The Internet Will Make Governments Unrecognizable by Today's Standards:

From Leadership to Stewardship and Collaboration

Panel: "Social Transformations and the Digital Age"
Theme: Collaboration and Governance For a Digital Era

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"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, create a new model that makes the old model obsolete."

- Buckminster Fuller

Our Internet-based communications have connected us like never before and have given us a means to tap the creativity of the entire human population. Yet, in the same process, each of us have become connected to a whole world of differences -- in terms of language and ethnicity certainly, but also in terms of understanding, perspectives, values, beliefs and assumptions -- creating a profound basis for social friction. How can we take advantage of these differences to innovatively and creatively work together while mitigating their divisive effects? This is a fundamental governance question, one that will inevitably transform our currently constructed governing institutions. "The world has reached a critical turning point", say Tapscott and Williams[1], "reboot all the old models, approaches and structures or risk institutional paralysis or even collapse." That said, if the Internet is making the old governance model obsolete, what is emerging to take its place?

Government is Being Transformed

For as long as we have known them and whether we liked it or not, governments are continuously being transformed. This should not be surprising. Unlike the static structures like the Parliament Buildings or the Capitol Building or City Hall that are often used to represent government, governments themselves are actually process structures that undergo constant transformation due to the ebb and flow of people and ideas that move through them. Governments are like rivers. You can stand in one place and watch the 'river', but the river itself, the water, is constantly being transformed. The river you see today is not the same river you saw yesterday nor will it be the same tomorrow. Every drop of water will have been replaced.

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[1] TAPSCOTT, Don & Anthony Williams. *Macrowikinomics*, Penguin, Toronto, 2010: 10

Similarly, governments are shaped: by the flow of people, both elected and non-elected; by the conversations they have amongst themselves; and by their interactions with the social artifacts created by those conversations – the laws, the economy, the infrastructure, the culture, and the collective well being.

How do process structures maintain their uniformity over time? Rivers have river beds to guide them. Governments, on the other hand, are guided by the conversations that take place between society's members. Those conversations reveal what is important to people; what needs to be attended to; what is possible and what is not; what is to be treasured; and how we should be together. You don't change a government by destroying a building; you change it by changing the collective conversation.

But while change may be normal and natural for a government, today those changes aren't likely to result in just simple, incremental reforms that amount to a new coat of paint on existing structures but the internet is prompting large societal transformations that are likely to create entirely new structures of governance and government.

The structures of current western governments are a legacy or a lingering shadow of feudal systems long forgotten. The meme that dominates them is that the conversations that matter all happen among a handful of people working in a few guarded places. Leaders are everything. Followers are inconsequential. Today, however, we are dominated by the meme of the Internet that says those conversations should be open. They can be initiated by anyone, anywhere and can ultimately snowball to include hundreds of thousands, millions or even billions of people. Those who were once followers don't need anyone's leave to change things, and cooperation needs no top-down direction – it can be self-generating. In the past, the conversations that mattered happened as a product of elite accommodation, with citizens deferring to the wisdom of experts. Only today, on the Internet, leaders don't matter much. Today, the conversation is increasingly peer-to-peer within self-organizing networks of collective intelligence.

The Forces Influencing Public Conversation

Today those public conversations are being influenced by a complex, interdependent environment and a number of global forces with the capacity to alter the nature of our governments and whether or not they remain legitimate actors in coordinating a host of social concerns. These forces are creating great stress on the existing structures of governance and government and include growing issue complexity, the challenge of public sector liquidity, the decline in legitimacy of the welfare state, the generation of new alternatives to government, and, of course, the internet which complicates the others and then adds its own challenges.

Figure 1: Government is Being Transformed
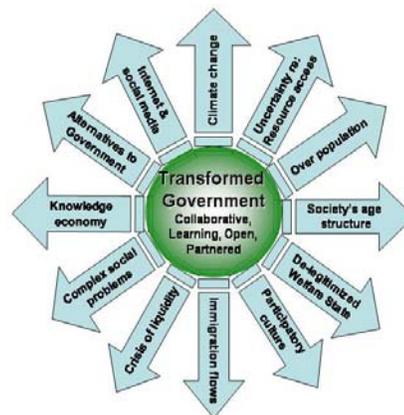
a) Issue Complexity

Despite budgetary challenges and calls for less government, governments are still mandated as the primary authority to resolve many of the socio-economic problems that afflict their citizens. Frequently, however, those problems are both complex and chronic and do not easily avail themselves to simple solutions. These 'wicked' problems[2] will include such issues as:

- International cooperation to *limit the effects of climate change*. Having already topped the safe climate change limit of 400 ppm of CO_2 in the atmosphere and with no serious international agreement on reducing CO_2 emissions in place, catastrophic global warming seems almost inevitable[3]. While this absence of global cooperation on climate change is likely to lead in disastrous directions, it may yet inspire broad governmental cooperation to help to mitigate some of its more dire consequences. Says Nick Mabey, CEO of E_3G, "Climate change is unique….it has no hard-security solutions. In fact, the only solution is cooperation."[4] However, the international community has little experience with sustained cooperation. Beyond win-lose diplomacy, it has neither the frameworks nor the skill sets to affect cooperation over long periods of time.

- *Access to basic resources* such as food, water, clean air, land, energy, and minerals is becoming increasingly problematic. The demands by a growing human population are pushing up against the large, but ultimately finite, planetary capacity. In addition, "when talking about what the greatest threats are that we face with climate change, I would put right at the top drought and water availability," says meteorologist Jeff Masters[5]. We are nearing the point where many governments will begin to aggressively compete for access to these increasingly scarce commodities from a purely survival perspective. Not having regular access to a new car may inspire discontent, but not having secure access to food, water or land will drive people into purely self-preservation mode with all the potential for global strife that that entails. "The pain will be unequally shared," observes Gwynne Dyer, "at least in the early phases of the crisis, and it is this business of winners and losers that poses the greatest threat to global order."[6]

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[2] Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber. 1973. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Sciences*, vol. 4, p. 155–169.
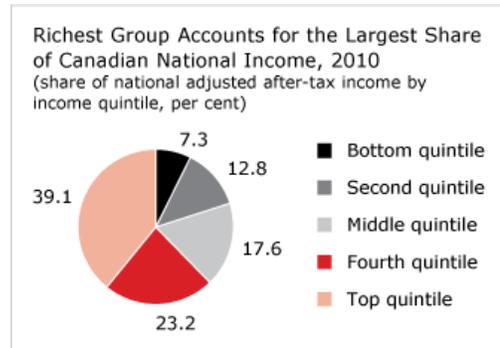
[3] LOVELOCK, James. *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning: Enjoy It While You Can,* Penguin Books, 2010

[4] Nick Mabey, quoted in DYER, Gywnne *Climate Wars*, Vintage Canada, 2008: 165

[5] METCALFE, John. *The Immediate Climate Threat Is Water Scarcity, Not Rising Sea Levels*, *Atlantic Cities*, 10 October 2013. Accessed at: http://www.theatlanticcities.com/jobs-and-economy/2013/10/immediate-climate-threat-water-scarcity-not-rising-sea-levels/7192/

[6] DYER, Gywnne *Climate Wars*, Vintage Canada, 2008:58

– An *escalating income gap*. While there is clear evidence of a reduction of global poverty[7], there is also evidence of a growing income gap between First and Third World countries[8] (excluding China and India) but also within the countries that are home to 71% of the world's population. Canada's richest 1%, for instance, took almost a third of all income gains between 1997 and 2007[9], according to a 2010 study. Large income gaps have always been socially destabilizing. This raises not only the issue of what

Richest Group Accounts for the Largest Share of Canadian National Income, 2010 (share of national adjusted after-tax income by income quintile, per cent)

7.3 12.8 39.1 17.6 23.2

Bottom quintile
Second quintile
Middle quintile
Fourth quintile
Top quintile

Source: *How Canada Performs*, Conference Board of Canada, Ottawa, January 2013

constitutes a fair distribution of wealth, but also about the distribution of social costs that are often offloaded onto society by individuals and organizations in pursuit of wealth, costs such as pollution, climate change, economic instability, and health and safety.

– *Perpetual economic growth* remains a foundation of the global economic order. However, the assumption that annual economic growth rates of 3% or more are sustainable in the long term is proving to be untenable in the context of the current economic regime -- although significant denial remains. Tim Jackson, former Sustainable Development Commissioner in the UK, describes the current economic framework as a *Ponzi Scheme* and suggests politicians are all terrified that if they do not continue to support it, it will be exposed for what it is and they will lose power.[10] No biological system can continue to grow indefinitely and that includes a human economy. However, the challenge is that growth itself has become so much a part of our way of looking at the world that everyone just takes it for granted.

"What if [the crisis of 2008 is] telling us that the whole growth model we created over the last 50 years is simply unsustainable economically and ecologically," says columnist and Pulitzer Prize winning author Thomas Friedman, "and that 2008 was when we hit the wall — when Mother Nature and the market both said: "No more.""[11]

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[7] According World Bank estimates, 21% of people in the developing world lived at or below the extreme poverty level of $1.25 a day, down from 43% in 1990 and 52% in 1981. Accessed at: http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview. In addition, the proportion of Canadians living on low income fell to its lowest level (8.8%) since StatsCan began tracking low income in 1965 and when it was 25%. COYNE, Andrew. "Fewer people sit below the poverty line now than ever before. Why are we not talking about it?", *National Post,* 22 July 2013

[8] MILANOVIC, Branko. *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2005: 180–81

[9] YALNIZYAN, Armine. *The Rise of Canada's Richest 1%* , Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Ottawa, 2010

[10] CONFINO, Jo. "Rio+20: Tim Jackson on how fear led world leaders to betray green economy", *The Guardian*, 25 June 2012. Accessed at http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/rio-20-tim-jackson-leaders-green-economy

[11] FRIEDMAN, Thomas. "The Inflection Is Near?", *The New York Times*, 7 March 2009

While the alternative notion of 'prosperity without growth' has gained a beachhead with some policy makers, most notably in Britain, it should be recognized that all of our economic and policy fundamentals are all geared around the assumption of growth – lending and interest rates, investment, resource development, social supports, healthcare – they all basically assume that we can borrow for today and repay it with interest out of tomorrow's expected growth returns. Yet if growth doesn't materialize, or doesn't materialize fast enough, then what occurs is increasing indebtedness until both lenders and borrowers go out of business.

"The failure to take the dilemma of growth seriously may be the single biggest threat to sustainability that we face,"[12]says Jackson. Without growth, borrowing for today looks increasingly like stealing from future generations. Renovating these foundations of the global economy will be a daunting task, one that it will necessitate a cultural transformation among the world's business and policy elites -- although as daunting as that may seem, it will much less so than dealing with a collapse of the economic order.

– *Human migration flows* are expected to increase due to the effects of climate change, a shrinking amount of livable land, growing income inequities and regional strife. During times of scarcity, migration is often the only hope for survival, yet historically it has also been a profound source of inter-group conflict. Such conflicts may well move governments beyond the point of trying to balance helping migrants and protecting the interests of their citizens to having to choose between their own continued existence and invasion. According to Leon Fuerth, co-author with John Podesta and former CIA Director, James Woolsey, of 'The Age of Consequences: The Foreign Policy & National Security Implications of Global Climate Change', "Governments with resources will be forced to engage in long, nightmarish episodes of triage: deciding what and who can be salvaged from engulfment by a disordered environment."[13]

– *Over population* continues to be one of the great taboo topics in public policy. Given our current usage patterns for food, water, air, land, energy, and minerals, along with the current trend in population growth, the planet is unlikely to be able sustain population growth much beyond 2050. The looming decisions to limit population growth and to change fundamentally how we use resources, will tax the capacity of all governments to work together. Do the more populous, stronger countries push aside smaller, weaker ones in an age old Darwinian contest? It's an issue that will be further complicated by the growing segment of the population, particularly in developed countries, that is less productive due to their age.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that by 2050 human population will peak at nine billion and could be supportable provided the necessary investments in infrastructure, trade, anti-poverty and food security

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[12] JACKSON, Tim. *Prosperity without Growth? - The transition to a sustainable economy*, Sustainable Development Commission, London, UK, 2009

[13] FUERTH, Leon co-author with John Podesta and former CIA Director, James Woolsey, of the "*The Age of Consequences: The Foreign Policy & National Security Implications of Global Climate Change*", Centre for Strategic & International Studies, 2007 quoted in Gwynne Dyer, *Climate Wars*, 2008:23

policies are in place. And while the sun provides us with all the clean energy we would ever need, we have yet to figure out how to harness it effectively. We need to recognize, says optimist Erle Ellis, that "our planet's human-carrying capacity emerges from the capabilities of our social systems and our technologies more than from any environmental limits."[14] Even if we discount the hubris contained in Ellis' implied belief that "technology will save us", if we can not expand our capacity to work together and be more innovative, then within the constraints of current attitudes and institutions we will most likely be forced, willingly or unwillingly, to limit human population growth. Yet, if the global human response to climate change is any indication, then we are surely a long way from having a population that could be sustainable at nine billion let alone at current levels.

Although all these issues have been reported by the media, they are often ignored as part of our collective conversation and certainly by the governing classes. According to Higham and Paquet, "these warning signals are occluded nationally, and there appears to be no pressure from the citizenry, and no taste among the governing circles to even acknowledge the need for significant repairs"[15]. While government leaders may be aware of the challenges, most seem to be side stepping them, either for ideological reasons or because there is little political capital to be gained from an issue you can't control.

