**Chat Notes from ODI Online Event on Networks**

**#odinetworks**

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[**Simon**](http://www.tanglerlive.com/user/Simon)

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Hello to all the webinar atendees! Welcome to the back-channel. Use this chat service to connect to other participants.

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Hello!

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Hello!

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Hi folkssmile

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9 minutes ago

:)

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Hello there (Hi Nancy - It's Meena)

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Hallo!

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Hey friends!

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Hello everyone!

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Where's my popcorn

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hello everyone

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Chocolate and popcorn Carl!

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6 minutes ago

laughing

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Sipping on a lime milkshake

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Hi everyone:)

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Hello people

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Hey Adrian

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Will this webinar be downloadable?

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Hi Carl!

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Yes, it is being recorded and ODI will share link, Joe

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:) great!

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Just waiting !

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Hello everyone

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We are about to rock and roll, folks!

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Early doors for you Nancy - great you're in for the fishbowl

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I'm almost awake !

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hurray:)

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We jump into a new experiment for ODI!

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I feel I should make fish sounds at this time!

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Bloop.....

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hashtag for Twitter #odinetworks

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testing...

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FYI here is something from the archives: http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/projects/ppa0103/Index.html

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Hi Rick

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Hi everyone. This is Denise Melvin from FAO. I am mangeing the FAO IFAD Knowledge Sharing in Asia Programme. We aim to set up networks for people working on IFAD funded programmes and offer KS face to face training workshops.

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Great idea to introduce yourselves. Brava, Denise!

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The poll reminds me of the very interesting dance of "roles" in networks

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more updates literature: http://www.odi.org.uk/work/programmes/rapid/topics/details.asp?id=496&title=networks-partnerships

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But how many are we ?

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Facilitators always in some way implicitly members, eh?

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We are 69 participants in the GoTo Meeting

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RPC = Research Program Consortium (DFID speak)

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RAPID - Research iand Policy in Development at ODI Overseas Development INstitute

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For you network and community geeks, I'd love any contributions to a loose and messy list of favorite articles -- https://onlinefacilitation.wikispaces.com/Communities+and+Networks+Reading+List

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Wondering how many people have joined the webinar ?

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70 so far

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We are up to 70 Hedwig

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70 attendees

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:)

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Great

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Hello From Nepal!

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Misquote of Dr. ML King this week great example of power and challenges of networks - Ramalingan. Great start! #odinetworks

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Hey Shishir, welcome

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Hi! Hello from Geneva. This is Jasmin Suministrado from the ILO Microinsurance Innovation Facility. I am Knowledge Officer of the Facility and we're setting up and maintaining networks and communities.

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welcome, Jasmin... great to see you and ILO!

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Idea of networks replacing that of nation and machine perhaps - good head food

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Hm, I think networks preceeded machines, but new developments of technology offer us new ways of participating and visualizing networks, eh?

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Ian Thorpe from UNICEF here - see a few familiar names in the participants list - hello to all

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So an old form in a new context/era

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Hi Ian

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I wonder if it is useful to separatly define/understand networks and networking

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just to remind you that the powerpoints will be sent around afterwards. we are also recording the webinar.

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Hello from India! Myself is Mihir Joshi and I am working for ADRRN (Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network) main objective of our network is to build reselience communities across Asia

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Being able to visualise networks that extend beyond each persons location is newly powerful

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Hi Mihir - thanks for the intro. Carl, I'm nodding in agreement

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Hello from Brazil. I am a management consultant and very interested in networks and development issues (mainly Local Economic Development). I have written some articles about it (i.e. Urban Studies and the Service Industries Journal) and eventually want to develop a methodology for applying it on the field (either in the corporate setting or for local economic development)

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CPD = comunity, domain and practice

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Bemvindo, Renato. Links to your articles?

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HI All.  Jared Raynor from TCC Group in Philadelphia, USA.  Delighted to be a part of the conversation.

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Eva Schiffer http://netmap.wordpress.com/

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Good morning, everyone!  Greetings from Rio de Janeiro!

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Hola Diego!

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An interesting assessment out of US non profits and networks http://www.knightfoundation.org/connected\_citizens/index.dot

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Hi Nancy! Glad to be here!

