R-SEARCH

Rapid Re-Search Enabling the Design of Agile and Creative Responses to Problems

STEFAANVERHULST

ANDREWYOUNG

GOVLAB

Why R-Search?

▶ Seemingly intractable problems require agile and creative responses;

▶ Meaningful and agile creativity can only arise when there is a rapid understanding of the topic at hand;

▶ R-Search enables the development of a MAP that allows for the design of responses that are more informed and targeted;

▶ R-Search allows to develop a baseline against which progress can be measured;

▶ R-Search enables the completion of a project canvas to guide development, implementation and assessment.

M A P
Milieu, Actors, Problem

Problem

Actor

Map
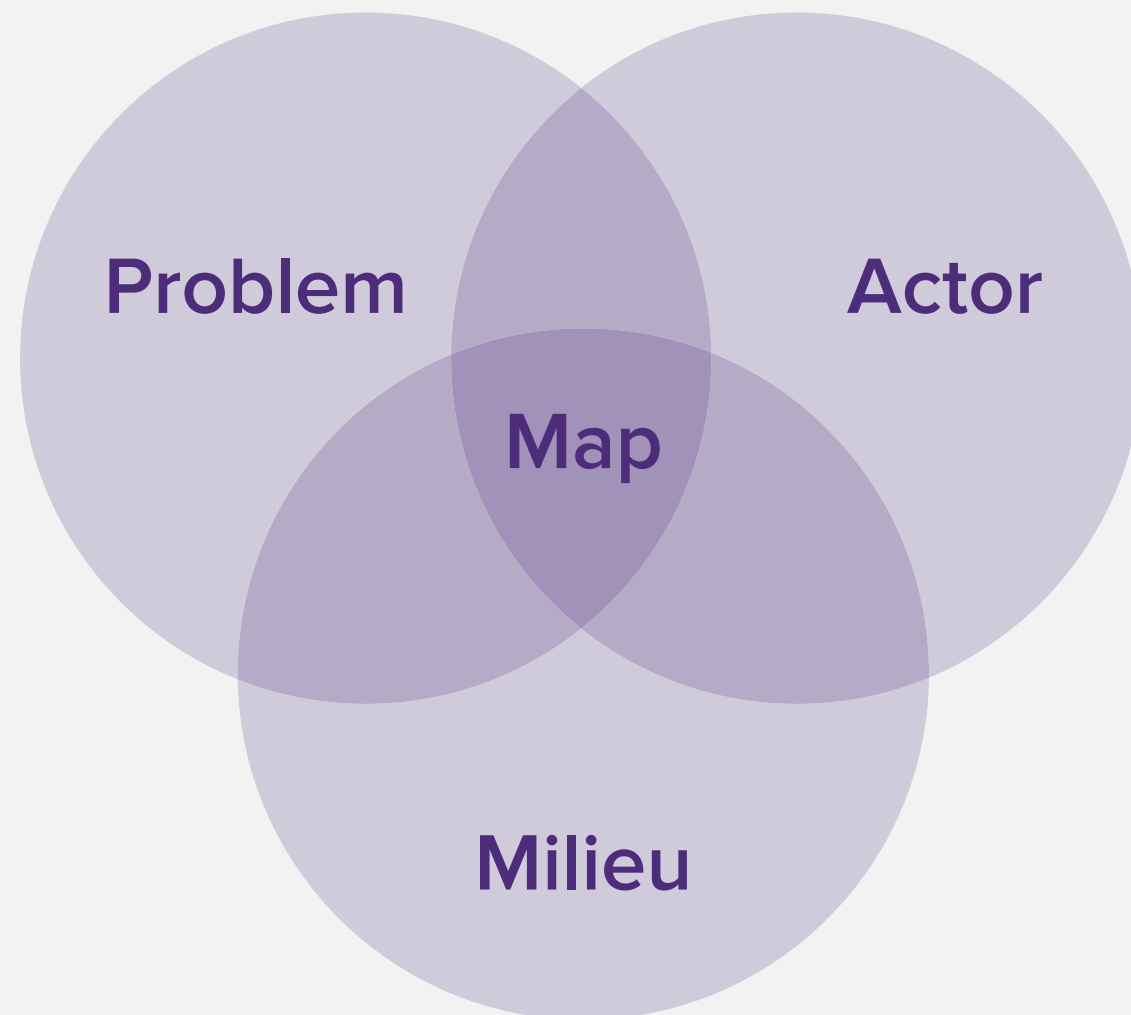
Milieu

The MAP approach allows you to quickly get smart about your problem and solution space, and the environment you want to impact.

