

Pith: Intro

Sydney Zheng & Christian Brooms

August 19, 2020

Overview

1. *The problem*: online social spaces aren't designed for real discussion
2. *The system*: designing for online discussion that's productive and natural
3. *The plan*: moving forward with incremental prototypes

1. The problem

Why discussion matters

The world is full of wicked problems due to timeless human conflicts

Social issues: poverty, mental health, education...

Climate change: wildfires, waste, pollution...

Global & local relations: immigration, economic & political interdependence...

Direct democracy

If designed thoughtfully, online discussions can be a solution to direct democracy

Existing examples: DemocracyOS, Wiki Democracies

Structured discourse: argument mapping

Social media...in some ways

What's not working

Most platforms aren't designed for productive discussion

Lack of nuance: DemocracyOS

Unnatural structure: argument maps

Feedback loops: social media

2. The system

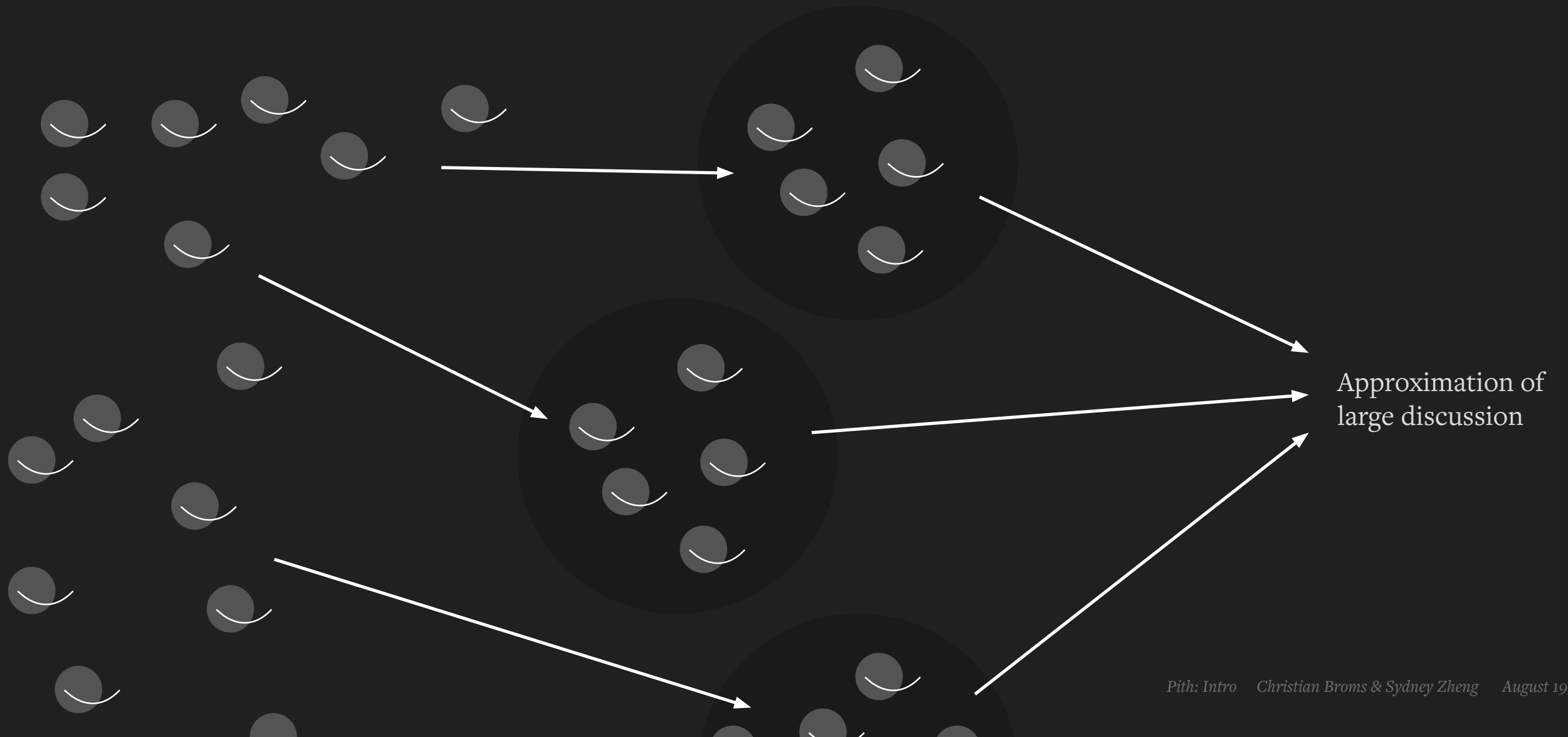
What Pith proposes

A direct democracy with a focus on large discussions that address wicked problems