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slide show not keeping up

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Hello Nancy: They can be found at:

<http://usj.sagepub.com/content/47/9/1949.abstract> and<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db>=all~content=a926601338

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Obrigado, Ranato

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Wenger, Trayner and DeLaat in a forthcoming paper on evaluating CoPs has a nice defintiion that I'm liking: "We will use the term "community" as a shortcut for community of practice, which we define as a learning partnership among people who find it useful to learn from and with each other about a particular domain. They use each other's experience of practice as a learning resource. And they join forces in making sense of and addressing challenges they face individually or collectively.  
We use the term network as a shortcut for social network. The term refers to a set of connections among people, whether or not these connections are mediated by technological networks. They use their connections and relationships as a resource in order to quickly solve problems, share knowledge, and make further connections.  
We see communities and networks as two aspects of the social fabric of learning rather than separate structures."

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oooh, too much information

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And some interesting case studies on SNA which I think carry lessons for us in Development, even though they are out side of Dev. http://www.robcross.org/research\_casestudies.htm

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(Pete, thanks for saying that. I'll slow down)

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What are differences between community of practice and networking?

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Any link for Wenger, Trayner and DeLaat paper?

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No link yet. Soon I hope!

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Shishir, what is your perception of the differences (or similarities) ? :=-)

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Etienne Wenger just did a workshop with us on his value creation framework mentioned by Nancy. Here is a blog post I put up on this eearlier today: <http://kmonadollaraday.wordpress.com/2011/05/05/demonstrating-value-in-communities-of-practice/>

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mmm, self-organised criticality

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Thanks Ian. Can't wait till more of this bubbles out.

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The missing Ghandi paradox

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I think there are really important intersections between community approaches and network approaches. I hope they are siloed!

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Link to Ben's comment on value creation and the work of Allee, etc.

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CoP is also networking but with peoples with similar profession.Is there any other thing that are more specific for CoP?

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Can I get copy of presentation latter on  
?

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Shishir, for me there is a continuum of boundedness. CoPs are often (not always) more clearly bounded, but they ARE a form of networks... just a particular form. (My definitions... and I don't think we are all sharing the same definition.

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Yes, the slides will be shared

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Also, we don't have easy tools to analyze networks and harness that potential, do we?

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Thanks.

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Have you played with NODE xl? Open source. We have a team playing with it now. Marc Smith is also very generous with his time to share it.

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<http://nodexl.codeplex.com/>

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I have really seen a shift here in the US to an interest in a network perspective from funders. Even some of the large, international dev funders (but I'd love to see more)

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Hello Diego. you should talk with Rick Davies. He has developed some pretty cool tools for analyzing and evaluating networks (including data collection).

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applause

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07:33 AM

cool

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the four tools that ben shared, i think it will be good to be able to learn how to apply those tools in the networks we are members of so we can assess and have inputs on how to further improve the networks

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I'm not sure if I uses it in the past... I was thinking about building automatic network representation form info available in the open network, and recommendation systems based on content analysis and network topology, for example...

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NodeXL can pull in Twitter, FB, etc data.

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Great presentation and looking forward to join the collective learning process !

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Good presentation.

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I'll look into it!!

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Just now starting to play with it, but our groups first experiment which was around referrals for children with special health care needs was REALLY interesting. It "changed" the converstion. Eva Schiffers NetMap is another example and very different approach.

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which is the url

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I liked the analogy to Game Theory - we are keen for "rules of thumb" that help us in our day to day

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I am interested if there is something like Cell phone networking?

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Janet, do you know Amy Jo Kims work on Games?

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Ruggiero - url for which? I can dig up and post.

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Shishir, do you mean using mobiles for social networks?

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Yes.

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There is work w / smallholder farmers in E AFRICA that uses mobiles to share market data which I do think can be considered a network based approach. IFAD funded. Anyone here have a link to that?

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No Nancy, would be interested to see it - as long it's light on the theory;)

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Cell Phone Networking like Frontline SMS: www.frontlinesms.com/

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Thank you.

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It is light on theory. I'll find the link, Janet. It really was a "lightbulb" for me to look at game theory as a way to design interaction opportunities

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that would be great, thanks.

