



Everett M. Rogers

A tribute to Everett Rogers

Tom Valente

Ev Rogers was the ultimate networker and so it is not surprising he started his academic career by talking to farmers about their networks in relation to how they adopted farming practices. Ev was a kind and generous man. He was a terrific host, opening his home to everyone whether at Stanford, the Hollywood Hills, or New Mexico. Everyone felt welcome at his home or office, whether a graduate student, a staff member, or esteemed colleague.

He was a pioneer in the study of social networks and human behavior and his name is synonymous with the diffusion of innovations. Starting with the publication of *Diffusion of Innovations* in 1962, he made the connection between social networks and how new ideas and practices are adopted and spread. He published *Communication Networks* in 1981 (with Larry Kincaid) which established him as one of the leading contributors to the network paradigm.

He was a wonderful and charming friend to people all over the globe. His legacy of having pioneered the study of network models of diffusion of innovations will live on, and he will always be remembered as someone who saw the “big picture.” His humanistic and global perspective made his work, his research and his company relevant to everyone. He could always look beyond any one study or one observation to truly connect the dots. In fact, his connecting of the dots will be a legacy we all cherish.

Everett M. Rogers, 1931 - 2004

Ronald E. Rice¹

Everett M. Rogers lived a very full life. And he helped so many others, in so many ways, to live fuller lives as well. Whenever I saw Ev at a conference, students and colleagues would surround him, thanking him for his help when they came from other countries to study with him, setting up times to meet with him to work on joint projects, talking with him about his new book or research, or simply to share in the palpable energy he emitted and harnessed. He was definitely a citizen of the world: he created his own center of gravity, and whatever University he was at was more like a central staging area than a limiting, office-based professional identity.

As a graduate student, I often saw him in his office, with people coming and going, phone calls received and made, notes and ideas being jotted down. At one conference, he sat in the back, seemingly not paying attention to the presenters, revising a proposal, reading a book chapter, edited a paper, writing memos. Then, when the presenter finished the talk, Ev raised his hand and asked a completely informed question about the context of the presenter's research. He was a human time-sharing computer, managing multiple matters in order to respond to many people's questions and needs, and coordinate his multiple projects.

Probably thousands of people have worked with Ev on state, national and international, funded and non-funded, quantitative and qualitative, short-term and long-term projects. At Stanford, he worked with many students there as part of an international Master's program, who went on to become ministers, professors, agency directors, and powerful influences in their home country. I was fortunate to help design and work on several of those projects, along with several other Stanford graduate students and Dr. William Paisley, the Green Thumb agribusiness teletext study. Although a world traveler and international researcher, he was right at home with farmers, agribusiness cooperative managers, and local storeowners. On another project, studying the reinvention of the innovation of dial-a-ride at local departments of transportation throughout the U.S., it took me several trips to become even moderately comfortable with his philosophy of air flight scheduling: "If we get to the airport 10 minutes before the flight takes off, we will have wasted 5 minutes." However, I also learned from him to carry an extra pair of socks in the briefcase to refresh the feet halfway through long days of interviewing, and to always try to present material in ways that people can understand. I have been more successful in following the first than the second advice!

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Ev introduced me to communication network analysis possibly by seeing in me an interest that even then I didn't know I had! At that time, around 1977, there were no easily accessible network analysis programs, though Structure and the UCINET series were developing. Many communication researchers used Negopy, which had been developed at Stanford University by William Richards, and fostered by Ev. Negopy was originally written for a CDC computer, and run at a local commercial CDC shop. So communication researchers wanting to analyze their communication networks would send their data to Stanford, where someone would prepare it and take the punch cards to CDC, wait (possibly a day or so) for it to run, look at the output, and revise the commands and re-run the data if necessary. As I had prior management experience in computer systems, it seemed I was a reasonable candidate to take on this job, which provided a little bit of extra funding, but, more importantly, quickly got me involved in the growing network of network researchers, and learning about and understanding network analysis programs and methods. As my dissertation was an over-time network analysis of the development of the 10 primary groups using the EIES computer conferencing system, we also came to share an interest in the study of new media. Later, when we were at the University of Southern California, along with Frederick Williams, we co-authored a book on Research Methods and the New Media. In true southern California fashion, Ev, Fred and I finished revising the last chapter in Fred's hot tub.

