

American Antigravity and the Newsgroups

How Yahoo and the Newsgroups changed the face of Alt-Science

By Tim Ventura, January 21st, 2007

The birth of the new millennium saw a sea-change the alt-science, as the community migrated from a rag-tag collection of annual conferences to the easy accessibility of Yahoo Groups and a few notable mailing-lists. These forums in many ways helped define American Antigravity, and thus it's worth listing our participation in the key groups that defined the open-source Antigravity movement...

2002: Year of the Lifter

The Lifter phenomenon started in 2000 and exploded into the newsgroups in 2002, when enrollment in JLN Labs swelled from tens to thousands of members – many of whom started follow-up websites & newsgroups of their own (like American Antigravity).

JLN Labs: The group that started it all...? Alt-science and Antigravity discussion-groups had been around for a long-time before French-inventor Jean-Louis Naudin's group hit the web back in '97, but something magical happened in 2002 when the list exploded from its roots as a clearinghouse for weird-science experiments to becoming a major forum for discussing hands-on technical innovation. Whatever the magic was, it didn't last long: Naudin's list retained it's membership but lapsed into relative obscurity in 2003, mostly as key members left to begin their own groups. One problem was the moderation – members were complaining that Naudin was deleting posts that weren't technically focused, which cut off any discussion about philosophical issues related to emerging science. (*founded 10/99; 3,655 members*)

Lifters: Originally started by Jean-Louis Naudin to help newbies build their first lifter, this group went from being a spin-off of JLN Labs to a force of it's own when it started making headlines on Slashdot and Wired News (with a little help from American Antigravity). At its prime, the Lifters group was the epitome of a positive, supportive online forum. The heyday lasted until mid-2003, when it became apparent that interest in Lifters was waning and that NASA might have been right about the limitations of Biefeld-Brown technology after all... (*founded 10/01; 3,125 members*)

AmericanAntigravity: Originally intended to be an update-list for the results of American Antigravity's Lifter experiments, the AAG group evolved as the website did into an update list for stories, events, and interviews. To avoid the inevitable lifecycle of most discussion forums, the AAG group remains an update-only list with a light volume of messages – usually less than 10 a month. (*founded 5/02; 4,160 members*)

Greenglow: In the early days, this group was tied to BAE Systems "Project Greenglow", which was heralded as a modern attempt by the British aerospace giant to begin an open, honest inquiry into whether antigravity could be developed to eventually replace the aircraft. Greenglow quickly added discussion threads about a variety of Antigravity technologies, and

for a time was a top-notch discussion forum with a heavy-concentration of aerospace engineers & scientists. This group was notable for not only its heavy concentration of professional engineers, but also for the open and recurring discussion of UFO-related issues – the name “Greenglow” itself originated in early UFO mythology. Unfortunately, this military/defense forum was doomed not to last, and a change of focus by both BAE and Boeing Phantomworks caused most of Greenglow’s membership to vanish by 2004. *(founded 11/99; 605 members)*

QuantumCavorite: Back in the 90’s, when Russian scientist Evgeny Podkletnov made headlines with claims about superconductors creating a gravitational-shield, a few enthusiasts here in states started websites to document the short-lived fad. Their efforts remained obscure for a few years, but the advent of Lifters drove interest in their direction – unfortunately too little, too late, as most of the original QC group members had gone on to other projects. By mid-2002, QuantumCavorite had already run the course of its lifecycle, and to most people remains more of a historical curiosity than a discussion forum. *(founded 2/02; 347 members)*

Nanogirlnews: Seattle-native Gina “Nanogirl” Miller started this group in the late 90’s to document the exploding wave of nanotech-research making headlines around the world. For a while, several people attempted to cross-pollinate ideas from the frequently-published Nanogirlnews update list to the Antigravity tech-boards, but differences in engineering cultures caused conflict. In 2004, family health issues became a concern for Gina, and her subsequently lower publication rate led this list to gradually begin fading out of sight. *(founded 12/00; 559 members)*

Antigravity: With so many competing ideas in advanced propulsion and gravity-modification up for grabs, participating in the ‘Antigravity’ group was a bit like having a discussion near the doorway of a busy conference-room. The explosion of Antigravity in 2002 swelled membership into the thousands, but group members often complained about newbies asking off-topic questions and the problem of re-explaining basic concepts over and over again. Thus, the Antigravity group became a doorway through which new people could find direction to other groups. The exception to this occurred in late 2002, when new member Marcus Hollingshead touched off a controversy with claims that he had developed a device capable of levitating tons of weight. By January 2003, this debate had been partially resolved, and the resulting negative fallout caused splinters in Antigravity that eventually led all of its membership to boil away. The name Antigravity was revived in 2006 for a working group led by Mystery Stevenson, with the announcement, “Yahoo Antigravity is back!” Unfortunately, the new group has only been able to attract 18 members. *(defunct)*

NewElectroGravity: This forum was created in July 2001 by Jerry E. Bayles as a working group to establish a new mechanics for gravitational force based on a local reaction provided by the vector magnetic potential and a non-local action by the Plank least action. The sharing of ideas leading to this proof in an open way is encouraged. As a specialized working group, it has remained active, although its peak has declined from over 600 postings in Oct 2003 to a more temperate 50 to 70 per month. Bayles research initially drove a group focus towards a specialization in engineering the Biefeld-Brown Effect, but the group has also been host to a number of other topics in Antigravity, many relating to evolving trends or breaking news. *(founded 7/01; 1,423 members)*

2003: Commercial Antigravity?

