

THINKING WITH DATA: LEVERAGING ANALYTICS TO BETTER DEFINE & SOLVE PROBLEMS

Facilitator: Richard Dunks

Follow along at: <https://bit.ly/think-with-data>

See the code at: <https://github.com/Datapolitan-Online-Tutorials/ThinkingWithData>

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THINKING WITH DATA: LEVERAGING ANALYTICS TO BETTER DEFINE & SOLVE PROBLEMS

WELCOME

A FEW GROUND RULES

- Step up, step back
- One mic
- Be curious and ask questions in the chat
- Assume noble regard and positive intent
- Respect multiple perspectives
- Be present (phone, email, social media, etc.)

AGENDA

- Welcome
- Ground Rules
- Introductions
- Purpose
- What Makes Us Data Driven?
- How do we think with data?
- Final Thought
- Q&A

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

In the chat, let us know:

- Who you are
- Where you're coming from
- Who you work for
- One place you'd like to be right now for a relaxing getaway vacation

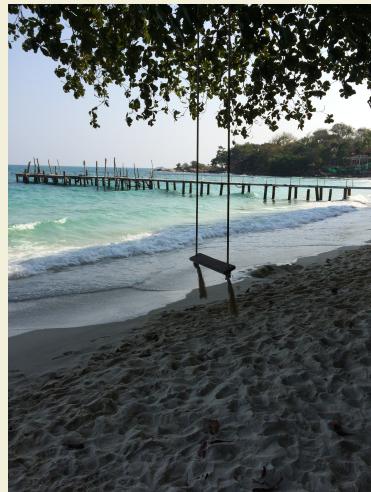
GETTING TO KNOW ME

- Who you are -> Richard Dunks
- Where you're coming from -> Dallas, TX
- Who you work for -> Datapolitan LLC
- One place you'd like to be right now for a relaxing getaway vacation -> Thailand



TESTING ZOOM REACTIONS

- If you like beaches, give me a thumbs up
- If you don't like beaches, give me a thumbs down
- We'll be using reactions for feedback in our talk today



MORE ABOUT ME

- Almost 20 years experience as a public sector analyst
- 2014 graduate of NYU's Center for Urban Science and Progress
- Provide support and training in data literacy, analytics, visualization, user research, design thinking, machine learning, and data-driven leadership
- Former adjunct professor at Columbia University and Pratt Institute
- Currently an adjunct professor at Tulane University

PURPOSE

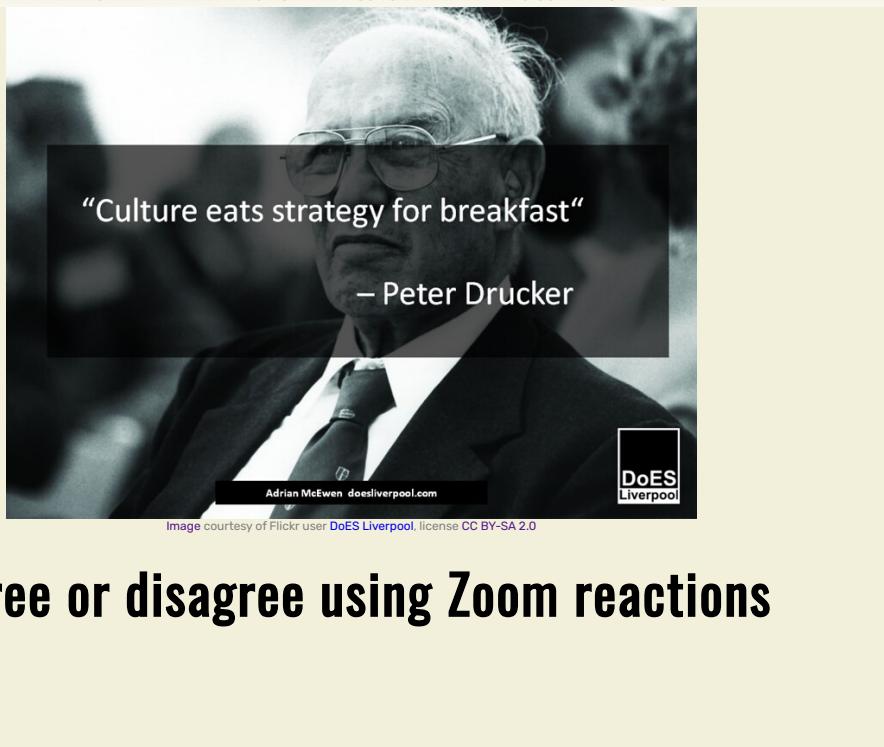
- There's a lot of "cheerleading" for data
- I'm assuming you've gotten a lot of these talks already
- We don't often talk about why we aren't more data driven
- My hope is to do that today



