

Conceptual Models

How to draw complicated ideas

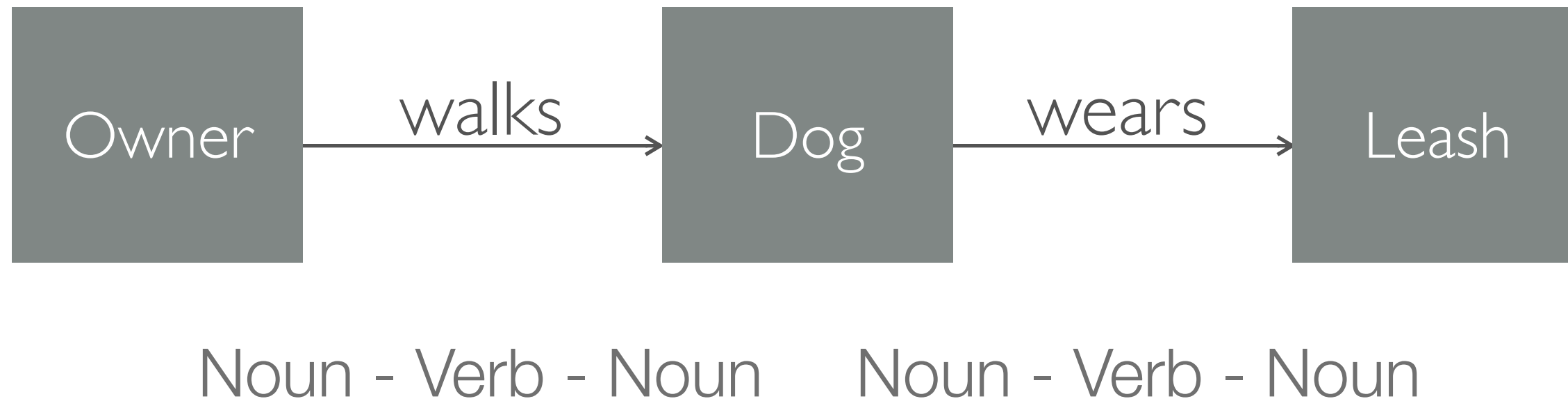
Definition

A concept model is a **diagram** that shows the **relationships** between different **abstract concepts**.

Common Structure

Noun - Verb - Noun

A simple example with boxes and lines



* Incidentally, [Boxes and Arrows](#) is the name of a well-regarded IA blog

Purpose & Challenge

Purpose

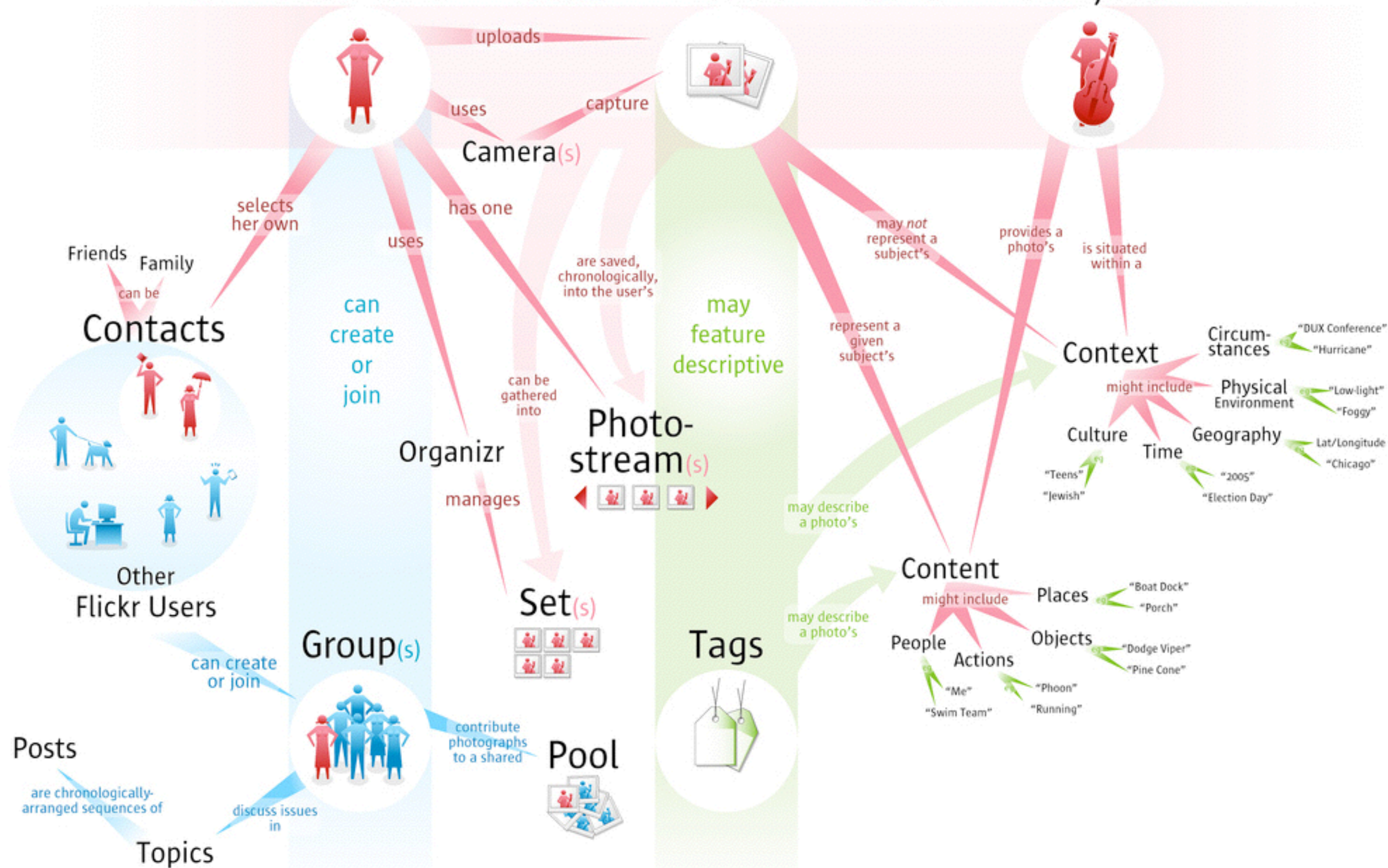
The main purpose is to **come to a common understanding of the site's underlying assumptions**, so the concept model must explain these assumptions effectively.