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<http://www.slideshare.net/Startonomics/putting-the-fun-in-functional-presentation>

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MxIT in South Africa, and elsewhere now, is probably the most dynamic mobile-based social network

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Excellent example.

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though the spread of Internet able phones and Facebook 0 is transforming the landscape

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People often set up networks when they really primarily want a marketing / communications effect but think it should be called a network now

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The hidden costs of networking?

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Sorry if people are having trouble hearing Enrique. I'm afraid I cannot turn his microphone up. Time to turn your volume to 11 I'm afraid.

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This confusion I'm dealing with every day but it's a matter of knowing your mantra !

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THe current slide is excellent - sounds exactly like what happens here:(

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costs of networks, or costs of networking or net working

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For those who resonate with this slide, you may enjoy this blog. http://workingwikily.net/

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Ohh, the "expected results"! :)

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Tip #1: focused and simple +++

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cost of networking vs cost of not networking?

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This concept of over-engineered--seems to imply a desire for more of a coalition than a network in many of these cases.

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I know the feeling Ian, but I think sometimes it's what networks think that our expectations are (as a funder)

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Over engineering also a hang over of web 1.0 bespoking as opposed to distributed web 2.0 presencing

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I like that Carl

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@Marian I agree.  However, sometimes people get the mandate to "network" along with everything else.  Such strategy usually falls apart..

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bespoking vs presencing

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Janet - actually we would just settle to have some funding:) we have expectations from sponsors without funds for them

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Over Engineered means less user friendly?

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a project I am working on formed a network of professionals from different organizations to deliver some research outputs. We are seen that however there are agreements between rganizations for the participation and outputs, there is no institutional arrangments that allows people to engage more, having time to reflect, learn, share, etc. we are working on types of incentives and arrangments to allow networks to function better.

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or does Over Engineered mean designed as opposed to emerging?

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The tug between the vertical of the org and the horizontal of the cross boundary collaboration? The reward and control is in the verticle, eh?

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Catherine - can it mean both?:) (waving)

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Network Functions Approach <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/579.pdf>

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Oh, would love to hear more from Simon about epxressing the VALUE of a network approach.

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I can't hear.

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hiya! greetings from brighton - so engrossed forgot to introduce myself!

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Good to "see" you Catherine!

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over engineering: have a look at the ToRs of some donors who not only ask for projects to deliver certain outcomes but also detail HOW these will be achieved.

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(when I see Carl, Pete and Katherine in the same "room" I think of a certain KM4Dev gathering and single malt scotch!)

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shome mishtake surely

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Hi Mihir J! Great to have you here - I know ADRRN well, Manu and Jemilah are good friends, and I helped facilitate the 2008 annual meeting.

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Funder -- particularly grant managers -- do they have the time and attention for a more reflective, iterative approach? Aren't those $&%($\*\*& ToRs a symptom of that as well, as much as a philosophy of funding?

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Hah

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I like this slide, but I can also recall examples where in both cases the secretariat is much less. Maybe I'm into less structured networks!:)

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Carl put it beautifully at a OneWorld Peer Exchange

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Ya Ben I know that we are working on outcome of that meeting which you had in Nepal it really helped us a lot

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The secretariat does not have to be separate. it can well be a member. or made up of various members.

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the importance of humility in believing in the value of iteration

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++ to both onthinktaks and Pete

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and what donor will fund a gradualist, emergent, humble, iterative approach to a constantly changing problem?

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Link to OneWorld Peer Exchange?

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Pete - a small donor??

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I haven't met any!

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Pete - or a collaborative of donors, as in ALNAP?

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we had over 50 seperate funders

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It is interesting-- the model of things like Social Ventures Partners could incubate that approach at a local level

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(this feels so like the back row of a lecture theatre)

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donors who are after lessons learned and not just numbers and figures

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But how often can you be honest with donors about how little we actually know, how the project will develop

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in emerging sectors, such donors exist

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recommendation to funders: first fund various networks to 'build a community'... give them time, watch closely and see if they develop and mature. THEN see what ELSE they can do. maybe amplify, maybe, convene, maybe mobilise resources.

