

The Final Interview Script: The Story of a Socio-Technical Steward

(The interview begins. You are calm, confident, and warm.)

Panel: "Thank you for joining us today. To start, could you take two minutes to introduce yourself briefly to the panel?"

You (The Introduction):

"Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you again. My name is Yeu Wen Mak.

For over 20 years, I've worked as an enterprise architect, and that experience has led me to a fundamental conclusion: the most elegant technical solution is useless if it fails to navigate the complex human system it serves. The most critical problems are never purely technical; they exist at the seams—between business goals, departmental silos, and human behaviour.

So, my professional focus evolved. Instead of just architecting technology, I began architecting the *conversations around the technology*. As my resume shows, I became deeply involved in practices like Systems Dynamics and the Cognitive Edge framework. My role shifted from being the expert with the answer, to being a facilitator who could help diverse groups build a shared understanding.

This fascination with the socio-technical whole is what led me to create my portfolio piece, 'The Aethelgard Experiment.' It started as an exploration of AI, but it quickly taught me that the real innovation isn't the AI itself, but the messy, collaborative work required to align that technology with human values.

And that realization is precisely why I am so committed to joining this program. My driving desire is not to master a single technology, but to master the art and science of stewarding these complex systems. I believe the MACYB, with its diverse cohort and systems-level focus, is the only place to do that. Thank you."

Panel: "Thank you. We would like to know about your hopes and fears about being involved in this Master's program."

You (Hopes & Fears):

"That's a great question. My greatest hope for the program is to be genuinely challenged by the diversity of the cohort. I hope the anthropologist in the room reads my Aethelgard piece and critiques my model of community, and that the policymaker points out a dozen blind spots in my vision for governance. My hope is to have my technologically-focused worldview stress-tested and expanded by their expertise, so we can build something more robust together.

Honestly, my biggest fear is the temptation to retreat to my comfort zone. For 20 years, my expertise has been my currency. The fear is that when faced with a complex, ambiguous problem, my old habit of trying to find the 'right technical answer' will resurface. But that's precisely why I'm choosing this program. I see it as a year-long exercise in building new muscles—the muscle of 'framing questions' rather than just solving problems. I'm actively choosing the discomfort of being a novice again, because I believe that's where the most important learning happens."

Panel: "We would like to know about working out of your comfort zones. Can you tell us about your experiences with challenges or setbacks in your work?"

You (The Blueprint vs. Reality):

"Certainly. A powerful learning experience for me was a major setback we faced during the development phase of a new enterprise-wide platform **at Toll Holdings**.

(Situation & Setback) As the lead architect, my team and I had designed a technically elegant blueprint based on SOA principles. It was the 'correct' solution. But three months in, the project was grinding to a halt. Development teams were in open conflict over implementing the services I had designed. My technical blueprint was perfect, but the human system couldn't build it.

(Task) This was a significant moment of discomfort. My official task was to defend the blueprint. But I realized that path would lead to project failure. My *real* task had to become figuring out why the human system—the development teams and their workflows—was rejecting my technically correct solution.

(Action) I had to step out of my architect's comfort zone and apply principles from my work with the **Cognitive Edge framework**. I paused pushing the architecture and facilitated 'autopsy' sessions with the teams—not to assign blame, but to understand the friction. It became painfully clear that my centralized architecture was incompatible with their decentralized, agile ways of working.

(Result) The immediate result was that I had to publicly admit my initial blueprint was socio-technically flawed. We then co-created a revised, federated model that gave teams more autonomy, and the project immediately got back on track. The lasting result for me was a profound lesson in resilience: an architect's blueprint is just a hypothesis. Its true test is its viability within the human system that must build and maintain it. It taught me that my most critical role is '**separating business intent from syntax**,' as I mention in my profile—ensuring the strategic *intent* is met, even if the technical *syntax* has to change."

Panel: "Thank you. Can you tell us more about your approach to teamwork and collaborative culture?"

You (The ATS Coalition):

"My philosophy on collaboration is that the most important thing you build isn't the product; it's the shared understanding. My best example of this is the Application Technology Stack (ATS) project at Toll.

(Situation) The situation was a classic complex system. We were a small architecture team in the middle of a network of stakeholders with conflicting, yet valid, priorities: business sponsors wanting speed, external consultants with their own methods, and internal operations teams demanding stability above all else.

(Task) My real task wasn't just to architect the platform; it was to prevent the project from being torn apart by these competing interests. I had to architect a **process for collaboration** just as carefully as I was architecting the technology.

(Action) Instead of trying to convince each stakeholder separately, my key action was to establish the '**ATS Design Authority**'—a regular, mandatory workshop. For each major decision,

we didn't present a finished solution. We presented a set of guiding **principles**. Then, I facilitated a structured dialogue, acting as a translator between the groups. I'd ask, 'Operations, how does this principle impact stability? Business sponsors, does it align with your cost goals?'

(Result) The result was twofold. First, technically, **we** successfully deployed the ATS platform. But more importantly, the platform was adopted willingly because every stakeholder group had their fingerprints on its design principles. We didn't just build a platform; **we built a coalition**. It proved to me that for a technical system to be resilient, the human network supporting it must be as well-architected as the software."

Panel: "We are interested to know about your ability to think critically about the goals of the School of Cybernetics."

You (The Future of the Field):

"I believe the School's mission is one of the most critical in academia today, because our ability to build powerful technology has dangerously outpaced our ability to wisely integrate it into society. Applied Cybernetics is the discipline that closes that gap.

My critical reflection is this: the biggest challenge for the field is one of translation and scale. The principles are powerful, but how do we get them out of the university and into the boardroom and the cabinet room where decisions are being made?

This is where I see a huge opportunity. My 'Aethelgard Experiment' was my attempt to use **narrative as a cybernetic tool**—a way to simulate a complex system and make its principles tangible and compelling for a non-expert. I believe a critical area of practice for the School is to intentionally develop a whole toolkit of these 'translation objects'—narratives, visual models, interactive simulations—that can scale its influence and bring a cybernetic mindset to the people and systems that need it most."

Panel: "Finally, to help us understand you as a whole person, could you tell us about your personal interests and passions?"

You (The Backyard Gardener):

"Certainly. Outside of my professional life, my great passion is my home backyard garden. It's my small laboratory for understanding complex adaptive systems.

It has taught me that my role isn't that of a commander; it's that of a **steward**. I can't force a plant to grow where it doesn't want to. Instead, I have to observe the system, understand its patterns and feedback loops, and then make small, careful interventions. I'm constantly asking: 'Why is this plant thriving while its neighbor is struggling? What small change can I make today that will lead to a healthier system tomorrow?'

It's taught me the profound difference between something that is **complicated** and something that is **complex**. You can't just follow a static set of instructions; you have to be in a constant, adaptive dialogue with the system. It's a passion that constantly reminds me to be humble, to think in terms of systems, and to appreciate that my most important role—whether in the garden or in an enterprise—is to be a patient and observant steward of a living, dynamic whole."