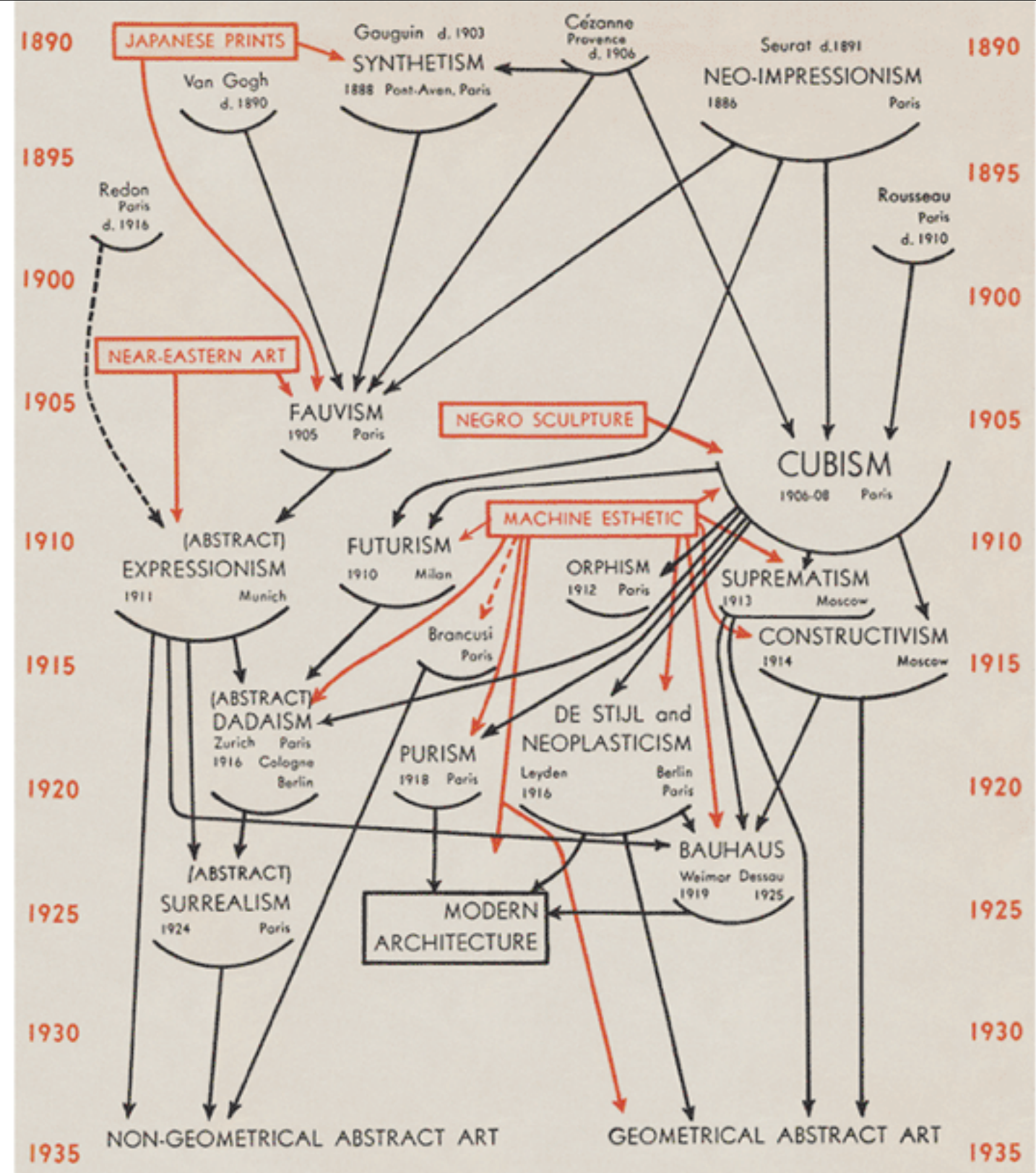
Challenge

The challenge is not only to capture the assumptions, but to **make sure everyone has the same understanding**.

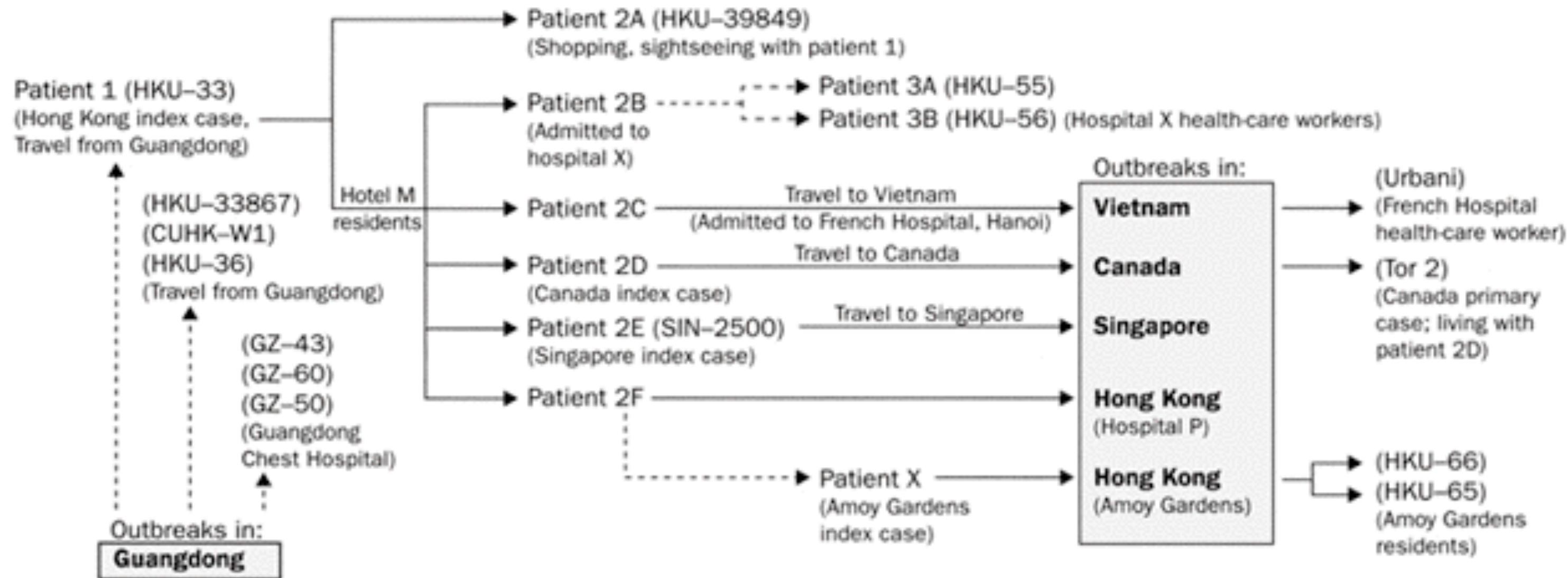
Examples

A Flickr User takes Photos of a Subject.