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(IKMemergent managed it with one sympathetic DGIS funder - but no more)

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@ pete -  a network which is supported as part of a much bigger programme - eg IMEdiary Network developed as a part of a funding programme to IDS... possible issues around confilct of interests and sustainablity , we havent managed to yet get any other members to build supportin gthe network into THEIR core funding (perhaps because it is significatntly less) - although they do contribute in kind.

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I find some networks I work with are engaging in a number of functions, and rarely one dominates

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but maybe a network is not the best way of working.

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(I still worry about a definitions problem here. )

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I think we are often using the word network in different ways. ;-(

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too many ways

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i agree. and even organizations have their own definitions

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@onthinktanks - you see to be successfully autotweeting out of the chat room. How did you do that?

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no idea

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Network is best way of working if we find the common intrest between all the members and most important is to show them the benefits or incentives of network

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Even in the presentation, at times it feels like we're not talking about networks but something way more structured, right?

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it's on the menu butto

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ah. no, i signed up using my twitter account (I am enrique mendizabal, btw)

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last on the right

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yes... and this is prevalent in development

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TO diego: yes, you are right

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@Nancy - what made you think we had different definitions?

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I guess your followers knew that, Enrique:)

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@Pete thanks. It takes a village to raise an idiot.

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Unclear boundaries..?

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shared values is very important point

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Catherine, there are BIG N networks - named, described and this is what we hear orgs and funders talk about. There are little n networks - which Simon is talking about now. But in fact, bounded groups are also a form of networks if we go off of the basic definition Enrique and Simon put in their paper.

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(fascinating how the dynamism of this conversation makes it so hard to tune back into the measured delivery of the webinar)

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A CoP is a form of network.

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What Simon is talking about now is very relevant to what I've experienced

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Anne - I will capture the chat transcript and send to ODI

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are social movements networks?

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I would think so, Janet. What do you think?

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(speaking of definition problems)

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Sure Janet

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This is a huge question that seems to haunt me everywhere

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:)

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well... they are, and they are not, I think.

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not always, janet, I think

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(FYI we are up to 86 people in the GoToMeeting

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they sure are "messy" (using Ramalingham's word)

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Hi everyone, Subarna Mathes from Innovations for Scaling Impact (iScale) – wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that we are just about to put forward some of the work we have done with IDRC and other partners on networks, particularly looking at the lifecycle of networks, and using this lifecycle approach to help assess the impact of networks – relevant to this current conversation about the functions of networks. Happy to share with anyone interested in this, just as a resource:)

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Excellent presentations very relevant to my works

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and as ben suggested... we jump into networks without much consideration of what they are (and are not) and how they work. we put lots of money and effort into these organisations with little thinking. based on assumptions.

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How can we measure the value of Network?

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Please do share the link SubarnaMathes

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Subarna, please share, yes

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What about impact? indicators?

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Here's a simple rule of thumb: for simple problems, need a project. For complicated problems, a programme. For complex, evolving problems, need networks... does this work at all?

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impact of what?

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on what?

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See the work of June Holley, Valdis Krebs and Jack Ricchiuto and Rick Davies on evaluation!!

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why make complex even more complex, ben?

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Ben, is that sort of related to the Cynevin framework?

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too linear ben

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08:04 AM

smile

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lol

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08:04 AM

:)

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why not look for simple (rule of thumbs) solutions when dealing with complex situations? the combination of simple solutions MAY be complex but i feel we overcomplicate trying to come up with something complex

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08:04 AM

smile

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LIke the idea of big N networks and informal emergent ones -useful expression of the differences

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Network versus CoP Communities of practice

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I'm nodding at Rick's definition. Actors connected by kinds of relationships.

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Which would then say CoPs are a form of CoPs... one usually charactarised by core/periphery if mapped

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And we are taking this and making it a bit more formal (becasue these are our clients)

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hard to think of a situation where it doesn't fit

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.Knowledge sharing part is more prominent in CoP than network.

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Doesn't that open up for Ben's observation that overuse of network term to the point that it means nothing or everything to everyone?

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Actors connected by kinds of relationships sounds like a description of 'society' - too broad for me

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++ Nancy

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thats why we need a more nuanced vocabulary than "networks!"

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Yeah.

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Use a word way too much and it will lose its meaning...

