CoNexus Project Background

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# Revision History

CoNexus was written by Tom McNamee, automating the Creative Strategic Thinking (CST) process created by Dr. George Land. The custom response network released in 1996 was developed by Russ Magnuson of Leadership 2000.

Ownership of all intellectual property related to CoNexus software and hardware was transferred to Tom McNamee in a letter from Dr. George Land in 1999. The

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Configuration** | | **Notes** |
| 1.0 | 1986.10 | PC DOS 3.2, Fleetwood keypads | | First release of CoNexus from Leadership 2000 |
| 2.0 | 1993.01 | Win 3.1, Fleetwood keypads | | First GUI release of CoNexus from Leadership 2000 |
| 3.0 | 1996.02 | Win 95, custom keypads | | First release using Leadership 2000’s custom response network |
| 4.0 | 1998.01 | Win 95, custom keypads | | Special edition for Arthur Andersen global license |
|  | 1999 | Dr. Land transferred CoNexus intellectual property to Tom McNamee and Rocketman Labs. | | |
|  | 2000 | Leadership 2000 sold to SAIC; terms not disclosed | | |
| 5.0 | 2002.03 | Win XP | | Added individual 45-minute processes to help with selection (which college, which house, which car) and life strategies. These could be conducted via a keyboard, no custom network needed. |
| 6.0 | 2007.05 | Win Vista | | Final release from Leadership 2000 |
| 7.0 *(custom)* | 2010 | Win 7 | | First release from Rocketman Labs, customized for Leadership 2000 per Dr. Land’s requests. This was to serve as L2000’s consulting tooling for the foreseeable future. |
| 8.0 *(planned)* | 2024.06.20, release planned for 3Q 2025 | Windows OS, Cloud host | This is a complete rewrite of CoNexus for Cloud hosting. CoNexus is gaining the ability to work with distributed groups. Participants will be able to use their mobile devices to access ongoing projects and results. | |

Near the end of 2000, SAIC sold the existing CoNexus 4.0 source, inventory and documentation related to the custom network, and training materials to Idea Sciences, Inc. As of this writing, their website appears to have been abandoned; there is no mention of CoNexus, and no evidence that the company pursued a decision support practice.

# Terms

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| **Term** | **Notes** |
| **Inquiry** | Data file containing information regarding a single session. |
| **Topics** | General terms for entries used to describe various aspects of the creative process. |
| Alternatives | Every Inquiry contains the “Current” Alternative, and it contains votes for the X-axis of the Profile. Additional Alternatives may be defined to describe specific choices being evaluated. |
| Criteria | The Criteria list (often called strategies, wants, needs, etc.) can be prioritized, forming the basis for the Profile’s Y-Axis and serving as WEIGHTS in the larger processes. |
| Costs | Optional Cost elements can be assigned to each Alternative. CoNexus supports multiple Costs (currency, time, etc.). In the Matrix, Costs are subtracted from WORTH (sum of weighted values for Alternative) to yield VALUE. |
| **Axes** | Axes contain participant evaluations of the existing Topics. WEIGHTS (Y-axis) is used for all Alternatives, while CONTRIBUTION is specific to each Alternative. The facilitator selects which X-Axis to display on the Profile. |
| X-Axis | Votes related to the CONTRIBUTION of the Alternative to each Criteria. |
| Y-Axis | Votes related to the WEIGHT that each Criteria should carry. |
| Additional X-axes | Any type of data collection using continuous or discrete element Voting Scales. This information can serve as a replacement X-axis on the Profile. |
| **Profile** |  |
| **Matrix** |  |
| CONTRIBUTION | These are values that occupy Matrix cells and represent users’ rating of the CONTRIBUTION of each Alternative to each Criteria. CONTRIBUTION represents the impact of the work proposed for each Criterion. |
| WORTH | The sum of the weighted values for each Alternative. |
| VALUE | The difference between the WORTH of an Alternative and its COSTS. |
| REFERENCE | This value represents a fictitious Alternative that received the same CONTRIBUTION vote in all cells. By comparing this “nominal WORTH” value to the real Alternatives’ WORTH, CoNexus can suggest one of several broad categories of action. |
| INTERPRETATION | Actions suggested by CoNexus by evaluating REFERENCE against WORTH. |
| WEIGHT | The importance score for each Criterion. |
| EFFORT | The sum of the raw CONTRIBUTION votes, representing how much is being done to meet each Criterion. |
| BALANCE | The difference between EFFORT and WEIGHT for each Criterion. Some processes use this feature of the Matrix to ensure resources are applied appropriately across the board. |

