

Create Dangerously Museums in the Age of Action

*A webinar for NEMO – the Network of European
Museum Organizations*

*Michael Peter Edson
14 February 2023*

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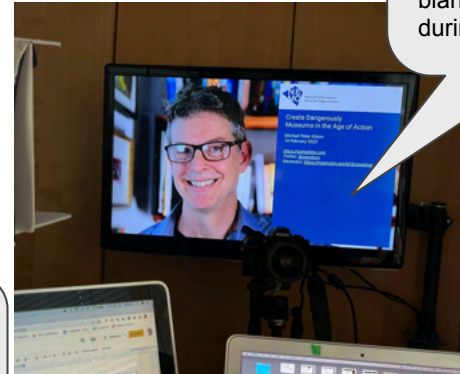
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Note: the layout of these slides is configured for a side-by-side camera/video setup. The right side of most slides is intentionally blank, and will be hidden during presentation.

Also, some slides will have an empty spot or appear to be off center to make room for a video overlay of the speaker.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUQNmYE1E>

Create Dangerously Museums in the Age of Action

Museums are used to operating within well-established boundaries of authority and trust. But the realities of 2022 – including the climate emergency, armed conflict, and rapid technological and social change reveal gaps and flaws in the traditional notions of our work.

How will we get across The Big Frikin' Wall that separates conventional museum practice from deep engagement with societal challenges? And what can museum workers do to get action started regardless of their position, authority, or pay?

“To create today is to create dangerously. Any publication is an act. And that act exposes one to the passions of an age that forgives nothing.”

*Albert Camus
Nobel acceptance lecture
Stockholm, 1957*

I'm borrowing the title of this talk today, *Create Dangerously*, from the title of a speech given by Albert Camus in Stockholm, Sweden, a few days after he accepted the Nobel Prize for literature in 1957.

In awarding Camus the Nobel prize, the Nobel committee noted his “important literary production, which with clear-sighted earnestness illuminates the problems of the human conscience in our times.”

And what times those were.

In the months leading up to the award ceremony in 1957, Camus and the rest of the world had seen:

- Soviet tanks crushing popular uprisings in Poland and Hungary.
- The beginning of America's war in Vietnam.
- Algeria fighting a war of independence against France.
- The US civil rights movement.
- Russia testing its first intercontinental ballistic missile in 1957, and Sputnik was launched a few days before the Nobel Prize ceremony, beginning the Space Age.
- 150,000 people died in the “Asian flu” pandemic
- And the European Economic Community (the precursor of the European Union) was formed

...And this is just a narrow glimpse of world news from a Western European and American perspective.

“To create today is to create dangerously,” Camus said, in his speech. “Any publication is an act. And that act exposes one to the passions of an age that forgives nothing.”

In other words, there is no sanctuary for artists, doers, makers, and creators in a dangerous age.

And though it's hard to make comparisons between 1957 and today I think it's safe to imagine that the news of our last few years, including a global pandemic leaving more than 6.6 million people dead, the rise of oligarchy and fascism, information warfare, another war in Europe, the election of Donald Trump, an insurrection and attempted coup in the US, systemic inequality and racism, social justice, the excesses of capitalism and neoliberalism, and global inaction regarding the climate emergency...All of these realities would leave Camus badly shaken. I mean, we can only guess, but do we think a writer with Camus' conscience would look at society's sclerotic response to climate change and say, “Eh, whatever.” Do we think the other great thinkers and doers whose exploits we celebrate in our collections and classrooms and performances and public programs would be counseling us to sit idly by, or to do the *least* we could do?

Beehives, Climate, and the Big Frikin' Wall

Family beehive

My own family inadvertently donated an enormous, beach-ball sized beehive to the Smithsonian when I was a kid. My mother had looked up the Smithsonian's phone number in the yellow pages and called the main switchboard for advice on what to do about the bees. A day or two later a friendly Smithsonian entomologist took the bus out to our home to have a look. He was so impressed with the beehive that he put the whole thing in a huge garbage bag, tied it shut, and took it back to the office with him, on the bus, bees and all.

It gave us a thrill to know that our beehive had become part of the permanent collections of the Smithsonian Institution, even if the purpose and, well, logic of the exercise seemed a little confusing. Why did the Smithsonian have an entomologist in the first place? Didn't he have anything better to do than take the bus around Washington collecting random beehives? Why did the Smithsonian have a zoo – with tigers, elephants, and panda bears – and a permanent exhibition of First Ladies' gowns? Why have an Asian art museum – and a tropical research institute in the jungles of Panama? Why have George Washington's battle sword, Abraham Lincoln's personal handball (really), crates of fossilized dinosaur poop (coprolites, as they are called), and a \$298 million contract to fly an x-ray space telescope for NASA? For that matter, why have a Smithsonian at all?

HOW IT IS

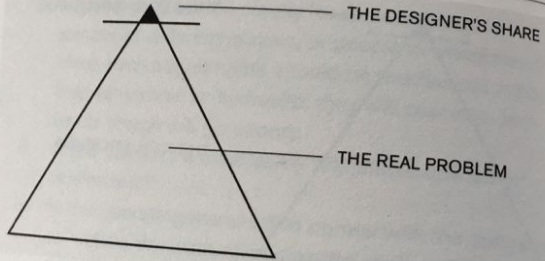


Figure 3: The World

Design for the Real World
Victor Papenek, 1971

Unfortunately, this diagram appli
own count

But for one thing, we are usually only given access to “the designer’s share”

We are in dialogque with our practice, but our practice is out of date.

- Smithsonian, 10 crates of gold
- Bran Ferren, “museums full of shit on the wall”
- Peter Schwartz “the model of enduring wisdom”

The truth is, we forged our concept of what a museum is and does in a simpler time.

And our “practice” is mostly mute on the questions that matter the most

British Museum

American public libraries in the 1950s, 1960s,...

The UN

It all must change — it all CAN change. For all of these systems were more or less designed. And if they were designed one way, they can be designed another way.

Standard Practice



And our “practice” is mostly mute on the questions that matter the most

British Museum

American public libraries in the 1950s, 1960s,...

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9-11 [next slide]



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British Museum

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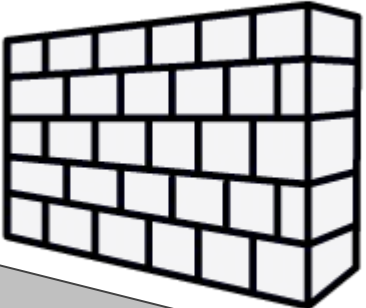
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9-11 [next slide]

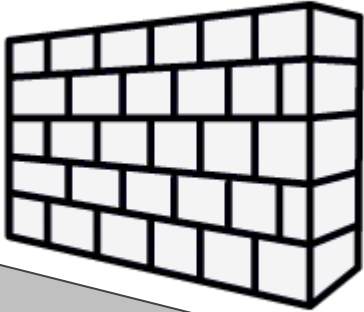
[Basic idea is that I was at work at the Smithsonian on “9-11”. Terrorists crashed a jet into the Pentagon across the river from the Smithsonian. Many of us wanted the Smithsonian and other cultural institutions to help the public make sense of what had happened, but it never did. This was a failure. This “radicalized” many of us, so to speak. We had discovered tech and the Internet and the Web and already had the idea that museums could be something more than they were.

The Big Frikin' Wall



The Big Frikin' Wall

Where you
need to be

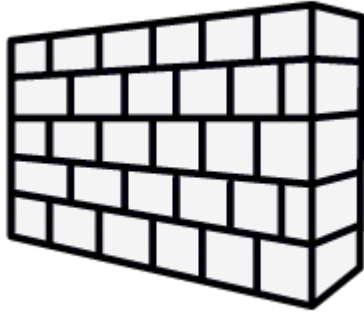


Standard Practice

Where you
are

The Big Frikin' Wall

Where you
need to be

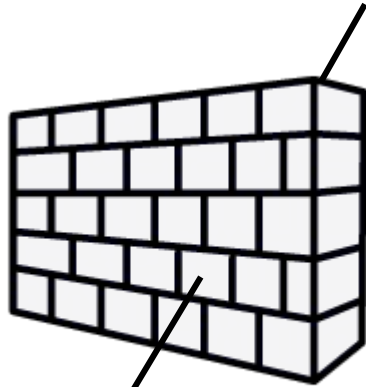


Where you
are

Adapted from Kathy Sierra.
<https://www.usingdata.com/usingdata/a-selection-of-awesome-graphics-about-user>

The Big Frikin' Wall

Where you
need to be



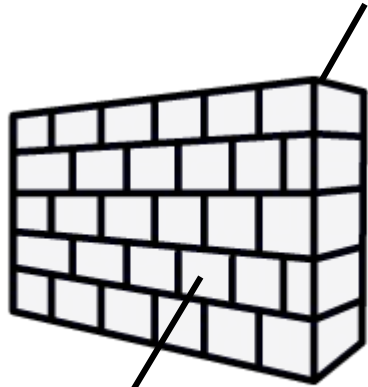
Where you get
with safe/
incremental
work

Where you
are

Adapted from Kathy Sierra.
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The Big Frikin' Wall

Where you
need to be

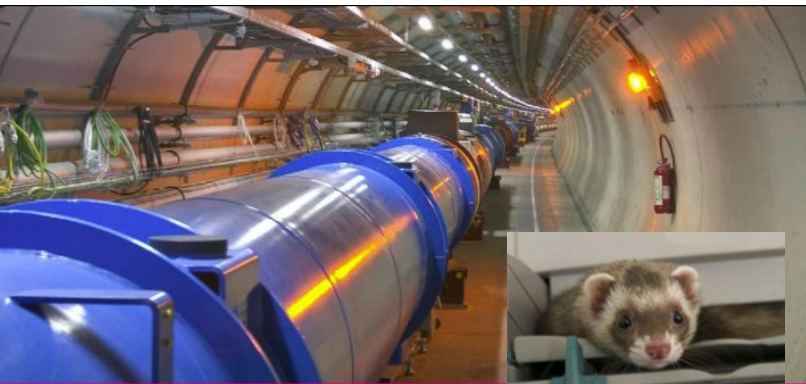


Where you get
with safe/
incremental
work

What does
this look like
in today's
world?

Where you
are

Adapted from Kathy Sierra.
<https://www.usingdata.com/usingdata/a-selection-of-awesome-graphics-about-user>



PHYSICS

A Weasel Just Shut Down The Large Hadron Collider, According to Reports

BI ALI SUNDERMIER, BUSINESS INSIDER
29 APRIL 2016

The largest and most powerful atom smasher on the planet has been taken offline. And it's all thanks to a little weasel.