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except networks works in some contexts

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More nuanced I like, less diverse I don't

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I agree with Carl

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I think including hirearchy in network is stretching it, for defintional rather than practical ends

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on vision/objective, yes, this should evolve. and as simon says, ideally one should work with networks that are already existing (relation are there). but the reality we work with is one in which networks are set up to respond to an objective.

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I think the definition of networks is changing with diverse issues and the ways we use to deal with them

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agree on having more nuanced undersandings not least because sometimes people with one kind of idea of networks can be quite dismissive of other kinds of networks and how they work - acknowledging difference might help more constructive dialogue.

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can't we add adjectives to 'networks'

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although there are networks that do develop this way: in Ecuador, AROG and la red Tejedora developed in response to external threats (new NGO legislation and economic crisis)

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like this smile

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like good, effective, inefficient etc

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:)

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so artificially constructed networks are rarely effective networks

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though they may evolve - or some people within them may decide to evolve - into an effective network

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I agree it poses challenges to TOC approach, but is possible and frequently forces those engineering networks to reflect on what tehy are really trying to do.

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the challenge for evaluating networks is that often the focus of the evaluation is NOT THE NETWORK but the impact the network is trying (or being asked) to achieve.

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unless you explicitly say that part of impact is the shorter-term things like relationships, info exchange, energy, etc.

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I have to go... shedual power cut off in my country.. Thank you very much for inviting in this great event.frown

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If Al Qaeda is a network, then Osama was on top of the hierarchy! So there might by hierarchy in networks!

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From Twitter: #odinetworks here is what we are learning about networks <http://packard-foundation-oe.wikispaces.com/> From Stephanie McAullif

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I'm wondering if we should go for this  volontary distinction as partcipating in networks should be part and parcel of the work/deliverables of any profesional working in development cooperation.

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+++ on Rick's comment on participatory approaches

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Re. network functions approach: it seems the network functions approach can be useful in formal, hierarchical "culture" (for lack of better word). I wonder how useful it is in other settings?

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Like participatory approaches for evaluating, mapping networks

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Hearn and Medizabal: Not everything that connects is a network

How has the Network Functions Approach been used, in the planning, implementation, or evaluation of networks?

"These network functions can be used to test whether a network strategy is appropriate"

How else would support and agency networks differ, apart from actors relationships to the secretariat?

What sort of relationships between members?And between members and non-members?

"...networks need to facilitate a shared vision to recognise and exploit motivations, ensuring they add value to the overall network" If so, how?

In networks agreement on objectives is more of an outcome than a shared starting pointActors x issues networks can help

Has there been any use of older literature on relative efficiency of teams and hierarchies?

Hierarchies work best with stable decomposable problems e.g. car production linesTeams work best with fluid entangled problems

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maybe not as practical but may help conceptualise what it is. but, then again, why would you want to conceptualise/explain a social network -up to what point?

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as for participatory method of social network mapping, i have used Netmaps [http://netmap.wordpress.com](http://netmap.wordpress.com/)

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Ramalingam: Mind the network gaps

The description of the network hierarchy spectrum is useful

It might be possible to simplify the attributes even further toVoluntary membership, and interaction thereafterDense network of relationships (arising from above)Changing network of relationships (arising from above)

In a network where membership is voluntary, how do you facilitate?

Usefulness of mapping versus navigating distinction

How do you apply ToC approaches to evaluation in a network with voluntary membership?

There is unlikely to be a single ToC about how the network interacts with the rest of the worldIs it possible to construct a composite ToC?

The problem of incomplete data

All network representations are incomplete. Only some actors are included, only some relationships are included. What is important is being transparent about this omissions,Could be argued that SNA descriptions are more open than other types of models and descriptions of what is happening.

The costliness and difficulty of gathering data can be over-stated. There are many different types of sources where network data can be obtained.