Ev published over 500 articles and authored over 30 books, which have been translated into 15 languages in addition to English. He produced many monographs and reports for national and international agencies, such as the United Nations, that were widely used and even available through Amazon.com! His *Diffusion of Innovations* book, now in its fifth edition, is the second most cited book in the social sciences. His book co-authors/editors include: Thomas Backer, Francis Balle, Nancy Bartlit, Rabel Burdge, Steven Chaffee, James Dearing, D. Lawrence Kincaid, Judith Larsen, Roy Prodipto, Rekha Agarwala Rogers, Ronald E. Rice, Floyd Shoemaker, Arvind Singhal, Robert Solo, Pradeep Sopory, Lynne Svenning, Fred Williams. The titles of his primary books, listed below, reveal the range of his expertise, interests, and contributions. These range from explicating and integration fundamental concepts and research literature (communication networks, agenda setting, diffusion of innovations, entertainment-education, intercultural communication, organizational communication, new communication technologies, research methods, health campaigns, development communication), studies of particular issues and contexts (AIDS, India as an information society, new media policy and diffusion, modernization, R&D collaboration, rural social change), and oral and case histories (the foundations of communication study, Navaho code-carriers during WWII, and Silicon Valley).

- *Agenda-setting* / James W. Dearing, Everett M. Rogers.
- *The beginnings of communication study in America: A personal memoir* / Wilbur Schramm; Eds. Steven H. Chaffee, Everett M. Rogers
- *Bibliography of the diffusion of innovations* / Everett M Rogers
- *Combating AIDS: Communication strategies in action* / Arvind Singhal, Everett M. Rogers.
- *Communication and development: Critical perspectives* / Ed. Everett M. Rogers.

- *Communication in organizations* / Everett M. Rogers, Rekha Agarwala Rogers.
- *Communication networks: Toward a new paradigm for research* / Everett M. Rogers, D. Lawrence Kincaid.
- *Communication of innovations: A cross-cultural approach* / Everett M. Rogers, F. Floyd Shoemaker.
- *Communication strategies for family planning* / Everett M. Rogers.
- *Communication technology: The new media in society* / Everett M. Rogers.
- *Designing health communication campaigns: What works?* / Thomas E. Backer, Everett M. Rogers, Pradeep Sopory.
- *Diffusion of innovations* / Everett M. Rogers.
- *Entertainment-education: A communication strategy for social change* / Arvind Singhal, Everett M. Rogers.
- *A history of communication study: A biographical approach* / Everett M. Rogers.
- *India's communication revolution: From bullock carts to cyber marts* / Arvind Singhal, Everett M. Rogers.
- *Inducing technological change for economic growth and development* / Eds. Robert A. Solo, Everett M. Rogers.
- *Intercultural communication* / Everett M. Rogers, Thomas M. Steinfatt
- *The media revolution in America and in western Europe* / Eds. Everett M. Rogers, Francis Balle.
- *Modernization among peasants: The impact of communication* / Everett M. Rogers, Lynne Svenning.
- *Organizational aspects of health communication campaigns: What works?* / Thomas E. Backer, Everett M. Rogers.
- *R & D collaboration on trial: The Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation* / David V. Gibson, Everett M. Rogers
- *Research methods and the new media* / Frederick Williams, Ronald E. Rice, Everett M. Rogers.
- *Silent voices: When sons of the land of enchantment met sons of the land of the rising sun* / Everett M. Rogers, Nancy R. Bartlit
- *Silicon Valley fever: Growth of high-technology culture* / Everett M. Rogers, Judith K. Larsen.
- *Social change in rural societies* / Everett M. Rogers, Rabel J. Burdge.