"All these challenges have two things in common," says Ian Johnson, Secretary General of the Club of Rome. "First, they are all anthropogenic, caused by us humans." This is actually quite a hopeful comment because if we are part of the problem, then we can and should be part of the solution. "Second, to a broad approximation, these challenges are all shared problems, and, as an old English saying goes, a problem shared is a problem halved. Shared problems must be addressed through shared solutions. This requires all of us changing our values, and understanding the commonality of humanity's challenges on earth, and, *they require new forms of governance*: especially of the commons -- whether local, national or global."[16]

The over riding observation among these concerns is that they are far too big for any single government or organization to handle alone. The need for cooperation is paramount but the observed capacity of governments to cooperate remains quite limited[17] given the well entrenched, 'command-and-control' cultures that permeate both government organizations and the public at large. As former US Surgeon General, Jocelyn Elders once wryly observed, for many, both in and out of government, collaboration continues to be seen "as an un-natural act between non-consenting adults."[18] Collaboration is often put aside as too time consuming, too unreliable, too unaccountable, a solution of last resort. Collaborative experience is not valued, not shared and certainly not taught. Consequently collaborators almost invariably start from square one again and again. These attitudes get reflected in the lack of confidence by the public

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[14] ELLIS, Erle C. "Overpopulation Is Not the Problem", *New York Times*, 13 September 2013

[15] HIGHAM, Robin and Gilles Paquet. "Reflections on the Canadian Malaise", *Optimum Online*, Vol. 43, Issue 2, Jun 2013 and OBERTONE, Laurent. *La France – orange mécanique*. Editions Ring, Paris, 2013.

[16] JOHNSON, Ian. "The Challenge of Scarcity", *The Ottawa Citizen*, 5 September 2013. Emphasis added.

[17] HUBBARD, Ruth & Gilles Paquet. *The Black Hole of Public Administration*, University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, 2010.

[18] BACKER, Thomas. *Evaluating Community Collaborations*. Springer Publishing, New York, NY: 2003: 10.

that their governments have what it takes to cooperate on complex issues, as a recent Nanos-IRPP poll[19] showed. Only 9% of Canadians had confidence that their governments were up to the challenge of working with others.

b) Public Sector Liquidity

Should governments wake up one day with fresh insights for resolving long standing issues, their current financial capacity to do so is questionable, given a growing epidemic of government liquidity. It was first observed with the Eurozone in late 2009, instigated by Greece's sovereign debt crisis, but it has continued to weaken the financial stability of the other PIIGS countries (Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Spain) and the EU in general. Liquidity concerns have led to a questioning of the fundamental agreements upon which the European Union was founded turning what in other circumstances may have been initially regarded as a simple recessionary downturn into an existential concern for Europeans. Despite band-aid solutions to keep governments afloat, the question remains as to whether governments should be constructed to perennially spend more than they take in as revenue – even if this is a politically popular strategy. Ireland, Greece and Portugal have debt to income levels over 300%, meaning that they spend three times their annual revenues.

Just to underscore that this is not, however, simply a European problem, we have the recent bankruptcy of Detroit, formerly America's fourth largest city; and a US debt to income level of 560%[20].

This challenge of liquidity in part boils down to a) innovation – how to do the same with less, or how to do the business of government differently so as to consume fewer resources. But the challenge is further complicated by b) the "*entitlement epidemic*"[21] – the growing size of state transfers to citizens, a growing dependency on such transfers, and the growth of a culture of entitlement that encourages ever more transfers. Democratically elected governments are frequently bowing to public pressure to increase these transfers in the short term even if it contributes to a lack of sustainability and to long term indebtedness. Western countries have created a climate of expectations where their citizens' demand for public services continues to grow even as their willingness to pay for public services is declining.

c) Decline of the Welfare State

The combination of liquidity problems and an inability to resolve complex social and economic issues will continue to undermine and to de-legitimize the popular belief in the interventionist style of government, the *Welfare State*, as it has been known for the last half century. The model of the *Welfare State* is increasingly being questioned, yet a

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[19] NANOS, Nik. "Canadians Rate Highly the Issues Close to their Day-to-Day Lives", *Policy Options*, August 2012

[20] INMAN, Phillip. "Eurozone: three countries have debt-to-income ratios of more than 300%", *The Guardian*, 9 June 2013. Accessed at: http://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/jun/09/eurozone-crisis-debt-income-ratios

[21] EBERSTADT, Nicholas. *A Nation of Takers – America's Entitlement Epidemic*. Templeton Press, West Conshohocken, PA, 2012

more appropriate alternative has yet to gain common currency. Over the years, the *Welfare State* has had as its core tenets:

♦   *Egalitarianism*, interpreted as equality in all things received from the State (even if that equality produces results that are neither fair nor logically supportable). Conformity and standardization have become the handmaidens of equality because if someone can't have it, then no one should. Moreover, to those looking to make real change, such standardization is seen as an important obstacle to the provision of unique, local solutions that try to respond to a community-based 'systems of effects'[22].

♦   *Redistribution* has been the major State tool to ensure equality. It takes from those who have more and gives it to those with less. While initially envisioned as a temporary compassionate tool to help those in need, the principle of redistribution is being increasingly challenged as an expensive means to curry political support while doing little in the way of fostering adaptation to changing economic and social conditions.[23] In the long run, the tools of redistribution are costly to provide and merely palliative in effect because they do not provide mechanisms to reduce the demand for support.[24]

♦   The *Hegelian* assumptions of rationality, objectivity, and linear cause and effect have been cornerstones of the Welfare State together with the claim that the 'State' is somehow more moral than its citizens because of it's being somehow privy to some 'higher truth'. Such assumptions are becoming harder to sustain in the face of an increasingly diverse polity, imbued with a heterogeneity of thought and belief made possible through the Internet, and the environment of growing transparency in which State actors must operate.

♦   The Welfare State has long relied on a *paternalistic approach* that favours trade-offs among small pools of experts over collective learning. In past decades, experts had answers which an ill-informed populace was then sold on, invariably producing attitudes in government that simply assumed that "the State knows best". Such expert driven governments arose from our model of 'representative democracy' wherein governance was delegated to a few virtuous, knowledgeable experts (usually men) to work on behalf of those lacking in knowledge and expertise. Public policy was presumed to proceed on the basis of objective evidence that was shared among experts and thus was expected to be free of vested interests -- although it rarely was. As Canada's Charbonneau Commission, for instance, has made painfully obvious, these vested interests, far from operating at a distance from government, have had a perpetual and widespread influence in

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[22] ROSS, Nancy and DUNN, James, *Canadian Neighbourhoods, Social Exclusion and Place-Based Policy Prescriptions: An Overview*, An issue paper prepared for Human Resources and Social Development Canada, October 2005

[23] KRAYBILL, D. and KILKENNY, M., *Economic Rationales For and Against Placed-Based Policies*, paper presented to AAEA-RSS Annual Meeting, "Spatial Inequality: Continuity and Change in Territorial Stratification", Montreal, Canada, July 27-30, 2003\

[24] WILSON, Christopher. "Attention to Place", *Optimum Online,* vol.38 (1) March 2008

the public sector at every level, the extent of which is only now being exposed to the detriment of the entire sector's reputation.

By contrast, the model of 'participatory democracy' implies that the knowledge to secure social coordination is dispersed among the entire population, requiring a more general participation of the citizenry and less dependence on expert elites. It is democracy by owners not by agents. While still in its infancy in North America, participatory democracy has shown an upward trend because of the frequently perceived gap between local needs and the needs identified by centralized governments.

For instance, in Porto Alegre, Brazil's tenth largest city, participatory budgeting or *orçamento participativo*, has operated since the late 1980s. This is a bottom-up process that emerges from neighbourhood levels to become citywide, one that permits citizens to set local, annual budget priorities which elected officials then allocate tax resources towards.

In addition, Finland is using crowdsourcing to create new laws.[25] Iceland is attempting to draft a new constitution with public input via Twitter, Facebook and Flickr[26]. The New Zealand government has used a wiki in the most sacrosanct of all areas of government operation – policy development -- to permit citizens to participate in rewriting its Police Act.[27] While Canada's experimentation with citizen juries, first in BC and then in Ontario, to propose alternatives to its unrepresentative 'first-past-the-post' electoral system failed due a total lack of support from political establishments, the idea of participatory democracy has not entirely died. In observing the ongoing degeneration of Canada's Parliament, John Ibbitson recently asked in the *Globe and Mail*, "rather than fret over how to make the House more relevant and the Senate relevant at all, it may be better to explore how new technologies can put citizens, rather than politicians, in charge."[28]

This gap between elected officials and citizens is likely to continue widening because of the difficulty in defining just exactly what a purely, objective reality might be when it comes to people and communities. As it turns out the experience of 'reality' is not objective. It is plagued by multiple truths that may stem from the same phenomenon, but are experienced differently by different people, prohibiting any single person from effectively representing the subjective perceptions of a diversity of citizens. Hence, this growing belief that citizens should represent themselves.

♦ *Centralization* has long been a guiding tendency within *Welfare State* governments because of the canonical belief that someone, somewhere must be 'in-charge' at all times. This legacy of feudalism guides both the machinery of

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[25] MEYER, David. "Finland is about to start using crowdsourcing to create new laws", *GigaOM*, 20 Sept., 2012

[26] ____. "Iceland is crowdsourcing its new constitution", *World e-gov Forum*, June 16th, 2011. Accessed at: http://wegf.org/en/2011/06/iceland-is-crowdsourcing-its-new-constitution/

[27] ____. "NZ police let public write laws", *BBC News*, 26 September 2007

[28] IBBITSON, John. "We don't need politicians in charge. With technology, it's time to put citizens first", *The Globe and Mail*, 2 February 2013

government and its accountability framework. Centralization assumes that a) the person deemed to be 'in-charge' is actually in control of all the required knowledge, resources and power to affect the public good, and b) that success or failure can always be traced back to a single individual. However, in the context of current public sector environments, both of these assumptions are proving to be quite erroneous.

♦ *Being market-driven* has become more recently, accepted tenet of the Welfare State especially among adherents of the philosophy of New Public Management. It stems from the not entirely erroneous conviction that the State should be as efficient as a corporation and assume the appearance of operating as if government was a purely *market-driven* organization, despite the public sector's need to balance multiple bottom lines and its regular involvement in areas of public interest that stem from market failures. Obeisance to market efficiency often comes at the expense of effectiveness and the need for social learning to collectively invent our way out of problems and secure the necessary social commitments to implement innovative ideas.

♦ Finally, the State must be seen to be *progressive*, where "*progressive* has come to connote any stance based on self-righteousness and public compassion, that is thereby exonerated from having to demonstrate its effectiveness, and forgiven for its toxicity."[29]

The malefit between these established attributes of the *Welfare State* and current governance realities has contributed to modern governments being perceived as both ineffective and illegitimate and to an almost uniform decline of public confidence in the claims by government of being capable of solving pressing public problems. More importantly, they have perversely twisted the role that governments perceive for themselves. As a former federal ADM once instructed me, "governments take positions, they don't solve problems. Solving problems takes too long. Positions are much more flexible. If problems do get solved, it's only by coincidence."

When the public is continually fed the appearance of change in the guise of a banquet of real change, it is inevitable that public trust declines (as it has in every modern democracy since the 1970s) and that citizens become more cynical and less accepting and deferential to government leaders. As major Canadian media have been lamenting for a few years now, the core of Canadian democracy is fading into irrelevance[30], Parliament is a "sham"[31].

d) Alternatives to Government

Interestingly, just as the government brand seems to be suffering, there appears on the horizon a growing number of publicly available alternatives to government. That is,

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[29] PAQUET, Gilles. "The Governance Of Equability", *Optimum Online*, Vol. 43, Issue 2, June 2013
[30] FOOT, Richard. "What happened to political integrity and respect for Parliament?", *Postmedia News*, 22 April 2011. Accessed at: http://www.canada.com/news/What+happened+political+integrity+respect+ Parliament/4661218/story.html
[31] WHERRY, Aaron. "The House of Commons is a sham", *Macleans,* 18 February 2011

people and organizations who are finding new ways to cooperate amongst themselves without the interventions or coercive power of the State. From community-based collaborations, to the creation of geographically dispersed communities of practice via the Internet, to the creation of public applications and services by ordinary citizens, to a complete disintermediation of the role of government through the Internet connectivity -- social coordination is finding new avenues of expression.

In their book *Macrowikinomics*, Tapscott and Williams describe many examples of how the public space is being transformed by the growing acceptance of distributed networks of knowledge, resources and authority that are enabling the creation and delivery of public goods and services. In essence, the logic seems to be "if we can do it ourselves, then why do we need government?" This in turn puts pressure on governments to transform or risk sinking into irrelevance. However, this is often a painful process because of the deep cultural and organizational biases that governments hold. "The price of inaction is a lost opportunity to redefine [the role of government] in society and help launch a new era of participatory government."[32]

e) The Internet

It is a truism to say that the Internet has connected more people than at any time in human history. As of June 2012[33] there were 2.4 billion people worldwide who were Internet users (including 83% of Canadians). Of that, almost one billion people were using Facebook. There is almost no part of the planet that does not have Internet access of one kind or another -- even war ravaged South Sudan does.

We are in the midst of realizing McLuhan's "global village"[34], which, when he first envisioned it in the early days of radio, he believed would be brought about by "electronic interdependence". That is, when an electronic media would supplant the traditional text-based culture as the medium for cultural exchange. McLuhan speculated that in this new age, humankind would evolve from individualism and many, small, fragmented tribal groupings into a collective identity, reflective of a global tribe. Despite the ongoing fragmentation and conflict, we seem to be on the verge today of seeing such a 'global tribe' becoming reality[35]. One might even think about the Internet as being humanity's neural net, linking together all the billions of individual human parts into a single organism.