Discussions that emphasize representation of diverse perspectives

Novel exploration of how ideas meet and can be connected

Making large discussions manageable

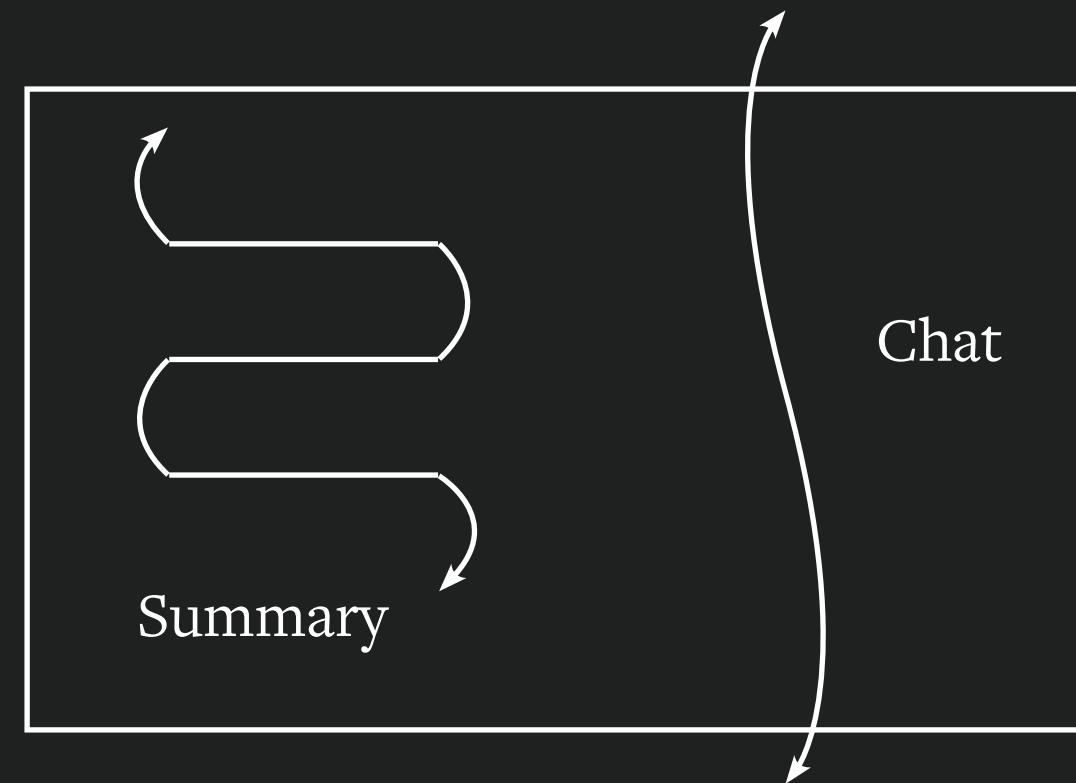


Discussions