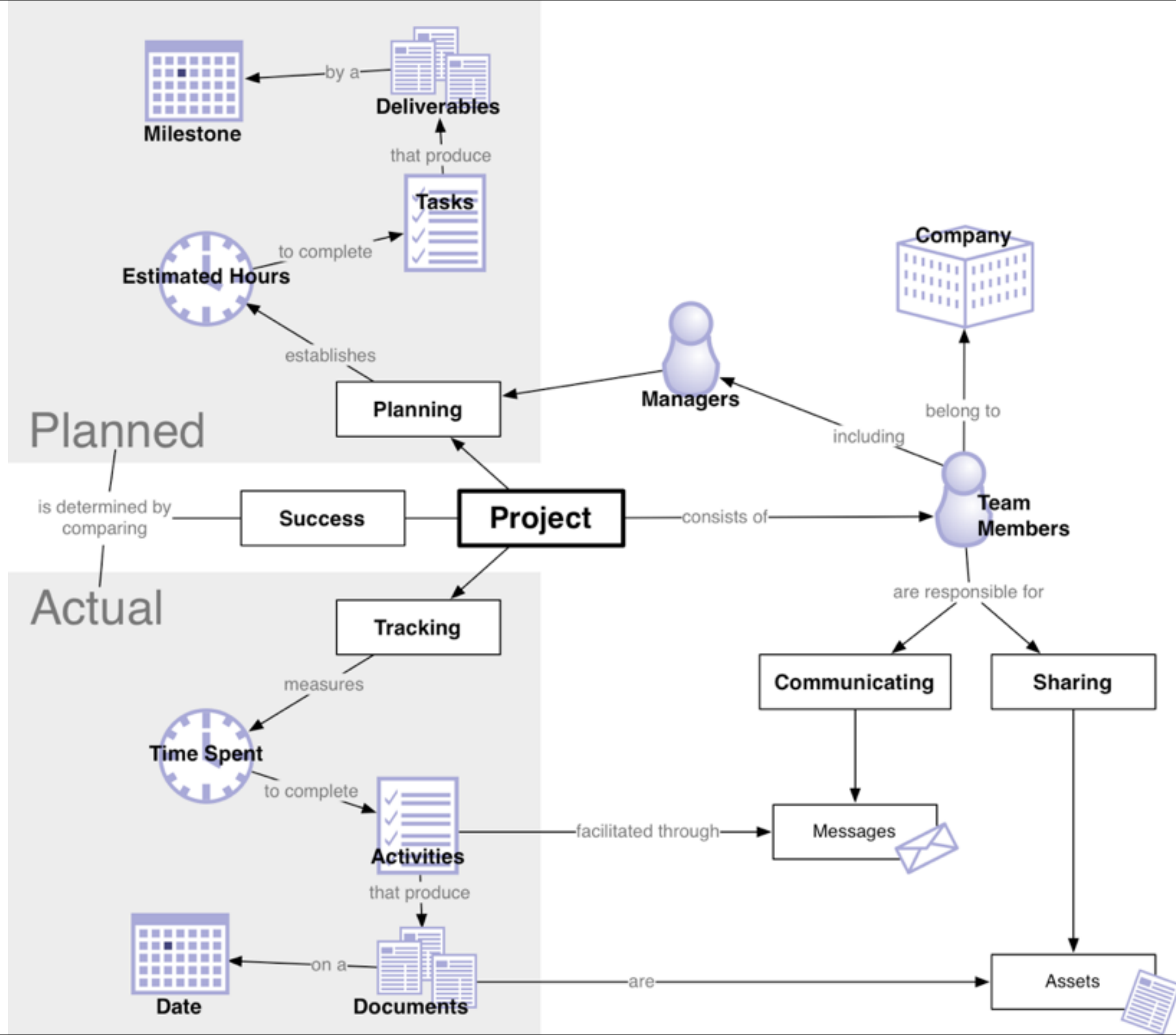


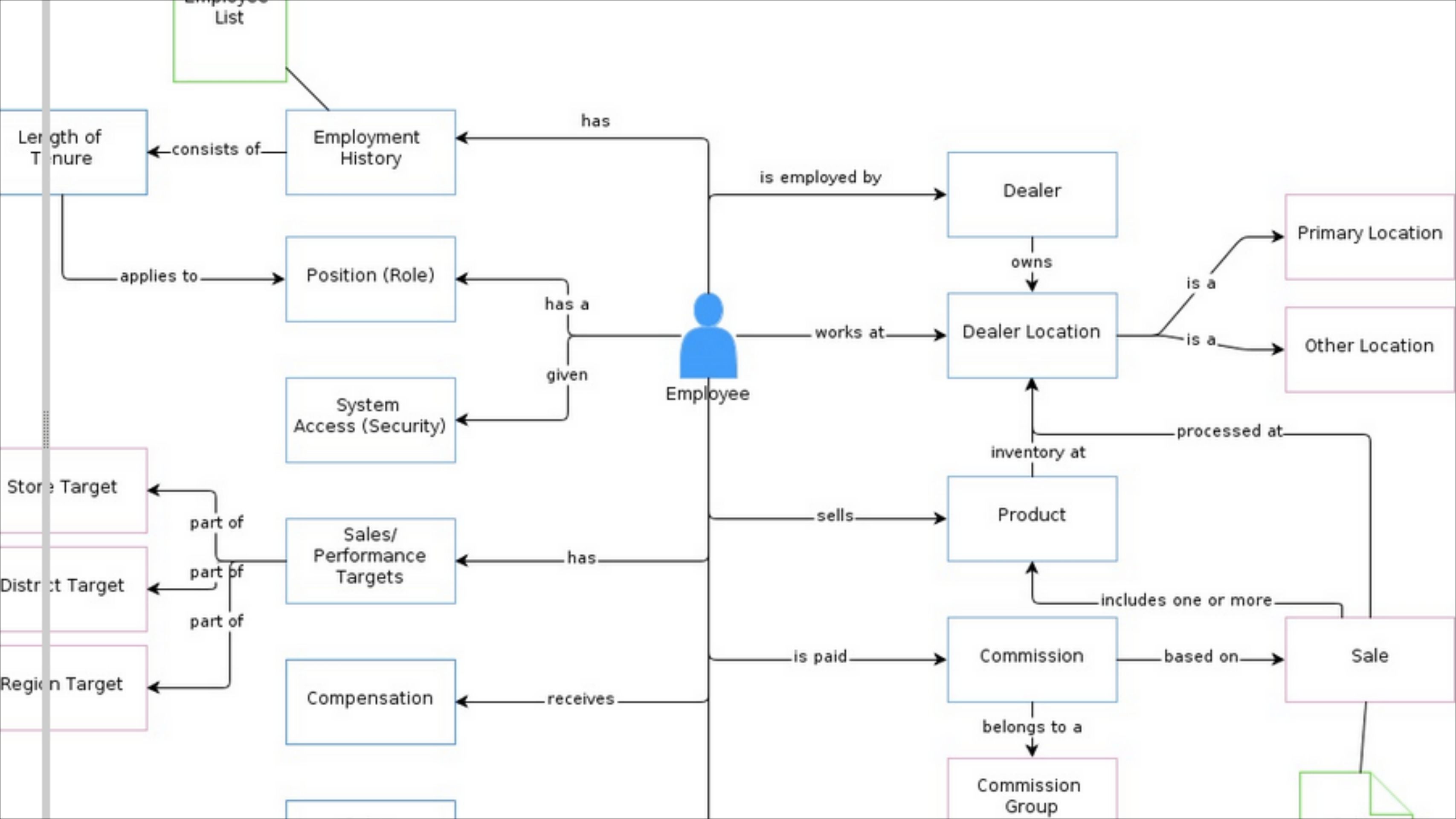
CUBISM AND ABSTRACT ART



This molecular epidemiological diagram tracks the spread of virus isolates of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) that caused disease outbreaks in many countries. Beginning with the unfortunate Patient number 1, some 20 arrows track key SARS patients, from Guangdong in China to Hong Kong to Vietnam, Singapore, Canada, and beyond to 30 countries. The key index cases (virus designations in parentheses) apparently “caused a disproportionate number of secondary cases, the so-called super-spreading incidents.”