According to [internal documents](#), the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN, a 27-kilometre underground ring used to collide particles at nearly the speed of light, is experiencing some issues.

Stakes are high. A confusing time to be alive.

Weasel in Large Hadron Collider in April, 2016.

2020–

Pandemic with 6m dead worldwide so far (>976k in USA); Trump advises injecting the body with bleach; conspiracy theories; fake news; Almost went to war with N. Korea, Iran, ourselves; Wildfires in California and Australia; Brexit; George Floyd was murdered by a police officer and the Black Lives Matter protests went global; presidential election in USA; grinding disinformation, fascism fueled by 3rd party social media; Trump impeached twice; Armed takeovers of Michigan state house and US capitol (technically 2021).

And now a war in Europe.

Stakes are pretty high

A confusing time to be alive

8

Only ~~11~~ Years Left to Prevent Irreversible Damage from Climate Change, Speakers Warn during General Assembly High-Level Meeting

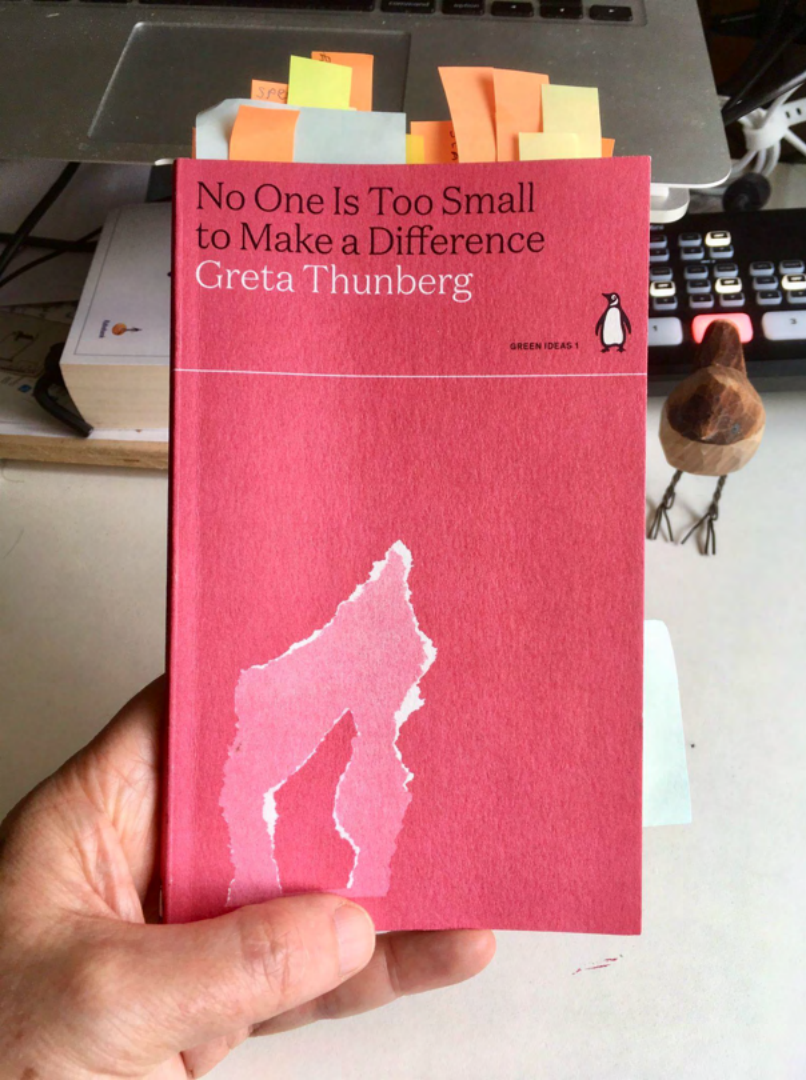
Ambition, Urgency Needed to Address Global Emergency, Secretary-General Says

Just over a decade is all that remains to stop irreversible damage from climate change, world leaders heard today as the General Assembly opened a high-level meeting on the relationship between the phenomenon and sustainable development.

The meeting – held pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/219 (2017) – will run through 29 March with a focus on protection of the global climate for present and future generations, in the context of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“We are the last generation that can prevent irreparable damage to our planet,” General Assembly President María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés (Ecuador) warned the gathering in her

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/ga12131.doc.htm>



Greta Thunberg:

Our house is on fire...

Adults keep saying: "We owe it to the young people to give them hope."

But I don't want your hope. I don't want you to be hopeful.

I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel inside me every day.

And then I want you to act.

World Economic Forum, Davos, 2019.

The Earth is in a death spiral. It will take radical action to save us

George Monbiot

Wed 14 Nov 2018 01:00 EST

Wouldn't it be better, we asked, to pursue some intermediate aims?

A young woman called Lizia Woolf stepped forward. She hadn't spoken before, but the passion, grief and fury of her response was utterly compelling. "What is it that you are asking me as a 20-year-old to face and to accept about my future and my life? ... This is an emergency. We are facing extinction. When you ask questions like that, what is it you want me to feel?"

We had no answer.

Bill McKibben: Winning Slowly Is the Same as Losing

The technology exists to combat climate change – what will it take to get our leaders to act?

By **BILL MCKIBBEN** 

“If we don’t win very quickly on climate change then we will never win. That’s the core truth about global warming. It’s what makes it different from every other problem our political systems have faced.”

<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/bill-mckibben-winning-slowly-is-the-same-as-losing-198205/>

PAGE TURNER

WHEN IT'S TOO LATE TO STOP FASCISM, ACCORDING TO STEFAN ZWEIG

By George Prochuk February 6, 2017

“The excruciating power of Zweig’s memoir lies in the pain of looking back and seeing that there was a small window in which it was possible to act, and then discovering how suddenly and irrevocably that window can be slammed shut.”

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/when-its-too-late-to-stop-fascism-according-to-stefan-zweig>



Aditi Juneja ✓

@AditiJuneja3

If you've wondered what you would've done during slavery, the Holocaust, or Civil Rights movement... you're doing it now. [#Charlottesville](#)

1:32 AM · Aug 12, 2017

<https://twitter.com/AditiJuneja3/status/896242929806790656>

Trump Will Withdraw U.S. From Paris Climate Agreement

By **Michael D. Shear**

June 1, 2017

6 MIN READ

WASHINGTON — President Trump announced on Thursday that the United States would withdraw from the Paris climate accord, weakening efforts to combat global warming and embracing isolationist voices in his White House who argued that the agreement was a pernicious threat to the economy and American sovereignty.

In a speech from the Rose Garden, Mr. Trump said the landmark 2015 pact imposed wildly unfair environmental standards on American businesses and workers. He vowed to stand with the people of the United States against what he called a “draconian” international deal.

“I was elected to represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris,” the president said, drawing support from members of his Republican Party but widespread condemnation from political leaders, business executives and environmentalists around the globe.

Let me give you an example of how this plays out...

To do: add clickable/larger link

Symposium: 3 weeks after Trump pulled out of the Paris Accord.

Frances Morris, Director, Tate Modern:

“The reality for Tate, which is at national museum...we're actually duty-bound not to be an activist institution. But I think we do have an incredibly important role.”

“And what I think we are trying to do at Tate modern, that I think speaks louder than any manifesto, or any action, is that our galleries are full of artists from many places across the world, and that there is a level of diversity in relation to gender and race and ethnic city and age.”

[Does this seem to you that the Tate director' response is on par with the magnitude of the crisis?]

Kundebrev Plus Live Nyhederne E-brevs Annoncer Ethery Admistrative søgbar Persondata [Log ind](#) [Såb skemaer](#)

POLITIKEN

Mandag

LIVE > PODCAST POLITIKENLILLET KUNSTPÅRTERKERSKOLEN KURSER NYTÆRNSKOLEN SKOLELEDERNETVÆRK VIDEO [MENU](#)

Politiken Festival 1.-3. november: Mød Jeanett Albeck, Nørlund & Aldt og mange flere

PODCAST JUN 27 2017 AT 17:01

What is the museum's role in a burning world?

Should the museums take a political position in a time of terror, xenophobia, refugee flows and refugee crises? The museums' activist space is debated in this Politiken Live Podcast from Bikubenfondens Visionssalon at Statens Museum for Kunst.

Skal museerne tage politisk stilling i en tid med terror, fremmedhad, flygtningestrømme og flygtningekriser? Museernes aktivistiske råderum er til debat i denne Politiken Live Podcast fra Bikubenfondens Visionssalon på Statens Museum for Kunst.

Kan kunst ændre beskuernes politiske holdninger og syn på verden radikalt? Skal museerne tage stilling og lade udstillingerne reflektere et politisk ståsted? Dette blev diskuteret til Bikubenfondens Visionssalon på Statens Museum for Kunst d. 21. juni.



Foto: P. Hall, Charlottenborg/Statens Museum for Kunst

Arkivfoto: Kunstmusei Charlottenborgs facade er i dagligtale dækket af redningsveste fra 1980'erne. Installationen er lavet af den kinesiske kunstner Ai Weiwei. I denne podcast diskuteres et par af kunstnerens museeretsaktiviteter i forhold til den aktuelle verdens.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Log In | Register | Select Language

Search Keywords or Topics GO

Plan Your Visit Exhibitions Learn & Teach Explore Our Research Calendar Join & Support Buy Tickets



MUMMIES

Unwrap the Secrets of Mummies
Now Open

Explore the museum

Find out about our exhibitions, events, research, and collections.

START EXPLORING

Science topics

On climate change, cosmology, Darwin, dinosaurs, and more.

VIEW TOPICS

Become a Member

JOIN THE MUSEUM

Shop for unique gifts

AMNH ONLINE STORE

Buy Tickets

PURCHASE TICKETS NOW

The Gilder Center

LEARN MORE

Informal Survey of 30 top global museums about a week after Trump pulled out of the Paris accord.

None of the elite natural history museums or similar orgs had anything about it on their web sites. Business as usual.

Greta Thunberg, UN Climate Change Conference, Katowice, 12 December 2018:

“We can not solve a crisis without treating it as a crisis.”

...Of California's Coast
Disappearing Into the Sea ...

...and a National Park
Losing Its Namesake


Forecast: Threat to Emerge
From Gulf

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

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Hours and adm

Become a Mem



Sensational Butterflies

Where is a butterfly's nose?
Find out. Book now.

Sensational Butterflies

Book tickets to our tropical butterfly house. Now open.