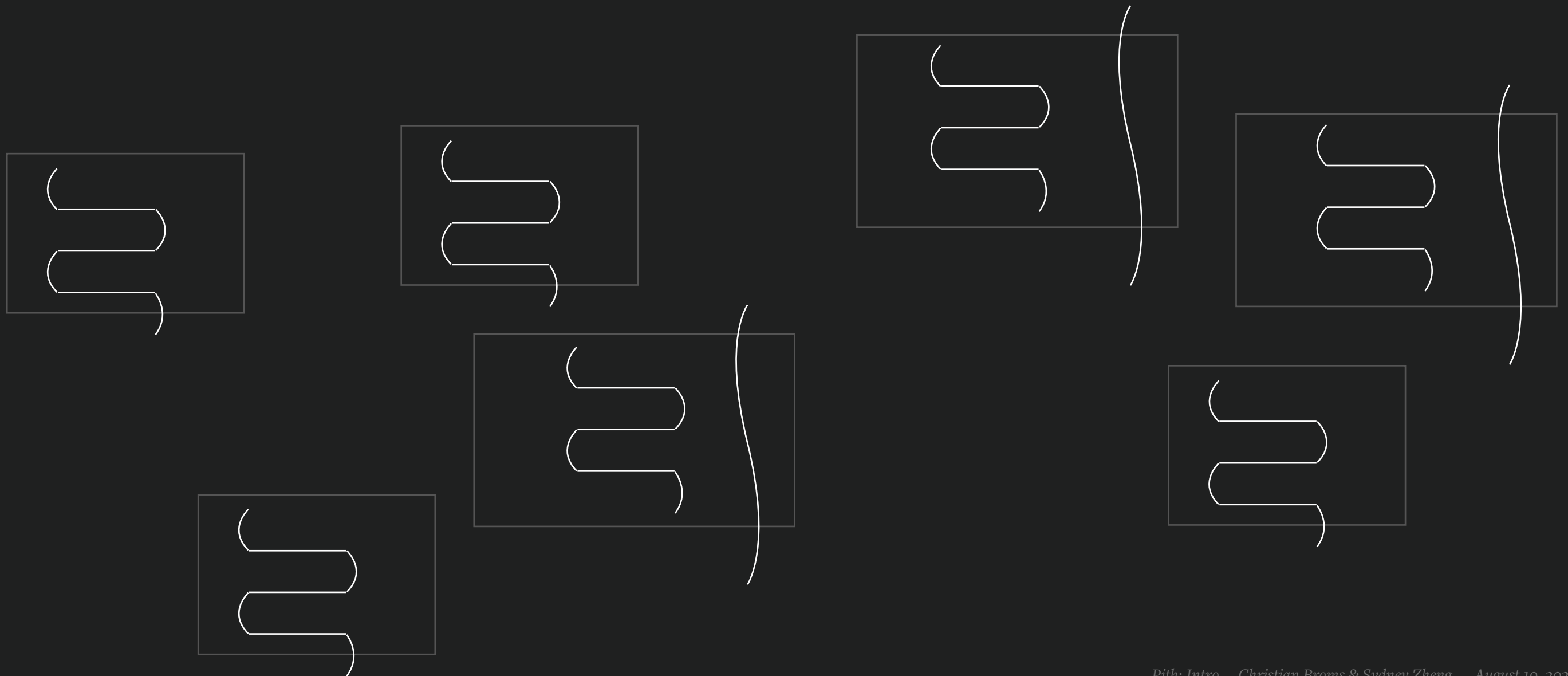
Small groups of less than ten people

Two primary areas: a chat and a summary

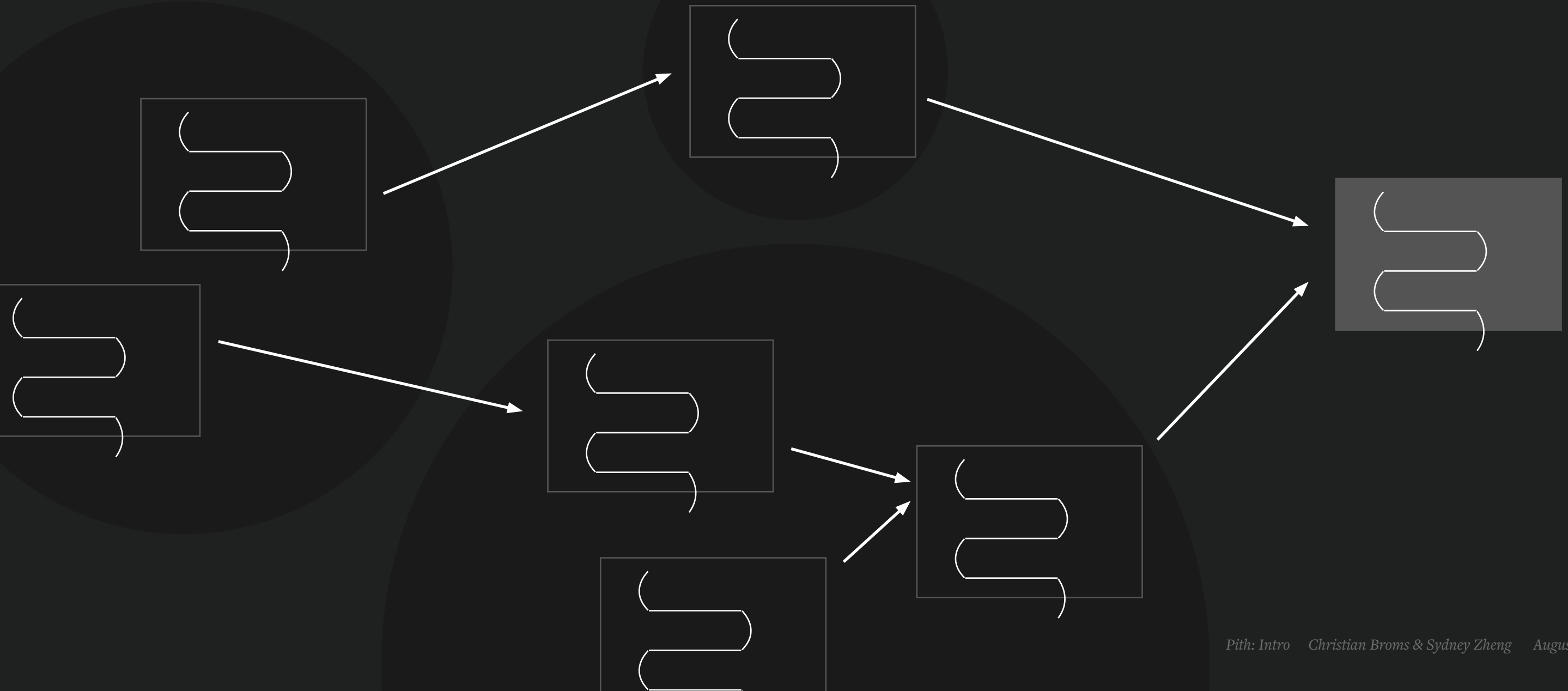
Temporary: leaves a record of some of the discussion, but not all