With the emergence of a global community, its dynamics will likely move in the same way that any community enlarges its collective welfare through increased specialization and diversity – that is, maximizing the potential for human creativity, while simultaneously raising the potential for increased conflict and violence through that self same diversity. The likelihood of the former over the latter will be dependent on the social mechanisms created to foster information sharing, learning and collaboration on the one hand, and mechanisms to mitigate conflict through trust building, moral

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[32] TAPSCOTT, Don & Anthony Williams. *Macrowikinomics*, Penguin, Toronto, 2010: 279
[33] Internet World Stats, accessed at: http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm
[34] MCLUHAN, Eric. "The source of the term 'global village'". *McLuhan Studies,* Issue 2, 1996. Accessed at: http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/mcluhan-studies/v1_iss2/1_2art2.htm.
[35] HUBBARD, Barbara. *Conscious Evolution: Awakening the Power of Our Social Potential*, New World Library, Novato, CA, 1998.

contracting and the reduction of free-riding. Thus the primary challenge of evolving governments will be to create new processes of social coordination that are consistent with Ashby's *Law of Requisite Variety* and that meet or exceed the complexity reflected in a globally diverse yet increasingly interconnected world.

As Frederickson and Matkin have observed[36], "because information technology is indifferent to borders and sovereignty, it is an ideal policy arena for inter-jurisdictional cooperation." The Internet removes connectivity barriers and increases the awareness of problem scope and complexity. "We learn that jurisdictions matter to officials and that jurisdictional self-interest can, under the right circumstances, lead to regional cooperation." That is, driven by an awareness of the problem and rational self-interest "officials appear to "learn" to cooperate with and trust officials from other jurisdictions with whom they collaborate or cooperate. We also learn that asymmetries in cooperation tend to matter less if there are enough cooperators and if the overall benefits are significant." Despite the added potential for conflict, the Internet creates a space for the dynamics of cooperation to play out.

While some of these coordination challenges will probably be met through new technologies (like wikis or social media) or new participatory behaviours among citizens (such as open source development or participatory democracy), governments will still remain the primary source of social coordination. As such, they will be expected to adapt in face of these fundamental challenges in ways that are not just incremental but transformative. It would seem that however government evolves it will in many ways resemble the Internet -- connected, networked, open, inclusive, permissionless, facilitative, collaborative, trusted, learning, innovative and adaptive. For governments to be less would be to risk both their perceived legitimacy among their citizens and the perception of their being an ongoing source of social value.

All combined, the combination of the above forces are set to alter our basic assumptions about how citizens can and must collectively engage with each other. "What is required is a revolution of the mind, a different perspective, and refurbished governance.[37]" If such a shift can take place, the changed conversations that will ensue will also fundamentally alter our notions of how governments relate to citizens, businesses and even to each other.

Yet notwithstanding the importance of all of these forces, the Internet remains the most pervasive challenge, both directly and indirectly, to the established order.

The Digital Era is Set to Profoundly Change the Landscape of Governance and Government

The increased connectivity and access to information that the Internet makes available are giving rise to new and different ways in which people and organizations can

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[36] FREDERICKSON, H. George and David Matkin. Public Administration and Shared Power: Understanding Governance, Networks, and Partnerships, Working Group on Interlocal Services Cooperation. Paper 8. 2005. Accessed at: http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/interlocal_coop/8
[37] HIGHAM, Robin and Gilles Paquet. "Reflections on the Canadian Malaise", *Optimum Online*, Vol. 43, Issue 2, Jun 2013

communicate, organize and ultimately work together. Thus the Internet offers the brightest ray of hope for enhancing the level of human cooperation to the levels needed to help resolve the above mentioned global challenges.

That said, the Internet presents its own additional challenges, often intertwined among its potential benefits. The challenge for governments is thus Janus-like: on the one hand, the Internet presents opportunities to become more innovative and collaborative and permit progress on well known, collective issues, while on the other hand, it raises novel, unfamiliar issues and presents entirely new, unfamiliar risks which heretofore have not been on the government's radar -- particularly when it comes to how governments themselves may have to adapt to the cultural shifts being brought about by the Internet.

The following are eight different but related ways in which the Internet and its evolving communications technologies have been tilting the playing field on which governments have operated for the last two centuries.

1. Creating more knowledge

It is said that innovation amounts to seeing old data in new ways. By connecting to billions of people around the globe, the Internet offers billions of new ways of looking at old data. The result has been an explosion of new knowledge. Knowledge is growing at an exponential rate, currently doubling about every 73 days[38]. To put this in a different way, in 73 days from today we will have added as much new knowledge as humanity has generated in all of human history prior to today.

This rate of knowledge growth puts great stress on governments which have been structured to adapt only very slowly to avoid the possibility of being caught up in radicalism. Consequently, all governments -- despite their resources – are increasingly in the dark with respect to the full story surrounding a particular issue. The problem of knowledge growth for governments is exacerbated by the diffusion of knowledge which is so unequal. In this environment, neither so called 'experts' nor individual citizens are likely to have anything close to comprehensive knowledge.

To deal with such a massive knowledge overload, some governments have retreated from this onslaught of uncertainty by taking the position that more knowledge is instead unhelpful. In its place, they have begun to rely on instinctive perspectives that are 'self-evident' (at least to them) as a more efficient means of arriving at decisions[39]. For over 200 years governments have tried to use objective knowledge to limit the arbitrariness of State power, yet today 'too much information' has been encouraging governments to once again govern through fiat and subjectivity[40]. On the other hand, too much information in the hands of ordinary citizens has seriously limited the knowledge hegemony that governments have long claimed for themselves. The State does not know best.

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[38] APPLEBERRY, James. Keynote address, EMU Presidential Inauguration, Eastern Michigan University, 20 October 2000

[39] In government, arriving at a decision is usually considered much more important than the implementability or outcomes of a decision because of the longer time frames associated with outcomes.

[40] GREGG, Allan R. *1984 in 2012 – The assault on reason*, speech delivered at the opening of Carleton University's new School of Public Affairs, *Ottawa, 5 September 2012*

Today the only thing which might come close to comprehensive knowledge is a collective pooling of individual knowledge. In the past, such thoughts were totally impractical. Today as a result of the Internet they have become a matter of course. Since we are all connected, can our public sector organizations reorganize themselves around *scalable learning*[41] rather than around avoiding waste (which they do very badly anyway)? "Institutions must be redesigned from the ground up," says Deloitte's John Hagel, "to address a totally different rationale. Instead of pursuing scalable efficiency, institutions must learn how to pursue scalable, peer learning." Otherwise what we have is like the old parable of the blind men and the elephant, where individuals with only partial knowledge lay claim to 'truth' with consequences that can be both fool-hardy or even tragic.

The volume of knowledge growth will also continue to erode the traditional pretense that 'knowledgeable experts' can govern on behalf of a less knowledgeable citizenry. Today any gap in knowledge between experts and non-experts might be closed as easily as clicking a mouse. We have created an entire citizenry comprised of partial experts, putting those in and out of government more or less on equal footing, especially if their platform for collaboration is online.

Even at a minimum, the rapid advancement in knowledge will create huge costs, both human and resource costs, on all institutions as they try to keep pace.

2. Democratizing knowledge

As more knowledge is created, the Internet has become the quintessential tool for the dissemination of knowledge. Knowledge which once was channeled through poorly read books and academic journals -- now flows freely through the 'creative commons', blogs, and YouTube videos. For instance, YouTube has more than 1 billion visitors each month watching over 6 billion hours of video -- almost an hour for every person on Earth, up 50% over last year.

Total strangers find can find new knowledge, comment on it, modify it, accept or dismiss it. All 2.4 billion Internet users can have an opinion and therefore can stigmergically contribute to the advancement of knowledge. What appears to be taking place is a democratization of knowledge the likes of which has never been seen before, except possibly with the advent of the printing press. It is a shift that is putting all knowledge together with the computing power that goes along with it into the hands of everyone on the planet. This is great for innovation but it also has its dark side.

Bill Joy, one of the co-founders of Sun Microsystems, once wrote in *Wired*[42] that such democratization risks putting all that knowledge and the power to use it into the hands of a very small number of disturbed people who might be intent on causing harm to others simply because they can. The result could be, not just a terrorist incident but, a

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[41] HAGEL, John "A Labor Day Manifesto for a New World", *Edge Perspectives*, 7 September 2009. Accessed at: http://edgeperspectives.typepad.com/edge_perspectives/2009/09/a-labor-day-manifesto-for-a-new-world.html

[42] JOY, Bill. "Why the future doesn't need us", *Wired*, April, 2000

global calamity if, for instance, democratized genome knowledge allowed someone to introduce into humanity an entirely new viral pathogen for which we had no antibodies[43] or enable a new generation of hacker to propagate 'nanobots' that could be pre-programmed to infect and destroy the very technology we have become so dependent on.

This is not some futuristic fiction but according to Symantec, "The findings …are somewhat alarming, given attacks like Nitro and Duqu that have targeted critical infrastructure providers… We think that targeted attacks against critical infrastructure providers in the form of Stuxnet, Nitro and Duqu will continue. These latest attacks are likely *just the beginning* of more targeted attacks directed at critical infrastructure."[44]

Given that it is impossible to prevent the creation of disturbed human beings, it would seem that the only sensible options are a) limit the level of democratization of knowledge, knowing full well you will also limit the creativity and innovation of human society; or b) find new ways of limiting the destructive potential of disturbed individuals. Yet neither of these options seem practical and neither consideration is being addressed in public conversation. We naively proceed as if there are no risks to the dissemination of knowledge.

Heretofore, governments have been designed to detect and respond to large societal level threats through standing armies, large investments in technology and foreign policy. However, as the 'Boston Marathon Bombers' recently illustrated, today's scariest threats can come from an inability to predict or detect the actions of single individuals. How do you protect against a threat you can't see or may not even know is there?

Knowledge is a double edged sword. The thing which on the one hand is fostering the most connected and creative period in human history, the Internet, may at the same time be the thing to create humanity's biggest menace.

The question of how much democratization of knowledge is a good thing is a big one and one that can not, should not, be taken alone by any government without possibly penalizing all levels of social creativity, productivity and competitiveness. Different governments will have different opinions, but the solution, like that on climate change, must be cooperative and global.

3. Creating more value

Knowledge is like money. The more it circulates, the more social value it creates. The corollary of this is that if you want to maximize the amount of social value, then you need to maximize the rate at which knowledge circulates. The truth of this is evident in the Internet-based 'open source' model which when compared to the value creation that

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[43] As Len Rosen describes in *Democratizing the Genome with Crowdfunding Assistance*, (The World Future Society, 23 August 2013 accessed at: http://www.wfs.org/blogs/len-rosen/democratizing-genome-crowdfunding-assistance) there is a clear trend to democratize the knowledge of the human DNA to facilitate more innovative disease responses.

[44] Symantec Corp. *Symantec Survey Finds Global Critical Infrastructure Providers Less Aware and Engaged in Government Programs,* Press Release, Mountain View, CA, 31 October 2011

results from top-down organizational models consistently wins hands down. "We are seeing how the new age of networked intelligence renders conventional approaches to value creation insufficient, and in some cases, completely inappropriate."[45]

However, knowledge has long been regarded as an asset in the same way as inventory, plant, equipment, financial capital. Unlike these other assets, however, knowledge is not relinquished when it is exchanged and every new idea continues to build on someone else's work Nevertheless, we have created well-established institutional and jurisdictional barriers to the free circulation of knowledge. IP laws, for instance, were established to limit the flow of knowledge in order for creators to capture greater 'rents' from its use.

The Internet and information technologies, however, have assured that new ideas and new technologies are often shared regardless of IP, and frequently within a time window that is little more than six months. Thus while IP laws nowadays don't present a complete barrier, they do slow down the *open sharing* of knowledge.

Simultaneously, the jurisdictional barriers to sharing coupled with the anonymity of the Internet have created whole new opportunities for crime and espionage. Through a range of sophisticated viruses, Trojans and other tools hackers can work at safe distances hiding behind jurisdictional barriers with little fear of being either caught or punished.

Thus the Internet is putting pressure to reform the established regime of knowledge sharing both to maximize sharing for socio-economic innovation and to diminish the harmful effects of cyber crime. In the current global system there are winners and losers, so some interests will be resistant to change. Reforming it will need a cooperative global effort working towards a shared goal that at this time is not well defined.

4. Increasing transparency

Unlike during the prior Internet era, organizations and their leaders have much less control over information than they once had. Somehow, someway information always leaks out -- through disgruntled employees, altruistic do-gooders, hackers, and human error. It leaks out by intent, by accident or by deficient organizational security protocols. Two of only the most obvious illustrations of this are the public disclosures through Wikileaks of top secret US government files and the revelations of Edward Snowden about NSA's cyber spying program, PRISM.

In addition, individual leaders are now prone to having their personal lives disclosed almost in real time on Twitter and other social media, much like celebrity movie stars, as is the case with New York mayoral candidate and former US congressman Anthony Weiner. Simple off-the-cuff remarks that may, in the past, have gone unreported are now instantly published with world wide coverage.

