

# Profile --Thomas L Blair



**The man and his mission:** Prof Blair sees cyberspace as the centre point of the Information Age. And his focus is on sharing information and ideas with Black communities, policymakers and opinion formers. To achieve this, he combines a highly developed social perspective with a long-standing academic background.

**Career:** Professor, international consultant; E-book author, Internet editor and publisher

**Eureka moment:** "In the heat of the Internet boom, I was complaining to a friend that someone needs to go on the web to affirm diversity in cyberspace. The result was the news magazine [Chronicleworld.org](http://Chronicleworld.org) founded in 1997", says Blair.

**Significant accomplishments:** Over 12 years, each issue was packed with workshops, problem-solving essays, articles, hints, tips and practical information. The [Chronicleworld.org](http://Chronicleworld.org) is a site of choice in major gateways to the social sciences, research, social welfare, careers, women, migration and immigration, including the search engines Google, Alta Vista and Infoseek.

In addition, Prof Blair has been invited speaker to the Oxford Students' Union, occasional contributor to the Guardian and Independent newspapers, featured speaker at the UNESCO 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Paris-based journal of Black culture, *Presence Africane*, and honoured by inclusion in the British Library cultural archive.

## **New writing**

The Audacity Of Cyberspace: The struggle for Internet power

### **By Thomas L Blair**

The Audacity of Cyberspace covers a major theme in the impending digital age. Self-motivated, Internet-based communities are pressing the lords of cyberspace – the owners, providers, controllers, and ultimately the censors – to support freedom of expression in cyberspace. This book is a guide to community-based Internet social action.

Key reading for students, academics and researchers in a variety of disciplines – including sociology, anthropology, eBlack studies, Afro-European, Africana and information technology studies.

### **Table of contents - 1.**

- Radical Cyberaction in Toledo Ohio –
- Afro-Americans and the Information Revolution.
- Organising for Cyberpower.
- On this Rock: the Cyberchurch.
- Cyberschools create Achievers.
- Ties that bind Cyberfamilies.
- Cyber hair care and beauty.
- Cyberpower and politics.
- Digitising Black Studies;

### **2. Wiring up Black Britain –**

- Black Londoners Online.
- Harnessing the Internet.
- Congo
- London goes Online.
- Anti-racist Youth
- Promote Info-technology.

- Digital City
- Black Britain.
- Message to Brixtonians: Learn! Baby! Learn!
- Going digital for equality.

### **3. Africa closing the digital divide.**

- Africa harnessing Cyberspace.
- Making Information Poverty History.
- Digitising Language Diversity.
- Targeting Languages for Development.

### **4. Taming the New Technologies.**

- Making the Net Work.
- Nine Experts on Planning Digital Dividends.
- The Digital Opportunity.
- End papers include: Resource Guides.
- Acknowledgements and Notes on the Author.
- Commentaries.

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**To order, simply go to:** The Audacity of Cyberspace: the struggle for Internet power <http://m-ybooks.co.uk/blair/index.html>

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Web site: <http://www.chronicleworld.org>

# About Thomas L Blair

Urban sociologist and policy action researcher Thomas L Blair is a pioneer in the battle to help the information-poor across the Digital Divide.

Born of West Indian parents in New York, his belief in raising up the voices of the unheard developed as a teenager in the low income, multiethnic neighborhoods of East Harlem.

He backed up his early concerns with his personal personal experiences and academic insights.

## **Researching societies, social problems and solutions**

In university, he studied a trio of human sciences – sociology, anthropology and psychology – to gain his baccalaureate, while starring on the basketball team and editing the college newspaper.

His research in youth clubs, sports centres, hospitals and asylums helped him gain a masters degree in mass communications and public opinion studies.

For his doctoral studies in Latin American Studies, he toured the dusty back roads and sugar plantations of Pernambuco in northern Brazil. Later, he lived among the Hausa-Fulani in the ancient city of Kano in northern Nigeria; this led to his report on the impact of urban growth on traditional societies.

## **Workers' control**

Early interests in the politics of diversity surfaced again in the revolutionary era of anti-colonial movements. He was in Algeria when workers took control o lands and factories abandoned by fleeing French colonists. The result, many believe was a manifesto on African liberation and post-colonial development, called *The Land to Those Who Work it: Algeria's experiment in workers' management*. Doubleday Anchor Books, New York 1970.

## **City planning and urban renewal**

Spreading his international concerns, Prof Blair came to England in the 1960s. During almost two decades at the Polytechnic of Central London

(now the University of Westminster), he trained a cohort of younger scholars skilled in social and environmental planning and the critical analysis of urban affairs.

Policy research allied to social action was his métier. His Inner City Studies included *The Poverty of Planning: Crisis in the urban environment*. MacDonald, London 1973 and *The International Urban Crisis*. Paladin, London 1974.

Thereafter, Blair embarked on the traditional route of Black scholars studying African American communities. He focused on the civil rights era of the 1950s and 1960s, and the contrasting leadership styles of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Huey Newton, in *Retreat to the Ghetto: The end of a dream?* Hill and Wang, New York 1977, and Wildwood House, London.

### **Internet policy analysis and research**

By the 1990s, the entrenchment of conservative views in the media and public affairs across Britain pushed Blair to a parallel career in online policy research, and journalism. Moreover, his web site was the medium for his message.

Prof Blair's Chronicle is Britain's first Internet magazine monitoring African Caribbean British and Afro-European communities

<http://www.chronicleworld.org> Founded in November 1997. It delivers authoritative information, book reviews and ideas to students, professionals, and corporate, educational and community leaders. Many think of it as a cyber-store of the skills and ideas peoples of African descent in Britain and Europe need for success at work, study, leisure, and community advancement.

### **Cyber-Honours**

Notably, his 21st century interest in cyberjournalism attracted the attention of academics, researchers and student. In early 2000, he was a featured speaker at the historic Oxford Students Union.

His work is honoured in the British Library's web-archive of "social, historic and culturally significant web-based material from the UK domain"

See his web sites Cyberaction for Social Change

<http://www.webarchive.org.uk/tep/15810.html>;

and Chronicleworld.org Changing Black Britain

<http://www.webarchive.org.uk/tep/15811.html>