TIME FOR A POLL

“ The biggest barrier to being more data-driven on my team is:

- Our leadership
- Our team
- Our tools
- Our data
- Our organizational culture



Agree or disagree using Zoom reactions

IT'S NOT THE TOOLS



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LONDON WHALE

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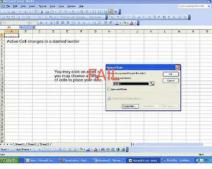
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How The London Whale Debacle Is Partly The Result Of An Error Using Excel

Linette Lopez Feb 12, 2013, 1:04 PM

This is something people are starting to talk about in the blogosphere that should give all of Wall Street pause.

Over at [The Baseline Scenario](#), law professor James Kwak, says that what has been generally under-reported about the London Whale debacle is how badly Excel failed as a financial modeling program.



flickr: pegqwin

How The London Whale Debacle Is Partly The Result Of An Error Using Excel

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IT'S NOT THE DATA



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IT'S NOT THE PEOPLE



Photo by [Elijah Mears](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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IT'S NOT (JUST) THE LEADERSHIP

LOCAL NEWS >

Residents Fume As Downed Trees Linger Across NYC Streets

 NOVEMBER 19, 2018 / 7:55 PM / CBS NEW YORK

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Source

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IT'S THE CULTURE



Image courtesy of Flickr user [DoES Liverpool](#), license CC BY-SA 2.0

WHAT IS CULTURE?

- The way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.
 - [Cambridge Dictionary](#)

Best summed up as the prevalent beliefs, values, and norms of that group.

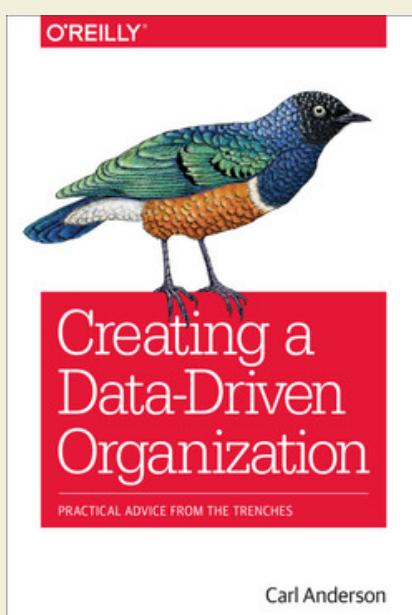
CREATING DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE

“Do you have data to back that up?” should be a question no one is afraid to ask and everyone is prepared to answer.