Visit

Our science

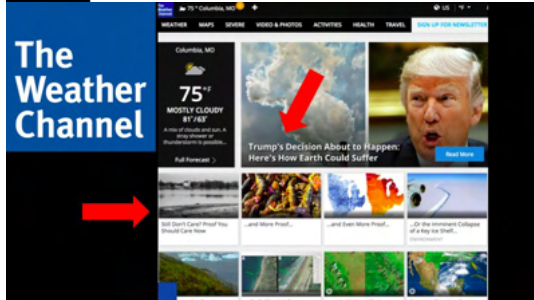


Who was taking on the job of informing the public about the significance of Trump & Paris?

Teen Vogue.

The Weather Channel.

Steak-umm sliced steak. ("100% beef. 100% delicious")



https://twitter.com/steak_umm/status/1247345795575283712

Museums and libraries fight ‘alternative facts’ with a #DayofFacts

First the [National Parks](#) went rogue, sharing climate change data on Twitter. Now museums and libraries have taken up arms — or at least typing fingers — to fight on behalf of facts.

By [Sarah Kaplan](#)

Feb. 17, 2017 at 9:03 a.m. PST

Using the hashtag [#DayofFacts](#), more than 280 scientific and cultural institutions are devoting Friday to dropping 140-character truths on Twitter. Many of the facts seem pointedly political — like the National Museum of American Jewish History’s [tweet](#) about a George Washington letter affirming religious freedom in the country, or a placard held up in a video by Chicago’s Field Museum that stated “Climate change is accelerating the extinction of plants and animals.”

The political undertone is the goal, according to [Alli Hartley](#), a museum educator from Virginia who helped organize the campaign with her colleague [Mara Kurlandsky](#).

Ali Hartley

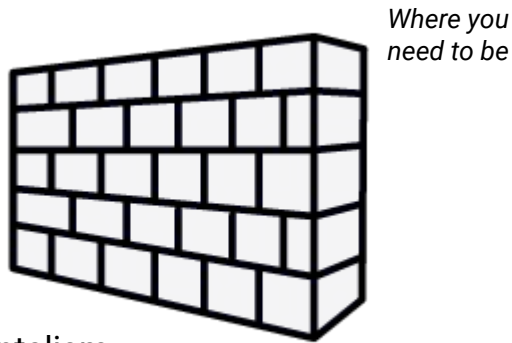
Mara Kurlandsky

2 cultural workers on their own time.

(280 scientific and cultural institutions signed up to participate.)

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/speaking-of-science/wp/2017/02/17/museums-and-libraries-fight-alternative-facts-with-a-dayoffacts/>

Climate acts like an X-ray on our practice



*Where you
need to be*

Incrementalism
Trust (and risk)
“Culture”
Digitality
Politics
Agency
*An incomplete
change model*

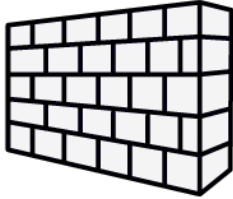
← Areas where we get stuck
on this side of the wall.

Climate acts like an X ray on our practice.

Especially because climate requires action. Doing something.

“If you want to know what someone’s values are watch when they have to make a decision that costs them something.” - a biz school professor at the Getty leadership institute.

Climate acts like an X-ray on our practice

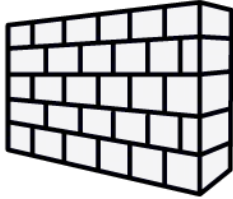


The information deficit model of behavior change

Access to information → Knowledge → Wisdom

This model from museology and library science is incomplete. It only builds part of a bridge...

Climate acts like an X-ray on our practice



THE
NEW YORKER

BOOKS FEBRUARY 27, 2017 ISSUE

WHY FACTS DON'T CHANGE OUR MINDS

New discoveries about the human mind show the limitations of reason.

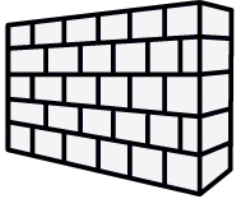


By Elizabeth Kolbert

February 19, 2017

“Providing people with accurate information doesn’t seem to help”

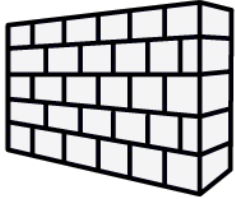
Climate acts like an X-ray on our practice



“One thing is clear: just giving people information doesn’t work to change [entrenched] behaviors.”

- Ann-Christine Duhaime, M.D.
Minding the Climate, p181

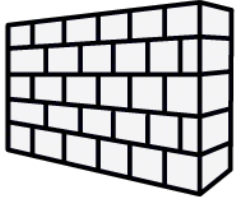
Climate acts like an X-ray on our practice



“There remains a gap between pro-environmental *intent* and the actual impact of specific behavioral actions, even among people who have pro-environmental attitudes....”

Ann-Christine Duhaime, M.D.
Minding the Climate p 215-16

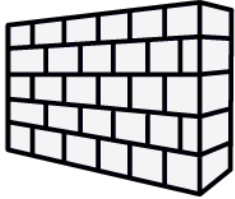
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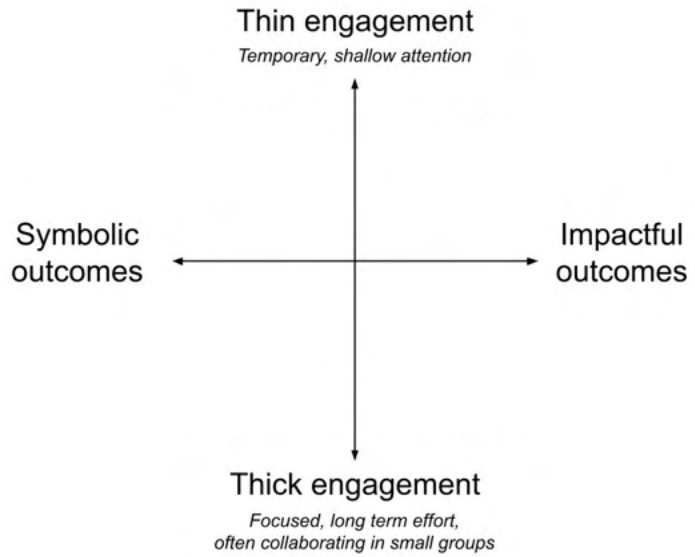
“...People can know about climate change intellectually, but they have many justifications that can be utilized when it’s just easier to keep doing what they’ve been doing without making bothersome changes [...] The brain is equipped to adapt based on what’s happening right now, and can find ways to attend [to climate action] selectively.”

Ann-Christine Duhaime, M.D.
Minding the Climate p 215-16

Climate acts like an X-ray on our practice

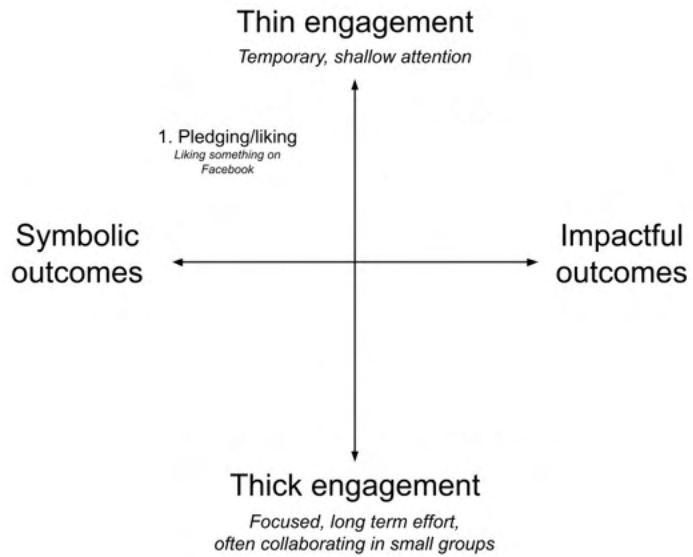


Action is very hard for us. A foreign language.



