



Figure 1.1

The nature of contemporary problems.

“NETWORKED”

The networked nature of today’s problem situations means that they potentially influence each other constantly—as we saw in the first case study, where the rise of the Internet confounded the government’s efforts to reach consensus on the route of the railway line. What other people are doing in seemingly unrelated fields might cause an effect that severely influences your problem field and options for action. Examples abound—and we will see another example of an unexpected stakeholder influencing the issues around social housing later in this chapter.

“OPEN, COMPLEX, DYNAMIC, AND NETWORKED”

All together, these four properties of the new problem situations severely challenge the assumptions behind our conventional ways of solving problems. We will see in chapter 7 that any one of these is already enough to pull the rug out from under most conventional problem-solving strategies, and the case studies above have shown that they can be really disconcerting in combination.