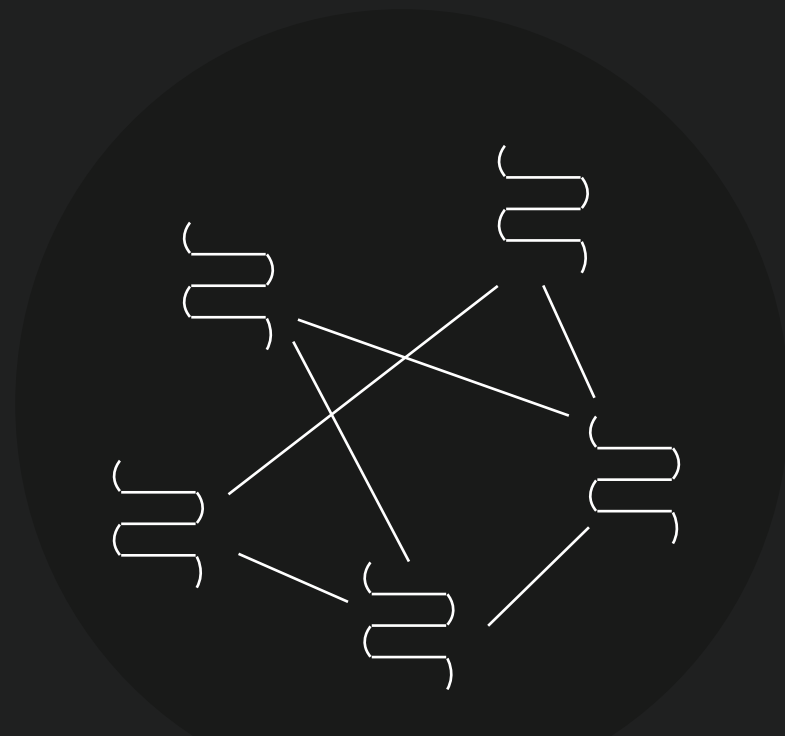
The broader community



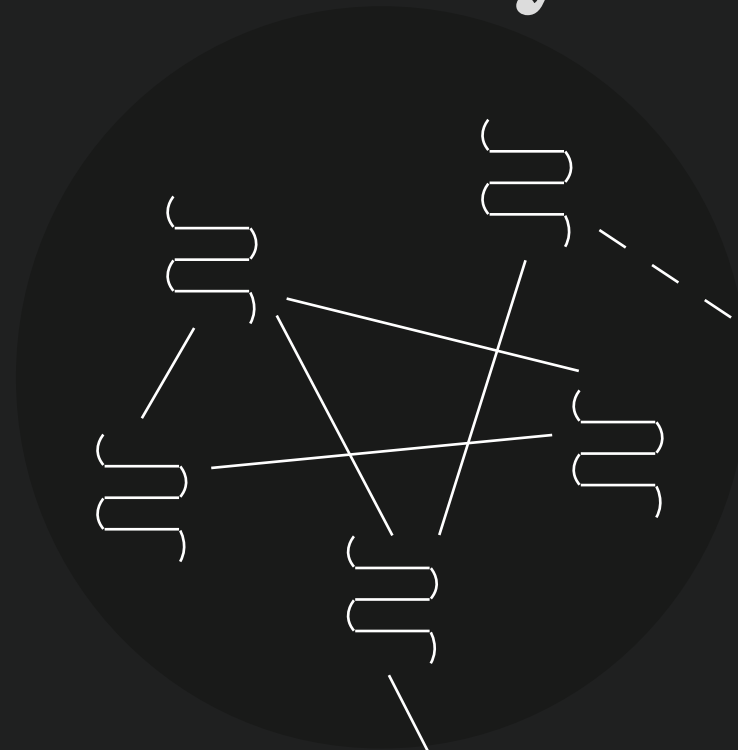
Summaries can be grouped and merged