"I sometimes wonder if (the ugliness of modern politics) is really new," says Alison Loat, co-founder of Samara. "Perhaps things are just more visible now that there's

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[45] TAPSCOTT, Don & Anthony Williams. *Macrowikinomics*, Penguin, Toronto, 2010: 25

more social media, and a faster news cycle. Everyone's warts are out there for all to see. That probably accounts as much for what's happening as politicians behaving worse than in the past."[46]

Despite there being less secrecy and less privacy in general, still the anonymity of much of the Internet permits many people to wreak great harm. For instance, cyber crime has cost Canadians $3.09 billion over the past year[47], affecting 42 % of online Canadian adults at an average cost of $383 per individual, up 127% from the previous year. According to the FBI, the estimated conviction rate for cyber crime is only 2%, which obviously presents no deterrent. Governments have been challenged with strengthening individual privacy at the risk of causing public harm from cyber criminals and terrorists OR weakening individual privacy at the risk of causing individual harm à la 'Big Brother' effects from over reaching governments and corporations.

In Canada, data has been lost or breached at 82.5% of government IT systems.[48] Cyber warfare is no longer a matter of science fiction. In 2011, for instance, Chinese hackers compromised the IT systems of Finance Canada and Treasury Board Canada[49] while Canadian MPs with Chinese backgrounds also had their computers hacked[50]. Canada's Auditor General has reported[51] that cyber threats are increasing and evolving faster than the ability of Government to keep pace with them.

In the end, governments seem to be fighting a rearguard action to become less transparent even as the Internet compels them to be ever more connected and therefore ever more vulnerable.

5. Creating more opportunities for self-organization & collaboration

Over the Internet, social coordination and collaboration need not depend on the establishment and maintenance of relationships as they do in an offline world. They can occur stigmergically.[52] Stigmergy is a form of communication that results from a message being passed between people through the modification of a shared environment. Over the Internet, this happens all the time as a result of individuals generating and leaving behind texts, blogs, pictures or videos for others to find. Collaboration occurs when these others find this material and then react to it -- like flocking birds – accepting

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[46] FOOT, Richard. "What happened to political integrity and respect for Parliament?", Postmedia News, 22 April 2011. Accessed at: http://www.canada.com/news/
What+happened+political+integrity+respect+Parliament/4661218/story.html
[47] HARRIS, Misty "Cybercrime cost Canadians nearly $3.1 billion over past year", *Postmedia News*, October 2, 2013. Accessed at: http://www.canada.com/technology/Cybercrime+cost+Canadians
+nearly+billion+over+past+year/8984034/story.html
[48] WONG, Christine. "Data lost or breached at 82.5 per cent of government IT systems in Canada", *ITBusiness.ca*, 14 June 2012. Accessed at: http://www.itbusiness.ca/news/data-lost-or-breached-at-82-5-per-cent-of-government-it-systems-in-canada/17620
[49] WESTON, Greg. "Foreign hackers attack Canadian government", *CBC News*, 16 February 2011. Accessed at: http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/foreign-hackers-attack-canadian-government-1.982618
[50] _____. "Chinese hackers targeted House of Commons", *CTV News*, 17 February 2011. Accessed at: http://www.ctvnews.ca/chinese-hackers-targeted-house-of-commons-1.608891
[51] PARRY ,Tom. "Critical cybersecurity gaps remain, auditor general says"*, CBC News*, 23 October 2012
[52] ELLIOTT, Mark. "Stigmergic Collaboration: The Evolution of Group Work" *M/C Journal* vol. 9, Issue2, 2006

it, modifying it or negating it. When large numbers of people react in this way, a collaborative product or mass behaviour can emerge, and often in unpredictable ways. Thus a single contribution can be amplified multiple times into a collective output, such as occurs with open source software development or as happened with the anti-SOPA protest of 2012[53].

How does one incite such mass collaboration? Unlike small group collaboration, it does not require the building of trusted relationships as a prerequisite. While a few basic rules are usually helpful, *action comes first*. Collaborators then react to the initial actions of others -- accepting them, modifying them or rejecting them. To be effective, it requires large numbers of people who may potentially participate even if much fewer do. This is the fundamental premise of open source as can be witnessed with Linux or Wikis. In reacting to someone else's actions, complete strangers can collaborate without ever having to invest in a relationship between them.[54]

This phenomenon of stigmergic collaboration has helped to underpin the experience of mass collaboration over the Internet that gives rise to geographically dispersed communities of practice and interest, collaborative decision making, resource sharing, collaborative consumption and 'macrowikinomics'[55].

Yet the potential for citizens and non-citizens to connect, share, learn and do together over the Internet without the intervening of power of government creates a legitimacy challenge for government, one that is further compounded by an absence of collaborative cultures typical in most public sector organizations. If people can interact and respond to collective issues and opportunities without government, then where is the legitimate role of government?

6. Facilitating greater access to more resources

One of the principal benefits of government has been its almost monopoly status for raising revenues for the provision of public goods and services[56]. Nowadays, however, crowd sourcing mechanisms available on such online sites as *Indie GoGo*, *Crowdfunder* and *Crowdrise* are creating new avenues to help raise funds for social purposes. These often provide the added benefits of ensuring that there is public support before funding is ever provided or that it is provided in increments to permit experimentation. While still largely novelties, they present clear alternatives to taxation and centralized decision making in the pursuit of public interests. Their existence may also herald a significant shift from government to the not-for-profit sector as the principle source of community-socio-economic development and support.

It is not only financial capital that the Internet helps facilitate but also access to the in-kind, intangible and reputational capital that online collaborators can bring to bear.

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[53] In response to the authoritarian provisions of the US Stop Online Piracy Act, or SOPA, many online providers and information sources went offline, most notably Wikipedia, on 18 January 2012 in the largest protest in human history.

[54] WILSON, Christopher. "On Collaboration", *Optimum Online*, vol. 41 (1) March 2011

[55] TAPSCOTT, Don & Anthony Williams. *Macrowikinomics*, Penguin, Toronto, 2010

[56] This is not to diminish the role of the not-for-profit sector, it's just that the scale and coercive power of the state is currently so much greater.

On a site like *Mumsnet.org* visitors (mainly parents) can swap advice about children, education, work, lifestyles, food, and just about anything parents want to talk about. It is a forum for parents to help parents and it is the biggest network for parents in the UK, generating over 9 million visits each month.

Sometimes the Internet provides an alternative to hiring public servants and instead helps governments use interested volunteers in much the way as open source software. The *Peer to Patent* initiative, for instance, of the US Patent and Trademark Office invites the public to participate in the patent examination process. It aims to improve the quality of issued patents by enabling the public to supply the USPTO with information (which it may not have) that may be relevant to assessing the claims of pending patent applications. It is in fact a recognition that comprehensive knowledge can not be held within a small group – no matter how expert.

The availability of such alternative 'funding' creates new challenges for government including a lessening of its control in particular issue spaces, and additional coordination and response challenges to keep abreast and stay aligned with initiatives that may be occurring somewhat independently of government. For agencies like the USPTO, there is the added challenge of remaining relevant and credible among those who may potentially contribute to the government's work or lose their participation.

7. Creating more communities

One of the more interesting transformations produced by the Internet has been our reconception of what we mean by community. Communities are no longer defined simply by geography but by shared interest and common practice. The processes of connecting and sharing that animate communities were once constrained by physical proximity and the need for personal interaction. In the past within any given geographic

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Figure 2: Leading Public Interest Crowdsourcing Sites

1. Indiegogo
Indiegogo approves donation-based fundraising campaigns for almost anything — music, hobbyists, personal finance needs, charities and whatever else you could think of (except investment)..

2. Crowdfunder
Crowdfunder is the crowdfunding platform for businesses, with a growing social network of investors, tech startups, small businesses, and social enterprises (financially sustainable/profitable businesses with social impact goals). Crowdfunder offers a blend of donation-based and investment crowdfunding from individuals and angel investors. The company has localized crowdfunding and investment to help develop entrepreneurial ecosystems.

3. Crowdrise
Crowdrise is a place for donation-based funding for Causes and Charity. They attract a community of do-gooders and fund all kinds of inspiring causes and needs. A unique Points System on Crowdrise helps track and reveal how much charitable impact members and organizations are making.

4. Somolend
Somolend is a site for lending for small businesses in the US, providing debt-based investment funding to qualified businesses with existing operations and revenue. Somolend has partnered with banks to provide loans, as well as helping small business owners bring their friends and family into the effort. With their Midwest roots, a strong founder who was a leading participant in the JOBS Act legislation, and their focus and lead in the local small business market, Somolend has begun expanding into multiple cities and markets in the US.

5. appbackr
If you want to build the next new mobile app and are seeking donation-based funding to get things off the ground or growing, then check out appbackr and their niche community for mobile app development.

6. Invested.in
You might want to create your own crowdfunding community to support donation-based fundraising for a specific group or niche in the market. Invested.in is a Venice, CA based company that is a top name "white label" software provider, giving you the tools to get started and grow your own.

Source: Barnett, Chance, "Top 10 Crowdfunding Sites For Fundraising", *Forbes*, 8 May 2013.

community, those forming interest-based communities shared only a few of the most commonly held interests – language, ethnicity, religion, family and history. Communities of practice were similarly generalized in the form of unions or associations.

With the advent of the Internet, however, one can now reach out to anyone around the world who might share your specific interest or work. Thus while you may be the only person in your geographic community with a particular interest or practice, there may well be thousands or millions of people worldwide who do. Connecting such geographically dispersed people into communities of sharing has been one of the principle benefits of the Internet. It has resulted in an exponential proliferation of communities, of every description who have developed sufficient scale to have both a voice and an influence. Yet with more specialized communities, there are also more opportunities for inter-community conflict. Unfortunately, our governance systems were designed to manage only a limited number of communities – French-English; Protestant-Catholic; east-west; rural-urban; rich-poor; industrial-agricultural; native born-immigrant; aboriginal-non-aboriginal – largely through processes of elite accommodation and negotiation.

So not only are there many more communities today, but many of those who would have allied themselves with these major groupings in the past will now see their principal allegiance and identity going to much smaller groups -- possibly neighbourhood associations, hobby groups or organizational subgroups. Understanding how people self identify is now a major concern in politics because, as Daniel Kahneman suggests[57], voters tend to vote not on issues but for people they perceive to be 'like them'. The proliferation of smaller, more numerous communities may well be eroding the sense of shared identity and public purpose in which democracy flourishes, encouraging trends towards citizen disengagement[58] and cynicism. Framing this in Internet terms, the challenge seems to be to reconnect an increasing number of identities and communities and infuse that network with an emergent sense of shared purpose. It's a phenomenon that tends to occur more in the creation of movements than in organizations and political parties[59].

Still, as much as the Internet has connected people to new interest based communities, it has also disconnected many citizens from their tribal allegiances to family, religious, racial or regional groups. In essence, the shear volume of different perspectives today decreases the likelihood of voting being a negotiation among politicians and 'tribal chieftains' as it once was. The availability of information over the Internet permits individual voters to choose a candidate for themselves, sending political parties scrambling at election time to come up with the right mix of messages to attract extremely diverse audiences. Nevertheless, with so many different communities, it gets harder and harder to identify what motivates them all, leading many parties to simply forgo the old tradeoffs and govern for only the slice of the electorate that has given them a plurality, instead of the old practice of governing for all.

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[57] BROOKS, David. "How Voters Think", *New York Times*, January 18, 2008
[58] HOWE, Paul. *Citizens Adrift: The Democratic Disengagement of Young Canadians*, UBC Press, Vancouver, 2010
[59] PHILLIPS, Robin, et al. *Brains on Fire: Igniting powerful, sustainable, word of mouth movements*, Wiley Books, Hoboken, NJ, 2010

8. Increasing the self sufficiency of citizenry

In many small ways, citizens are beginning to assume activities and functions that have long been associated with governments. Here are some illustrations:
- ♦ Garbage collection – eg. Let's Do It Estonia and SeeClickFix
- ♦ Public transportation – eg Zipcar, FixMyStreet, and a Better Place
- ♦ City planning – eg. The City 2.0
- ♦ Education – eg. Scolaris.ca, the Student Room, Gooru Learning and MOOCS
- ♦ Health -- eg. PatientsLikeMe; We Are.Us; MedHelp or SickWeather
- ♦ Oversight -- eg. citizen journalists via twitter or Youtube
- ♦ Disaster relief -- eg. Ushahidi-Haiti; and Virtual Alabama
- ♦ Space exploration – eg. Galaxy Zoo and the X-Prize

The move to make information collected by governments available to the public, in so called open data initiatives, is on the one hand co-opting citizens to reduce the costs of providing effective government services but it is also transforming citizens from being passive consumers of government services into participants and co-decision makers of their own governance.

The growing active participation of citizens in processes that address things that affect them directly or that they are passionate about -- independent of their voting habits -- lends credence to the idea that today's citizens are just as engaged in their democracy as previous generations -- and probably more so. It's just that they tend to ascribe to the "do-it-yourself", or "in-your-face" form of governance rather the old passive and paternalistic system of parties and elections. Governments are currently quite challenged to recognize democracy as a mechanism for facilitating the shared ownership of all their citizens and not some modern version of a feudal arrangement of an entitled aristocracy. Embracing this shift to co-governance implies articulating a new role for government and already there are calls for "local leaders [to] lead and senior governments [to] follow".[60] Are we, as citizens and governments, ready to entertain this relationship where citizens are willing to lead and governments are willing to follow?

Massive open, online courses, or MOOCs as they are popularly known, present an illustrative case of the growing self-sufficiency occurring in the public space. Post secondary education has long required massive public investment into 'bricks and mortar' infrastructures to enable large numbers of students to come together to receive instruction. For logistical reasons, class sizes were limited to less than a few hundred, largely because of the restrictions placed on classroom spaces and the need for manual assessment. Hence, there was a need to create many classrooms and many institutions as a mechanism to deliver on the promise of public education for all.

