

Design considerations for sustainable decision making and Local Government in a distributed and networked world

Five design principles help frame thinking and decision making in a networked world. In brief there are:

1. **Seeing the system first.** In the mechanistic society we looked at the pieces first and then sometimes the system. In this future the focus needs to be the other way around.

Systems Thinking		Command & Control Thinking
Outside in	Perspective	Top down
Demand, value, flow	Design	Functional specialisation
Integrated with work	Decision - making	Separated from work
Related to purpose, variation, demonstrating capability	Measures	Related to budget, activity, productivity, standards
Intrinsic (pride)	Motivation	Extrinsic (Incentives)
Act on the system	Management ethic	Manage budgets & people
What matters	Attitude to clients	Contractual
Partnering	Attitude to suppliers	Contractual

2. **Understand form and shape.** Build sets of focused distributed nodes of activity not organisations which spend much of their work time focusing inwardly.
3. **Design everything from the consumer/client/citizen backwards.** In the mechanistic world we became obsessed with economies of scale. This focused us on one size fits all, unit cost rather than total cost and on specialization and standardization. But most people have slightly unique needs and having the ability to deliver what they want when they want it (known as economies of flow) creates far greater control over processes. In sum it's the difference between the "Ford" way and the "Toyota" way. Recent UK studies have shown that there are no benefits from economies of scale in the UK public sector.
4. **Learn from Biomimicry.** In recent times many people have created powerful new business models by first asking; how would Nature do what we are trying to do and can we learn from that? Ants for example have much to teach us in creating logistics systems and we know that very few ecologies thrive when only one species or monoculture is present. Why know that when children of various ages are together they help each other learn and moderate each other's behavior. So we put all 12 yr. olds together because?
5. **Doing more with less.** Most of the emergent business models deliver at least twice the value using half the resources. This is known as Factor 4 thinking. Some deliver the same value using 1/10th of the resources (Factor 10). The Rocky Mountain Institute has built models that suggest for us to live within the environmental constraints of the planet we need to be substantively at factor 4 by 2020 and Factor 10 by 2030.