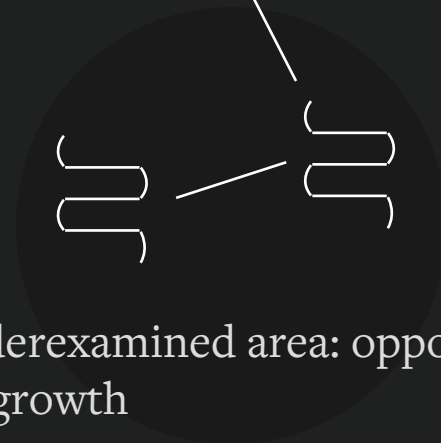
The broader community: network



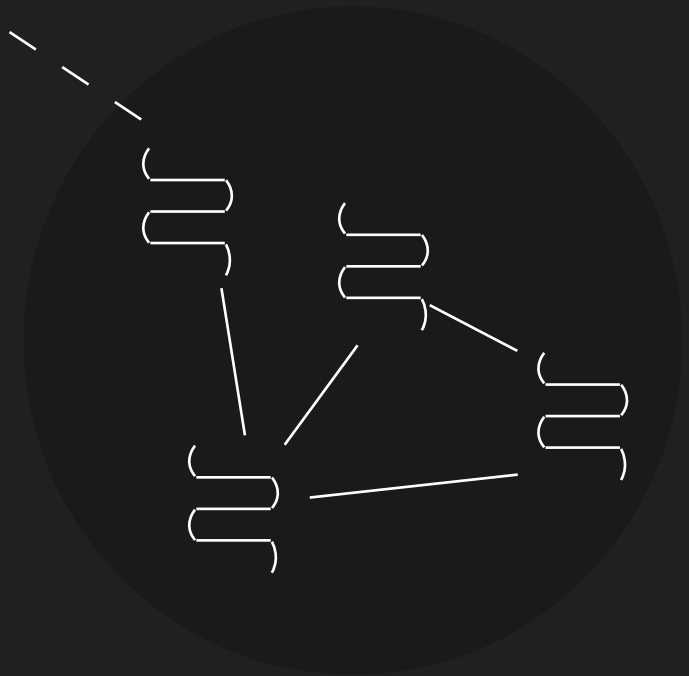
Echo chamber: opportunity for connections to new ideas