In my province of Ontario, the provincial government alone spends approximately 24% of its total budget of $127 billion[61] on education ($23.2 billion on primary and secondary education and $7.1 billion on postsecondary and training). By comparison, US

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[60] MAXWELL, Judith *Looking Down the Road: Leadership for Canada's Changing Communities*, Community Foundations of Canada, 2006.
[61] 2013 Ontario Budget

governments (federal, state and local) spend approximately 15% of their collective budgets on education[62]. It is a colossal amount of money, much of it on infrastructure. The emergence of new online delivery mechanisms that can reach large numbers of students with limited infrastructure suggests this traditional function of government in education may be about to dramatically change.

Huge investments in 'bricks and mortar infrastructure' is now no longer necessary. MOOCs, for instance, are conducted over the Internet without the need for centralized physical spaces. Already some MOOCs have involved as many as 350,000 students in a single course and whose work is graded by computer algorithms rather than professors or student markers. Students are free to access these courses on their own schedule rather than on an institutional one. While accrediting such courses for degree purposes still remains an issue, the courses themselves already carry the imprimatur of some the world's most prestigious institutions, such as Stanford or Harvard, and involve some of the world's foremost academics.

And all of this can be obtained at a tiny fraction of the institutional costs involved in traditional course delivery leading, to student costs that may be nominal or even free. Without the need for large physical spaces or institutional staffs and a drastically reduced need for student financial support -- if any -- the role of government in post secondary education is likely to be dramatically curtailed. In this context, existing educational infrastructures may well become surplus, leaving a handful of only the very best universities and colleges to provide post secondary education for everyone on the planet.

In a similar manner, the government's role in public and secondary education may be reduced by what has been described by Sugata Mitra as *self organized learning environments*[63], where young children explore and learn from each other -- using resources and mentoring ubiquitously available over the Internet. Mitra's "Hole in the Wall" experiments have shown that, in the absence of any supervision or formal education, children can teach themselves and each other over the internet, motivated by innate curiosity and peer interest. The "Hole in the Wall" project clearly demonstrates that, even without a teacher, students can learn new languages or complex ideas entirely on their own or from other children. What then becomes of the extensive networks of public and secondary schools and the role of teachers?

The Internet is Enabling the Shift from 'G' Government to 'g' governance

Increasingly, things that in the past we simply left to government to figure out for us, today we find that some people – although not all – are taking it upon themselves to develop those responses either on their own or in concert with others. The Internet is challenging not only the government delivery model but the basic educational model that says you go to school until you're 25 to prepare yourself for a job. With ubiquitous access to information anytime, anywhere together with connectivity on a global scale,

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[62] CHANTRILL, Christopher. *US Government Spending*. Accessed on 9 September 2013 at: http://www.usgovernmentspending.com/
[63] MITRA, Sugata. *Build a School in the Cloud*, TED Talks, February 2013. Accessed at: http://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_build_a_school_in_the_cloud.html

why shouldn't work and education be concurrent and lifelong instead of compartmentalized to a small segment of our lives? The ease and frequency of creating many, new and diverse communities on the Internet (some of which may be global in reach) means that if we can identify a problem there are probably many others elsewhere who think like we do and who we can connect with in order to envisage and implement solutions -- sidestepping any need to persuade governments to do this on our behalf. Bring your own solution, the new BYOS, is increasingly the hallmark of social coordination.

The newly created capacity for stigmergic collaboration among large numbers of people, to respond to social problems self-sufficiently is evidenced in many of the 'open data' initiatives, 'Hackathons', and the citizen applications created for community benefit. This pattern of growing self-sufficiency is bound to alter our relationship with government. We are becoming less and less dependent on government as the principal source and provider of public goods and services. And not surprisingly, as the legitimacy of government shrinks, the reputation of the civic sector expands in importance as both a respected place adult conversations to take place, and as the main delivery agent for public services.

MaAlpine and Temple[64] note a confluence of factors that are pushing the civic sector into the forefront to social governance. They note the increased willingness of citizens to assume ownership with a rising interest in civic engagement and volunteerism. They see the blurring of boundaries between sectors as actors in each sector recognize their inability to implement change on their own. They observe how the many, largely small and distributed civic organizations are linking together in networks to enable new ways of working. Then out of that connectivity, they are detecting new ways of thinking and new models for achieving systemic change that are the products of large scale, long-term and multi-stakeholder initiatives. And they are noticing that the Internet and its accompanying technological advances are enabling both the production of networks and the new found scales of impact. The civic sector is increasingly becoming our social laboratory to experiment with new knowledge, new technologies and new approaches of cooperation.

At the same time, the responsiveness of governments is being slowed to the point of non-responsive. In part this is due to the volume of knowledge governments must consider, but it is also due to the declining confidence in governments' ability to cooperate together with an increasing public scrutiny and demand for transparency and government accountability. But it is also due to the fact that the required knowledge is often shared in the hands of citizens and government; by the growing demands by citizens to be included in the governance process; and the ability of citizens to be able to contribute to the solutions that affect them. The public sector bureaucracies which at one time were prized for their assurance of stability, are increasingly viewed as being 'out of touch' with their citizens or even as impediments to progress.

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[64] MCALPINE, Jill, and James Temple. *Capacity building: Investing in not-for-profit effectiveness.* PricewaterhouseCoopers Canada Foundation, 2011. *Accessed at:*http://www.pwc.com/en_CA/ca/foundation/publications/capacity-building-2011-05-en.pdf

If people can self-organize using the Internet to produce collective goods and services, then what becomes of the disintermediated role of government which in the past had pretty much of a monopoly on delivery of public goods and services? What happens if citizens can cooperate amongst themselves to produce those collective goods? Is it then not reasonable for them to demand a larger share of societal governance as partners with government instead of consumers of governance? Would it not be in the best interests of government legitimacy to determine the mechanisms by which this participation could be extended beyond the currently episodic participation in elections?

In a recent TED talk[65], Clay Shirky describes the experience of Martha Payne, a nine year old Scot who lives in the Town of Argyle who published a daily food blog called *Never Seconds* to document the food being served in her school cafeteria. Within a short period of time, thousands of people tuned in to watch her rate her school's lunches. Then, suddenly she published a goodbye notice and shut down her blog after her teacher told her that she was no longer allowed to take pictures in the lunch room any more.

What might have been considered as an innocent means of student engagement or as a means of increasing public accountability to parents and students was interpreted by the school board as a threat. So Martha was shut down. Not surprisingly, the public backlash was large and unanimous – how dare they censor a nine year old! Within hours the school board reversed itself claiming censorship was never their rationale -- except that it is exactly what they did. The story is illustrative of the changing relationship between citizens and their governments and the growing tendency of citizens -- for fun or profit -- to become engaged in areas that have until now been viewed as the exclusive purview of government.

Governments today are less and less able to control either the flow of information, or the way in which citizens may choose to engage with them -- at least that is without putting at risk their stock of public legitimacy. Yet as Lenihan reminds us, "we remain locked in a political paradigm that was designed for a very different world — one defined by winner-take-all debates, simplistic policy solutions, a passive public, and ideologically-driven decision-making."[66]

The impact of the Internet on citizen expectations and behaviours will profoundly alter the character and nature of governments as well as our relationship with them. Because governments, as currently constituted, are ill-suited to collaborate or to share power, the impact of the Internet will create fundamental pressure on governments to change the way they operate. Therefore, we can expect some major tensions to emerge as our relationships with government are being transformed, beginning with the bureaucratic cultures at the core of government. We can expect less of the domineering, big 'G' Government and more of the small 'g' style of governance that facilitates the work of others.

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[65] SHIRKY, Clay. *How the Internet will (one day) transform government,* accessed at: http://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_how_the_internet_will_one_day_transform_government.html
[66] LENIHAN, Don. "Volatile voters, wicked issues — and a whole new era in politics", *iPolitics*, 2 April 2013. Accessed at: http://www.ipolitics.ca/2013/04/02/volatile-voters-wicked-issues-and-a-whole-new-era-in-politics/

"The small-g governance approach raises some fundamental questions that are never confronted head-on by the Big G government approach," according Gilles Paquet, "because they are wrongly presumed to be already resolved"[67]. These include the questions of a) how to ensure effective coordination among stakeholders who share significant portions of the power, resources and information required to steer or implement an initiative; and b) how to arrive at shared principles, norms of behaviour and mechanisms of engagement that ensure sufficient trust and effective stewardship.

The Internet can encourages such small 'g' governance behaviour by fostering cultures of sharing[68], elements of which might include:

- enabling greater openness[69], knowledge dissemination and exchange;
- promoting shared ownership and decision making;
- enabling active listening through stigmergic communication;
- nurturing stewardship;
- encouraging moral contracting;
- fostering boundary spanning & network brokering;
- facilitating social learning and innovation;

- identifying new resources and promoting shared commitment;
- embracing networks over top-down control;
- adopting cooperative attitudes like "how can we help?" over "thou shall do this";
- enabling angel-style investing;
- reducing conflict in communities of practice;
- providing opportunities for rigorous feedback & accountability; and
- enabling effective collaboration

At this time, "probably the most important thing the Canadian government could do", says author Don Tapscott, "is transform itself around the Internet and the principles of collaboration."[70] While these behaviours are not generally elements of a traditional public sector culture, already they may be observed in pockets all across government.

In recent interviews in BC[71], for instance, I was surprised to hear educational and health authorities describe that they could no longer expect the behavioural changes they sought to bring forth in school communities simply from their own creation and imposition of policies, tools and resources. For them, this was a non-starter. For real change to occur, I was told, the motivation for change had to emerge locally and be shared amongst all the relevant stakeholders. Only then did it make sense for government to step in to help facilitate change through additional contributions of knowledge, resources or policy. Clearly for these policy makers, the capacity for change was shared but the driving force came from school communities themselves.

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[67] PAQUET, Gilles "Governance As A Mythbuster", *Optimum Online*, Vol. 43, Issue 1, Mar 2013

[68] WILSON, Christopher. "On Collaboration", *Optimum Online*, Vol. 41, Issue 1, March, 2011

[69] Obama's first act as President in 2009 was to sign into law the Open Data Initiative.

[70] Quoted in TOSSELL, Ivor. "Don Tapscott: Let's crowdsource Canada", *The Globe and Mail,* 20 February 2013

[71] These interviews were conducted with officials from BC's Health and Education ministries who are involved in the Healthy Schools BC initiative.

I suspect that this "how can we help" attitude will become increasingly characteristic among governments in a digital era, not only as citizens mature in their own sense of ownership of collective problems and solutions, but also as the Internet continues to give them access to the people and resources necessary to affect desired change -- independent of any actions by government.

Lastly, technology is eroding our acquiescence to the notion of leadership. In this sense the Internet is a growing threat to currently constituted governments– and not just in authoritarian regimes. It continuously wears away at the public perception of the ethicalness and effectiveness of leaders. In this digital era, people tend to know things faster and alternatives circulate more freely than they did in the past. Consequently, governments -- and leaders in particular -- no longer control information and ideas in the way that they once did.

Accordingly, ethical lapses can be known within minutes or hours via Twitter instead of months or years later. In addition, as the power, resources and knowledge to affect policy and programs become increasingly distributed, individual leaders are finding themselves unable to implement their ideas without the cooperation of others. This leads to a dilution of their publicly perceived power and ability to affect change. In response to this complexity, many leaders hunker down and circle their wagons of influence and we see a "consolidation of decision making power into smaller and less diverse groups[72]." In contrast to Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety, many of today's leaders, overwhelmed by the sheer volume of knowledge and information, tend to retreat to older, more simplified models of governance in an attempt to perpetuate notions of stability, uniformity and certainty instead of evolving more complex governance models.

It is in this context of leadership that the digital era is perhaps having its greatest impact. As the notion of leadership is being undermined, followers are becoming less inclined to follow[73]. Even a decade ago it seemed inconceivable that organizations could exist without leaders. Today, we can't seem to get rid of traditional leadership fast enough. Both the Internet and our collective destiny are inexorably forcing us to consider how to structure effective organizations and governments in the absence of leadership and where decision making involves larger and more diverse groups?

Leadership in a Digital Era

Harlan Cleveland once defined 'leadership' as "bringing people together to make something different happen." Despite the concept of leadership becoming increasingly nuanced and varied[74] over the years, leaders and leadership remain cornerstones of our organizational cultures. That is because the mechanism of leadership allows followers to

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[72] JOHNSON, Steven. *Future Perfect: The Case for Progress in a Networked World*, Riverhead Books, New York, 2012: 156

[73] M.B , "Leaders without followers", *The Economist*, 21 January 2013 accessed at: http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2013/01/world-economic-forum-davos

[74] It once meant something related to the exercise of authority in a top-down hierarchy but the literature is awash with servant leadership, collaborative leadership, facilitative leadership, team leadership and many other forms of leadership. See Wilson, Christopher. "Moving from Leadership to Stewardship", *Optimum Online,* vol. 43 (3) September 2013

work together. Leadership permits followers to coordinate their individual activities to produce value-adding, collective outputs through a variety of leader-led structures such as hierarchies, clans and associations.

As a mechanism for coordination, leadership helps to organize separate productive activities across the organization while mitigating the potential for conflicts that grow with the increasing diversification of organizational units. Coordination typically occurs through the leader rather than laterally between individual units. However, leaders don't become leaders on their own. Leaders are created by followers.[75] And they are chosen by followers on the basis of:

a) their *ethicalness*, that is, they are seen as operating for a common good that will ultimately benefit the follower; and

b) their *effectiveness*, that is, they are capable of coordinating various community actors in a value adding way. The net collective benefit is perceived as increasing with leadership.

