

Social Architecture 101

by

Pieter Hintjens

2012-12-04 #TechMesh

SoftwareAndSilicon.com

Questions

- How can we be so stupid (for smart apes)?
- How come the same people, organized differently, can be 1000x more or less effective?
- What makes the difference?
- Can we understand what's going on?
- Can we use this knowledge for benefit?

Adhocracy

- Smart self-organization around problems
- For 10K-25K generations
- Consistent across domains and geography
- Patterns based on human social instincts
- Widely applicable
- Software is a tangible test-bed

Effectiveness

- Speed with which we can identify problems
- Accuracy of this process
- Cost of this process
- Speed of organization around new problems
- Accuracy, speed, cost of answers
- Cost of failure

Challenges

- Complexity
- Structure
- Friction
- Individual limitations

Solutions

- Simplicity
- Self-organization
- Smoothness
- Collaboration

Basic Patterns

- Impossible mission
- Engagement by choice
- Freedom of access
- Weak or no group identity
- Well-written rules
- Fair authority

Basic Patterns

- Space for conflict
- Freedom to choose tasks
- Decentralization = diversity
- Open and transparent
- Free workspaces
- Remixable knowledge

Advanced Patterns

- Regular structure = scalability
- Smooth learning curve = growth
- Measurable success
- Competition
- Clear enemy
- Sense of humour

Identity

- Real names vs. forced anonymous
- Identity hierarchy
- Meritocratic ranking
- Metrics for success
- Controlling spammers and trolls
- Personal ownership

Core Architecture Process

- Define a compelling mission
- Create structures for collaboration
- Invest in core 'seed' product
- Feed structures with short term problems
- Create competition for status
- Promote most active participants
- Develop codes for knowledge sharing
- Act as benevolent dictator

Less is More

- Do the least that probably works
- Perfection precludes participation
- Use free cloud services
- Use existing legal frameworks
- Power structures are liquid cement

Applications & Examples

- Open source communities like ZeroMQ
- Product development for businesses
- Political flash crowds (not movements)
- Science (human genome project)
- Wikipedia
- The Web in general

Next Steps

- Read Software and Silicon
- Think about it
- Apply to the groups you're involved in
- Use for your own new groups
- *Thank you for being here!*