Participatory approaches to network mapping and analysis are under-developed, but very relevant in development context (vs academic research)

Re complexity, network models provide a possible means of simulating what happens in complex programs. Simulations occupy a place between theory construction and theory testing. If they produce unrealistic aggregate behaviour, you revise the theory. If they generate realistic behaviour, you go ahead and seek to test components of the theory, especially linkages that make the biggest difference to aggregate behaviour

In Funnell and Roger's book Purposeful Program Theory (page 486) they describe how the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) " recognised that controlled experimentation with the climate system in which the hypothesised agents of change are systematically varied in order to determine the climate's sensitivity to these agents...[is] clearly not possible" Different models of climate change were developed with different assumptions about possible contributing factors. "The observed patterns of warming, including greater warming over land than over the ocean, and their changes over time, are simulated only by the models that include anthropogenic forcing. No coupled global climate change model that has used natural forcing only has reproduced the continental warming trends in individual continents (except Antarctica) over the second half of the 20th century" (IPCC, 2001, p39). See my simple example here: Models and reality: Dialogue through simulation

The critique of ANT as being too all encompassing reinforces the point above about network representations being almost by necessity partial incomplete representations of realityThe value network analysis work has prompted me in the past to think about supply networks in the field of aid, and the need to subject them to more detailed analysis. Here is one visual representation of one NGO supply network presented in the context of a discussion of the measurement and importance of efficiency in aid delivery: "The Worst Question to Ask About Charity"Re future directions

SNA could help describe/measure network forms described by Hearn and MedizabalNetwork membershipCore versus periphery positionsBrokerage roles viz other networksNetwork relationshipsTie strengthMultiplex relationshipsIssue networks e.g. Ghana GPRS governance working group

There is a wide open space for the development of participatory approaches to social network analysis. As I said in an email sent earlier today "In my own opinion, a big weakness of a lot of [academic] SNA is that it considers the actors in the networks that are being investigated to be "dumb": to have no views about the networks that they belong to. [They are just treated as sources of information] There is a relevant phrase here from sociology, re modernism "The social agent within this form of modernity is "a cultural dope", characterised by universality, homogeneity and pushed about by forces outside his control". The alternative is a more participatory form of SNA."

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good point about language from Nancy... this is a big issue in my work... my name is Sarah, i am working in India helping support new Communities of Practice, facilitated by UN agencies

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Mature networks are reslient in the face of funders seeking to drive them toward single outcomes

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Question from Renata Mirulla: I moderate an online Forum where members interact on Food Security issues, through online discussions <http://km.fao.org/fsn/> . We often refer at our members (over 3,000 as of today) as a community, and yes sometimes we also use the work network interchangeablyϑ.  
It is interesting to hear concepts and definitions and to see how far they are applicable or meaningful to this case. On the issue of what is a network, what do you think the features of an online networks are?

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it is the network *metaphor* that is new

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@rick davies could you explain that a bit more?

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Hierarchies said to eventually evolve within big horizontal networks (wikipedia for example)

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networks have been around since day 1, but talking of howthings work in terms of network metaphors is new (late last centrury). In the past more mechanical metaphor were more common

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Following from RIck (from a book i am working on 'on think tanks'): Five evolving metaphors that inspired the philanthropists and policy entrepreneurs who have driven the drive of think tanks can help explain the rise of particular types of think tanks and their services. Smith identifies four (Smith, 1991): 1. The belief that science could treat the symptoms of society as doctors treat patients; 2. The refocus on the causes rather than symptoms of social maladies –leading to the formation of larger more complex research bodies and long term research efforts; 3. The introduction or acceptance of the idea that just as machines could be made more efficient so could societies and so business consultants and efficiency experts made their way into the policymaking space –increasingly privatising, as we have seen, the public interest; and 4. The fourth narrative is one of foundation –or re-foundation- that appears in the U.S. during the Second World War, in Chile after the 1973 coup, and the rise of new think tanks in China after significant economic and political reforms in he 1980s and 1990s: This led first to a focus on understanding the causes or factors that led to a large or significant breakdown of prevailing theories or institutional arrangements as well as the consequences these had on society at large and politics in particular; and then to the deployment of planners, or architects or engineers, to develop new institutions. A fifth one is the Great Conversation (Ricci, 1993) that leads takes a more open approach to policymaking and therefore focuses on mediating and improving the breadth and quality of the debate. ... 6) networks?

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agree with need for more stories of practice!

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Increased exposure to net working changes behaviour (expectation, incentive alignment)

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I thought Nancy was freestyle bongoing

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@onthinktanks: thanks for that--very interesting framing!