Over the thousands of years that this social mechanism has proved useful, but despite its many variations today, the most consistent concept associated with leadership it is that the leader is always identified as being the person "in-charge". In hierarchies, the leader is easily identified as the one at the apex of the hierarchy giving orders. Leaders always told followers what to do and followers, well, just followed.

Figure 3: Leadership is a mechanism of social coordination
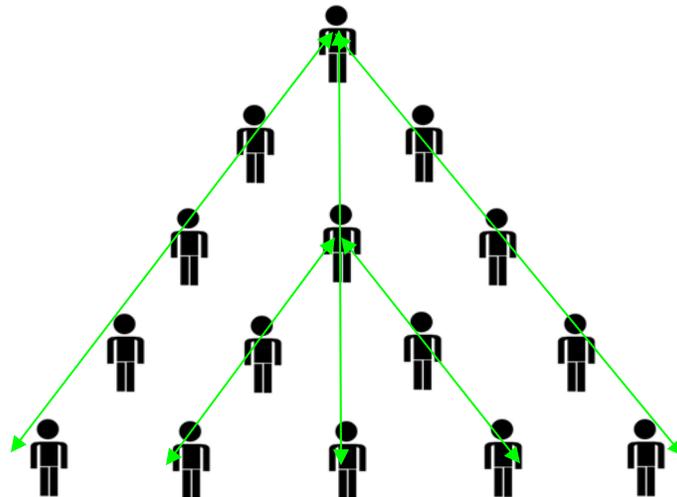
What Leadership Has Become

With the ubiquitousness of the Internet and the ability to connect to others anytime or any place, the top-down control by leaders of the flow of information and authority has become ever more tenuous. As Tapscott and Ticoll make clear in the *Naked*

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[75] BLOCK, Peter. **"**As Goes the Follower; So Goes the Leader", *AQP News for a Change,* American Society for Quality, July 1998

Corporation,[76] leaders at this stage in history should expect that all information will eventually leak out, especially if it is controversial. The more controversial, the faster the leakage. As a result, both the ethicalness and effectiveness of leaders is being steadily undermined. The repeated public exposure of the personal short-comings, failures, shady dealings, and out right criminal behaviours of leaders in all types of organizational settings and sectors continually erodes the willingness of followers to follow, and brings leadership into disrepute. Why should I follow, if I can't trust the leader? As the *New York Times* goes on record to say, *"The entire 'leadership class' is 'fundamentally self-dealing'*[77] or as Canada's newsmagazine *Macleans* proclaimed, "Parliament is a Sham."[78]

> **Leadership in Disrepute**
>
> US CEOs have done more to hurt the economy than anyone else – even more than the President or Congress – *Fox News*
>
> The entire "leadership class" is "fundamentally self-dealing" – *New York Times*
>
> HSBC execs apologize for laundering money for Al Qaeda and drug cartels – *The Toronto Star*
>
> Prior to its takeover by Wells Fargo, Wachovia Bank's CEO is implicated in $378 billion money laundering scheme with Mexican drug cartels – *The Guardian*
>
> The 2013 global "Trust Barometer" survey, finds as trust in institutions continues to climb, just 18% of respondents trusted business leaders, and only 13% trusted government leaders - *The Economist*
>
> "There is contempt for the whole institution [of the Canadian Senate]" - *Macleans*
>
> "The Senate is the backwater of the US government"– *The New Yorker*
>
> "Parliament is a Sham" - *Macleans*

For instance, in what amounts to a major departure from parliamentary tradition, Ralph Heintzman, former public servant and Assistant Secretary of Treasury Board Canada has suggested "public servants [should] make their own judgments about the public interest."[79] They should not be simply followers of elected politicians (implying that politicians could not be entirely trusted as leaders and representatives of the public interest) and that public servants had an obligation to act as check on politicians. In Heintzman's view, public servants were not just the implementers for elected governments, they were a kind of fourth pillar of democracy. While this view has some logic and appears to be well received in the senior echelons of the Canadian Public Service, it amounts to a rescinding of the 'grand bargain' of parliamentary democracy -- that politicians lead and the public service loyally implements. This has governance implications that include a lack of trust between politicians and public servants; increased fear and frustration, and systemic conflict that is even now being observed in Canadian governments. If the public service can't be trusted to follow, then the Westminster model of democracy collapses.

However, it's not just because some leaders are bad or unethical, that followers are losing their confidence in leaders. They are losing confidence even with ethical leaders because of the pace of change, of issue complexity and the often wide distribution of knowledge, resources and power that reveals leaders as ineffective. Why? Because these 'wicked' problems take more people, more perspectives, more and different resources, and multiple sources of power and authority to resolve.

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[76] TAPSCOTT, Don and David Ticoll. *The Naked Corporation: How the Age of Transparency Will Revolutionize Business*, Viking Canada, Toronto, 2003
[77] BROOKS, David. "Who is James Johnson?" *New York Times*, 17 June 2011, p.A35.
[78] WHERRY, Aaron. "The House of Commons is a sham", *Macleans*, 18 February, 2011
[79] HEINTZMAN, Ralph. "Loyal To A Fault", *Optimum Online*, vol. 40, Issue 1, Mar 2010

"In our political culture", says Dan Garner[80], "a leader who acknowledges uncertainty and encourages experiments is 'indecisive'. A leader who permits dissent is 'weak'. A leader who changes his mind in response to new evidence is a 'flip-flopper'. A real leader is one who centralizes power, is certain of everything, who breaks the knuckles of anyone who disagrees, who never admits to being wrong, and who will deny to his last breath ever having changed his mind about anything. A real leader is a Great Man issuing orders from the top of a pyramid."

Citizens have long accepted this concept of leadership because they were uncomfortable with the uncertainty presented by these wicked problems. They turned to leaders whose claims to certainty reassured them and put them at ease. Yet if citizens begin to believe that their knowledge and networks can do the job as well as government, then what makes leaders so special? Besides, good leaders, as Garnewr describes, make for bad collaborators.

And, it's not just followers who don't believe that our leaders can work well with others[81], it's the leaders themselves. In a global study[82] by the Center for Creative Leadership, 86% of the senior executives they surveyed believed partnering was a priority and promoting collaboration across boundaries was "extremely important" for them to work effectively in their leadership role. However, only 7% of these executives believed they were currently "very effective" at doing so.

The Problem With Leadership is Leaders

Hayek once identified that the character of socio-economic problems "is determined precisely by the fact that the knowledge of the circumstances of which we must make use, never exists in concentrated or integrated form, but solely as the dispersed bits of incomplete and frequently contradictory knowledge which all the separate individuals possess."[83] This presents the very rationale for human communities – to bring together that distributed knowledge to produce more than the sum of the individual parts. Thus the problems of society are not simply allocation problems that leaders may be good at. They are instead problems of "how to secure the best use of resources known to any of the members of society, for ends whose relative importance only these individuals know. Or, to put it briefly, it is a problem of the utilization of knowledge which is not given to anyone in its totality."

So there it is: the fundamental problem with leadership is leaders – their very finite capacity to possess knowledge, resources and power. In its stead, what often passes for leadership is a combination of snake-oil salesmen in the guise of saints together with a followership of convenience that steers people into voluntary servitude.

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[80] GARDNER, Dan. "The trouble with 'decisive' leadership", *The Ottawa Citizen*, 20 May 2011
[81] MCGREGOR, Janyce "Canadians lack confidence governments can solve issues," CBC News, Jul 25, 2012 accessed at: http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2012/07/24/pol-premiers-advancer-nanos-poll-priorities.html
[82] YIP, Jeffrey Chris Ernst, and Michael Campbell. *Boundary Spanning Leadership: Mission Critical Perspectives from the Executive Suite*, Center for Creative Leadership, 2011
[83] HAYEK, Friedrich A."The Use of Knowledge in Society", *American Economic Review*. Vol. 35, No. 4. Sep., 1945: 519-30

"It's now entirely obvious", former Liberal MP Glen Pearson[84] posted on his blog, "that many powerful forces are engaged in our politics that are diametrically opposed to those men and women of goodwill who wish for a more equitable Canada, a more peaceful world. And the problem for the average politician is that they can't get there from here – the powers of polarization far outmatch their individual abilities to truly represent their communities and the greater good. And since their parties don't permit them to work together to counteract such alienating forces, they have little choice to conform to the politics of the age, realizing that they are being personally diminished in the process."

As the public perceptions of leaders drift towards their being unethical and ineffective, leadership has become less and less of an effective social tool and more of a romanticized myth, a cult of personalities who are assumed to be intrinsically special, different from and better than their followers and therefore capable of saving us all from ourselves. Leaders are those 'white knights' who followers choose to believe can swoop in and fix everything, except in today's distributed governance world they often present as many problems as they fix.

In the past, recognized leaders, leaders like John A. Macdonald, Winston Churchill, or Franklin Roosevelt, were truly iconic and rare. Today the mantle of leadership is can be easily bestowed -- in accordance with one's position in the hierarchy, through tenure, a two-day course or by reading the latest in the faddish, leadership books that clutter airport bookstores.

> ### A Rogues Gallery of Leaders
>
> Laval Mayor Gilles Vaillancourt is charged with gangsterism and then interim Mayor Alexandre Duplessis resigns in sex scandal
>
> Montreal Mayor Gerald Tremblay resigned amid accusations of consorting with organized crime and then the City's interim Mayor, Michael Applebaum, was arrested on corruption charges.
>
> Ex-SNC-Lavalin CEO, Pierre Duhaime, arrested for fraud.
>
> Former head of Canada's Security Intelligence Review Committee, Arthur Porter, was arrested on charges of fraud and bribery – *the Globe and Mail*
>
> Senators Mike Duffy, Mac Harb, Patrick Brazeau, and Pamela Wallin are investigated by RCMP for financial improprieties
>
> Evidence by former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney at Airbus inquiry found "to be not worthy of any credence" by the presiding judge.
>
> Former French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, was under investigation for illicit campaign financing.
>
> Former Italian PM, Silvio Berlusconi, received a 7-year prison sentence and banned from holding public office for life.
>
> Czech PM, Petr Necas, was forced to resign over bribery, corruption and spying charges
>
> Richard Fuld, CEO of Lehman Brothers, leads his company into a $639B bankruptcy
>
> Jimmy Cayne, CEO of Bear Stearns, "worst CEO of all time"–*CNBC* and "a dope smoking megalomaniac" -- Ace Greenberg, Bear Stearns' previous CEO
>
> FIFA President, João Havelange & other top officials receive millions in bribes
>
> After addressing the Global Leadership Forum, Lance Armstrong, 7-time winner of the *Tour de France*, is stripped of his titles and banned from future cycling competition for doping.

Leadership has become the acknowledged, accepted path for obtaining additional perks and benefits in a manner akin to 'aristocratic entitlement'. However, as self proclaimed 'leaders' pursue entitlements, special privileges or benefits, they are often proving particularly susceptible to digital media and exposed as weak, liars, foolish,

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[84] Quoted in HORGAN, Colin. "The fearful MP", *iPolitics*, 8 February 2013. Accessed at: http://www.ipolitics.ca/2013/02/08/the-fearful-mp/

inept, corrupt, vain, lazy, demagogues, selfish and just plain crooks. Leadership is a $50 billion industry, says Kellerman, which in 40 years has produced no evidence that it has generated any 'better' leaders or mitigated the effects of 'bad' leaders.[85]

"Large corporations are vast and complex entities with customs and attitudes that are hard for any one leader to change. So why", asks Justin Fox of Time Magazine, "do we [still] talk as if the CEOs are truly in charge"[86]. This incessant appeal of leadership is a return to a safe and familiar mechanism when one is forced to consider the uncertain environments where <u>no one</u> is, or can be, 'in charge'. Collaboration is something organizations are unfamiliar with, whereas leadership is the devil they know. It amounts to self delusion, as economist Tim Harford astutely observes, "I see the God complex around me, all the time ... I see it in our business leaders. I see it in the politicians we vote for — people who, in the face of an incredibly complicated world, are nevertheless absolutely convinced that they understand the way that the world works."[87]

Kellerman, founding Director of the Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership, is surprisingly most harsh on the topic of leadership. "The leadership industry has not in any meaningful, measurable way improved the human condition…It's a fraud."[88]

These days one doesn't have to look very far to see this fraudulent behaviour. From the almost unimaginable excesses, arrogance, incompetence, and criminal behaviour that have been revealed among leaders of the global financial sector responsible for the 2008 economic meltdown[89] to the ongoing failure of public sector leaders to seriously address any of the nation's major issues, to the budget circus that recently played out on Capitol Hill -- leadership does not appear to be making a positive contribution to social well being. The incapacity of society's leaders to affect ethical and effective results hastens the loss of confidence in them, no matter whether they be politicians or CEOs, and this loss of confidence is exacerbated by the free flow of information on the Internet. It's not that we have suddenly become bereft of good leaders, it's that we are seeing them in a more accurate light, with all their human weaknesses and limitations. As a result, leaders are losing their social licence.