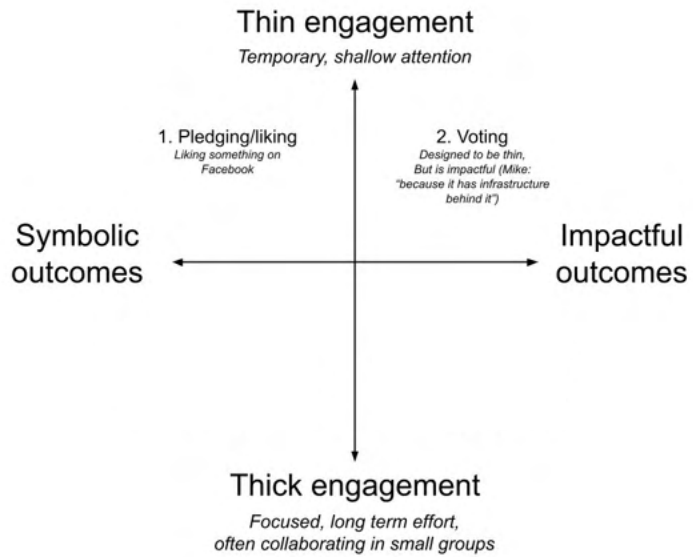
@mpedson Michael Peter Edson

Model derived from Ethan Zuckerman, MIT



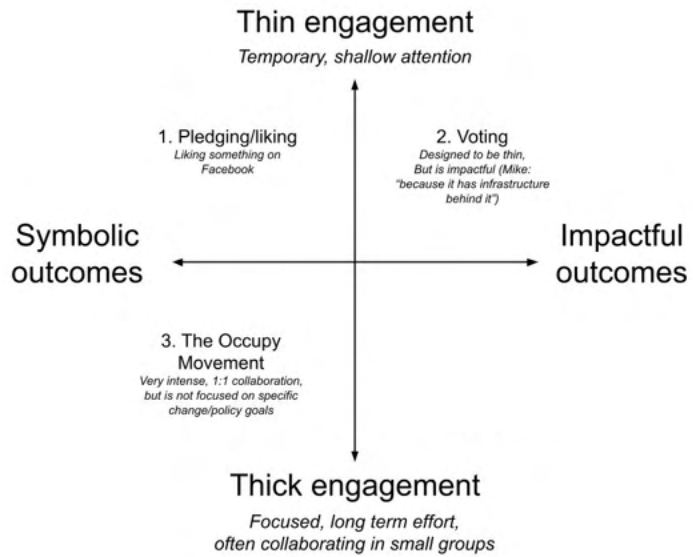
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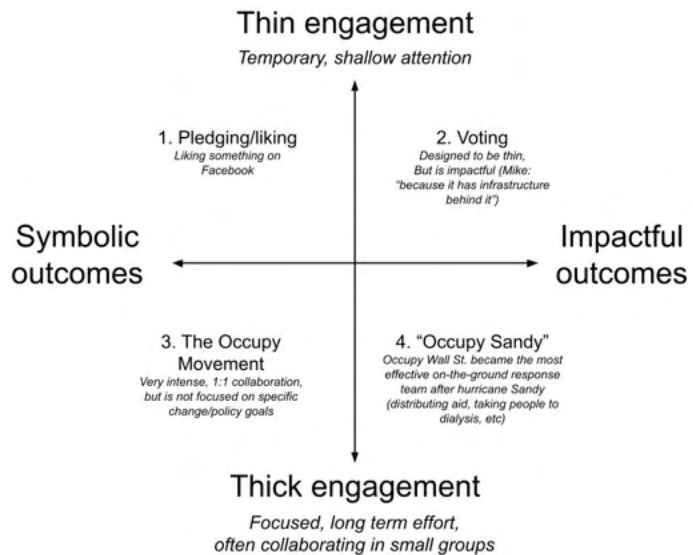
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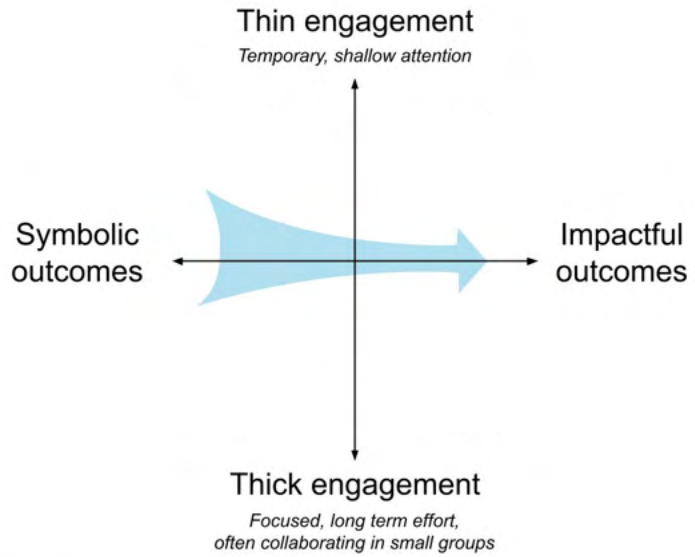


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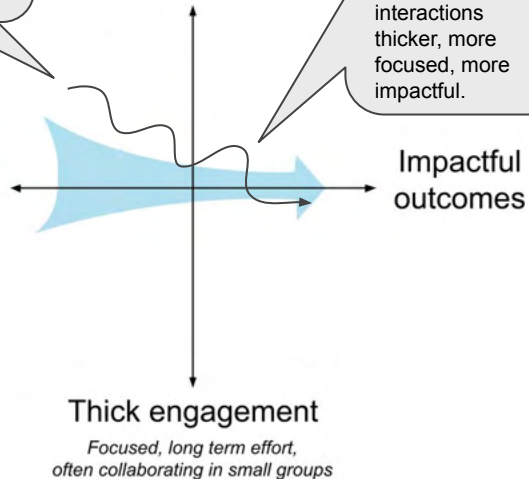
I see many examples where impactful work begins with small, symbolic acts....

Thin engagement

Temporary, shallow attention

Over time, interaction, structure, infrastructure, & creativity are added to make interactions thicker, more focused, more impactful.

Symbolic outcomes



Impactful outcomes

Thick engagement

Focused, long term effort, often collaborating in small groups

Model derived from Ethan Zuckerman, MIT

Notes (work in progress /Mike, Feb 14)

Prof. Giuseppe Delmestri

Head Institute for Change Management, WU Vienna, & Vice-Chair EGOS

#sabbadicycle, 2400km, Italy to Tallinn. For EGOS European Group on Social Studies 2022.

Arrested in a protest in Austria.

“...the contention that the university teacher should be entirely devoid of ‘passion’ and that s/he should avoid all subjects which threaten to arouse over-heated controversies constitutes a narrow-minded, bureaucratic opinion which every independent teacher must reject.” - Max Weber, The meaning of “ethical neutrality”

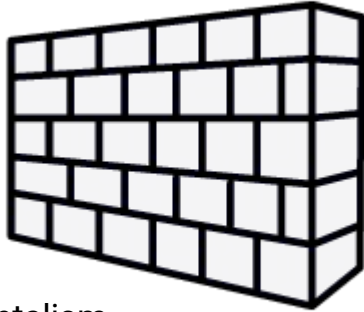
Os4future.

@mpedson Michael Peter Edson

Some examples:

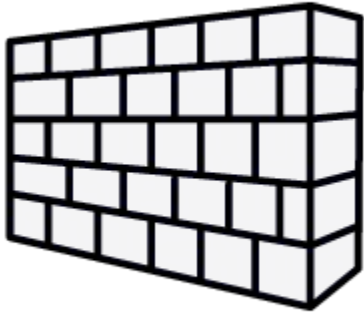
- Ministry for the future (shoes->political pledges->citizens Assemblies->political responsibility rights of future generations)
- Prof. Giuseppe Delmestri #sabbadicycle
- Occupy Sandy
- Times Square (tactical urbanism!)
- Congressional Modernization Committee ([link](#), design for civic meeting in US congress)
- Solutions Journalism Network
- “Germany Talks”
- Folger Shakespeare Library (counter example)
- Gold Kimonos (Krznaric)

Climate acts like an X-ray on our practice

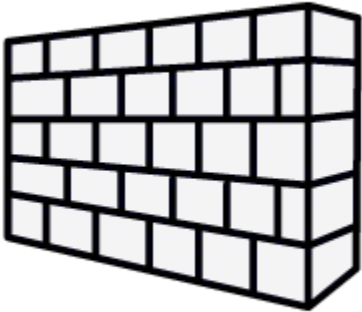


Incrementalism
Trust (and risk)
"Culture"
Digitality
Politics
Agency
*An incomplete
change model*

All that being said, don't
obsess about what's
holding you back; focus
on what's over here on
the other side.



Next slides, projects/people who
have seen through, around, over
the Big Frikin' Wall.



 Borrow

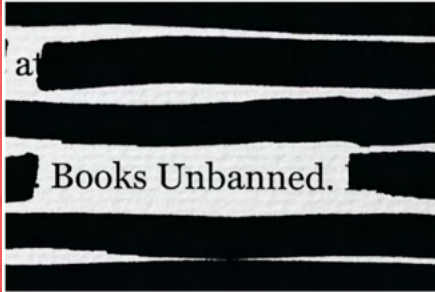
 Learn

 Attend

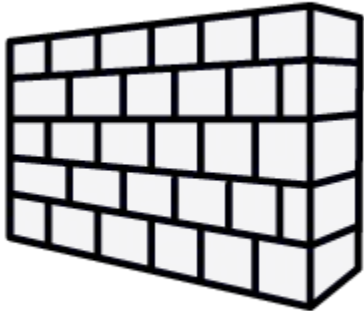
 BPL Presents

 More

Standing up to book bans,
The Brooklyn Public
Library is letting all teens
access their online
catalogue, free



<https://www.bklynlibrary.org/books-unbanned>



National Emergency Library

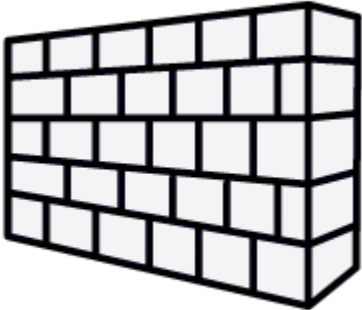


Graphic art by Yiyi Lu

Internet Archive National Emergency Library and
Controlled Digital Lending

<https://blog.archive.org/national-emergency-library/> |

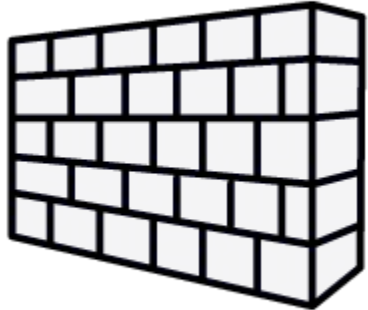
<https://openlibrary.org/>





European
City of Science
Leiden2022

Leiden 2022 European City of Science
<https://leiden2022.nl/en>

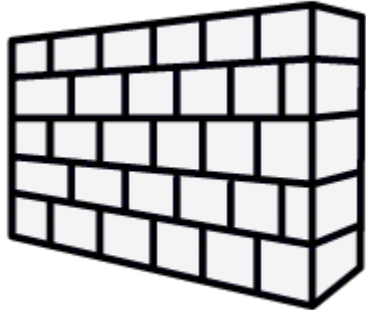




The YNot Lot (“why not?”)

A free community performance/meeting venue in a shipping container in Baltimore, Maryland, USA

<https://www.stationnorth.org/ynot>

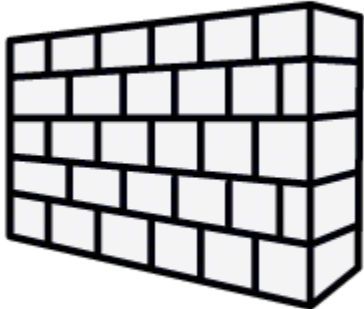




The runway at the National Portrait Gallery's Kogod Courtyard.

Rip This Runway

“The teens are not a problem, they are an audience.” Nik Apostolides, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery

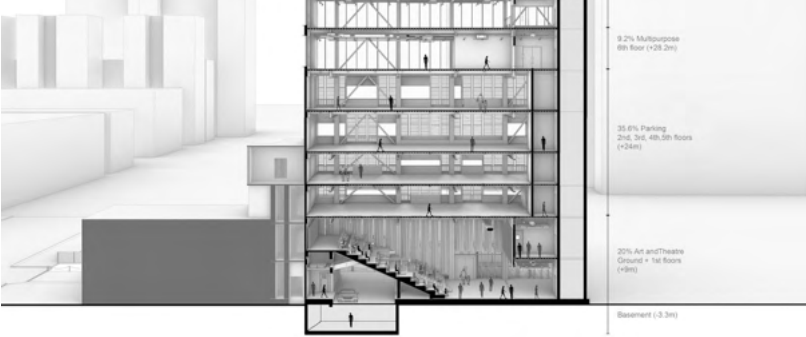


<https://www.ft.com/content/41a8e272-1436-11e3-9289-00144feabdc0>
<https://dcist.com/story/11/08/08/rip-this-runway-at-mlk-library/>

National Portrait Gallery (USA) deputy director Nik Apostolides received complaints of local youth hanging out on the museum's steps. He invited them in and, with DC Public Library, helped the young people use the museum in their own way.