The sudden explosion of interest in Antigravity from open-source Lifter experiments began to mature in 2003, as many began to connect contemporary research to decades of engineering myth & legend. This year was characterized by notable stories like "The Marcus Device", as well as several attempts to commercialize both Lifters and a variety of legacy technologies.

AGGroup: In late 2002, Marcus Hollingshead caused a sensation with claims – and plans – for a large scale Antigravity device that never quite materialized. Disgusted by pessimism about Marcus claims in the Antigravity newsgroup, founder Jaro started AGGroup in February 2003 to focus on actually building the device, but became disenchanted with the idea himself a few months later. The groups focus quickly shifted to building a working SEG after Pennsylvania Lifter-pioneer and Searl-Effect advocate Russell Anderson joined, leading to long-term moderate group activity as they put discuss the details of their ongoing project, which has evolved to include a professed goal of moon-colonization by 2009. *(founded 2/03; 834 members)*

TapTen: Created on Halloween in 2000, this group may be the oldest alt-science activism forum on the web. Founder Gary Voss originally created the group for communications within TapTen.com -- an organization with a goal of locating, funding, and developing new technologies such as time-travel and antigravity, but an inability to locate funding led membership to plateau at limited levels. Voss himself built a number of organizational ties that led to close friendships with Unitel Aerospace CEO Larry Maurer and TeslaTech organizer Steve Elswick, but at the detriment of promoting a more balanced mix of technologies to potential investors. Organizationally, TapTen can be credited with providing its members with more support than potentially any other Yahoo group in this genre – Voss communicates regularly with the board's membership, and even distributes TapTen T-shirts and other miscellany. Recent discussion topics include Voss' plan to build a physical community modeled loosely on the forum's structure, a project he calls "The Ranch". *(founded 10/00; 764 members)*

UFOFacts: Originally founded by psychologist Dr. Richard Boylan as a community forum for discussion related to UFO phenomenon, many had hoped that this group might serve as a credible venue for analyzing potential links between UFO's and antigravity. Unfortunately, this group became mired in first-person, subjective accounts of supposed alien-abduction by a number of group members, and rapidly changed focus from an objective discussion on UFO information to a therapy group for individuals who believe they may be abductees. Its membership remains steady with a core group of regulars, and it continues to become more subjective through the addition of perceived UFO/spiritual connections. *(founded 7/01; 1,272 members)*

Intalek: Founded by electronics engineer William "Bill" Alek, the Intalek group is primarily an update list focused on details of Alek's numerous weird-science & antigravity research projects. While the focus of this group is largely technical in nature, Alek's style has changed since 2005 to include more subjective material – such as a vision he had in 1977 that he cites as the inspiration for co-founding "The Ranch Project" with TapTen creator Gary Voss. Intalek holds a steady membership and averages 2 to 3 posts a week. *(founded 11/02; 589 members)*

Space-Elevator: The notion of building a space-elevator's been around for a long time, but it came back into the limelight in 2002 when advocates proposed using carbon nanotubes as structural elements. Group membership swelled rapidly, but started a decline in 2004 when further analysis showed that even carbon nanotubes probably couldn't provide enough strength to make the concept a reality. *(founded 5/01; 911 members)*

InternetStockNews: Obviously not an Antigravity-related group, the internetstocknews forum was a larger group that American Antigravity used in an attempt to promote a few of the alt-science startups emerging in 2003. Unfortunately, despite the large volume and diverse user-base of this group, it has virtually no traction with its readers, and has degenerated since its founding in 1998 into a stock-swindle forum that nobody trusts. *(founded 10/98; 5,652 members)*

2004: Cultural Integration

The quest to modify gravity spans a number of engineering cultures, and 2004 was characterized by increasing communication between these diverse groups. This year brought together research efforts by government labs and military scientists with existing open-source projects, and integrated concepts from a number of international sources as well.

StarDrive1: This group was founded on the principle of revitalizing public interest in Antigravity by stressing a focus on technology & physics, to counter the increasingly off-topic messages found in the traditional online forums. Unfortunately, it failed to attract a major following, and eventually boiled down to a core-group of members who became mired in group elitism and increasingly obscure questions about the nature of particle physics. *(founded 2/03; 78 members)*