These incessant "corporate scandals and the worldwide financial catastrophe," says Collingwood, "have shaken the cult of the heroic CEO to its foundations."[90] Then as Perrin Beatty, former Canadian federal cabinet minister and current CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce warns, "as long as our problems seem larger than our leaders, markets will be driven by the daily headlines, business will withhold investments needed to restore economic growth, and voters will remain angry and divided."[91]

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[85] KELLERMAN, Barabara, *The End of Leadership*, HarperCollins, New York, 2012:
[86] FOX, Justin. "The Limited (but real) Impact of CEOs", *Time Magazine*, October 20, 2006 accessed at: http://business.time.com/2006/10/20/the_limited_but_real_impact_of/
[87] HARFORD, Tim. *Trial, error and the God complex*, TED Global, July 2011. Accessed at: http://www.ted.com/talks/tim_harford.html?quote=1003
[88] KELLERMAN, Barabara, *The End of Leadership*, HarperCollins, New York, 2012:xiv
[89] FERGUSON, Charles. *Pedator Nation*, Random House, New York, 2012
[90] COLLINGWOOD, Harris. "Do CEOs Matter?" *The Atlantic*, June 2009: 54-60
[91] BEATTY, Perrin. "Our problems seem bigger than our leaders", *The Ottawa Citizen*, 9 November 2011

Nor surprisingly, "the next revolution in corporate America won't be technological, it'll be social," says Gary Hamel, who *Fortune* magazine once called 'the world's leading expert on business strategy'. "The real problem we're up against," says Hamel, "is not technology, it's the management DNA in companies .... When you concentrate the responsibility for innovation at the top, you're holding your capacity to change hostage. It disempowers people … Bureaucracy has to die."[92]

But what do you replace leaders with? If "bureaucracy has to die", then what do you use instead? The answer lies in the structure of the very thing that is currently giving leadership such a hard time – networks.

In a digital era, "bringing people together to make something different happen" is the very essence of what happens via Internet connectivity. The Internet is a network and networks connect people and those networks are fundamentally self-organizing, Networks produce collective coordination as the result of each network node responding to changes it perceives around it, in much the same way as flocks of birds or schools of fish do when they move together in what seems to be intricately choreographed patterns. As people are connected on the Internet, it becomes possible for them to collaborate -- even in large numbers -- without anyone being 'in-charge' or without anyone able to compel others to cooperate. Within networks, leadership is not a factor. Stigmergy is.

Figure 4: Network coordination
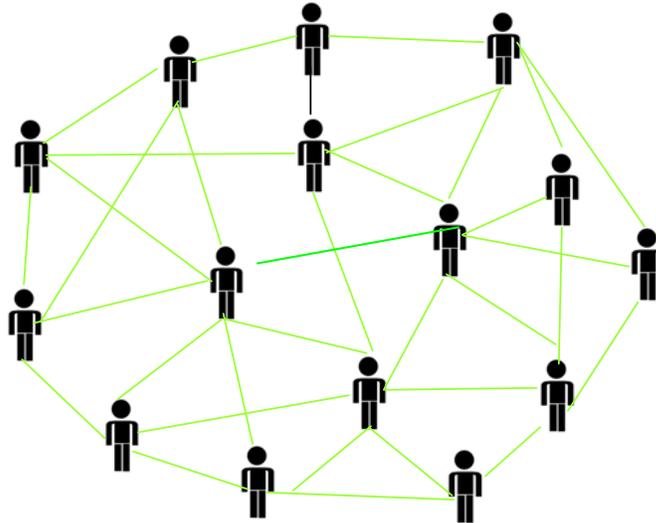
In contrast to small group collaboration, this stigmergic collaboration may be characterized as[93]**:**

- Quick to start up,
- Having relationships after action,
- Requiring low trust,
- Involving high standardization,
- Using un-centralized decision making,
- Involving potentially large scales &

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[92] Quoted in MEARIAN, Lucas "The next corporate revolution will be power to the peons", *Computerworld*, 4 June 2013
[93] WILSON, Christopher. "On Collaboration", *Optimum Online*, Vol. 41, Issue 1, March, 2011

- Involving low partner monitoring,   exposure, and
- Focusing on codifiable knowledge,   • Being subject to viral growth

Despite its relational differences from small group collaboration, stigmergic collaboration can produce similar cultures of cooperation. Still, stigmergic collaboration requires access to large audiences[94], ideally over 100,000, which is why this form of collaboration was not particularly obvious until the advent of the Internet (see footnote[95]) and presenting the possibility of reaching out to millions or billions of people. Without that reach, stigmergic collaboration tends to be weak, unreliable and lacking in quality. For instance, the foundation for the success of open source software is famously captured in Linus' Law (after Linus Torvald the originator of Linux) which holds that "given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow[96]. But of course, its corollary is also true -- fewer eyeballs, means more bugs!

In a TED Talk last year, Jennifer Pahlka describes[97] how 1000s of citizens are assuming responsibility for small neighbourhood tasks like cleaning snow away from fire hydrants, maintaining tsunami sirens, clearing storm drains, or shovelling sidewalks. Citizens 'adopt' these public tasks as a means of improving their neighbourhood experience. She suggests this behavioural trend is reflective, not of how government traditionally works, or even businesses, but of how the Internet works -- *permissionless, open and generative*. "A new generation," she says, "is tackling the problem of government not as an ossified institution but as a problem of collective action." To this new generation, government is a platform, a means to help both themselves and others.

Nevertheless, the problem of fostering collective action is not simply a matter of orchestrating some grand social design that mechanically operates on the basis of some socio-technical system driven by some omniscient and omnipotent computer 'app' that can reconcile community differences and extract community innovation[98].

In reality, human communities are systems where members are constantly acting and reacting to each other, both in small groups and stigmergically and often producing quite unpredictable results. In essence, we flock[99]. In this context, coherent collective action requires not only coordinated doing, but also the mitigation of social traps[100] to reduce the shirking behaviours that undermine collective action through the tendency to exploit cooperation in ways that produce non-rational collective results. According to

[94] ELLIOTT, Mark. "Stigmergic Collaboration: The Evolution of Group Work" *M/C Journal* vol. 9, Issue2, 2006

[95] The behaviour of mass collaboration was first observed by Pierre-Paul Grasse in 1959 who was trying to understand the collaborative behaviour of insects and their use of stigmergic communication as the vehicle for cooperation. In human societies, this pattern was observed over longish periods of time as one generation passed its knowledge and culture to the next.

[96] RAYMOND, Eric S. *The Cathedral and the Bazaar*, first published Nov. 22, 1998 at www.tuxedo.org

[97] PAHLKA, Jennifer. *Coding for a Better America*, TED Talks, March 2012. Accessed at: http://www.ted.com/talks/jennifer_pahlka_coding_a_better_government.html

[98] CHURCHMAN, C. West. *The Design of Inquiring Systems*. Basic Books, New York: 1971 AND Belton, Valerie & Theodor J. Stewart, *Multiple Criteria Decision Analysis: An Integrated Approach*. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston: 2002

[99] STRUTHERS, Marilyn. "Of Starlings and Social Change", *The Philanthropist*, vol. 24(4), 2012

[100] ROTHSTEIN, Bo. *Social Traps and the Problem of Trust*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2005

Brian Arthur[101], our political economy is based on assumptions that cannot "see" this exploitive behaviour in advance. Leadership is no deterrent to this exploitive collective behaviour as the 2008 financial crisis has provided ample and obvious evidence of[102]. A solution to this, says Arthur, is to develop a capacity to recognize "a pattern [of interaction], a set of emergent phenomena, a set of changes that may induce further changes, a set of existing entities creating novel entities." Such a capacity for forward thinking needs to be grounded in a "deep understanding of mechanisms that create these patterns and propagations of change."

If we consider technologies broadly and include both physical technologies (computers, cell phones, telecommunications, etc.) and social technologies (collaborative processes, social learning, moral contracting, etc), then:

− To produce the sort of complex, emergent phenomena described by Arthur that are both self-organizing and autocatalytic, you generally need denser networks for changes to effectively propagate and stimulate a phase transition in collective behaviour. The need for network density implies both a need for more connectivity as well as an increased capacity for conversations to develop and collective learning to be generated and disseminated. In turn this suggests that in part the locus of social change needs to focus on network building and increasing network communication; and

− Because the political-economy is reacting to itself, you need lots of feedback loops to monitor the innovation /change *as it emerges*. Such developmental evaluation[103] helps to continually fine tune any approach since you can not predict the ultimate outcome of a single intervention. This leads to a focus on stakeholder collaboration and shared governance over leading and directing.

Despite the incessant media cries for better, stronger leadership, the traditional style of leadership remains antithetical to the facilitation of cooperation in a network. Yet without leadership we'll have chaos, or so the argument goes. Therefore how can we achieve collaboration without traditional leadership?

The Leadership Alternative: Stewardship

As a tool of social coordination leadership is **a** mechanism… but it is not the only one. And, there is no *a priori* reason to rely only on leadership – only long standing habit.

However, we are not going to see the needed change coming from leaders. Instead it must come from those who have previously abdicated their ownership rights reasserting themselves. Yes, that means followers. The alternative to hierarchies is networks of shared ownership suggesting that the alternative to leaders is stewards.

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[101] ARTHUR, W. Brian. *Complexity Economics: A Different Framework for Economic Thought*, SFI Working Paper: 2013-04-012, Santa Fe Institute, 2013
[102] FERGUSON, Charles. *Predator Nation*, Random House, New York, NY. 2012.
[103] PATTON, Michael Quinn. *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*, Guilford Publications, New York: 2010

For those who want to effect socio-economic change it would seem mechanisms for network building, constant monitoring, knowledge sharing and social learning are pre-eminent requirements – not to mention the capacity to live with the uncertainty of not knowing exactly what you are creating. Organizational 'steering' in this context is not a target and arrow exercise of leadership that looks through the rear view mirror to see how the past became the present in order to predict the future. We can't shape the past, even though we can be certain of it. Instead we need to follow Wayne Gretsky's sage advice, "I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been." In environments where governance is distributed and problems complex, we need to adopt a more Gretsky-like, future orientation to help actors shape the shared future in which all their needs will be met and not fix the problems of the past or present.

Instead of the 'causal leader', it is the steward's capacity to act as a 'catalyst' among owners and help them to shape change that distinguishes him/her. It requires a combination of process design and relational governance but a good steward "depends for his power on making other people powerful."[104] It is a function in service to others.

The process of good stewardship ultimately encourages bridge building and relational governance. It helps to build and sustain the commitments of each employee, partner or collaborator involved in the shared work and to help articulate and guide collective learning and action. Good stewards are those who willingly put their partners ahead of themselves and focus on ensuring their partners' success as a prerequisite for their own.

Yet strangely enough, ownership is not popular. Building that co-ownership and developing mechanisms to sustain it prove to be the two pre-eminent stewardship tasks. As Block has pointed out[105], "it is very sobering to see the struggle in [our] culture, to create participative institutions which demand people to act on their own freedom." When presented with the opportunity to act as owners or voluntary servitude, people generally choose the latter. "Given the simplicity and clarity of high control leaders, it is no wonder they are still so common and even attractive."

Fostering that empowerment is often the steward's most important task. Moving to a stewardship model isn't just as simple as changing leaders. Not only are there likely to be institutional barriers that perpetuate the belief that only a centralized, leader–dominated, hierarchical structure can do the job with effectiveness and efficiency[106] but people themselves – employees, citizens, stakeholders and potential partners – may have to overcome their own habits of dependence and entitlement[107].

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[104] ZANDER, Benjamin. *Collaborative Leadership: Awakening Possibility in Others,* address to the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, Davos, Switzerland, 27 January 2008

[105] BLOCK, Peter. **"**As Goes the Follower; So Goes the Leader", *AQP News for a Change,* American Society for Quality, July 1998

[106] PAQUET, Gilles. "Leadership In Turbulent Times: An Interview With Denis Desautels", *Optimum Online*, Vol. 31, Issue 2, Dec 2001

[107] BLOCK, Peter. "As Goes the Follower; So Goes the Leader", *News for a Change,* Association for Quality and Participation, Vol. 2(7), 1998:11-13.

Fundamentally stewardship is a process of 'learning while doing'. From this stewardship process one learns about many things, including:

♦ collaborators – their strengths, weaknesses, and capacities,;
♦ partner perspectives and how to translate from one to another;
♦ how to construct a more comprehensive picture of the problem or issue;
♦ how your actions or inactions contribute to the problem, thus empowering you as an owner to act meaningfully for change;
♦ what works, as well as what doesn't;
♦ what might be possible together and not just fixed;
♦ how to be comfortable with uncertainty; and finally
♦ how to draw strength and satisfaction from a process of learning together.

If leaders are created by followers; so by that same measure, stewards are created by owners. "Stewardship begins with [our] willingness to be accountable for a larger body than ourselves -- an organization, a community."[108] Ownership is not about control it is about choice. In choosing to be accountable, we are choosing ownership of our own condition. "It is the reality of distributed ownership that sets stewardship apart from leadership"[109] There may well be someone, or even several people, who can convene, facilitate, and look out for everyone's collective interest. Being a good steward is not exclusive position as it is with leadership. There is no apex of stewardship. Many people may be simultaneously valued for their ability to provide encouragement, inspiration, facilitation, education and conflict resolution in order to help others cooperate -- not as followers or pawns – but as equals. "Making others powerful", as Zander put it, is not something that can be bestowed or imposed. It's a choice owners must make for themselves.

The steward may help, but the principle choice remains plainly with those being empowered. What is often helpful in this regard is the intrusion of reality. Being constantly confronted with a situation in which no person -- leader or otherwise -- can obviously be expected to resolve on their own is a reminder that "I can't do it alone". If so, then just maybe, "I can do it with others". While this is always the first step towards shared ownership and effective collaboration, it is also historically the principal rationale of any human community – we can do it better together.