Milieu: A problem does not exist in a vacuum. Mapping the problem and solution space requires a clear understanding of the ecosystem in which a problem exists.

Actors: A critical component of gaining an understanding of a topic area involves developing knowledge on those working on that topic, as well as the communities affected by it.

Problem: Gaining a firm grasp on the problem and solution space requires an exploration of the literature, evidence and narratives existing in the space.

MAP
Elements

Objectives	Why research and MAP?
Guiding Questions	What questions to answer in order to ensure a level of comprehensiveness?
Methodologies	What approaches to use that help uncover answers to Guiding Questions rapidly?
Tools	What sources, software and platforms are available that enable the carrying out of methodologies in the interest of answering Guiding Questions?
Deliverables	How to capture and share findings? – a place to share findings, such as a blog, Tumblr, Medium or wiki is essential.
Examples	Inspirational examples of research deliverables

Problem

Gaining a rapid, yet firm, grasp on the problem and solution space requires an exploration of the evidence, responses and narratives existing in the space.

Objectives:

▸ To establish a deeper understanding of the scale and scope of the problem quickly and how it is being portrayed and backed-up by evidence;

▸ To create a convincing and compelling case (why is it important?) ;

▸ To establish legitimacy and credibility ("done your homework");

▸ To package and communicate issues and ideas;

▸ To become aware of the existing solutions space.

MAP

Problem

Guiding Questions:

▸ What is the current evidence/counter evidence of the scale and scope of the problem, and how divergent is the evidence?

▸ What types of evidence exist — i.e.,research-based, experience-based, statistics? And how convincing — i.e., accurate, trustworthy, applicable — is the existing evidence?

▸ What are the key and dominant narratives and assumptions?

▸ What are the untested assumptions and/or metrics of success?

▸ What is the current response and solution space?

Problem

Methodologies:

▸ Web R-Search — preliminary scanning of news and literature on the topic.

▸ **Journal and Database R-Search** — diving deeper into the academic/ grey literature to gain understanding of the categories and theories surrounding the topic.

▸ **Social Media Scanning and Canvassing** — using, for example, Twitter hashtags to follow updates on the problem and identify people to reach out to for more information.

▸ **Outreach** — reaching out to and learning from peers or any identified expert in the field.

▸ **Crowdsourcing** — putting out less targeted calls for help and information through, for example, Q&A sites.

Problem

Tools:

▸ Google Search/Scholar/News and other graph based search (check out Google Ask page + List of other Search Engines)

▸ Research and Library Databases — For instance: Social Science Research Network (SSRN), Policyarchive, Congressional Research Service (Open CRS), Docuticker, et al.

▸ Tag search: Twitter Hashtags (Check out Hasthtags.org)

▸ Q&A Sites (e.g., AskMetafilter, Quora, Stack Exchange, Yahoo Answers)

▸ Case-studies (HBR; SSIReview) and Reviews (Webbies)

Problem

Deliverables:

▸ **Problem Mindmap** — graphical articulation of scope and scale of the problem, and the issues at play.

▸ **Findings and Source Review/Slide Deck** — categorization and description of the current thinking and writing on the topic, especially within academia/grey literature (Prezi; Wikipedia, Tumblr, et al page).

▸ **Annotated Bibliography/Readings** — collection of key sources related to the problem containing brief descriptions of each source (Zotero).

▸ **Problem Index** — collection of relevant statistics on the problem (Harpers Index)

▸ **Response and Ideas Portfolio or Directory** — Collection of identified or developed approaches (GitHub)