Everett M. Rogers was a massively influential force in the social sciences, from the most personal and individual level, to the most academic and international level. He made our lives fuller, as he filled his life with energy and collaboration.

From Pat Chatiketu:

This is a letter from a stranger from afar.

My name is Pat Chatiketu. I helped Ev and Arvind on their book "Combatting AIDS" when they were in Thailand.

I was shocked by sad news about Ev because when Ev was in Thailand a few years ago he was able to walk up 300-step ladder uphill to Doi Suthep Temple in Chiang Mai and joked with Corrine, Arvind, my wife and I up there by taking a photo with an imaginative camera in his hands and said "Ka-ching!" Corrine jokingly said the photo will be saved in his "memory stick."

During his visit twice to Thailand for writing the book that year, Ev made a lot of impressions to those who met him. Ev gave a special lecture at Chulalongkorn University without caring much for the honorium like many business Gurus do.

Ev also interviewed Kate Bond, your ex-advisee at Johns Hopkins U., and shared some stories about the University and gossiping about you during the conversation. :) (Tom never studied a class in public health... but...)

Personally, I was touched by his amiable manner when we first met at Ohio U. He approached me by calling my name... a supposedly young and unknown PhD student from Thailand. He said he saw my photo from Peer Svenkeruud's (Arvind's advisee) presentations. (Peer worked on a San Francisco-Bangkok AIDS research that I was a research assistant.)

Through out the trip in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, Ev shared stories, his visions, and his experiences that I felt like little a kid listening to another the Lord of the Rings tale.

His legend will last in my "memory stick" as long as I live. May his legend lives longer than Frodo. Rest in peace, Ev. We miss you! :~~~

May the force be with Y'all,

Pat C.

From Jung-Im Kim²

When someone who touched so many people and meant so much to so many, I don't know where to begin...

It was such a huge shock to hear that Ev has passed on, especially because this past week I spent a great deal of time talking about him with my graduate students. For three consecutive days (Tuesday-Thursday), many students visited me to discuss how they could develop their dissertation/thesis proposals using the Diffusion of Innovations (DI).

In fact, given the time difference between Albuquerque and Honolulu, I know we must have been talking about Ev while he was passing because all we ended up (I say "ended up" because it wasn't by my design) discussing was the diffusion of innovations and Ev during my research seminar which lasted between 3 - 6:30 pm (running one hour overtime) Hawaii time on Thursday. What is interesting about this phenomenon is that most of these students (mostly with a business school orientation) had only heard of TAM and not much of DI until this semester (which was very hard to believe for me). I'm witnessing a big wave of "diffusion" of DI among many students in the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Communication and Information Sciences at the University of Hawaii, and I know Ev is smiling at us up there.

I even suggested (again this week) to two people organizing two separate conferences to be held here in about a year to invite Ev as a keynote speaker, and was so looking forward to the possibility of seeing him here sometime next year. But how could he pass away so soon? I thought he could easily have another 20 great years ahead. I thought now he is retired he could spend more time gardening which he loves so much. As you can see, it's hard to write in past tense about him. I can still hear his unique, rhythmic "Hi, hi, hi" (in incremental notes, not just one simple "Hi"), coupled with his energetic footsteps, coming from the office hallway ringing in my ears.

Many of us will, of course, remember him as a true international scholar who contributed so much to developing the field of Diffusion of Innovations and who was a source of great intellectual inspiration. And I'm glad that he was able to publish his 5th edition of Diffusion of Innovation last year. But I want to remember him also as a true intercultural and international *person*. Ev had such a compassion for foreign students. While at Stanford, Ev sent an invitation to every foreign graduate student in the department about this time of a year to a Thanksgiving dinner at his house all prepared by himself. "You don't need to bring anything, just wear your national costume," he would say. That was such an annual tradition that warmed the hearts of international students and their families because they had a "home-away-from-home" to go to every holiday season.

I'm so glad that I had the good fortune of meeting him almost 30 years ago and of working with him many years at Stanford, and have many great memories of him. We all lost a great scholar and a dear friend. And we will miss him so.