- Julie Arsenault

This is the essence of what it means to think with data

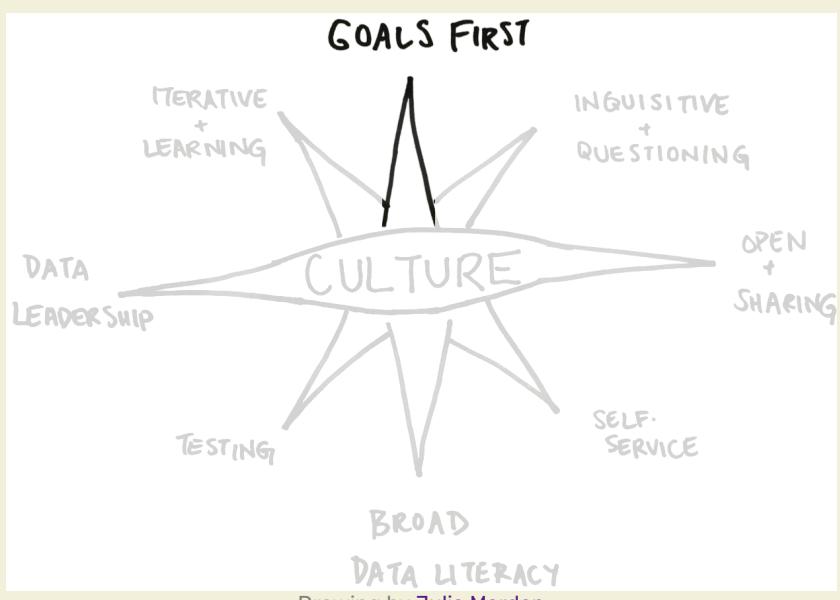
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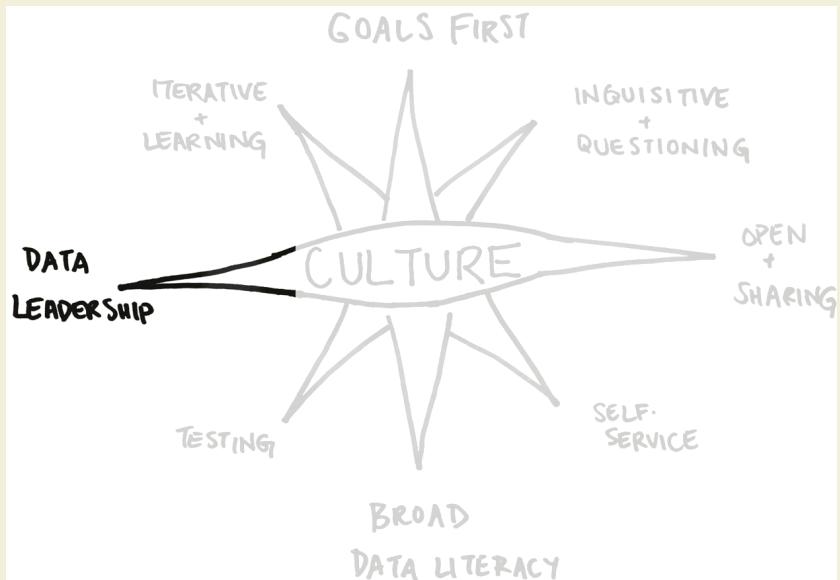
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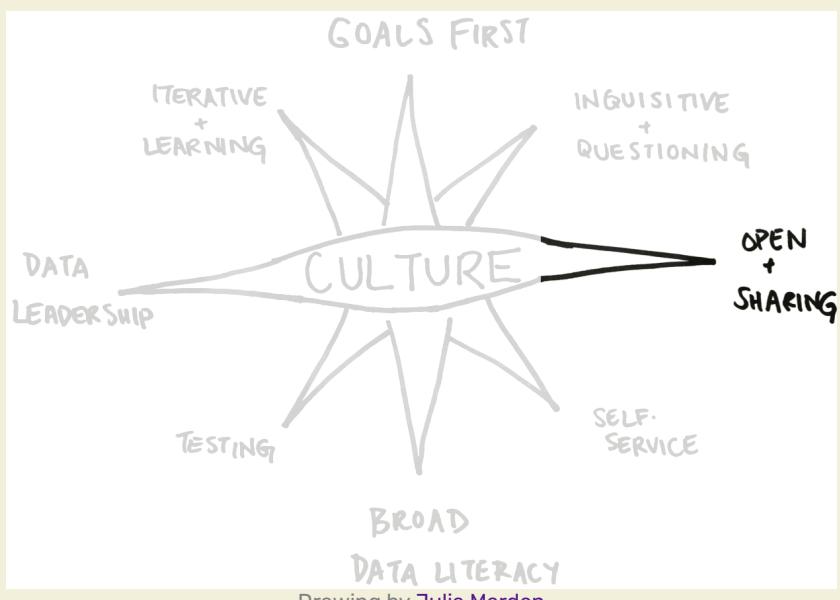
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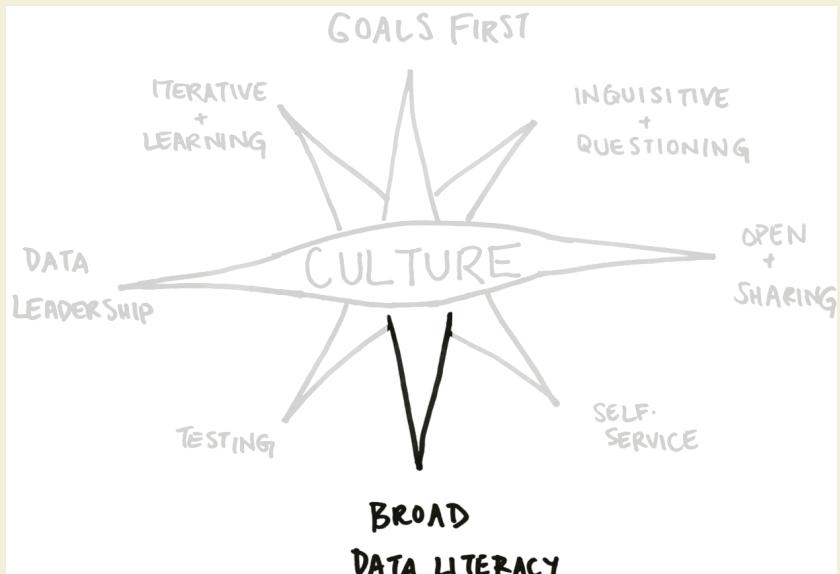