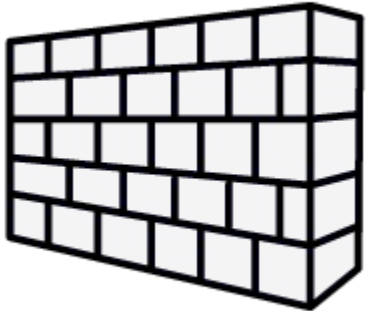
“The brainchild of the D.C. Public Library's Rebecca Renard and professional designer (and former Project Runway contestant) Carmen Webber, the event brought together girls and boys ranging from 13 to 17 years of age. It all took place at Martin Luther King, Jr. Library and the National Portrait Gallery's Kogod Courtyard”

Via <https://dcist.com/story/11/08/08/rip-this-runway-at-mlk-library/>



Museum of Solutions, Mumbai (MuSo)
Boldly Child Led, Opening 2023

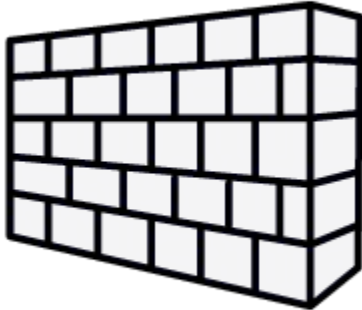
<https://www.museumofsolutions.in/know-muso/>



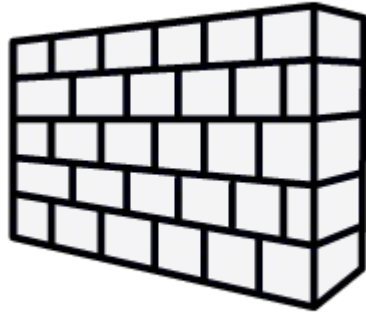
Other examples:

National Geographic Society shift from *neutrality* to social & environmental issues arising from *last/next 100 years* discussion in the 1980s

MIT Open Courseware arising from faculty strategic planning on the future of education in the 1990s.



Climate acts like an X-ray on our practice



*Where you
need to be*

Talk to
people who
are already
over here...

...and build know-how and
confidence here, and the wall
starts to dissolve.

“Confidence is a feeling which
reflects the coherence of the
information and the cognitive
ease of processing it.”

Daniel Kahneman
Thinking Fast and Slow

Where you
are

Two big clarifying questions:

What are our obligations?

What is consequential?

What are our obligations?

Why do we need to do anything at all?



What are our obligations?

Why do we need to do anything at all?

1. **Every sector must be transformed**

...By 2050, and sooner. // Me: If I were a shoemaker I would be angry that the shoemaker's sector was so passive and detached. Our societies must be *transformed*. Climate requires effort/risk from every sector of society.

2. **“Culture” is needed (and M.I.A*)**

We know we can't just deliver technocratic solutions to every community in the world. There is a “cultural” component to change.

3. **Core values + needs are aligned with this moment!**

This is the “for the future” part of the “study the past” equation! Relevance. Impact. Unfinished transformation (participatory, community, co-creation). Business model (€1.8 trillion on the table now; €100m N. Euro. Bauhaus; \$23 trillion in emerging markets by 2030 per ifc.org)

What are our obligations?

Why do we need to do anything at all?

4. **Human rights**

People have a fundamental human right to determine the kind of world they want to live in.

What are our obligations?

Why do we need to do anything at all?

5. **The “handoff” between different sectors of society is broken**

...Broken by the speed and scale of change.

What are our obligations?

Why do we need to do anything at all?

5. **The “handoff” between different sectors of society is broken**

...Broken by the speed and scale of change.

So everybody has to do 1 more thing (more risk, more boldness, more creativity) than in *normal* times. “A bridge to action.”

It's not fair, but nobody said it has to be fair.

What are our obligations?

Why do we need to do anything at all?

5. **The “handoff” between different sectors of society is broken**

Outdated notions of “trust” and “neutrality” often hold us back in the sector. Trust is thought of as something that is earned, but not spent.

This crisis is mirrored and accentuated in journalism, which has been reluctant to deviate from the illusion of neutrality re: social justice, climate, and the rise of fascism.

See also Museums are not Neutral.

<https://www.museumsarenotneutral.com/learn-more/we-are-stronger-together>

To do: add slide after this one that unpacks the “trust”/handoff examples, for example, from Wash Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/01/30/newsrooms-news-reporting-objectivity-diversity/>

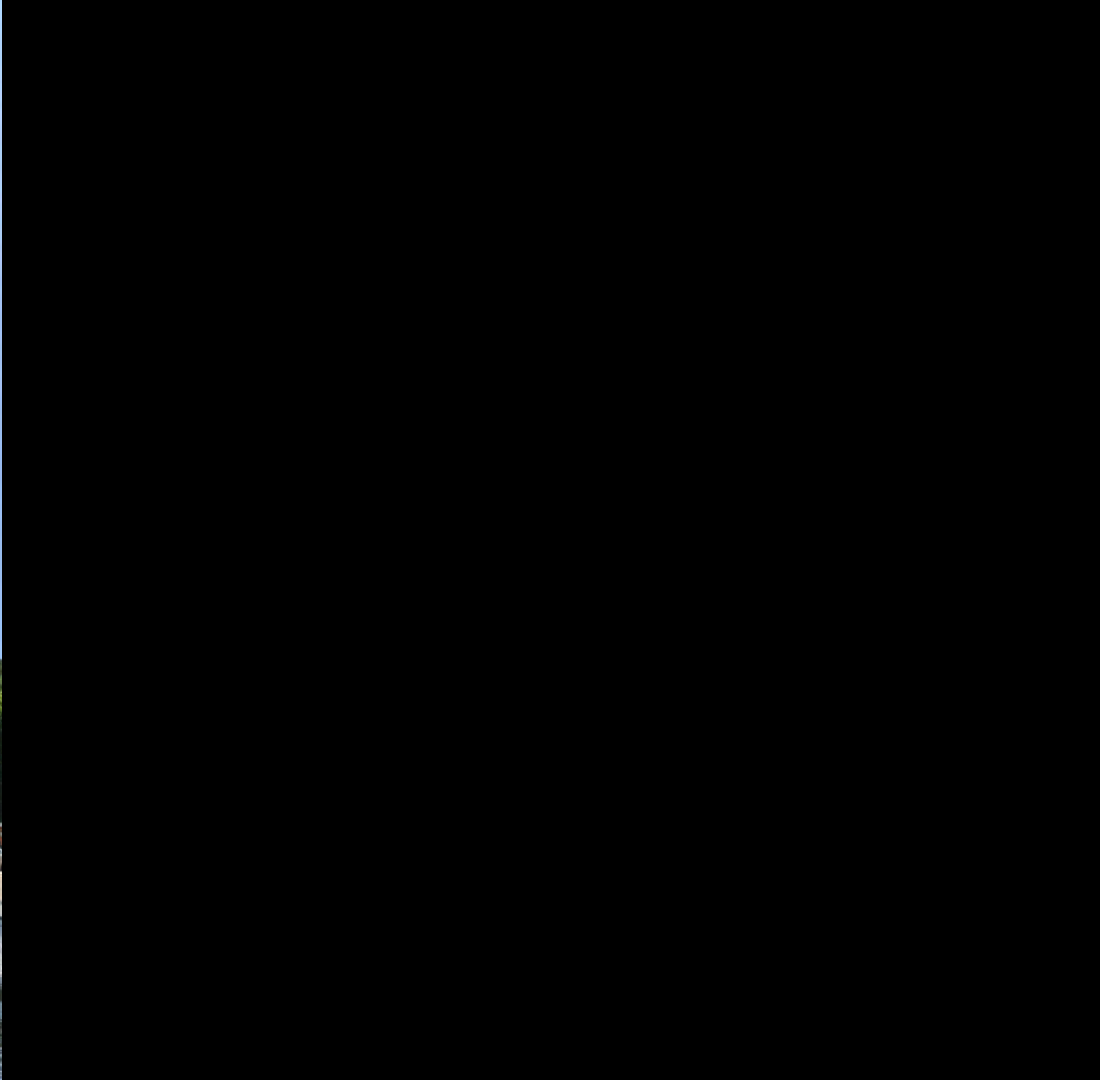
“The American mainstream press must make a choice: Will it double down on its commitment to detached, nonpartisan neutrality? Or will it [elect to] defend truth and democracy?”

The Mainstream Media Has a Republican Party Problem: Jay Rosen on how the press fundamentally misunderstands American politics. Nov 12, 2021, NY Times ([link](#))

“The consensus among younger journalists is that we got it all wrong. Objectivity has got to go.”

Opinion: Newsrooms that move beyond ‘objectivity’ can build trust. By Leonard Downie Jr. Jan 30, 2023 ([link](#))

What is consequential?



What is consequential?

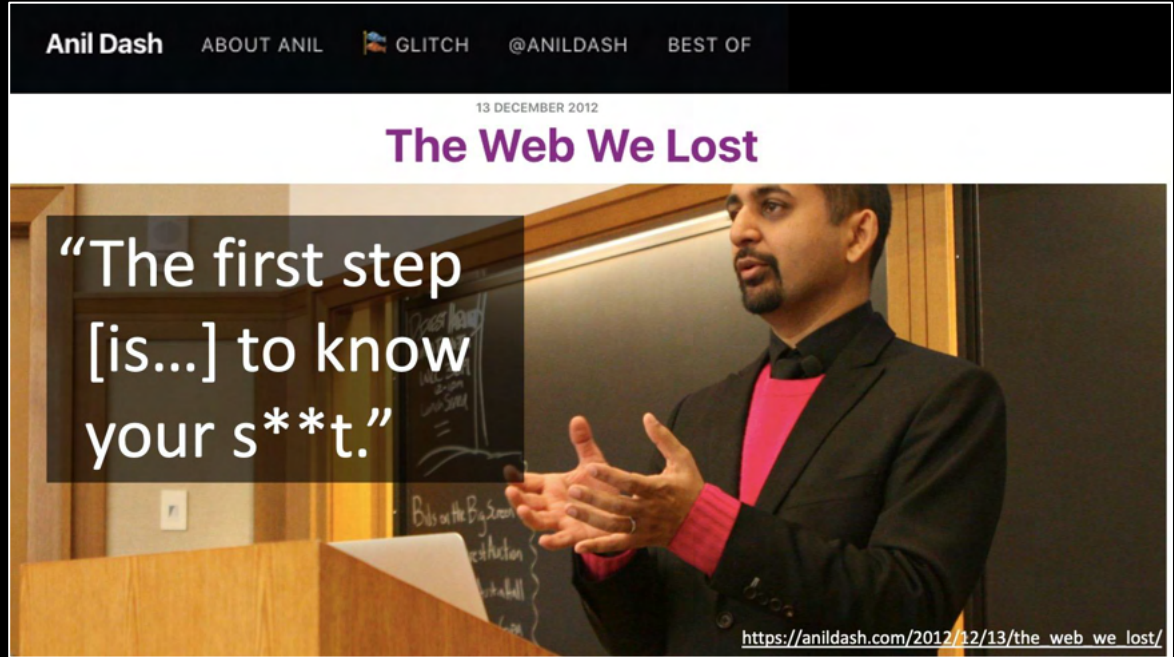
What kind of action matters?