Good bye, Ev.

² Jung-Im Kim, Ph.D. Associate Professor, School of Communications & Chair, Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Communication and Information Sciences, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, USA

From Brad Hall

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

It is with regret that I write to let you know that Everett M. Rogers, Distinguished Professor of Communication at the University of New Mexico, has passed away. He died on the 21st of October surrounded by love and peace, after a prolonged battle with cancer.

His was truly a remarkable career and he has influenced countless numbers of lives. He received his doctorate in 1957 from Iowa State University. His 47 years of teaching and research includes faculty positions at Ohio State University, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Michigan State University, University of Michigan, Stanford University, Universite de Paris, University of Southern California, and finally the University of New Mexico, where as Chair of the department he was instrumental in initiating a doctoral program in 1995.

Professor Rogers had an international impact. He taught or conducted research in Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, India, Nigeria, Korea, Thailand, France, Germany, and Tanzania. He published over 500 articles and authored over 30 books, which have been translated into 15 languages in addition to English. He is perhaps best known for his book *Diffusion of Innovations*, published in its fifth edition in 2003. He received awards too numerous to mention here, but people throughout the world will note and lament the passing of this truly great scholar.

Brad Hall, Chair

Department of Communication and Journalism

P.S. Arvind Singhal penned a beautiful piece to open the award ceremonies for Ev being named UNM's 47th Annual Research Lecturer. Singhal's tribute touchingly captures Ev's humanity, the depth of his intellect, his love of teaching, and the reach of his compassion. It follows [on the next pages].

Introducing Professor Everett M Rogers
47th Annual Research Lecturer
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque
April 24, 2002
Arvind Singhal³

I am honored to introduce to you Dr. Everett M. Rogers. When I first met Professor Rogers in Los Angeles 17 years ago, he was the Distinguished Walter H. Annenberg Professor of Communication at the University of Southern California. I was a first year Ph.D. student. We are here to celebrate Dr. Rogers' "intellectual journey": The journey of a scholar, teacher, writer, and mentor. I hope you will allow me to tell you about Ev, from my privileged vantage point as an advisee, collaborator, and co-traveler.

Ev's journey began on the family Pinehurst Farm in Carrol, Iowa, where he was born. The great depression had just begun. Life was tough everywhere, especially on an Iowa farm. The farm did not have internal plumbing, heating, or electricity. Ev went to a one-room school. He came home to milk the cows, feed the chickens, and do the chores.

That daily hard work ethic, learned on an Iowa farm, defines Ev's intellectual journey. Ev has written 32 books and some 400 refereed journal articles. That's a hard work ethic, and more. Ev's books and articles have shaped and influenced the field of communication, sociology, marketing, and political science.

Hard to believe today, but Ev almost never went to College. He wanted to stay at home and farm. But a highschool teacher packed a bunch of promising high school seniors in his car and drove them to Ames, Iowa. It was Ev's first visit to Ames. Fortunately, for us, he liked Ames, and pursued a degree in agriculture.

Iowa State in those years had great intellectual tradition in agriculture and in rural sociology. Numerous agricultural innovations were generated by scientists at Iowa State. Rural sociologists were conducting pioneering studies on the diffusion of these innovations — like the high-yielding hybrid seed corn, chemical fertilizers, and weed sprays. Questions were being asked about why do some farmers adopt these innovations, and some don't? These questions intrigued Ev.

Back at his farm, Ev saw that his father loved electro-mechanical farm innovations; but was resistant to biological-chemical innovations. His father resisted adopting the new hybrid seed corn, even though it yielded 25 percent more crop, and was resistant to

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drought. However, during the Iowa drought of 1936; while the hybrid seed corn stood tall on the neighbors farm; the crop on the Rogers' farm wilted. Ev's father was finally convinced. It took him eight years to make up his mind.