# Background

Transformation Theory was discovered by Dr. Land as he noticed similarities between various scientific disciplines. In cell biology he found that single-celled organisms feed themselves using steps analogous to a creative process he had created called PASEAR (Appendix F). In astronomy, chemistry, geology, and psychology, he continued to see a common pattern to the way systems dealt with change.

Transformation Theory is explained in Appendix D.

Creative production is the name for the process that underlies much of CoNexus’ process design and it arises from a simple principle: **creativity is the generation of novelty**. To be novel, an idea only must be new *for the creator*. Novelty can be the idea itself, or a new way to use it and it only must be novel to the creator. Dr. Land began his explorations into Transformation Theory because of his earlier work in creativity and imagination, conducted with the Creative Education Foundation out of SUNY Buffalo.

Creative production is covered more fully in Appendix E.

From this, Dr. Land developed Creative Strategic Thinking, a problem-solving process specifically designed to yield novel results.

# Next Release

* Expansion into the other three Delivery Modes.
* Uses mobile devices instead of custom keypads for Participant interactions.
* Custom Processes can be designed by authorized users.
* Journaling service documents Inquiries as printable reports with data, Profiles, and other results.
* “What If?” feature allows any authorized user to alter costs, weights, or individual contribution scores to see their results in the Profile or Matrix.
* The Long-term Acquisition of CoNexus Inquiries (LACI) service allows Inquiries to be linked in a chain or hierarchy.

# Selling CoNexus

# Appendix A – Typical Group Process

# Appendix B – Typical Individual Processes

# Appendix C – Sales Experience & Pricing History

# Appendix D – Transformation Theory

# Appendix E – Creative Production

# Appendix F – PASEAR

Personal note: I began my interest in Land’s work after hearing about his work in creative problem-solving. I had been exposed to some of the “institutional” processes adopted by corporations such as Xerox and IBM, and my quest began with this:

“Which is best?”

After posing the question to Dr. Land he showed me a process derived from many systems across many different disciplines. This was *pasear*, meaning “journey” in Spanish; we write it as an acronym for the process steps:

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| **PASEAR** |
| **P**erception |
| **A**nalysis |
| **S**ynthesis |
| **E**valuation |
| **A**ction |
| **R**esponse |

Each step, consistent with Creative Production, starts with a divergent exercise to develop ideas, and ends with convergent voting to product a Profile.

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|  | **Elicitation Question, “Imagine we have achieved the ideal future…** |
| **P**erception | What information did we know? |
| **A**nalysis | What are the criteria for success? (*this is a CST process*) |
| **S**ynthesis | What alternative solutions exist, and how can they be combined? |
| **E**valuation | How do the alternatives compare with each other? Which is best? |
| **A**ction | What actions could we take as a result of these findings? |
| **R**esponse | What measurement systems must be in place to monitor performance? |

The feature that most differentiates PASEAR is that some steps are omitted according to the system’s current stage of development.

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|  | **Phase I** | **Phase II** | **Phase III** |
| **P**erception | P | P | P |
| **A**nalysis |  | A | A |
| **S**ynthesis |  |  | S |
| **E**valuation |  | E | E |
| **A**ction | A | A | A |
| **R**esponse | R | R | R |

A PASEAR session was the equivalent of six CST sessions. It was too large to due in a Same Time/Same Place situation. However, with the distributed resources of CoNexus 8, it may yet be a valued addition to our consulting processes.