Problem

Rockefeller Foundation Unhealthy Developing World Food Markets presentation

Activity

Sign up for Coggle and take 20 minutes to create a Problem Mindmap using this template.
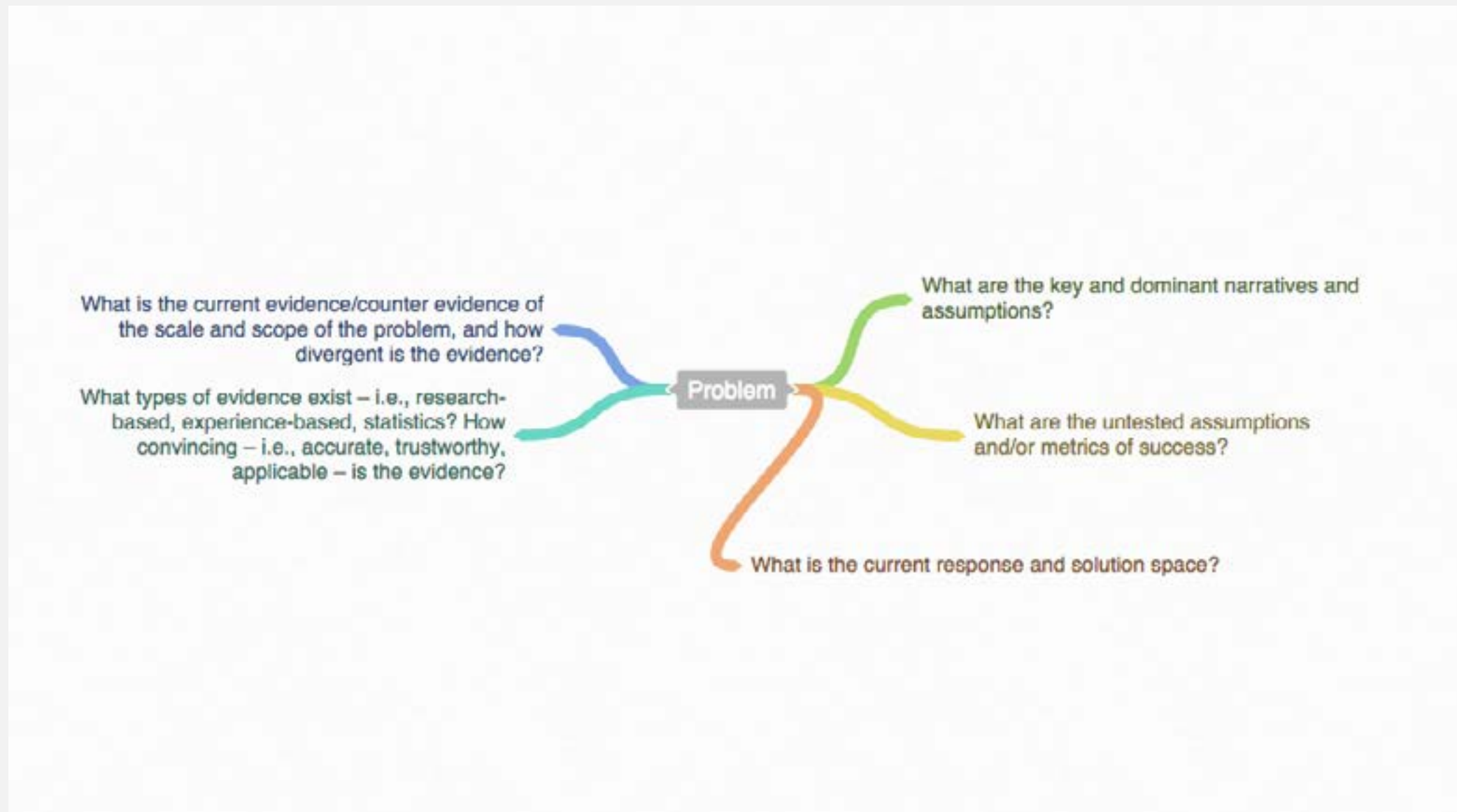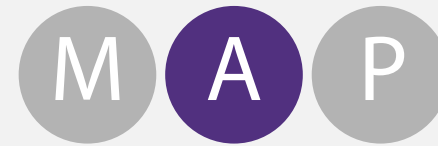
Actors

Gaining an understanding of a topic area involves developing knowledge on the actors focused on that topic, as well as the constituency they represent versus the communities affected by it.

Objectives:

▸ To establish a deeper understanding of the actors involved in studying, expanding and acting on the problem's solution space;

▸ To map the set of individuals, organizations and networks that are active in the space and may have significant power to influence any response or innovation (and want to partner with);

▸ To develop a scalable understanding of the links between key players in the field and their level of legitimacy and authority.

Actors

Guiding Questions:

▸ Who are the experts — e.g., think tanks, academics and others — working in the space?

