The first paper, *Visualizing Conversation*, is academic in its tone and presentation, though it can tend towards obtuseness in its tone, and lacks emphasis and explanation on why and how the two visualizations provide benefit beyond a deeper understanding of how online conversations unfold. It seemed that in this regard, the paper was written in the wrong order – with explanations of potential uses near the end and descriptions of the technologies at the beginning. If the opposite order had been used, the reader would have been able to more easily evaluate the effectiveness of each visualization.

The writers fail to address how well the criteria used by their visualization to determine a conversation's tone, (e.g. Caps lock, multiple punctuation points, etc.) match with a human observer's. For example, a post "ITS A GIRL!!!" on a thread about someone's pregnancy would convey excitement to a human, but would likely be marked red to denote anger by Loom. Additional information on the efficacy of Loom's history presentation as compared with a human's would have added weight to the program's credibility as an interpreter of language.

*Managing the Virtual Commons* is a very interesting and well written piece. The economic analysis applied to social situations was an insightful approach, and
was executed well. The writers were a bit verbose – an editor would have done this piece some good by shortening it by 25-30%.

The section on the rules that govern cooperation among organizations was particularly insightful. The bit about monitoring and sanctioning seemed to gloss over the fact that it is very difficult to effectively censure a member of an online community, as the ultimate punishment would be banishment, which is easily gotten around by merely starting a new account or routing your posts through an alternate source.

MtVC does not assume much of the user, and so expends a good bit of ink on explaining the concept of the Usenet

*Medium Effects* explores some similar questions as *MtVC*, but focuses on more direct interaction and not the longer-term social implications of the communication medium. The paper assumes that users have at least a passing familiarity with MUDs, and so does not spend much time explaining them. To a reader unfamiliar with the idea, the paper may be a bit confusing. Some happy medium between the two paper’s styles would be ideal in this regard.

In addressing the question of turn taking, and the amount of time between turns and length of each message, the writer seems not to consider the typing skills of
users as much as the mindsets, and so leaves a potentially large gap in her otherwise strong analysis. Her hypothesis that back channel communications are present and important even in text based communications seems to be borne out by the prevalence of emoticons, typed sound effects, <indicated actions>, and the incredible overuse of ellipses in modern chat and IM communications.