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Carl, reading back. Love the language of resillience in networks (and how can we "measure" that?)

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That was with our partners, http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=3495&title=research-policy-networks-ethiopia

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<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=3495&title=research-policy-networks-ethiopia>

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Thanks, Janet

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Carl, get out your bongos and join me. I'm high on green tea

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But we are being pressed to show "impact" - that's where things are headed

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Enrique - when you did evaluations of networks, did you use any kind of ToC? If so, where did it come from?

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Renata, Im copying your question again as I think it is a great one: . On the issue of what is a network, what do you think the features of an online networks are?

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Resilient qualities I guess (broader asset base, multiple benefits, pourous boundaries)

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LOVE hearing the stories of use/design/evaluation of networks #odinetworks

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Hm, Ben's comment makes me think about "what are the patterns of decision-making in different kinds of networks" - since decision making is a very interesting and core human group behavior.

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Network models and Social Frameworks for representing project contexts, plans and outcomes

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Rick: eva not with TOcs. but when have been asked afterwards the question has been to evaluate the communications/influence of the network. so TOC is 'from the network' outwards

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who deteremines how networks are to evolve? who should determine it?

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Shared language is important within the CoP, but less essential / useful as you go out into wider circles of participation around the theme (in our case 'networks')

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in response to chat approx 20 min ago, Please visit <http://www.scalingimpact.net/> for iScale's work on lifecycle of networks - *will be* released in the coming months...

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I suspect that is a contextual question, Jasmin!

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Jasmin... the members?

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Question for Enrique - why does it matter that the quality of the networking itself isn't being evaluated but rather the quality of what the network does - i.e. the extent to which the network has been able to influence policy etc? Isn't that what we should be looking at - i.e. the added value of a network rather than just setting up a network for the sake of 'networking' per se?

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Carl said "Shared language is important within the CoP, but less essential / useful as you go out into wider circles of participation around the theme (in our case 'networks')" #odinetworks

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So larger, open networks are useful containers for using diversity more productively than perhaps smaller, homogeneous groups. #odinetworks

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@sj: this would be for network maximization reasons in my mind--is you can enhance the quality of the networking itself, presumably you could enhance outcomes, no?

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Thanks everyone and congrats to ODI on this interesting webinar!  I'm looking forward to slides and recordings (will this chat be recorded as well?) Gotta run!

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@SJ I copied your question to the GoToMeeting question tool

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SJ: sure. maybe both should be assessed. but not all networks exist to influence policy. some just exist to be there for their members. and that is valuable enough.

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Ate logo, Diego

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Looser, larger networks can accomodate a lack of consensus?

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@nancy: I am very interested in that question of decision making in networks, especially if they mainly communicate virtually. Not much experience in "online decision making". What works, what doesn't work?

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its is the same with think tanks' influence. it assumes that think tanks exist ONLY to change the policy document: create and maintain debate, train future policy makers, connect parties and interest groups, monitor, educate the public, etc. all very valuable.

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i agree Simon - and this gets really confusing when trying to work with folks that have a very "project" mindset, and really struggle to think about getting work done using a different modality and how collaborating/working together through a network or community could help achieve the same objectives better...

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<http://mande.co.uk/special-issues/network-models/> Network models and Social Frameworks for representing project contexts, plans and outcomes                                                          Using stories to increase sales at Pfizer<http://mande.co.uk/2011/uncategorized/using-stories-to-increase-sales-at-pfizer/> (involves use of network analysis)

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@Anne - this is actually very similar in F2F with large and small groups. Group size seems to be a particular influence on decision making practices. So in broad, open networks "decision" making is often more the accumulation of individual action vs collective decisions. IMO

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Thank you for addressing CoP's

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Haha. I'm obsessed with CoPs

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what means IMO?

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In My Opinion.

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(as in Nancy is full of opinions, but not always facts!)