ElectroGravityResearch: In late 2003, AAG performed analysis on a magnetic solenoid developed by Jeff Cook that he claimed to produce gravitational effects, but our test results showed nothing. Cook had engaged a number of people in newsgroup conversations about this research, but found that as others also obtained negative experimental results with his device, the newsgroup community rapidly lost interest. Convinced that his device did in fact produce results, he founded the ElectroGravityResearch group in February of 2004. Over time, the group's focus transitioned from pure experimental replication efforts on original solenoid device into a larger effort to explore the connection between electromagnetism and gravity through a number of experimental coils, circuits, and devices. Although originally posting under the name "Jeff Cook" in 2003, in this group he typically posts using "J. Noel Cook". Posting volume varies from month to month, between 50 and 150 messages, depending on the level of experimental activity. *(founded 2/04; 272 members)*

[The Sarfatti List]: Self-proclaimed "theatrical physicist" Dr. Jack Sarfatti runs the SarfattiScienceSeminars on Yahoo, but the real action happens off the boards. His invite-only email discussions feature a collection of ex- and not-so-ex government intelligence agents, artists & cinematographers, well-known physicists, and paranormal celebrities like Uri Geller. Active discussions include a variety of topics in theoretical physics, military intelligence and UFO's, recent hot-button political issues, and have peak volumes of 30 to 40 messages a day. *(~100 members)*

2005: Community Space Activism

This year saw the AG community reach out to mainstream space-organizations like NASA and the X-Prize foundation in the hopes of promoting AG as a solution to future space-travel. Internationalism also became a watch-word this year, as organizations like New Energy Technologies in Russia began to play an increasingly larger role in unearthing obscure Russian AG-research and breakthrough physics.

KosolDevice: The mysterious “Kosol” became an explosive social fad in 2005 when a series of email messages written in broken English but alluding to profound wisdom from the then-unknown Kosol Ouch began circulating around the newsgroup forums. The newly-formed KosolDevice forum on Yahoo became a focal point for an engineering effort to build a working device claimed to allow travel between dimensions as well as gravity-modification. The design of this device was claimed to be based on a combination of spiritual advice that group leader Kosol Ouch had received from higher-dimensional beings, mixed with a mish-mash of concepts taken from research articles published on American Antigravity and elsewhere. This effort was notable for being a second-generation “cultural remix” of bits and pieces from existing research projects, as well as for the high level of group activity involved. As a fad, this group’s membership rapidly swelled to over 1,000 members, but quickly subsided to a more steady volume within the first few months. Due to interpersonal conflicts between group founder Ouch and others he had given moderation rights to, Ouch left the group in 2006, split the existing membership, and founded Kosol_Core_Tech to focus on one particular branch of this research effort. The remaining group remains a repository of CAD-renderings, engineering schematics, and moderate activity relating to a poorly-described device called a “Rian maker”. While the majority of the open-source community never regarded this effort to be scientifically credible, it was nonetheless interesting as an artistic reflection of the open-source values and ideals in the newsgroup community. *(founded 5/05; 419 members)*

Kosol_Core_Tech: One of Kosol’s chief claims had been a request by the spirits to “clean the forum”, which led him to periodically delete all the past messages in the “kosoldevice” newsgroup archives. This was one of many reasons for the spit that led him to form “Kosol_Core_Tech”, as his fellow moderators as well as the newsgroup membership protested his plans to eliminate their core files & message-history in May 2006. Additional speculation holds that until early 2006, Kosol had functioned as the primary leader around a personality-based forum, but the addition of other moderators may have diluted his claimed spiritual authority. Like KosolDevice, the Kosol_Core_Tech forum had little if any scientific value, but was an excellent case-example of how different leadership styles can shape cultural forums. Kosol’s primary draw for membership had been fad-based interest from the newsgroup population, which had run its course months before the foundation of Kosol_Core_Tech – leading some group members to speculate that perhaps part of the motivation for the split was pressure to salvage a declining readership. Whatever the actual reason for the formation of this group, its origins during a period of declining interest meant that it never caught, and thus remains steady with a small but dedicated user-base. *(founded 5/06; 187 members)*

[The Evans List]: By invitation only, the AIAS discussion-list provides regular updates and working-group insights into the development of Einstein-Cartan-Evans theory – the brainchild of British Civil List Servant Dr. Myron Evans. While it doesn’t boast a large membership, the list is highly-active and maintains a focus tracking ECE applications across the globe. *(~50 members)*

[The Section-F List]: A less frequent forum, the STAIF Section-F list is an informal update list for technical-updates and event information for a number of working professionals in the breakthrough physics area. It isn't a formal email list, but nonetheless a lengthy and regular exchange that tends to include typically 20 of 50 or more scientists who often publish through Section-F at the STAIF Conference.

2006: The End of the Road?

Having built a community but still unable to find long-term financing, American Antigravity founder Tim Ventura decides to take a break after notable funding projects fail to produce results. This example follows a larger-trend of AG-organizations folding after failing to secure funding, leading to a period of introspection about AG's place in contemporary society.

SpaceActivism: Hoping to rekindle the spirit of open-source collaboration in a central forum, American Antigravity launched the SpaceActivism forum as a discussion group in the hopes of engaging the 4,000+ members of the AmericanAntigravity mailing-list in a participatory venue. Unfortunately, despite appeals to over 10,000 people across the scope of the newsgroup community, only 12 members joined this list, producing only a handful of posts. (*founded 9/06; 12 members*)