What is consequential?

What kind of action matters?

- *Educate ourselves*



Anil Dash ABOUT ANIL GLITCH @ANILDASH BEST OF

13 DECEMBER 2012

The Web We Lost

“The first step [is...] to know your s**t.”

https://anildash.com/2012/12/13/the_web_we_lost/



Penguin Books — "Green Ideas" series



Tech, culture, democracy. Scope, scale, speed. Loyal but disobedient.

[\[Home \]](#) [\[Climate \]](#) [\[Covid-19 \]](#) [\[About \]](#) [\[Search \]](#) / [Consulting /](#) [RSS+Subscribe](#)

Links for NEMO webinar



Penguin Books — "Green Ideas" series

A quick post here with some links I'll mention in tomorrow's Feb. 14 Webinar for NEMO – the Network of European Museum Organizations: [Create Dangerously: Museums in the Age of Action](#).

More-or-less in order of appearance.

- The Carbon Almanac: <https://thecarbonalmanac.org/>
- Minding the Climate: <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674247727>
- The Penguin Green Ideas series: <https://shop.penguin.co.uk/products/penguin-green-ideas-collection>
- Business Disruption from the Inside Out: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/business_disruption_from_the_inside_out
- Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System: <https://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/>
- Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/01/magazine/climate-change-losing-earth.html>

This list of books, essays, and articles are posted on my website:

<https://www.usingdata.com/usingdata/links-for-nemo-webinar>

THE CARBON ALMANAC

IT'S **NOT TOO LATE**

Facts. Connection. Action.

This is *The Carbon Almanac*. A book of facts about climate change. Containing tables, infographics, maps, definitions, history, quotations, and resources. We are a collective of artists, entrepreneurs, scientists, teachers, and humans who believe it's not too late to stop climate change. JOIN US.

Foreword by **SETH GODIN**

Minding the Climate



*How Neuroscience Can Help Solve
OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS*

Ann-Christine Duhaime, M.D.

Indigenous Youth Represent Their Culture to Demand Action

In the months leading up to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) held in Glasgow, Scotland, a group of young activists from Panama's Indigenous Guna people came together to create a massive handmade ("Mola") sail. They planned to bring it to Glasgow to bring attention to the effects of rising oceans on the Guna homelands. The traditional colorful handsewn mola cloth appliqué technique used for the sail is unique to the region.

The majority of the Guna people (about 33,000) live in Guna Yala, a province primarily located on the San Blas Islands in the Caribbean Sea. The islands are in danger of being rendered uninhabitable by sea-level rise in the next several decades. The Guna youth are active participants in Geo 2030, a 10-year leadership development campaign for global climate action. Planned in Panama in 2020 and launched globally in 2021, Geo 2030 is directed by a council of youth and elders representing a diversity of youth-led international and Indigenous organizations and companies.

The sail was handmade by 37 Guna artisans, and at 40 square meters is the largest Mola ever created. To ensure that the entire

Guna people were represented in the project, the team of young people consulted with their elders.

Months in advance of the departure for Glasgow for COP26, the team sought approval to hang the Mola Sail somewhere inside the Blue Zone, the area reserved for official delegates, heads of state, and major corporate sponsors.

However, nobody in any official capacity replied to their request.

The young activists then decided to unilaterally take action. In the early days of COP26, they staged demonstrations with the Mola Sail as the centerpiece. Then, halfway through COP26, they found an ideal location to hang the Mola Sail.

Without asking permission, they hung the sail near the main venue.

They found people sympathetic to their cause with the right heavy equipment required and late one evening worked together to hang the huge Mola.

For the remainder of COP26, the Mola Sail was visible to all and served as a ceremonial gathering spot for Indigenous leaders. Media outlets like the BBC and newspapers including *The National* covered the Guna efforts.

"The Mola Sail represents the origin of my people's identity as



DISASTERS LOOMING

Children of this generation are three times more likely to face climate disasters than their parents did.

a Guna nation," says Agar Inkenia Tejada, a student of architecture and design associate with Geoversity Design who was a co-leader of the project. "It symbolizes our deep caring of our Mother the Earth with its honoring of the sky, sun, sea, earth and of all living beings. It's the sail that unites us and moves us forward to fight for the forests, rivers and oceans of our Mother."

"Our Geo 2030 action agenda is grounded in the hard work of preparing our ocean, riverside, and forest communities for the wrenching changes we have to make in the face of a rising sea, flooding rivers, landslides, incursions by loggers and ranchers, and parched forests on fire," says Iniquilipi Chiari, co-founder of the Guna Youth Congress and of Geoversity School of Biocultural Leadership. "We must continue growing stronger in our resolve, smarter in our organization and united in our action with our brothers and sisters of lands close by and far away."



Whose Job Is It?

The roles of government, business,
and individuals in creating change

→ Employees increasingly want their employers to become more responsible corporate citizens. Here is a playbook for how employees can be effective change agents and how leaders can respond to employee activism.

Good for internal
changemaking...

Business Disruption from the Inside Out

BY FORREST BRISCOE & ABHINAV GUPTA

Illustration by Klaus Krennmerz

In recent years, prominent American businesses have landed in the headlines not because of their new products but because of their employees' activism. In 2009, for example, 4,000 Amazon employees filed a shareholders' resolution criticizing their company's exacerbation of climate change. A year prior, 200,000 Google employees walked off the job to protest the company's lenient sexual harassment policies. This year, Disney employees engaged in a car rally to raise safety concerns about the company reopening its theme parks in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, and Facebook employees staged a virtual walkout over the platform's tolerance of racism and hate speech.

These events represent a rising wave of employee activism—when employees advocate for social change inside, and sometimes even outside, their own organization. This trend has had a range of consequences for both employees and the work place. In response to the 2009 employee shareholders' resolution, for example, Amazon pledged to eliminate its carbon emissions by 2020. Google, however, was less receptive to its employee walkout: It altered its employee handbook to discourage future activism. In addition, many of the

walkout's organizers have since been pushed out; 45 employees have documented their experiences of retaliation by the company, including demotion.

Employees' growing expectations of greater corporate social responsibility (CSR) has contributed to their activism, as employees want to work for companies that do more good than harm to society and the environment. Many workers speak up and even put pressure on their employers to increase their CSR efforts. Tellingly, a 2019 Weber Shandwick survey found that 75 percent of employees in the United States agreed with the statement that "employees are right to speak up against their employers." Only 14 percent did not agree, and 11 percent said they were unsure.

Despite widespread employee support, employee activism is controversial among many corporate leaders. To improve their odds of succeeding, employees need to deepen their understanding of what effective activism looks like. Additionally, managers need to know how to engage meaningfully with employee activism, because it will continue to have an increasing significance in organizational operations.

Far from a one-size-fits-all method, employee activism exists in various forms, extending from internal lobbying to issue selling to collectively organized business disruption. In this article, we offer insights into the full spectrum of today's employee activism and,

Sustainability Institute

Leverage Points Places to Intervene in a System



by Donella Meadows



Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change

By Nathaniel Rich

Photographs and Videos by George Steinmetz

AUG. 1, 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/01/magazine/climate-change-losing-earth.html>



1. 'This Is the Whole Banana' Spring 1979

The first suggestion to Rafe Pomerance that humankind was destroying the conditions necessary for its own survival came on Page 66 of the government publication EPA-600/7-78-019. It was a technical report about coal, bound in a coal-black cover with beige lettering — one of many such reports that lay in uneven piles around Pomerance's windowless office on the first floor of the Capitol Hill townhouse that, in the late 1970s, served as the Washington headquarters of Friends of the Earth. In the final paragraph of a chapter on environmental regulation, the coal report's authors noted that the continued use of fossil fuels might, within two or three decades, bring about "significant and damaging" changes to the global atmosphere.

Pomerance paused, startled, over the orphaned paragraph. It seemed to have come out of nowhere. He reread it. It made no sense to him. Pomerance was not a scientist; he graduated from Cornell 11 years earlier with a degree in history. He had the tweedy appearance of an



FEATURE

The Insect Apocalypse Is Here

What does it mean for the rest of life on Earth?



...Unpacks the idea of what a "discipline" is.



5 Minds *for the* Future



HOWARD
GARDNER

Author of *Changing Minds*

THE MINISTRY FOR THE FUTURE

A NOVEL

KIM
STANLEY
ROBINSON

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

"ROBINSON HAS ESTABLISHED HIMSELF AS THE GREAT HUMANIST OF SPECULATIVE FICTION." —VILLAGE VOICE

"ONE OF THE WORLD'S FINEST WORKING NOVELISTS IN ANY GENRE." —GUARDIAN

Leaving Microsoft to Change the World

An Entrepreneur's Odyssey
to Educate the World's Children



JOHN WOOD FOUNDER,
ROOM TO READ



BRAIDING SWEETGRASS

INDIGENOUS WISDOM, SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE,
and the TEACHINGS of PLANTS

ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

James
Bridle

Ways of Being

Animals, Plants, Machines:
The Search for a
Planetary Intelligence

Chapter 3: The
Thicket of Life
(Great audiobook
too!)



