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# PUBLIC

## PROBLEM SOLVING

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SEPTEMBER 2014





This course is  
**WRONG**



Public problems cannot  
be **SOLVED**, only tackled



Modern decisionmaking practices  
are too mechanistic and lacking in  
complexity when facing wicked,  
contemporary problems



# The Governance Deficit



# 17%

of U.S. adults have (a  
great deal of confidence)  
in the presidency in 2013

*Gallup Poll, "Confidence in Institutions." June 2013*



# 10%

have a great deal of trust in Congress in 2013  
(the lowest level since first surveyed in 1973)

*Gallup Poll, "Confidence in Institutions." June 2013*



*The “dysfunction gauge has  
moved into the danger zone.”*

*Its Even Worse Than It Looks (2013)*  
**Norman Ornstein and Michael Mann**





# 43%

of general population across 25  
countries that trust government to  
always do what is right in 2012

*Gallup Poll, "Confidence in Institutions." June 2013*



# Almost 2/3

of Americans in 2012 have little or no trust  
in the mass media to report the news fully,  
accurately, and fairly

*Gallup Poll, "Confidence in Institutions." June 2013*



*In 2012*

60%

of Americans reported having little or  
no trust in the mass media to report the  
news fully, accurately, and fairly

*Gallup Poll, "Social Series: Governance." September 2012*



# Arab Spring



**But what happens  
the day after the  
arab spring**





# The rational, linear approach to problem solving

**Order:** given causes lead to known effects at all times and places.

Reductionism: the behavior of a system could be understood, clockwork fashion, by observing the behavior of its parts. There are no hidden surprises; the whole is the sum of the parts, no more and no less. Predictability: once global behavior is defined, the future course of events could be predicted by application of the appropriate inputs to the model. Determinism: processes flow along orderly and predictable paths that have clear beginnings and rational ends.

**Robert Geyer and Samir Rihani,**

*Complexity and Public Policy: A New Approach to 21st Century Politics, Policy and Society*  
(Oxford: Routledge, 2010), p. 15



“The quest for certainty in political thinking seems more likely to breed orthodoxy than to nurture truth and in practice tends to promote the domination of method over substance ... In an attempt to mimic the hard sciences, of which they rarely have a true understanding, these social scientists have tried to subordinate every understanding of reality to some orthodox construction of understanding.”

**Benjamin Barber,**

*Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age,*  
(Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 47



# Innovations in Problem Solving

**OPEN**

**COLLABORATIVE**

**DATA-DRIVEN**

**EXPERIMENTAL**





New technologies to aid how we tackle problems

**DATA SCIENCES**

**VISUALIZATION**

**SOCIAL COMPUTING**

**SOCIAL SCIENCE INCENTIVE INSIGHTS**

*(defaults, nudges, games, prizes)*



# We Have the Opportunity to Co-Create Governance

**Getting Diverse Knowledge In** – Institutions seek input from citizens or experts to inform how they make decisions.

*Example: A city asks those with scientific expertise, acumen or insight to help devise a better way to manage overflowing sewers.*



# We Have the Opportunity to Co-Create Governance

**Pushing Data Out** – Institutions publish the data they collect so that citizens can analyze and use the data to detect and solve problems.

*Example: A national government releases hospital safety records so that professional and public pressure can improve quality of care.*



# We Have the Opportunity to Co-Create Governance

**Distributing Responsibility Publicly** – Institutions delegate responsibility to citizens, or enable citizens to seek solutions themselves.

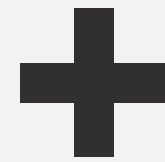
*Example: City residents use an app to divide up responsibility for shoveling snow, and coordinate with city government so the city can plan its snow-removal efforts efficiently.*



*This Course:*

## **From Gov 3.0 to Public Problem “Solving”**

**Innovations  
in Problem Solving**



**Effective Project  
Management**



# UNDERSTAND

The problem I am tackling is...

*What is the need?*



## UNDERSTAND

The people most impacted  
by this problem are...

*Who is harmed?*



## UNDERSTAND

I believe the major causes  
of this problem are...

*What are the causes?*





# OBSERVE

I believe this because...

*What is the evidence? Also who can you interview? What can you find out? What experiment can you run?*



## POINT OF VIEW

The problem can be improved by...

*What is The Big Idea?*

*What is the value proposition?*



## POINT OF VIEW

This approach will have  
an impact because...

*What is the mechanism of beneficial change?*



## POINT OF VIEW

The impact will be  
measurable because...

*Key metrics?*



## POINT OF VIEW

Those with the greatest interest  
in change are...

*Key supporters? Segments?*



## POINT OF VIEW

Those most opposed to change are...

*Key foes?*



# IDEATE

The way it will work is...

*What is the user experience?*



## IDEATE

To make this happen, these changes  
need to occur...

*Who Has to Do What To Make It Happen?*





## IDEATE

To undertake my big idea,  
I could work with...

*Key partners to execute?*

*Key partners to help others evaluate your value  
proposition?*



## IDEATE

The reason to do this now is...

*What are the precipitating events?*



## IDEATE

Others working in this space include...

*Who else is in the field?*



## IDEATE

My approach is better because...

*What's wrong? Missing? Not working?*



## IDEATE

Key resources (besides financial ones)

I will need to be successful...

*Physical, human and intellectual resources?*



## PROTOTYPE AND TEST

My strategy for rolling out this project involves the following key activities...

*Next steps? Pilots?*



## PROTOTYPE AND TEST

I will sustain this project by...

*Cost Structure?*

*Financial Sustainability?*

*Revenue Streams?*



## PROTOTYPE AND TEST

My biggest risk is...

*How might this go wrong? How might the problem evolve? What are the legal, cultural and other impediments?*





## PROTOTYPE AND TEST

I will raise awareness  
about my project by...

*How will I promote adoption?*



# DO THE PIXAR PITCH

Once upon a time  
Every day,  
One day  
Because of that,  
Because of that,  
Until finally