These questions about innovation diffusion, including the strong resistances, and how they could be overcome, formed the core of Ev's graduate work at Iowa State. Ev's doctoral dissertation dealt with the diffusion of the 2-4-D weed spray in two Iowa farm communities (The weed spray has since has been discontinued). Ev's dissertation had an elegant multiple regression, but his committee didn't think much of it. They were, however, intrigued by his review of literature chapter.

In this chapter, Ev reviewed the existing studies of the diffusion of all kinds of innovations — agricultural innovations, educational innovations, medical innovations, and marketing innovations. He found several similarities in these studies. For instance, innovations tend to diffuse following an S-Curve of adoption (Ev will show you some of these S-curves in his presentation).

Ev published this review of literature chapter, greatly expanded, enhanced, and refined, as the *The Diffusion of Innovations* book. The year was 1962. The book provided a comprehensive theory of how innovations diffused, or spread, in a social system. The book's appeal was global. It's timing was uncanny. National governments in countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America were wrestling with how to diffuse agricultural and family planning innovations in their newly-independent countries. Here was a theory that was useful.

When the first edition of *Diffusion of innovations* was published, Ev was an Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology at Ohio State University. He was 30-years old. But he had also become a world-renowned academic figure. The *Diffusion of Innovations* book, now in its fourth edition, is today the second most cited book in the social sciences. Perhaps someday soon it will be in first place.

Ev's traveled a long way from Iowa to Albuquerque. He has a long vita which humbly notes certain milestones in his career. A chaired professor at Stanford University, Regents' Professor at UNM, and more. One thing you will not find on Ev's academic vita is his illustrious career in the U.S. Air Force between his undergraduate and graduate degrees. Ev, at that time, often flew in-and-out of Kirtland Airforce Base in Albuquerque. He made up his mind then, as a 20-year old, that someday he'd build an adobe house and retire in Albuquerque. In essence, Ev had charted his destination to Albuquerque many decades ago. He just took a circuitous route (about 50 years) to finally land here.

Let me say something about Ev, the teacher. People who know Ev marvel at the ease with which he brings his research experiences into the classroom. At USC, I remember Ev taught a 200-person freshman class. For 16 weeks, Ev moved around an auditorium, microphone in hand. He reminded me of Phil Donohew. The 200 eager-beaver freshman journeyed with Ev to all parts of the world. He discussed his work in Nigeria, Colombia, Korea, Pakistan, and Egypt. He also told them about his work in Indonesia, and how he narrowly escaped a simmering volcano. Ev has a special fondness for teaching large freshman and undergraduate classes. He taught them at Stanford, at USC, and I know he teaches them here at UNM.

This week, Ev and I are putting the finishing touches on our fourth book. The book is titled *Controlling AIDS in the Developing World*. While conducting research for this book, I witnessed his enormous global influence. We visited five countries — South Africa, Kenya, Thailand, India, and Brazil. Everywhere, we ran into former students of Ev Rogers. In Nairobi Kenya, Ev and I visited Dr. Mary Ann Burris, the Ford Foundation Representative for East and Southern Africa. When I tried to introduce Professor Rogers to her formally, she said: “I was Ev’s student in a freshman class at Stanford 27 years ago”. Our research meeting was quite productive.

Now to Ev Rogers the mentor. At a recent event held in Phoenix to honor Ev, which brought many of his former students under one roof, someone asked Ev the formula for mentoring. Ev replied: “I like to plant little acorns and then watch them grow into trees”. You can tell, Ev is at heart, still a farm boy — thinking of plants and trees. Several of Ev’s mentees are here in the auditorium today. Some like, Professor William Brown, Dean of Communication at Regent University, have flown in to toast their mentor.

In closing, A year or two ago, Ev and his wife, Corinne, returned to Carroll, Iowa, to Pinehurst Farm, where Ev’s journey began. Ev took Corinne to show her the one room school which he attended some 65 years ago. They even posed and took a picture. The one room school with perhaps its most illustrious alumni! To me, this picture, symbolizes the intellectual journey of Ev Rogers, a journey that we are here to celebrate this evening.

Congratulations, Ev.