Y. Guan, J. S. M. Peiris, B. Zheng, L. L. M. Poon, K. H. Chan, F. Y. Zeng, C. W. M. Chan, M. N. Chan, J. D. Chen, K. Y. C. Chow, C. C. Hon, K. H. Hui, J. Li, V. Y. Y. Li, Y. Wang, S. W. Leung, K. Y. Yuen, and F. C. Leung, “Molecular epidemiology of the novel coronavirus that causes severe acute respiratory syndrome,” *The Lancet*, 363 (January 10, 2004), 99-104; illustration at p. 100, quotation at p. 103.

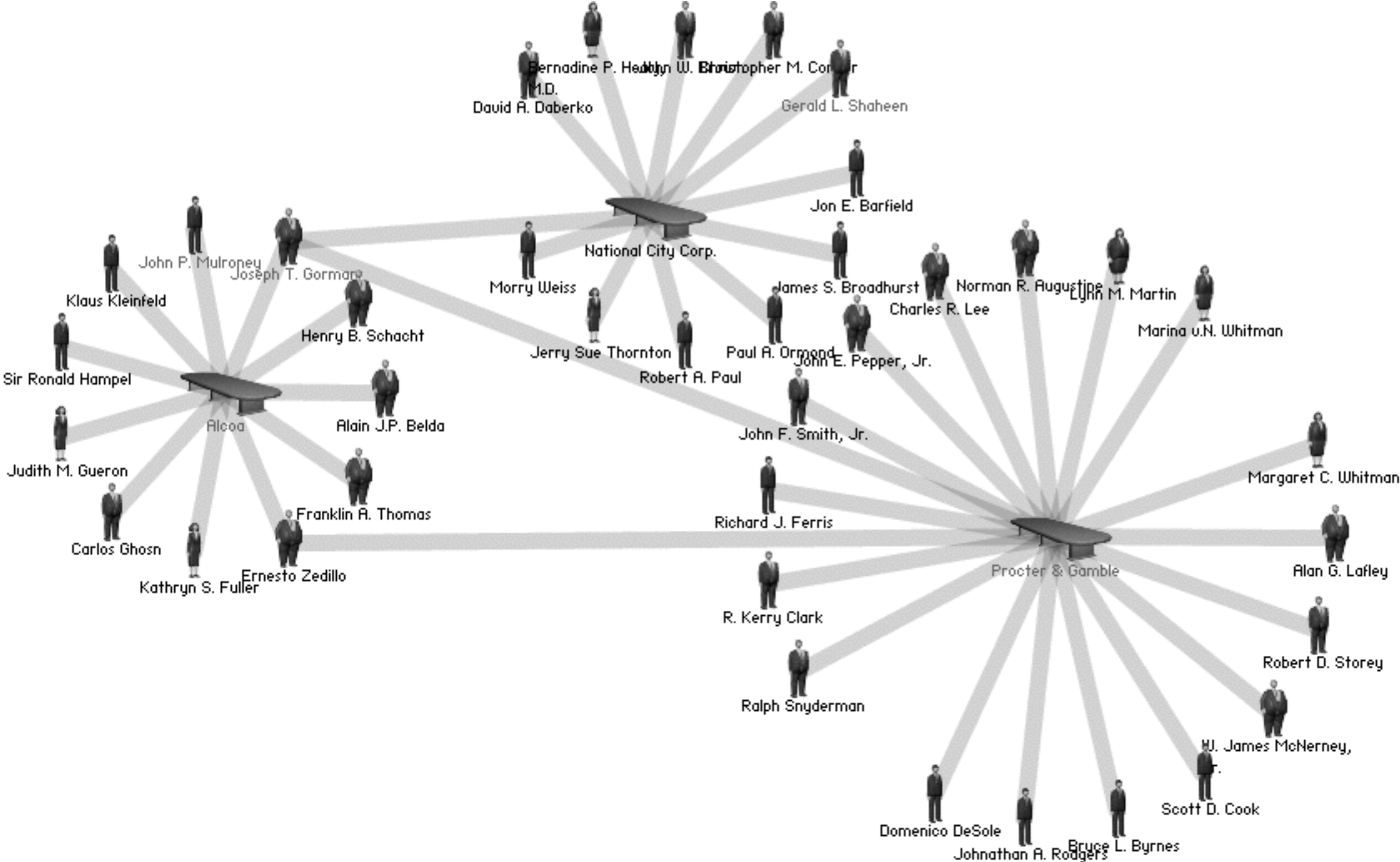




TheyRule.net

THEY RULE 2004 -

- COMPANIES
- DIRECTORS
- INSTITUTIONS
- LOAD MAP
- SAVE MAP
- CLEAR MAP
- FIND CONNECTION
- ADD NOTE
- LOG-IN | SIGN-UP
- PRINT MAP
- HELP
- ABOUT