▸ What policymaking bodies/intermediaries (e.g., governmental agencies, committees, working groups) are responsible for governing the space? What are their priorities? What are their positions? How open are they toward innovation?

▸ What NGOs (including industry) and advocacy groups are focused on the problem area? Who are their constituency and main funders? What are their legitimacy and reputation?

▸ Who makes up the affected user base?

▸ Who are the most important and influential thought leaders, across realms, working in the space? How are they linked? How does their work differ? What roles do they play?

Actors

Methodologies:

▶ **Academic Citation Tracking, Grey Literature R-Search** — identifying key players based on citations in the field and analysis of relevant literature not controlled by commercial publishers.

▶ **Scanning of Partnerships and Funding Streams (Network analysis)** — learning how different actors in the space are linked and collaborate.

▶ **Identifying Relevant Conference Speaker Lists** — finding key players in the field by viewing speaker and panel lists for influential conferences in the space.

▶ **Social Media Scanning and Canvassing** — using, for example, Twitter hashtags to follow updates on the problem and identify people to reach out to for more information.

▶ **Outreach** — conducting, for example, interviews and delphi surveys to map and broaden understanding of the circle of influence.

M A P

Actors

Tools:

▶ Google Scholar/News

▶ Citation and Reputation Trackers (e.g., Web of Science, Linkedin Graph)

▶ Individual and Conference Directories (e.g., The Leadership Library, Who's Who?, Council on Foundations Database, Laynrd, Linktank)

▶ Social Media Followers (Twitter/Linkedin), Hashtags and Lists + Graph Tools for visualizing network

▶ Q&A Sites, Community- and Topic-Specific Online Sites (e.g., subreddits, local community message boards)

MAP
(M A P — A highlighted)

Actors

Deliverables:

▸ Stakeholder Mindmap — graphical articulation of the key players in the space and how they interact (circle of influence)

▸ Biographies and Relationship Map or Photographic Slide Deck — pictures, descriptions and categorizations of the key players in the space and how their work is similar or differs from other key figures.

▸ List of Key Figures and Organizations to Follow (Twitter List) — a collection of the most important people and organizations in the space which can later be used for disseminating outputs.

▸ User Profiles — detailed information on the people affected by the problem.

▸ Expert Networks — connecting and matching key experts with particular needs in a systemic manner.

M A P
Actors

The GovLab's Open Governance Twitter Lists

Activity

Take 20 minutes and create an Actors Mindmap using this template.
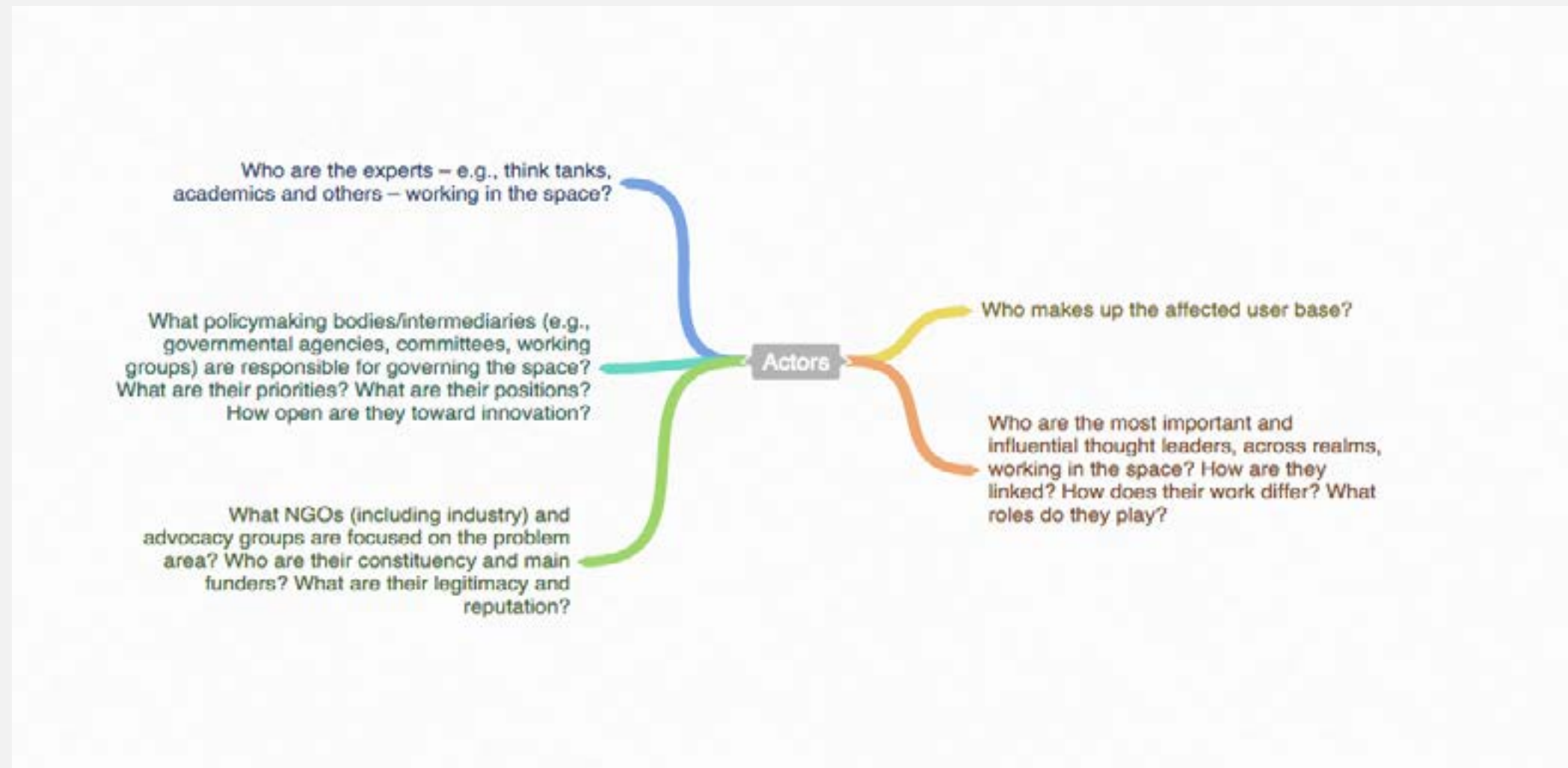
M A P

