

EDITORIAL

Mostly people marvel at the wonder and benefits of the Internet, and mostly it seems we are right to do so. We also bemoan the problems created by the Internet, which range from right-wing hate forums, to the inane mountains of available information, to the obsessive checking of emails and other social network “postings”, to the ubiquity of the new verb – “just google it”! And yet intellectual life is so imbricated with the Internet that we forget how recent its founding is, and how intellectual communities formed and functioned before the Internet. For much of its nearly 30 year history **PINS** has functioned as a kind of *virtual* intellectual community, firstly for people who wanted to be associated with a psychology that was *actively* anti-apartheid, and secondly for people who want to maintain a constructive social critique of psychological theory and practice in post-apartheid society.

PINS has now become *really virtual* in another way – we have a website: <http://www.pins.org.za>

Many readers will wonder what took us so long, as though the **PINS** editorial had an ideological objection to the World Wide Web, or that the editorial is made up of a bunch of committed new age Luddites! **PINS** has wanted a web presence for some time, but lacked the resources to achieve this. As an independent journal with no infrastructural support, **PINS** relies on the “free labour” of the editors to get things done, from producing each issue of the journal to developing and maintaining a website. However, we shall continue to build the website over time with the first priority being to make all the back copies available. Currently **PINS 22 – 38** are available, and we shall slowly add issues **PINS 21 – PINS 1**, in that order. Unfortunately the uploading of **PINS 1 – PINS 21** will be a bit slow because of certain “technical” difficulties. **PINS 11 – PINS 21** only exist in an old word processing format – the programme XyWrite, and so the conversion to Word and pdf will be somewhat laborious and slow. Furthermore, for **PINS 1 – PINS 10** there are no longer any electronic copies and hence these will take even longer to make electronic and upload onto our website. The **PINS** editorial is committed to having a full record of all back issues on the web, so this project will happen, surely, and slowly, but not too slowly!

For many the advent of a **PINS** website will be an instance of the “good news” side of the Internet, and the **PINS** editorial would concur. For **PINS** there is also a danger to our new *really virtual* status. For example, the predominantly Internet-driven political formation, www.avaaz.org, who campaign for everything from saving the bluefin tuna from extinction to the staving off the execution of the Iranian woman, Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, on trumped up charges, is ironically caught within the dilemma of political “activism” being reduced to the passivity of us hitting the send button on our computer as we “voice” our (email) support for any one of their admirable causes and campaigns! While the Internet has the potential to open our eyes, it also has the potential of reducing us to “keyboard activists” who seldom engage with the human drama of people’s struggles and suffering.

And while *Avaaz.org* does create a massive “community” of action and solidarity, it nevertheless points to a certain malaise and passivity of political consciousness. The **PINS** editors aren’t for one moment grandiosely suggesting that our appearance on the www is of this scale, but it nevertheless raises certain concerns. It is a well established fact that journals that have open access on the Internet don’t have large individual subscribers. They often have other sources of revenue for this not to matter much. **PINS** does not have the luxury of other sources of funding outside of its subscriber base, and hence our Internet presence, while welcomed and essential, is simultaneously a source of worry. More importantly the worry is not merely financial, but rather to do with the possible loss of an “intellectual community” of support as subscribers increasingly rely only on the Internet for access to **PINS**.

*We, therefore, would like to appeal to people interested in sustaining the “**PINS** project” of a critically engaged psychology to continue to support the journal through subscribing and encouraging other “fellow travellers” to subscribe.*

PINS used to run editorials with each issue, and they functioned to introduce each article, as well as offer commentaries on particular concerns to **PINS** and its readers. Given that we publish abstracts with each article, editorials have in the main become redundant. Our occasional editorials now tend to be for one of two reasons. The first is to introduce special issues in which the guest editors comment on the rationale, the foci, and the topic area of the special issue. The second is to communicate to our readership about the journal, and in this instance the communication is about our website.

Sadly, however, another communication in this issue is mourning the loss of two critical scholars, one established and yet far too young to die – Alan Flisher; and the other a young and promising scholar about to make his mark – Siyanda Ndlovu. Both were associated with **PINS** as authors, Alan as far back as 1987, and Siyanda as recently as the present. In fact, Siyanda Ndlovu was working on a book review over the easter weekend this year when he tragically drowned. **PINS** is proud to be associated with the memory of these two men, who in their different ways formed part of the “virtual community” that coheres around **PINS**.

Grahame Hayes

PINS editor