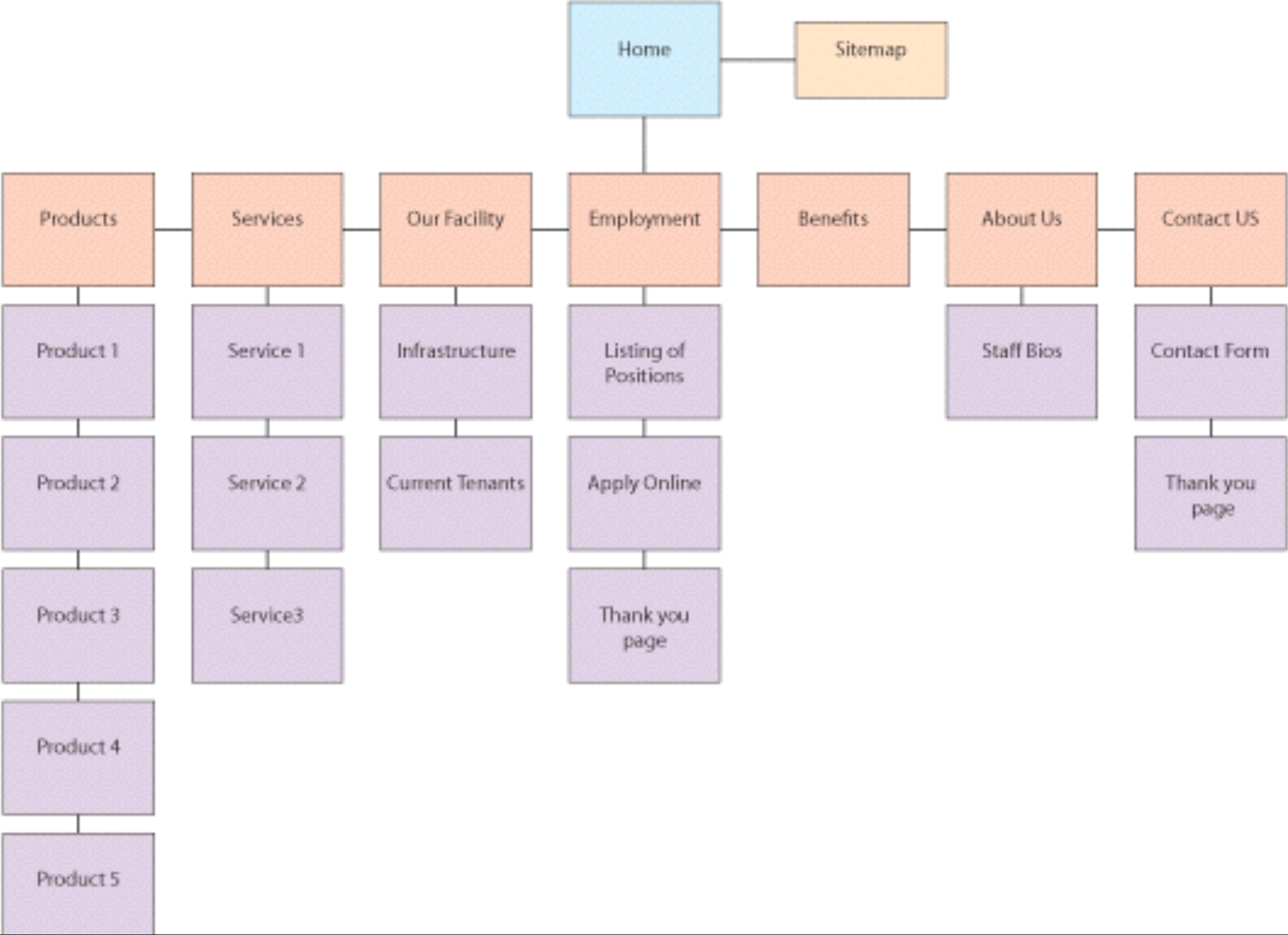


It's about communication

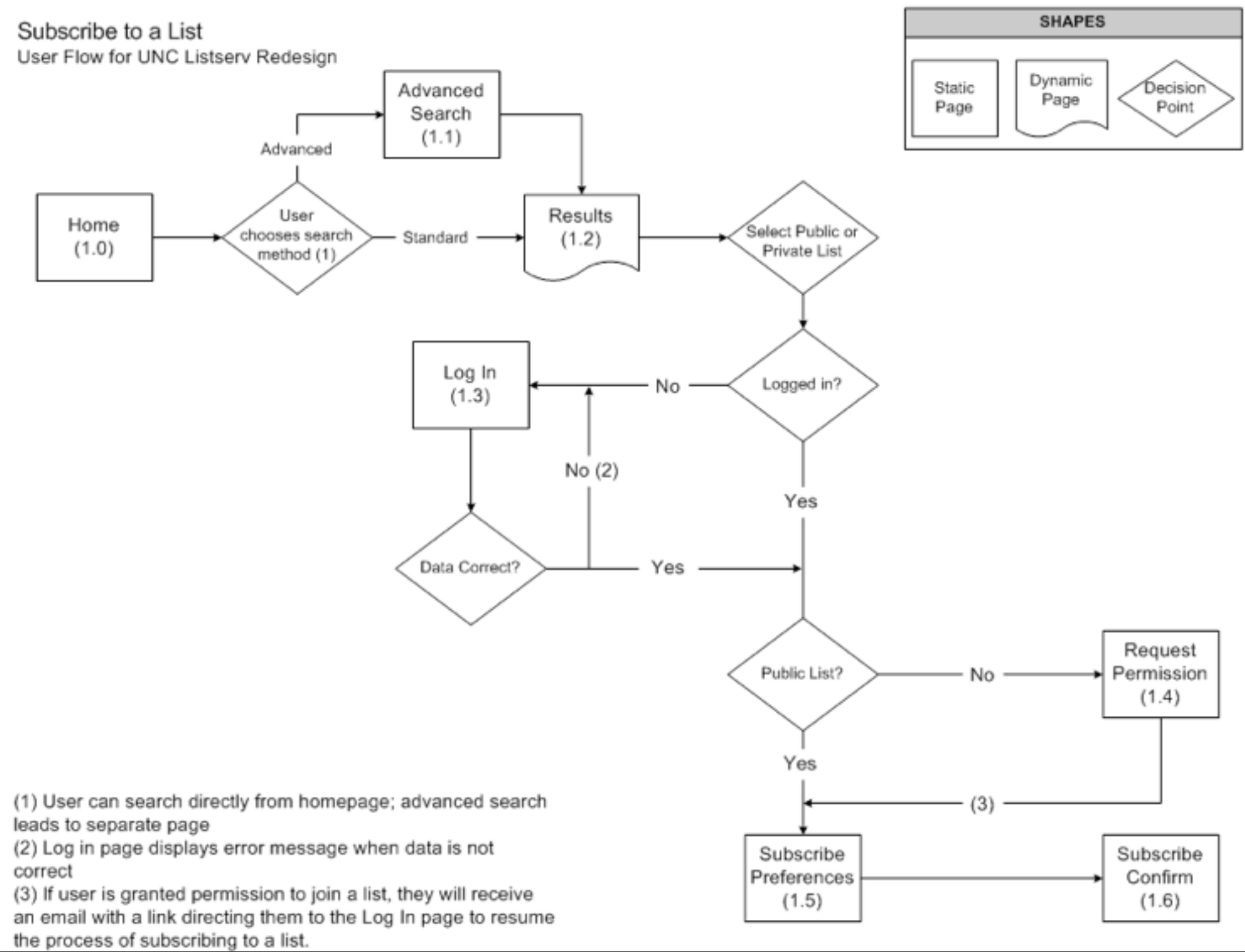
- Like other methods and documents we have learned, we are **telling a story**
- The power is in the telling, and sometimes you do that in front of the audience, while other times you have already written it.

For our purposes conceptual models are not...