Milieu

A problem does not exist in a vacuum. Mapping the problem and solution space requires a clear understanding of the external environment in which a problem exists.

Objectives:

▸ To establish a deeper understanding of the wider environment and context in which a problem exists;

▸ To identify the diverse external factors affecting a problem and potential solutions;

▸ To gain the ability to approach a problem with insight into the many potential levers of and barriers to change.

▸ To identify societal trends that may impact responses.

M A P
Milieu

Guiding Questions:

▸ Is the problem similar to others faced in different environments/contexts?

▸ What are the current key trends in the space and do they point to any potential tipping points or forces that can be used to promote particular responses?

▸ What are the political (incl. legal and policy processes) and social (incl. technical and economic and cultural) trends and issues related to the problem?

▸ What are important forthcoming decision points, events and releases?

▸ How is the problem related with other challenges (if at all) and how high is it ranked in perceived priority?

Milieu

Methodologies:

▶ Trend, Force Field and System Dynamics Analysis — collecting information on the environment from over a period of time in the interest of identifying patterns and trends and examining the character and impact of forces at play.

▶ Analysis of Scenarios and Forecasts — review and comparison of future studies in the field.

▶ Review of Relevant News Articles, Op-Eds and Calendars — gaining an understanding of current and forthcoming activities in the field that may provide potential for change.

▶ Social Media Scanning and Canvassing — using, for example, Twitter hashtags to follow updates on the problem and identify people to reach out to for more information or conduct sentiment analysis

▶ Value and Delphi Surveys (Expert networking) — assessing the change in values and public expectations /documenting views of experts on the issues

M A P
Milieu

Tools:

▸ News and Legal Databases (e.g., Google News, WestLaw, LexisNexis)

▸ Ethnographic Values and Opinions Surveys (e.g., Pew Research Center, World Values Survey)

▸ Data and Statistics Portals (e.g., data.gov, FedStats, Census)

▸ Consulting and Research Agency Reports — McKinsey, Gartner, Deloitte

▸ Sentiment Analysis Tools (e.g., Twitter, Skyttle)

▸ Forecasting and Future Studies (e.g., OECD, Institute of the Future)

Milieu

(M)(A)(P)

Deliverables:

▶ **Ecosystem Mindmaps and Infographics** — graphical articulation of the key players in the space and how they interact (including WordClouds; InfoCharts)

▶ **Trends, Challenges and Recommendations Paper and Presentation**— articulation of the shifts in the space, major barriers to change and targeted ideas for addressing those barriers.

