



The Challenge of Organizational Communication

CHAPTER

1

AFTER READING THIS CHAPTER, YOU SHOULD ...

- Be able to describe how today's world is complicated by globalization, terrorism, climate change, and changing demographics.
- Understand the concept of "requisite variety" and appreciate the need for complex thinking to cope with complex situations.
- See ways in which we can complicate our thinking about organizations both by considering a variety of organizational forms and by viewing organizations that are often paradoxical and contradictory.
- Understand the distinction between a "transmission model" of communication and a "constitutive model" of communication.
- Be familiar with the seven conceptualizations of communication and the ways in which these domains of understanding can change our view of organizational communication.

In March 2013, Facebook reported having 1.11 billion users—approximately one out of seven people around the globe, and clearly a higher proportion in many parts of the world. As these billion-plus users contemplate the possibilities for establishing and updating their personal information on the site, they are met with a variety of possibilities for specifying relational status including single, married, engaged, in an open relationship, divorced, widowed, in a civil union, in a domestic partnership. In the midst of the list of options, one stands out as different from the rest—"it's complicated." That simple statement could be seen as defining much of our twenty-first-century world and our lives within that world. Our relationships are complicated. Our families are complicated. Our work is complicated. Our politics and government are complicated. Our global economy is complicated. Our connections with other nation-states are complicated. Our beliefs about ourselves are complicated.