They are not site maps



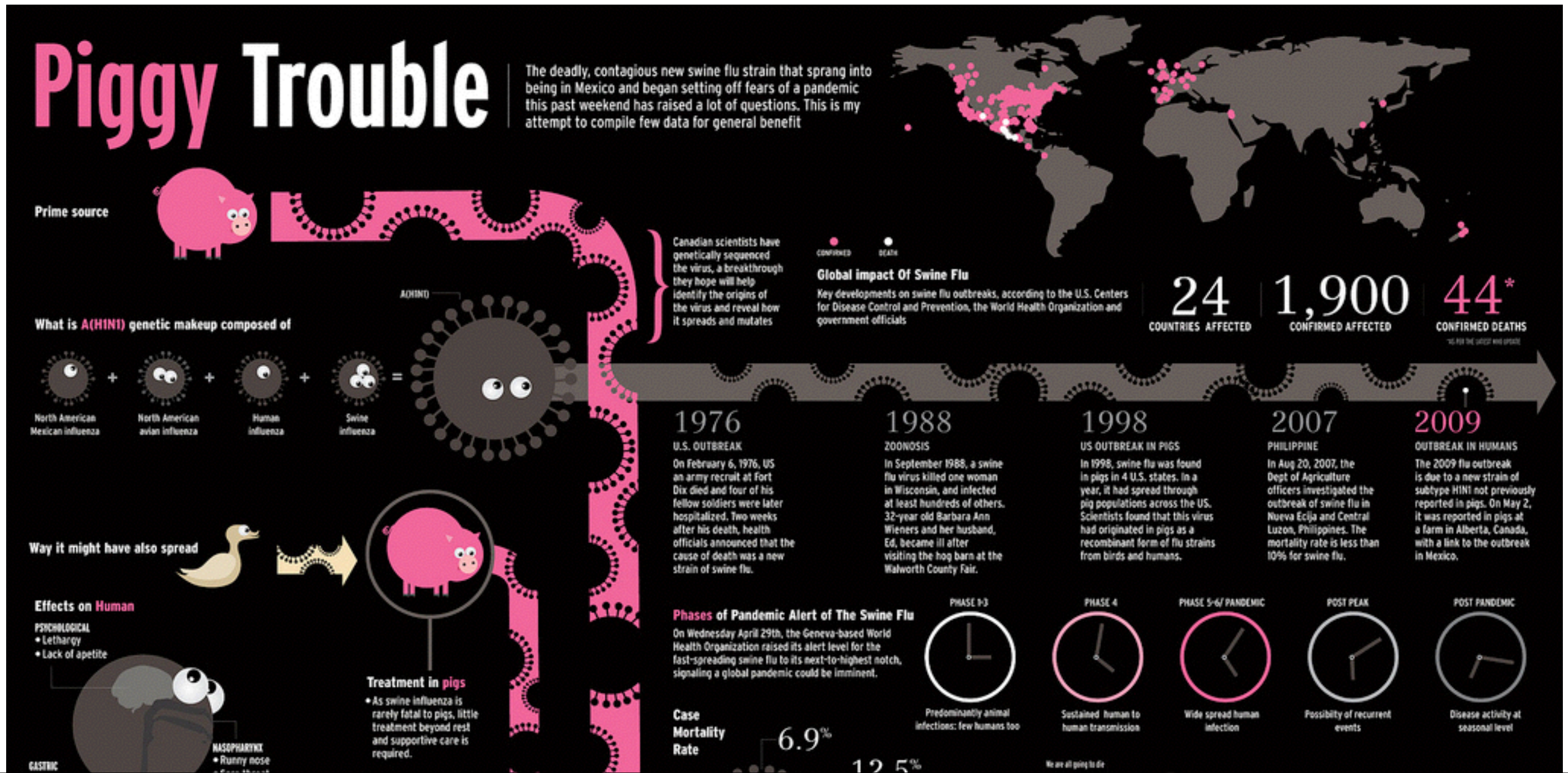
They are not flow charts



They are not graphs/charts



They are not infographics

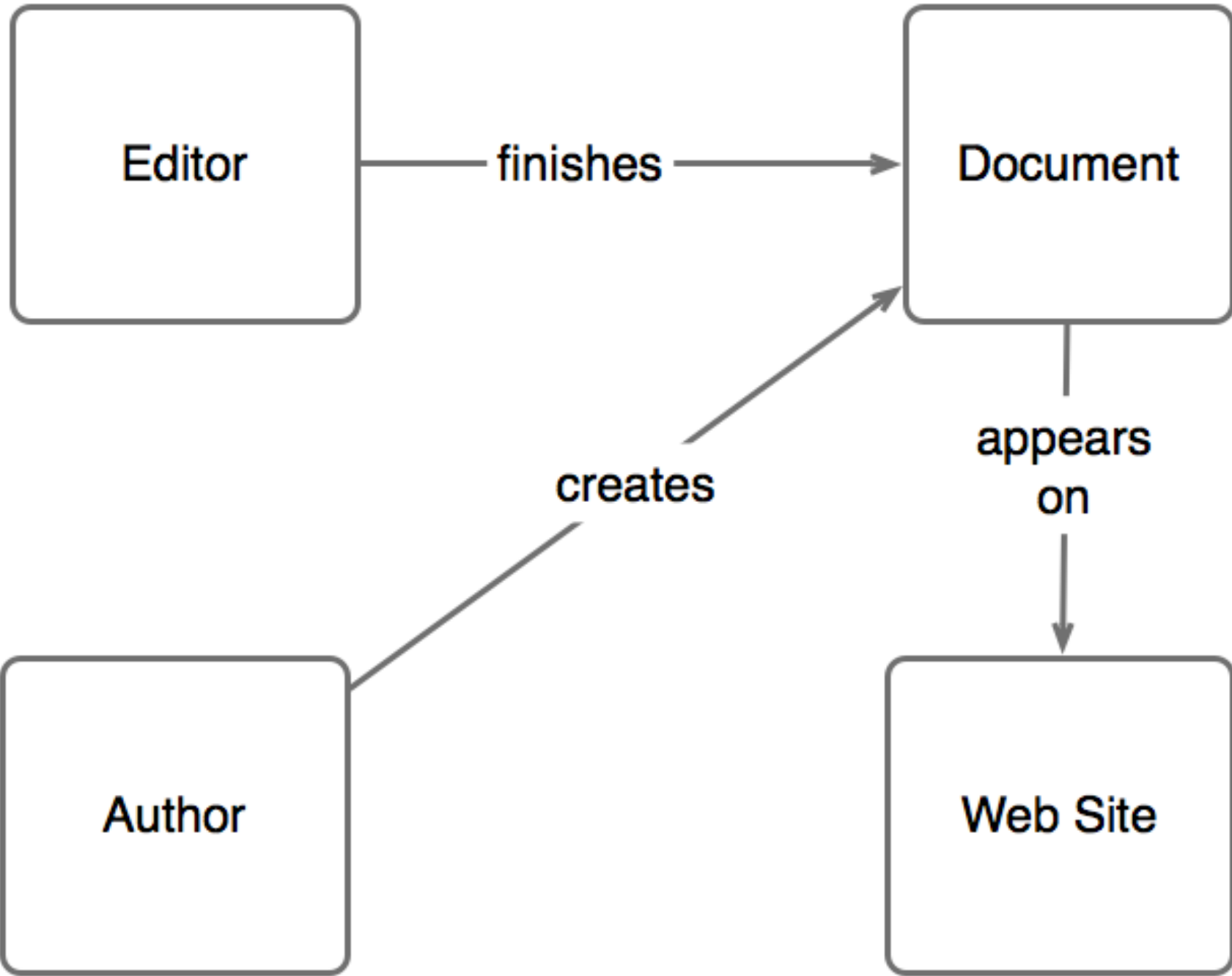


But it's less about strictness of format