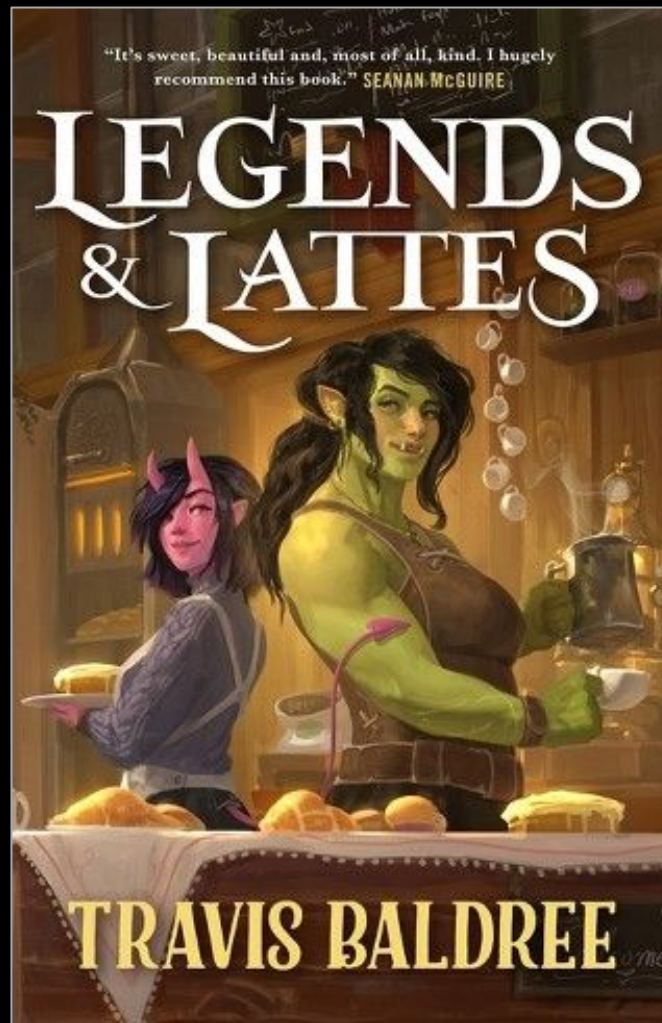


Think big, start small, move fast

Digital Strategy in a Changing World



...And when
you're sick of it all
and just need a
break.



"Charlaine Harris delivers both horror
and humor as seen from the unique
perspective of rural America."

—Tanya Huff

A Sookie
Stackhouse Novel



#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

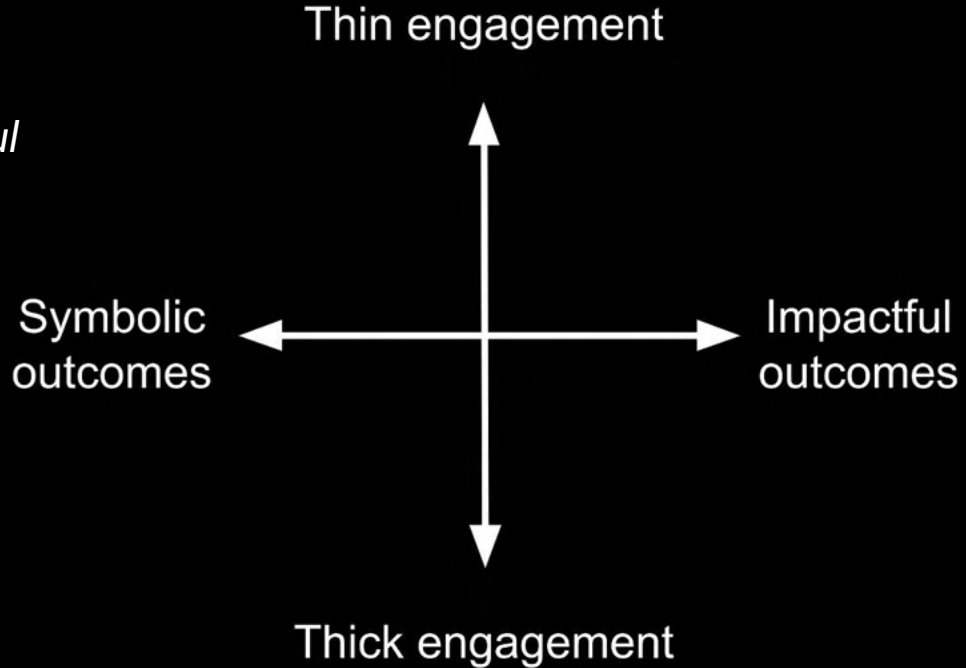
CHARLAINE HARRIS LIVING DEAD IN DALLAS

What is consequential?

What kind of action matters?

- *Educate ourselves*
- *Build from symbolic to impactful*

Use the “Zuckerman Quadrant” to understand where your projects currently stand, and to think about how you can nudge them towards increasingly impactful outcomes.





At a strategy session in a barn in Leiden, with the Ministry for the Future and other Dutch collaborators. They literally walked through their options.

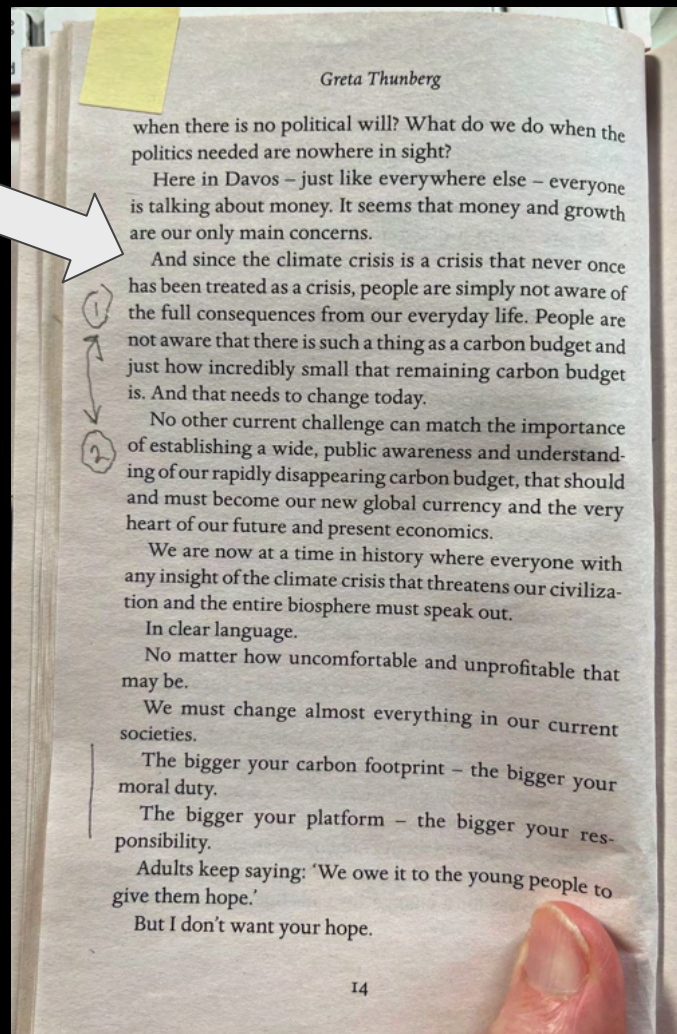
What is consequential?

What kind of action matters?

- *Educate ourselves*
- *Build from symbolic to impactful*
- *A bigger N (Greta Thunberg)*

We must get dramatically more people aware/involved (though beware “awareness raising” as its own end: must design for *doing*, too.)

World Economic Forum, Davos. 2019



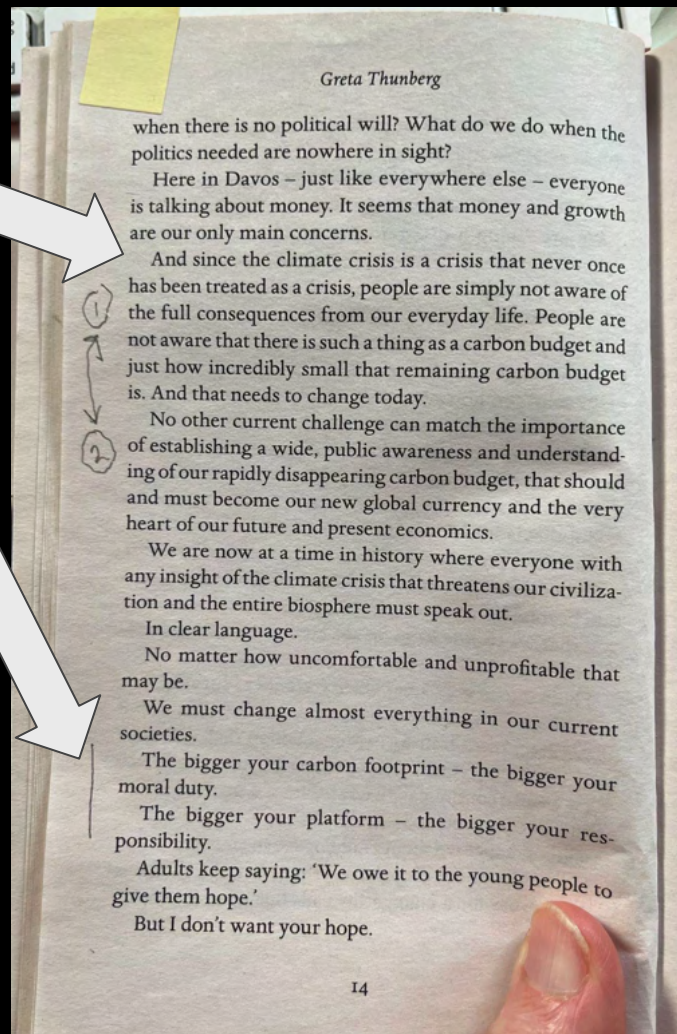
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“The bigger your carbon footprint — the bigger your moral duty.
The bigger your platform — the bigger your responsibility”





LOGIN

SCOUTS for SDGs

[GOALS](#)

[WORLD MAP](#)

[EXPLORE](#) ▾

[ABOUT](#)

[TAKE ACTION](#)

The global scouting organization pledged 1 billion hours of effort towards the SDGs...and got 2 billion hours! Now they're going for 4!



World Scouting
@worldscouting

Here's to completing **2,000,000,000**
HOURS OF SERVICE for [@GlobalGoalsUN](#) by [#Scouts](#)
around the world! 🌍

Our next goal is to **DOUBLE** this! 🙌 Let's reach 4
billion hours of community service by 2030!

sdgs.scout.org



What is consequential?

What kind of action matters?

- *Educate ourselves*
- *Build from symbolic to impactful*
- *A bigger N (Greta Thunberg)*
- *Change the information flow*
- *Change the rules of the system*



Leverage Points Places to Intervene in a System

*A gorgeous
piece of work*

by Donella Meadows

PLACES TO INTERVENE IN A SYSTEM (in increasing order of effectiveness)

9. Constants, parameters, numbers (subsidies, taxes, standards).
8. Regulating negative feedback loops.
7. Driving positive feedback loops.
6. Material flows and nodes of material intersection.
5. Information flows.
4. The rules of the system (incentives, punishments, constraints).
3. The distribution of power over the rules of the system.
2. The goals of the system.
1. The mindset or paradigm out of which the system — its goals, power structure, rules, its culture — arises.



Leverage Points Places to Intervene in a System

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Start Debating! "Germany Talks"

ZEIT ONLINE matched up 1,200 people across Germany to meet up for face-to-face political debates. How did we do it? Here's a look behind the scenes.