While the characteristics stewardship can be exhibited by individuals, it is even more desirable for them to be generated by process design which enables cultures of collaboration to become sustainable. That process design includes:

♦ assembling shared principles, rules, and norms;
♦ agreeing on the appropriate behaviours, mechanisms and protocols that collaborators can rely on that can be independent of individual participants;
♦ constructing a system for generating wayfinding, meaningful self-organization, social learning, resilience, and innovation; and

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[108] BLOCK, Peter. *Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest.* Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 1993: 6
[109] WILSON, Christopher. *Moving from Leadership to Stewardship*, paper prepared for Second Annual CAPPA Conference in Public Management, Toronto, Ontario, 27-28 May 2013

♦ providing sufficient feedback mechanisms to both steer collaboration and reinforce participants' contingent cooperation.

My colleagues and I refer to such a system as an *inquiring system* as it helps participants to ask the right questions at the right time to enable proper steering to take place. "The role of stewardship is therefore to increase the collective sense of opportunity in a future that everyone is willing to live into, while diminishing the perceptions of individual risk associated with moving towards it via shared ownership, social learning and working together."[110]

This process of encouraging possibility while reducing the perception of risk can be characterized by several separate but interconnected tasks, including: [111]

♦ various search processes to gather together all the relevant actors and information;

♦ the creation of an effective space for frame reconciliation to ensure collaboration, leaning and innovation;

♦ collective dialogue that extends to joint action but avoids the rush to decisions and action;

♦ the generation of trust through a mix of incentives and moral contracts that enable both the continuous inquiry needed to facilitate learning, as well as the need for contingent cooperation;

♦ the construction of feedback, fail-safe and safe-fail mechanisms that assume failure, to ensure effectiveness and ongoing resilience; and

♦ the creation of relationships that foster *negative capability* -- the capacity to reject preconceived notions and embrace uncertainty, experimentation and a willingness to co-create a new future, in order to ensure the collaboration will be robust enough to survive.

The collective capacity of stewardship boils down to the construction of effective collective learning. Hagel underscores this with his observation that organizations are *already* moving from being organized around "scalable efficiencies" to "scalable learning." He says "the rationale of scalable efficiency is becoming less and less compelling, and the alternative rationale is scalable learning. The reason we have institutions is because we can learn faster as part of an institution than we could alone [but] most institutions are not structured or operated to deliver on that rationale." [112]

Stewardship and Inquiring Systems

Learning is driven by inquiry. Those with only answers to sell aren't learning, which by the way is a hurdle that many collaborative efforts must overcome when dealing with experts. In the case of stewardship how do you institutionalize, therefore, this process of inquiry? While these systems of inquiry are likely to evolve tailored to

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[110] WILSON, Christopher. *Moving from Leadership to Stewardship*, paper prepared for Second Annual CAPPA Conference in Public Management, Toronto, Ontario, 27-28 May 2013.

[111] VICKERS, Geoffrey. *The Art of Judgment*. Methuen, London, 1965.

[112] BOYD, Stowe. *Socialogy: Interview with John Hagel*, May 1 2013. [accessed at: http://stoweboyd.com/post/49386411425/socialogy-interview-with-john-hagel].

specific environments or issue domains, there will be common challenges confronted by the designers of any *inquiring system* in order to produce the requisite stewardship.

One may broadly stylize these challenges in terms of the four key phases of the collaborative governance process that together function as a continuous loop of reflective questioning. These phases are depicted in the figure below:[113]

a) Observational: Is there anything wrong or unsatisfactory?
b) Investigative: What is the problem? Who needs to be involved?
c) Relationship Design: How can we work together in tackling the problem?
d) Learning-While-Doing: How can we learn and work together and evaluate our progress?

Figure 5: Institutionalizing an Inquiring System
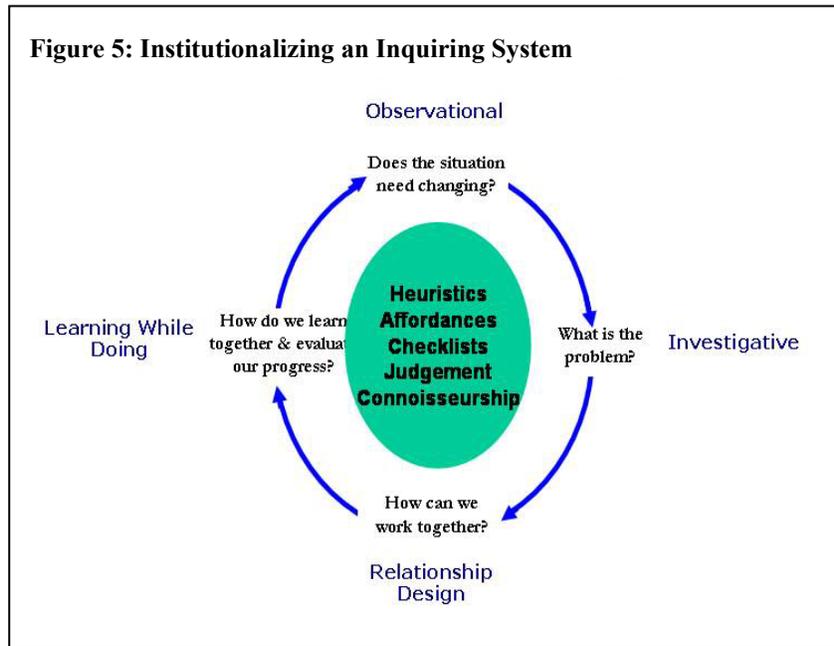
The inputs of this 'inquiring system' would be drawn from the data, diverse perspectives and experiences gathered from various partners and collaborators. The source of this information could be some relational governance mechanism or it could emerge via stigmergic contributions over the web. These can then be reacted upon through cycles of dialogue, learning and unlearning that comprise the process of 'learning while doing'. Such a trial and error process is best facilitated with the aid of heuristic strategies[114] that complement the approach of asking the right questions at the right time. The outputs of this 'inquiring system' could be reflected not only in system modifications through time, but just as importantly, in the co-learning, shared commitment and mutual accountability among the collaborators.

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[113] WILSON, Christopher. 2011. *Collaborative Co-Governance: A checklist approach to networking and collaboration*, presentation to National Collaborating Centre for Public Health workshop, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, May 6.

[114] Strauss identifies 64 such heuristics that are regularly used in the practice of collaboration. STRAUS, David. *How to Make Collaboration Work: Powerful Ways to Build Consensus, Solve Problems and Make Decisions*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, CA, 2002

Stewardship and Stigmergy

In a digital environment, stewardship is generally reflected in a few rules and protocols that can be used to promote stigmergic communication and collaboration[115]. The following represents seven key practices for fostering that online stewardship:

1. Define minimal rules

If you're trying to maximize the number of possible contributors to an online collaboration, it's a good idea to minimize the number of entry barriers. Participation should be seen by potential users as essentially barrier free. For instance, a growing number of rules being imposed on potential Wikipedia contributors discouraged some 50,000 contributors in the first quarter of 2009 compared to the same period of 2008[116]. In 2009 Wikipedia put in place new policies that made the generation of articles more tightly controlled by others, making it harder for contributors to just jump in and contribute. In contrast, the fewer rules previously had the effect of encouraging contributor ownership as potential contributors could define for themselves why and how they would contribute.

2. Prototyping

One of the maxims of *open source* is "release early and release often". It is presented as a means of encouraging stakeholders to become co-developers of ideas and tools with the originator. Rather than waiting to release an idea to the public until it is perfected, as is the practice in most organizations, the stigmergic approach to collaboration tries to release drafts as early as possible with a clear understanding that they are incomplete, inaccurate and 'buggy'. Stakeholders are then encouraged to respond with improvements and fixes.

However, while relying on crowd sourcing can be very beneficial, there remains an important caveat: even if you don't come up with a good idea, you have to be able to know a good one when you see it in order to properly recognize the contributor within the community of practice.

3. Self-organization & Ownership Practices

It's very hard to originate a online project in mass collaboration mode. Therefore to engage a nascent community requires having some form of 'straw dog' for them to begin playing with. Torvald mentions that it was his original Linux kernel that got people interested and excited. A 'straw dog' must be sufficiently developed to represent a *plausible promise* of something better because even if the path forward may not at times be clear, the group should never lose sight of the possibility that their work might one day engender.

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[115] WILSON, Christopher. "On Collaboration", *Optimum Online*, Vol. 41, Issue 1, March, 2011

[116] AHMED, Murad. "Wikipedia shows signs of stalling as number of volunteers falls sharply", *The Times*, London, November 25, 2009, accessed at:
http://technology.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/tech_and_web/the_web/ article6930546.ece

4. Awareness Practices

　　　Build in as many ways as possible to listen to your stakeholders. Ask them about what works and what doesn't and thank them for their contributions. Listening to stakeholders doesn't necessarily mean relinquishing total control to them. If, however, you do not accept their contributions then be prepared to offer a good explanation as to why.

5. Generosity Practices

　　　The next best thing to having a good idea yourself is publicly recognizing the good ideas of your stakeholders and users.　In fact, most *open source* advocates[117] would say that the latter is in fact better.

6. Coordination Practices

　　　Find as many ways as possible to move information around to foster mutual alignment and coordination. Facebook and Twitter are especially good at providing almost immediate feedback, but more thoughtful feedback may require the more delayed contributions of wikis or face-to-face meetings.

7. Exchange Practices for Codifiable Knowledge
　　　Collaboration is all about exchange and that exchange can be either around subject matter information or information that supports further partner collaboration. Successful online collaboration ensures that there are repositories of both types of information.

Reflections

　　　The Internet sits at the centre of a mix of crucial problems and issues that demand that government fundamentally transform itself to retain its social licence and legitimacy. The internet exacerbates problems making them more complex to resolve by undermining leadership and giving rise to new found alternatives to government as means for addressing social problem solving. In the meantime, the Internet is creating its own array of challenges and issues that call for increased cross-agency, cross jurisdictional collaboration and co-created solutions.

　　　Yet while the Internet imposes challenges on governments, it is also a source of new knowledge, connectivity and community, as well as new collective capacity to learn and be innovative. It presents governments the opportunity and the means to re-new their legitimacy albeit with different roles, through different processes and in different forms. The question is whether governments can make the final break and set aside with their feudal origins, and become catalysts of collective human potential.

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[117] RAYMOND, op. cit. 1998

In considering a way forward, there are many uncertainties to pay attention to. How the future unfolds with respect to government in a digital era will be a product of the public conversations we as communities have among ourselves. And so it begins…

♦ Will the gap between what a government and its leaders actually do and the expectations of its citizens grow sufficiently to fundamentally de-legitimize it and if so, what might the consequences of this be? Will people simply ignore it or aggressively oppose it?

♦ Will the necessary conversations remain taboo and off script until it is too late to influence the outcome of crucial issues or will the community forming capacity of the Internet and social media be able to raise awareness and help convene those conversations proactively?

♦ Given the uncivil nature of a significant portion of Internet discourse, if we are able to avoid change until circumstances demand forceful responses, then will the Internet and social media then become the voice of a modern day lynch mob? Can we establish a global culture of civil discourse?

♦ Will the transformative pressures of social forces cause us to embrace the emergent possibilities of collaborative governance systems or will we continue to seek out the certainty of overly simplified, 'strong-man' solutions?

♦ If different governments and levels of government evolve at different rates, will we facture the many bi-party armistices that currently exist between them, or will the Internet be home to a sufficient number of cooperators to create a culture of collaboration, as Frederickson suggests?

♦ Will the influx of new technology and younger public servants be sufficient to overwhelm and transform the old, leadership-dominated, governance paradigm, or will the young public servants gradually adapt to the established bureaucratic culture despite the omnipresence of Internet tools?

♦ Will governments make room for citizens? The ongoing consolidation of decision making into smaller, less diverse groups decreases collective learning and undermines democracy. Can we find mechanisms to scale up local conversations and learning to regional and national levels? At what point are governments likely to share power with citizens and other societal actors?

Yet even having raised these questions, their tenor reflects a fear of change: that change will happen; or that it won't; that it will become contentious; that it will be out of our control; that it may evolve into something that is unpredictable. Fearing change doesn't stop it and running away from it is a fool's errand -- especially in the context of the Internet. On the other hand, embracing change, big and small, and finding ways to harness it for the common good, this is a theme that underlies much of the Internet's attraction and success.

Therefore better questions to ask might be whether the collaborative power of Internet can be harnessed to devise mechanisms that allow governments to better represent the diversity of their citizens while simultaneously being more capable of utilizing that same diversity to become ever more innovative in service to those citizens? In essence, can government re-invent itself as a platform for collective inquiry and innovation?

Maybe, to avoid being trapped in our mental prisons and preconceived cognitive commitments, another way of asking this question is, "What is the most ideal form of social coordination that we can imagine?" If we can set aside what government has been, what it has or has not done, then what is the possibility with respect to government that we want to live into? How then we can work together to help create that possibility using both the physical technologies that are available to us, like the Internet and social media, together with the social technologies of collaboration and stewardship? Can we then call whatever that is *Government*?

To realize this, we need more conversations, more places to hold conversations, more and easy access to information, bigger and denser networks together with more and different methods for connecting people, along with less anonymity, and more objective monitoring of our collective progress.

We have the technology tools for all this. Nothing new needs inventing except in deciding how we might use these existing tools. What we lack most is a sense of shared ownership -- people and citizens acting as owners and not as entitled consumers. We need people willing to say 'no' to struggling or failed leaders. We need people to reassert their joint ownership among their neighbourhoods, communities, regions and countries. It is no longer enough for someone to sit back and claim shared rights without contributing to the process of collective action. In the end, we need to embrace the fact that our communities are *our* problem, not someone else's. And while we might not have everything to make the necessary changes, maybe, just maybe, we can reach out and do it together.