS AND DESIGN, PRECONDITIONS AND POLICY**

Ranulph Glanville

Cybernetics offers us much more than control, feedback and communication! In this talk I shall introduce several concepts that are central to thinking in contemporary cybernetic terms, and which may have considerable value when we try to consider policy, especially what policy might, in principle, be able to achieve. I will not explore a particular example, as the others in the panel do, but will introduce the broad range of these concepts, pointing to how we can treat them as bringing benefit rather than detriment.

The ideas include the unavailability of error; insoluble (wicked) problems; undecidable propositions; side effects; and the value of being good enough.

I will suggest that many of our most highly regarded professions act on and incorporate these concepts.

**Ranulph Glanville** is the current President of the American Society for Cybernetics. He attended the Architectural Association School in London, and then undertook a PhD in cybernetics and a second in human learning at Brunel University. The same university awarded him a DSc (higher doctorate) in cybernetics and design in 2006. He has published over 350 works, as well as having a small art practice, mostly involving sound.

He is a professor in several universities around the world, helping these universities build their understandings of what research might be, and developing new research programs where none existed previously.

He sees cybernetics and design as complementary: opposite sides of the same coin. However, what he, as a designer, means by “design” is very different to the use of the word by engineers and others, who treat design as a branch of problem solving and a defective science. Rather, he positions design as an alternative, and deeply cybernetic, way of looking at and acting to resolve problems. His website is <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/ranulph-glanville/9/472/25a>.