▶ **Primers and Case-studies** — explanatory writing on the large-scale issues at play and deep-dive writing on specific examples.

▶ **Policy Analysis Paper** — in-depth analysis of the legal and policy ecosystem affecting the problem and solution space.

▶ **Foresight Report** — based on an understanding of the current problem and solution space, a description of what changes and developments can be expected in the near future.

Milieu

Mary Meeker's Internet Trends Report

At Home

Create a mindmap of your problem's Milieu using <u>this template</u>.
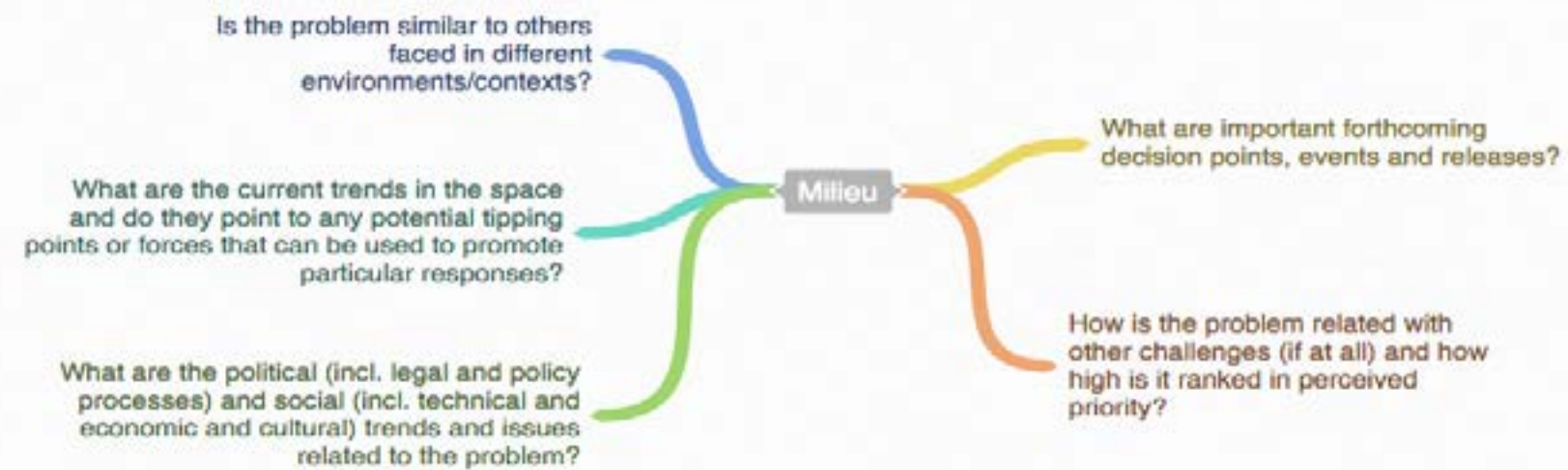
Monitoring and Staying in the Known

Objective:

Staying in the know – after getting up to speed on a topic and operationalizing a project design, it is important to position yourself to stay in the know as new developments occur, allowing for agile adjustment of response .

Questions:

▶ How has the problem space changed in the time since the project design was implemented?

▶ What new actors have entered the space?

▶ Have new solutions been suggested or attempted?

▶ Have there been any recent legal, political, social or cultural changes in the problem or solution space?

▶ Are there opportunities for collaborations or discussions with others in the space that could allow for meaningful project iteration?

Tools for Staying in the Know

Twitter Lists / Flipboard

Google and Google Scholar Alerts

RSS Feeds / NewsReaders

Paper.li

Relevant Newsletters and Mailing Lists

Further Reading

▸ <u>Defining the Problem to Find a Solution</u> – description of the importance of clear problem definition.

▸ <u>FreePint</u>, <u>Open Directory Project</u> and <u>IpL2</u> provide many tools, suggestions and resources for rapid research

▸ <u>Finding an Expert Using the Internet</u> – a guide to expert identification for academic and business needs

▸ <u>Action Learning's Good Company: The Action Modalities</u> – an analysis and guide to action research, which is conducted "in the wild" instead of in the lab

▸ <u>The Rapid Research Method Approach</u> – another approach to quickly learning about a topic

▸ <u>Policy Research Methodology</u> – an approach for assessing policy impacts

▸ <u>Choosing Appropriate Research Methodologies</u> – how to determine whether a project requires a more qualitative or quantitative approach.

