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*that appeared in volume 5 of*

NLP world

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# NLP Ethics and Ecology – practical and to the point

At the DVNLP Congress and in *NLP World (*4:iii, p.69), Joseph O'Connor likened the potential fate of NLP to that of the Apple computer: the best insights and aspects of NLP run the risk of being subsumed by other disciplines, much as the MacIntosh graphical interface was bypassed by Microsoft Windows. While the MacIntosh and NLP may still exist in their own little corners of the world, Windows and psychology may take the lead in terms of overall market dominance using the relevant technologies created by others. One could respond to this concern by saying that NLP has modeled and is now being modeled. And, for that matter, why not? What are we afraid of? What is the unique and worthwhile NLP identity comprised of anyway? After all, the very strength of the thorough process-orientation of NLP is to refrain from offering a definitive recipe for application and thus a conclusive overall concept.

*There is no way to reduce NLP-ethics to just a principle*

Unless we embed NLP into an overall concept about when exactly NLP has a certain effect and how and why exactly it has that effect, NLPers will never be able to make any kind of promise about the result of their change work. So far we have not been willing or able to make a commitment regarding what exactly a qualified practitioner will be able to achieve with NLP. The customary promise about the effect of NLP consists of "Well, that's the way it is – NLP just works." The practitioner simply has to be flexible and to adjust himself in a goodwilled manner to the map of the client, without disturbing the client's "self-determination" (a nominalization and abstraction often used in the ethics-committees of the two German NLP associations). Is there any such thing as an "*un*self-determined" client?