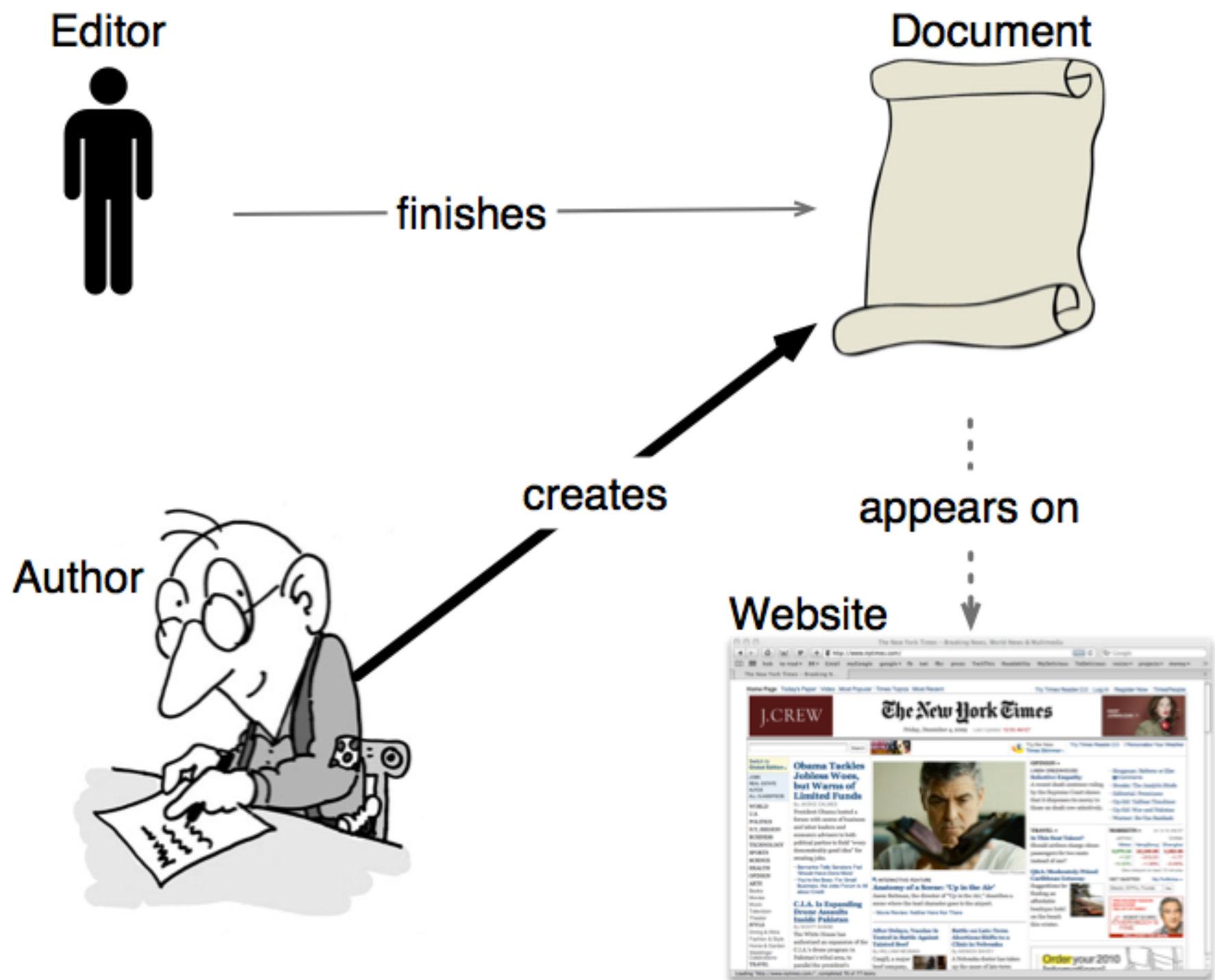
- There are very few rules when creating conceptual models
- Nodes are flexible
- Connections are flexible
- Sometimes you group instead of connect with lines