9. März 2018,

*Changing the
information flow.
Changing the rules
of the system.
Changing the
goals of the
system.*

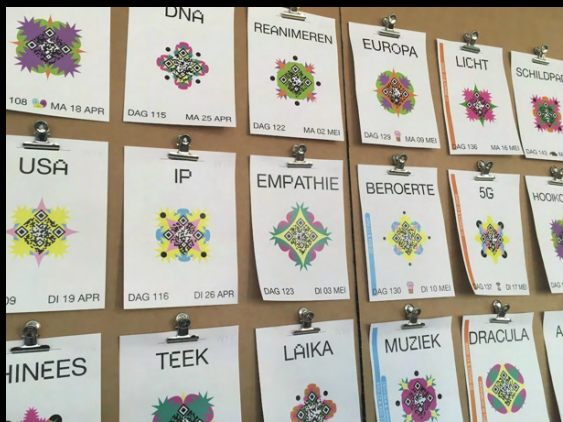
In summer 2017, some 12,000 Germans registered to participate in the ZEIT ONLINE project "Deutschland spricht". They agreed to meet up personally with someone from their neighborhood or region who held opposing political views and to have an hourlong discussion with that person. Here is how it happened.



Director Meta Knol: "The community bonus" (by redefining the flows, rules, power, and goals of the system). 365 days of events.

... onoplosbare, wetenschappelijke vragen
... Scan een van deze QR-codes!

3E5 dagen nieuwsgierig



European City of Science Leiden2022

◆ 365 DAYS CURIOUS

Bekijk meer →

I'm curious about

Show results

Suprise me!

KNOWLEDGE THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Knowledge throughout the Neighbourhoods builds bridges between science and local society. It is a co-creation project in which we extract and share science, knowledge, art and expertise in the capillaries of Leiden and the region.

<https://leiden2022.nl/en>



*Leverage point: Information flows;
the rules of the system; the goals
of the system...*

People from all over the world are sending emails to Melbourne's trees

Melbourne gave 70,000 trees email addresses so people could report on their condition. But instead people are writing love letters, existential queries and sometimes just bad puns.

By [Margaret Burin](#)
Story Lab



Dear Rose Gum,

Over the past year I have cycled by you each day and want you to know how much joy you give me.

No matter the weather or what is happening around you, you are strong, elegant and beautiful. I wanted you to know.


Love.

What is consequential?

What kind of action matters?

- *Educate ourselves*
- *Build from symbolic to impactful*
- *A bigger N (Greta Thunberg)*
- *Change the information flow*
- *Change the rules of the system*
- *Build solidarity*

“ There isn't mystery about how climate change has come about: Big emitting countries have created the problem. Tension is already there about this, and it will get far worse as impacts are felt.

 **If we let the problems of climate change force us apart and create divisions, that in itself will become even more significant than the climate crisis. They will dwarf the climate problem itself.**

We are going to need to work on a deeper and more cultural level in order to counter the tensions and divisions climate will generate. We must work on things that promote that solidarity and unity of purpose. We need to be working in ways to build human solidarity — a sense that we are in this together and only by cooperating are we going to be able to tackle this problem.

As part of that we should use the opportunity of the internet and digital tech for its original purpose, which is to build that shared sense of purpose and that shared sense of belonging. And rediscovering that capacity of the Internet and of digital tools is I think a great hope and possibility.

— Tom Pravda

What is consequential?

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- *A bigger N (Greta Thunberg)*
- *Change the information flow*
- *Change the rules of the system*
- *Build solidarity*

Activism


A group of people are walking away from the camera on a dirt path in a forest. The path is surrounded by tall trees and green foliage. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an overcast day or a shaded forest. The people are dressed in casual outdoor attire, and their figures are slightly blurred, emphasizing movement and a shared journey.

Our sector has an allergic reaction to the term: toxic

**...But we have been badly miseducated about activism,
And the art of activism has a lot to tell us about agency,
impact, community, and change.**

Letter to editor	Manifesto or public statement	Formal lecture	Letter writing	Political mobilization	Craftivism (Sarah Corbett, "quiet activism" for introverts)	Boycotts	Spatial occupations	Blockades
Distributing leaflets	Petitions	March, rally, demonstration	Legal Action	Refusing (or subverting) the directions of a supervisor/ employer	Internal workplace organizing (E.g., Microsoft workers protesting government contracts related to immigrant detention)	"whistleblowing" (documenting/reporting fraud, waste, abuse)	Artistic and literary activism (slaughterhouse sanitation = Upton Sinclair's <i>The Jungle</i> , 1906; child labor & urban poor = photos of Lewis Hine, 1900s)	Social media campaign
Door-to-door canvassing	Conference or roundtable	Craftivism (the AIDS quilt)	Shareholder activism (drive change in corporate conduct)	Public assemblies/sit-ins	Press Conferences	Lobby public officials	Hold a public meeting	Fundraising (for other activists)
Consumer action (purchasing choices)	"Teach in" (community education)	Manifestos	Workplace sabotage (slowdown, etc.)	Run for elected office (school board, local gov, etc)	Activating citizens (e.g. citizen science)	Coordinating with activists in peer institutions	Internal coalition building	Talking with news media
"issue selling" to decision makers	Employee walkout	Unsanctioned press conference	Leaking proprietary information	Civil disobedience	Public outreach event			

The "repertoire of contention" contains options for everyone.



How to be a
CRAFTIVIST

The art of
gentle protest

Sarah Corbett

Aids Memorial Quilt




National Institutes of Health via NPS, AIDS quilt in front of the Washington Monument, DC (Public Domain) <https://flic.kr/p/HRP3Qk>



March for Science, 22 April 2022. Michael P. Edson CC-BY

A great explainer video about a simple but effective campaign.

YouTube




PROJECT 3.5

0:08 / 10:09

What is Project 3.5? | Extinction Rebellion UK

6,134 views · Jun 27, 2022

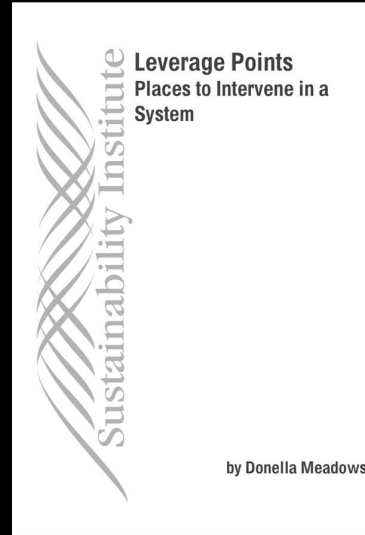
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 Extinction Rebellion UK
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtUQNmYE1E>

1. The power to transcend paradigms

There is yet one leverage point that is even higher than changing a paradigm. That is to keep oneself unattached in the arena of paradigms, to stay flexible, to realize that *no* paradigm is “true,” that every one, including the one that sweetly shapes your own worldview, is a tremendously limited understanding of an immense and amazing universe that is far beyond human comprehension. It is to “get” at a gut level the paradigm that there are paradigms, and to see that that itself is a paradigm, and to regard that whole realization as devastatingly funny. It is to let go into Not Knowing, into what the Buddhists call enlightenment.



Donella Meadows, *Leverage Points*.
The most powerful way to transform a system is to change the paradigm out of which the system arises.

Climate Things

A group of six people are walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a forest. The path is covered in brown leaves and leads into a dense area of trees with green foliage. The people are dressed in dark, outdoor-appropriate clothing. The overall atmosphere is quiet and natural.

<https://climatethings.org>

A group of people is walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a dense forest. The trees are tall and green, and the path is surrounded by foliage. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking down the path.

Climate Things

Projects

23 Climate Things

23 Climate Things is a new global initiative designed to help the library, museum and cultural sectors become dramatically more engaged with the climate emergency.

A group of five people is walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a lush green forest. The trees are tall and thin, with dense foliage. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day or a shaded area. The people are dressed in casual outdoor attire, including jackets and trousers. The path is well-trodden and leads into the distance.

Climate Things

Projects

The Culture for Climate Innovation Prize

The Culture for Climate Innovation Prize is to be a €10-million incentive competition that will award its purse to the first cultural organizations to generate 10-million hours of bottom-up community effort towards the climate emergency.

Climate Things

Join us! Climate Things is an emerging global collective of library, museum, and cultural professionals* who develop transformational initiatives for culture and climate action.

* And many other types of people. Not sure if you belong here? You do. Join us.

<https://climatethings.org>

used to walk at night on the mountains overlooking the gulf of Genoa and light great bonfires of leaves and branches which he would watch as they burned. I have often dreamed of those fires and have occasionally imagined certain men and certain works in front of those fires, as a way of testing men and works. Well, our era is one of those fires whose unbearable heat will doubtless reduce many a work to ashes! But as for those which remain, their metal will be intact, and, looking at them, we shall be able to indulge without restraint in the supreme joy of the intelligence which we call 'admiration.'

One may long, as I do, for a gentler flame, a respite, a pause for musing. But perhaps there is no other peace for the artist than what he finds in the heat of combat. 'Every wall is a door,' Emerson correctly said. Let us not look for the door, and the way out, anywhere but in the wall against which we are living. Instead, let us seek the respite where it is – in the very thick of the battle. For in my opinion, and this is where I shall close, it is there. Great ideas, it has been said, come into the world as gently as doves. Perhaps then, if we listen attentively, we shall hear, amid the uproar of empires and nations, a faint

flutter of wings, the gentle stirring of life and hope. Some will say that this hope lies in a nation; others, in a man. I believe rather that it is awakened, revived, nourished by millions of solitary individuals whose deeds and works every day negate frontiers and the crudest implications of history. As a result, there shines forth fleetingly the ever threatened truth that each and every man, on the foundation of his own sufferings and joys, builds for all.



Coda

*Throw your hat
over the wall*

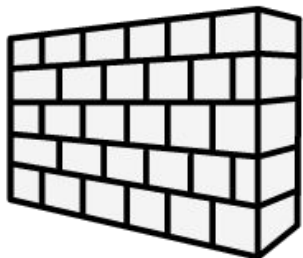


Photo AP Ed Towers, via
<https://www.krqe.com/gallery/55th-anniversary-of-jfks-assassination/>

“Frank O'Connor, the Irish writer, tells in one of his books how, as a boy, he and his friends would make their way across the countryside, and when they came to an orchard wall that seemed too high and too doubtful to try and too difficult to permit their voyage to continue, they took off their hats and tossed them over the wall--and then they had no choice but to follow them.”

President John F. Kennedy
San Antonio Texas
Nov 21, 1963

Thank you!
Michael Peter Edson
<https://usingdata.com>



Think big.
Start small.
Move fast.