▸ <u>Toward Metrics for Re(imagining) Governance</u> – approaches for measuring success

Questions

M

Is the problem similar to others faced in different environments/contexts?

What are the current key trends in the space and do they point to any potential tipping points or forces that can be used to promote particular responses?

What are the political (incl. legal and policy processes) and social (incl. technical and economic and cultural) trends and issues related to the problem?

What are important forthcoming decision points, events and releases?

How is the problem related with other challenges (if at all) and how high is it ranked in perceived priority?

A

Who are the experts – e.g.. think tanks, academics and others – working in the space?

What policymaking bodies/intermediaries (e.g., governmental agencies, committees, working groups) are responsible for governing the space? What are their priorities? What are their positions? How open are they toward innovation?

What NGOs (including industry) and advocacy groups are focused on the problem area? Who are their constituency and main funders? What are their legitimacy and reputation?

Who makes up the affected user base?

Who are the most important and influential thought leaders, across realms, working in the space? How are they linked? How does their work differ? What roles do they play?

P

What is the current evidence/counter evidence of the scale and scope of the problem, and how divergent is the evidence?

What types of evidence exist – i.e.,research-based, experience-based, statistics? And how convincing – i.e., accurate, trustworthy, applicable – is the existing evidence?

What are the key and dominant narratives and assumptions?

What are the untested assumptions and/or metrics of success?

What is the current response and solution space?

Methodologies

M

Trend, Force Field and System Dyanmics Analysis

Analysis of Scenarios and Forecasts

Review of Relevant News Articles, Op-Eds and Calendars

Social Media Scanning and Canvassing

Value and Delphi Surveys (Expert networking)

A

Academic Citation Tracking, Grey Literature R-Search

Scanning of Partnerships and Funding Streams (Network analysis)

Identifying Relevant Conference Speaker Lists

Social Media Scanning and Canvassing

Outreach (e.g., interviews, delphi surveys)

P

Web R-Search

Journal and Database R-Search

Social Media Scanning and Canvassing

Outreach (e.g., emails to experts)

Crowdsourcing (e.g., Q&A sites)

Tools

M

News and Legal Databases (e.g., Google News, WestLaw, LexisNexis)

Ethnographic Values and Opinions Surveys (e.g., Pew Research Center, World Values Survey)

Data and Statistics Portals (e.g., data.gov, FedStats, Census)

Consulting and Research Agency Reports (e.g., McKinsey, Gartner, Deloitte)

Sentiment Analysis Tools (e.g., Twitter, Skyttle)

Forecasting and Future Studies (e.g., OECD, Institute of the Future)

A

Google Scholar/News

Citation and Reputation Trackers (e.g., Web of Science, Linkedin Graph)

Individual and Conference Directories (e.g., The Leadership Library, Who's Who?, Council on Foundations Database, Laynrd, Linktank)

Social Media Followers (Twitter/Linkedin), Hashtags and Lists + Graph Tools for visualizing network

Q&A Sites, Community- and Topic-Specific Online Sites (e.g., subreddits, local community message boards)

P

Google Search/Scholar/News and other graph based search

Research and Library Databases (e.g., Social Science Research Network (SSRN), Policyarchive,Congressional Research Service (Open CRS), Docuticker)

Tag search – Twitter Hashtags (Hasthtags.org)

Q&A Sites (e.g., AskMetafilter, Quora, Stack Exchange, Yahoo Answers)

Case-studies (HBR; SSIReview) and Reviews (Webbies)

Deliverables

M

Ecosystem Mindmaps and Infographics

Trends, Challenges and Recommendations Paper

Primers and Case-studies

Policy Analysis Paper

Foresight Report

A

Stakeholder Mindmap

Biographies and Relationship Map or Photographic Slide Deck

List of Key Figures and Organizations to Follow (Twitter List)

User Profiles

Expert Networks

P

Problem Mindmap

Findings and Source Review/Slide Deck

Annotated Bibliography/Readings (e.g., Zotero)

Problem Index

Response and Ideas Portfolio or Directory

THANK YOU

STEFAANVERHULST
ANDREWYOUNG