

What happened in the next five minutes was an eye-opening revelation to me. I had known Liam for some time, we had worked together on the “Better for Less” paper and discussed the issues of evolution but somehow, in all of this, I had never explained to him what my maps were. Whilst Liam could see the potential of maps, I was befuddled. How did he not know what these were?

I started talking with other CEOs, CIOs and CTOs and rapidly discovered that nobody knew what maps were. Even more shocking, despite my assumption that everyone else had their own way of mapping, it turned out that no-one did. It finally dawned on me that the incredibly wise senior executive in the Arts Hotel who had asked “Does this strategy makes sense” wasn’t testing me, he didn’t have a clue. But this question had sent me spiralling off on this journey (see chapter 1). It seemed it wasn’t just me who had been faking it as a CEO.

It was in 2013 that this revelation truly hit home. I was working for the Leading Edge Forum (a private research organisation) with access to the great and good of many industries and many Governments. I had undertaken a very informal survey of around 600 companies and concluded that only four of those companies had anything remotely equivalent to a map. In each of these cases, they were using mental models. The entire world was playing a game of chess without ever looking at the board. Suddenly, my success at taking over the entire cloud space with Ubuntu despite the wealth and size of competitors made sense. Their inability to counter my moves was simply due to