Bridge: opportunity for new discussion



Underexamined area: opportunity for growth



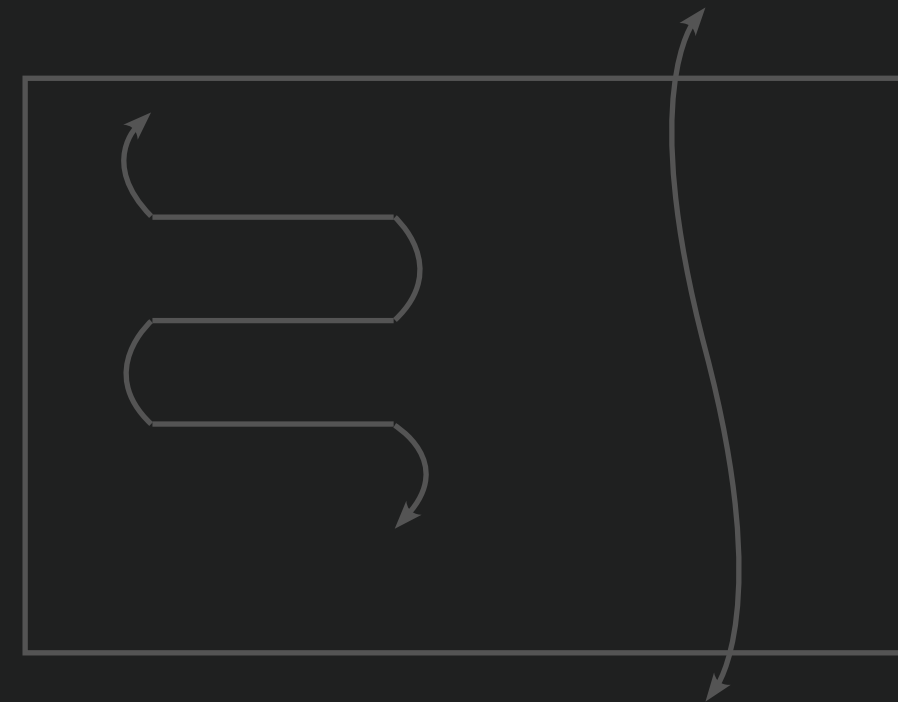
3. The plan

Alpha stage: October 2020

Goal: begin to build an audience and gather feedback

Create a tool that provides immediate value and defines an underlying part of Pith

Discussions with chat and summary, plus features to help reach a consensus

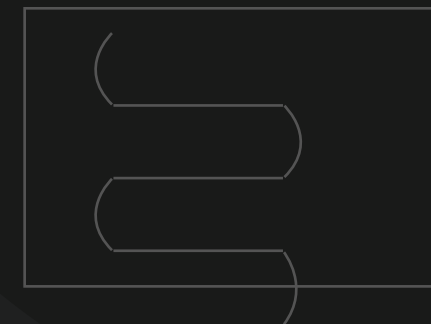
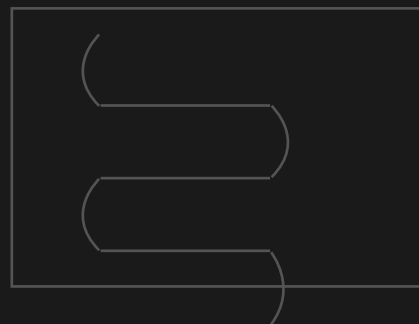


Beta stage: February 2021

Goal: build the platform in an organizational context

Execute the most essential state of the core vision for Pith

Between-discussion categorization with a basic semantic network

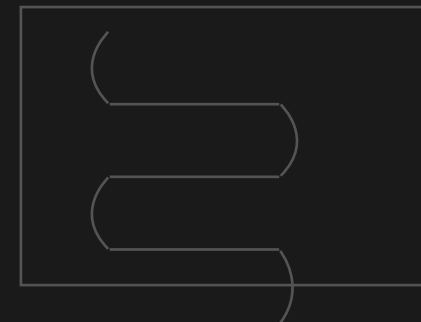
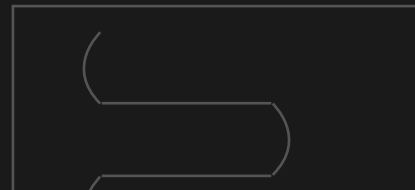
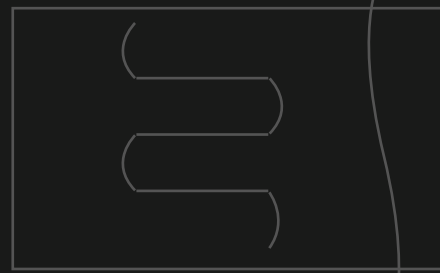
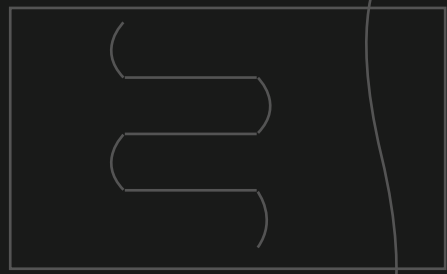


Launch stage: June 2021

Goal: expand Pith's audience in a variety of domains

Execute the main vision for Pith as a platform

Fuzzy clustering, hyperbolic view, advanced transclusion



<https://why.pith.is>