Conceptual Modelling Part 2 – How To

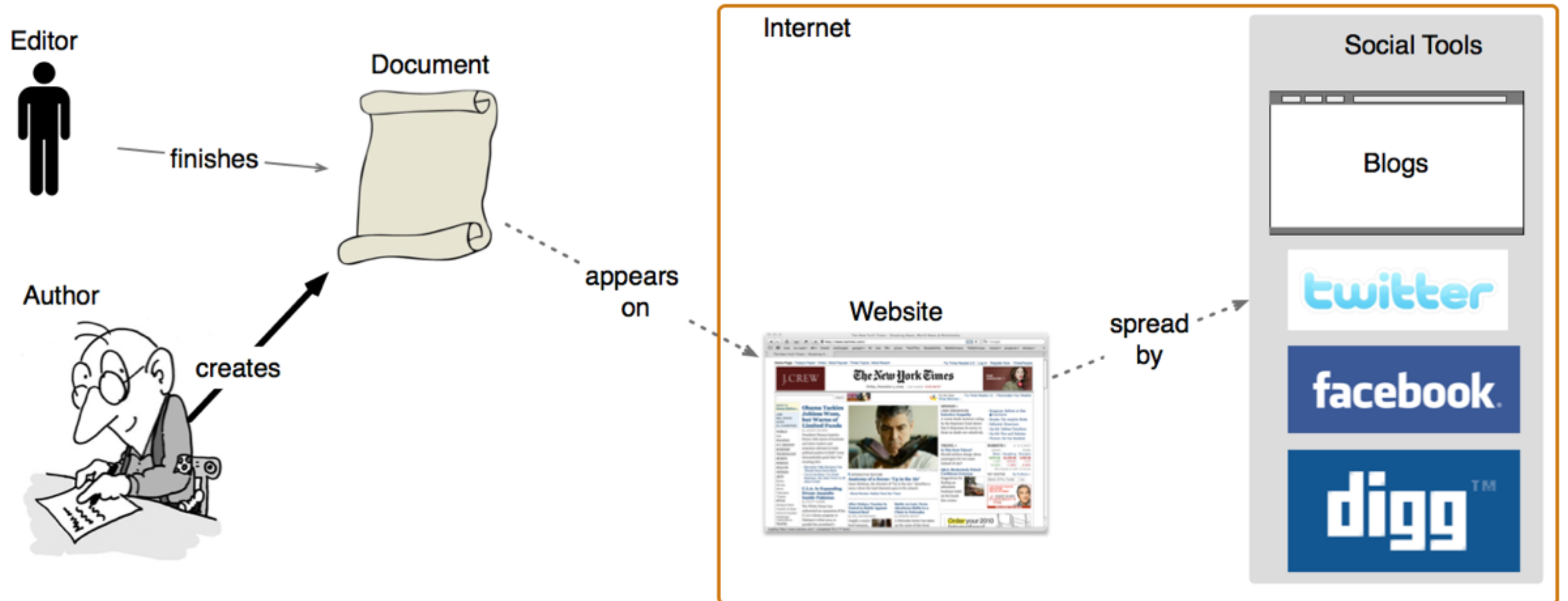
Bare Minimum



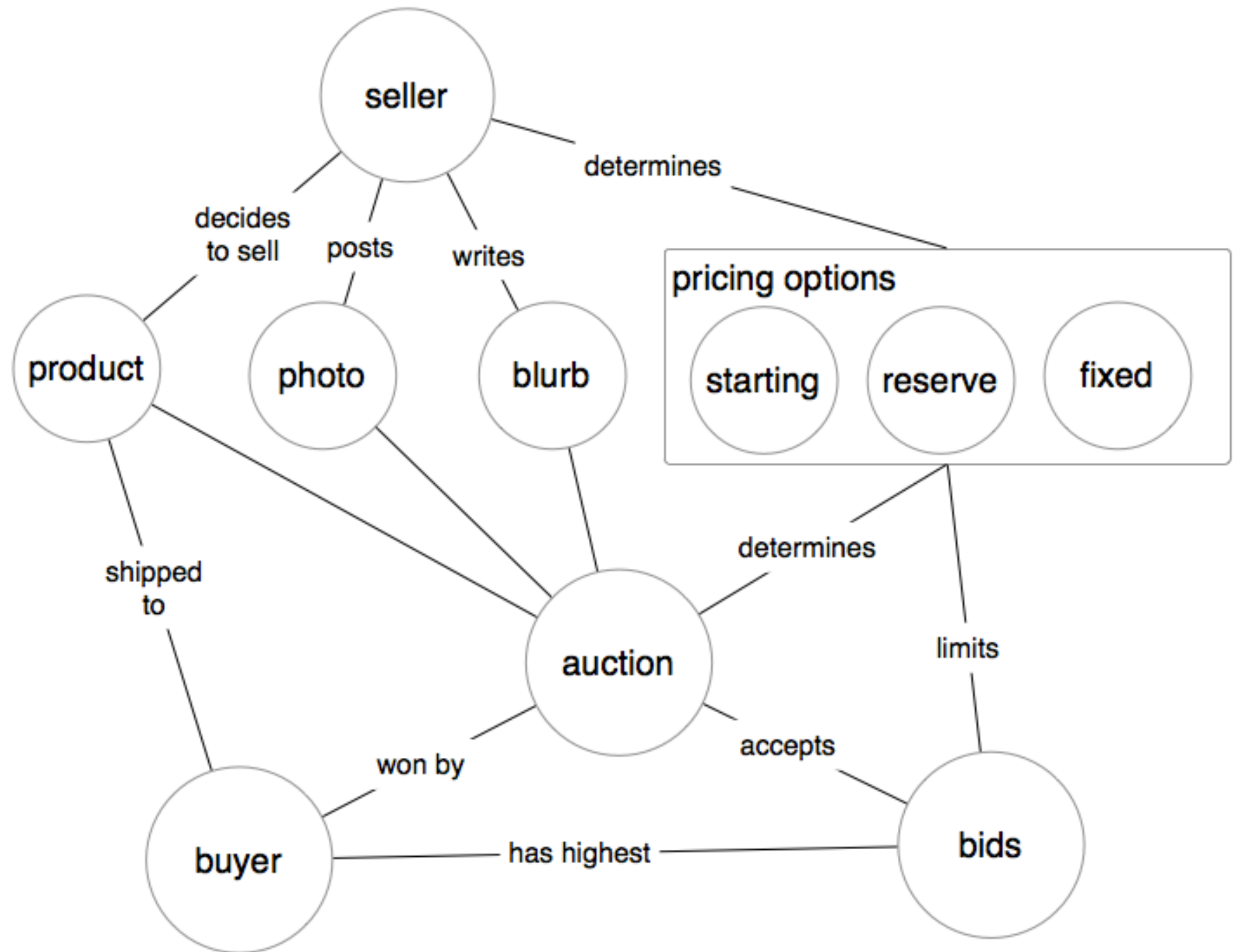
Adding More Detail



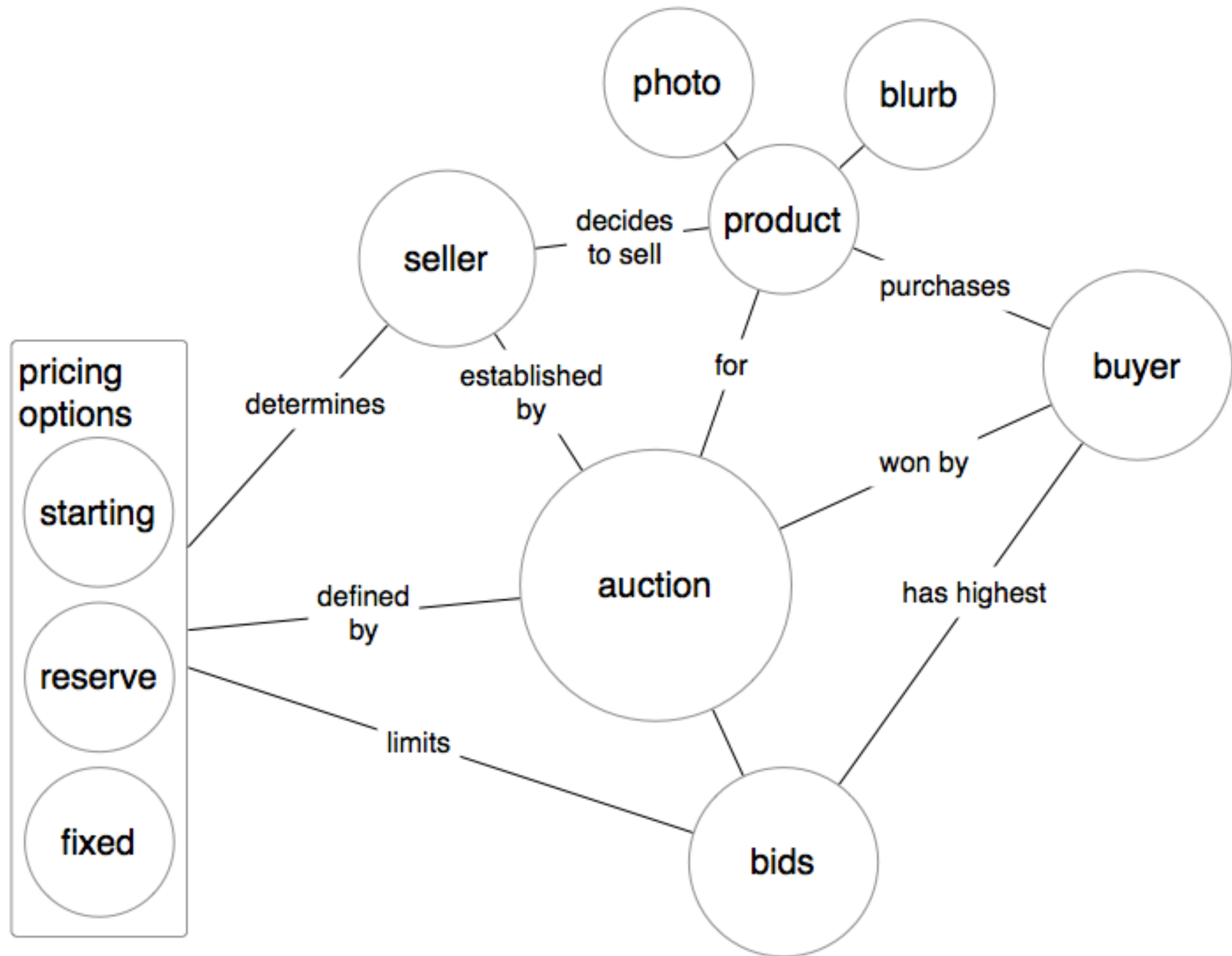
More Dimensions



Layout can inform



Grouped & Centralized



Have a Message

- eg High School Web Site “Though there are a lot of different people and groups in this high school, we can boil the site down to a few main content types”
- eg Musical Instruments “What are the different ways people look for a musical instrument and what criteria do they use to determine whether they’ll buy it?”
- **Hardest part is deciding what to leave out**

Nodes

- Start with nouns
- Normalize your nodes
 - Remove what is not essential to the message
 - Whole vs parts - can sometimes remove one or the other
 - Avoid node growth, maybe use separate diagrams for large and separated clusters

Connections

- Economize your connections
- You can leave out connections if they are not central to your message or purpose

Potential Pitfalls in Concept Model Creation

- Balance concept and design: remember that the design is the 'end', the model is the means
- Keep concept in perspective to keep UX simple
- Build practical models