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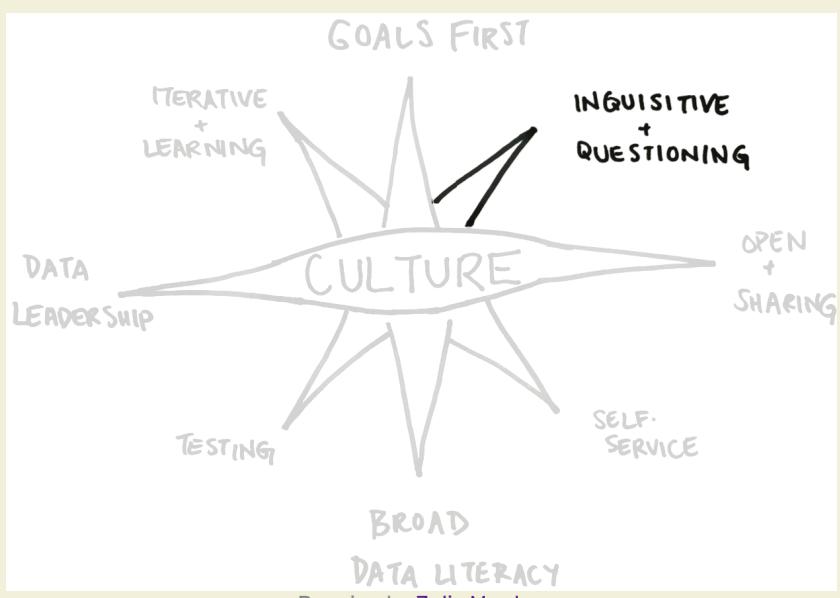
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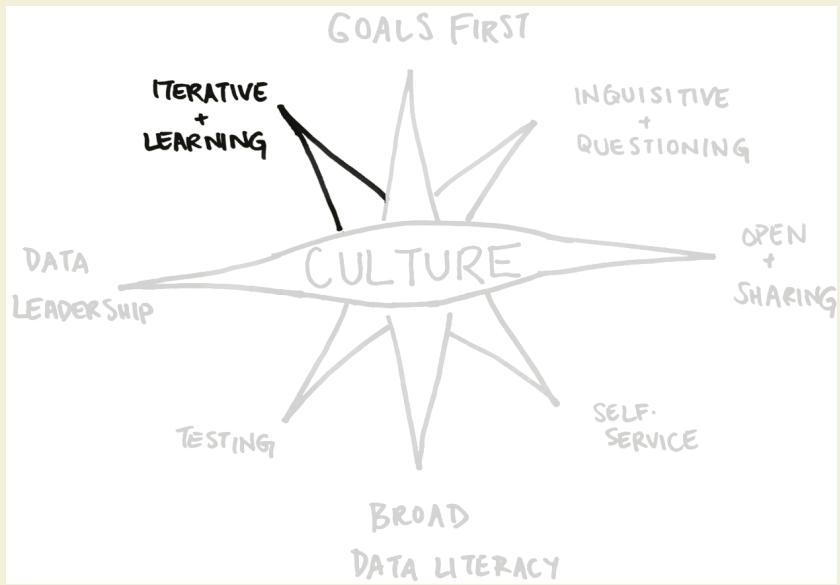
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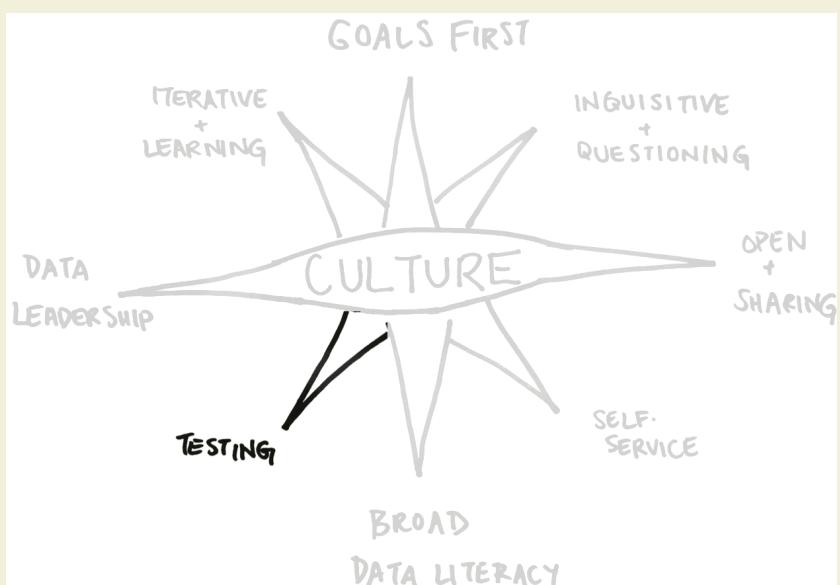
CREATING DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE



CREATING DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE



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CREATING DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE



CREATING DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE



“Do you have data to back that up?” should be a question no one is afraid to ask and everyone is prepared to answer.

- Julie Arsenault

Source

SO WHAT DOES THIS CULTURE LOOK LIKE?

SOME KEY BELIEFS

- Data is a useful guide and should be used whenever possible
- Everyone can use data and should have access to the tools and information they need to be successful
- No one knows everything and we do this work better together

SOME KEY VALUES

- A single-source of reliable truth (centralized datastores, inspectible data cleaning processes, etc.) over distributed and differing information sources
- Tested hypotheses over untested assumptions (and the ability to discern the difference)
- Constant improvement in how things are measured, evaluated, and communicated

SOME KEY NORMS

- Asking "what's the data on this tell us?"
- Offering up data even when it's not explicitly asked for
- Deferring judgement until the data is ready (if possible)
- Answering questions without the data should feel uncomfortable or at least not be the norm

SO WHY ISN'T THIS EASIER?



LINE STAFF

- Much of their **perceived** value is in their skill and knowledge
- Their judgement is relied on for sound decision making
- They often work in siloes and are respected for the work they do (no matter how inefficient)
- People drawn to government work do so because often they value continuity and consistency

They can feel pushed aside

LEADERSHIP

Leaders often attain their position because:

- They were highly skilled and knowledgeable
- Their judgement could be relied on for sound decision making
- They were rewarded for knowing all the answers
- They like being in control

They can feel like they're losing control

SOME THOUGHTS ON HOW TO MANAGE THIS CHANGE

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Start the conversation telling colleagues what they "should" or "have to do" -> *Tell them what data will enable*
- Tell them they need to measure everything -> *that will just lead to exhaustion if you aren't measuring what matters*
- Promise them everything will be solved with data -> *it won't and when it doesn't, you have even less support for being data driven than you started out with*

GETTING BUY-IN

- Start small
- Set a good example
- Have tangible results

**The value of being more data-driven
should be self-evident and speak for itself**

GETTING BUY-IN

We should be able to show a data-driven approach is:

- more efficient
- more reliable
- provides repeatable results towards outcomes

If not, we may not be doing it right

GETTING BUY-IN

- Have patience
- Have empathy
- Know this isn't easy work, but is important

FINAL THOUGHT

**Centering data more in our conversations
is what can help us towards creating a
more fair, equitable, and just society in
which everyone benefits**

If we have data, let's look at data. If all we have are opinions, let's go with mine.

- Jim Barksdale, former Netscape CEO

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Email me
- Connect on LinkedIn

TIME FOR FEEDBACK

Hannah will be sharing a link in the chat
for your feedback

THANK YOU!

ANALYTICS VALUE CHAIN



Drawing by [Julia Marden](#)