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wink

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while I believe strong civil society or research networks are an end in and of themselves, I think our funders and donors are not satisfied with 10-15 years of support before we can show external impacts. The hard part is that some of the most powerful impacts of networking are the unexpected, and the unplanned

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I completely agree with Nancy,  my experience  to date learns that at the end the inclusion of network functions in the job description of professionals of member organisations is crucial for organising and creating change across the boundaries of organisations/institutions and countries ! We at Agri-ProFocus are working on that now, and we really need to learn more from other experiences. Unfortunately I have to leave you now. I't s a public holiday in Holland and one hour later, so I'm off to the theatre play ; Augustus Oklahoma,  good continuation. Thanks so far,  smile

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Mmmm, back to an earlier question, I think if donors - organisations - funded and supported networking rather than networks it would be more focused and easier to evaluate

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agree ITC's change Cop model

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Networks do always / typically contain communties of practice within them even if not named (keeners, geeks, worriers) IMO

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Jane: ask your network: if funding was cut, would this still exist? are the ties strong enough for the network to continue regardless of the lack of cash?

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I wonder if SNA can help us with some of these definitional problems

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Thanks Nancy, really interesting!

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....and the purpose, the issues that they network is addressing

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Love that power, inclusion and exclusion has come in again. Juicy

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(my last was re Enrique to Jane!)

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K, good event, I have to go

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thanks all

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Within networks to deal with exclusion / elite capture the design needs to be intentionally biased towards addressing / surfacing power

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@Simon, I think SNA can really help us talk about the diversity or similarties of networks. The "snapshot" for me, changes my perception quickly.

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Big N Networks -- control. LIttle n networks - opportunities for inclusion, diversity but perhaps less coherence

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Can someone define "negative tie?" please

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why "less coherence"?

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If there is a power and exclusion issue (technology, language, time, etc.) this leads to inequality within the network. people with more followers get more followers. This is like the market.

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I understood negative tie as being one that through its strength excluded others from bonding on to that link

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But at the same time, you can influence in a wide network in ways that you sometimes can't in a closed, bounded one. Open networks allow people to work around, for example, power centers. In closed, bounded contexts, centralized control is hard to route around.

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so true Ben - which is why i think facilitation can really play an important role to address issues of exclusion (who is there, language used, etc)

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++ agree that there are a lot of variation in patterns in online networks

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There was certainly a bottleneck of translators when journalists were trying to interpret tweets from uprisings in Egypt

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Taking the market metaphor foward and linking to my idea of intentional bias we can use the idea of apporpriate levels of market regulation to achive more sociallly desirable outcomes

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yes

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"boundary maintenance role" Rick Davies @odinetworks

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Onthinktanks, thanks, yes of course you are right. I'm just focused on the role of neworks in influencing policy and practice as I'm currently doing a mid-term review of a project that is about trying to improve governance and accountability. It is working in two different ways - one via networks that have always been networks and haven't previously been involved in managing/implementing formal, externally funded projects, and the other way via organisations that have a long history of implementing discrete, externally funded projects but who are new to networks - and I'm trying to work out how to comment on the relative pros and cons of each 'delivery mechanism'...!

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To be a more transparent moderator we can publish the principles that we use to guide our behaviour in this role

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In the "olden days" when I worked on health policy at a state level here in US, we always used a network approach. We never called it that. I think advocacy work has always been a networked approach, no?

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But this is true for offline networks

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always has been

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yup

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Disruption operated differently depending on the boundedness of the network

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Level playing fields are not level to begin with or permanently, they need constant gardening

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operates, not operated

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<http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/Magazine/articles/The-virtues-of-virtuality> on think nets and the difficulty of setting up multi-anything networks

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(will have to do a link harvest from this chat afterwards!)

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exactly... the Communities I work with, does not allow for posting of designation, there is lots of effort made to bring a balance - in terms of gender, types of practioners, and helping everyone participate... to break down existing boundaries, to enable all members to interact

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Here is my operating principle about online stuff in regards to Enrique's comment: Tools are designed for a group, experienced by an individual. This significantly impacts experience, participation and engagement.

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are there good (and bad) practices in this drive to encourage and enable all members to interact?

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Jasmin, when you say "all" can you give me a context of numbers? The purpose? Because I think the answer is contextual.

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how does a moderator encourage more participation?

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What KIND of particpation, Sara? I think we need to get more specific!:)

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Neoclasicall economists have a tightly bounded and codified domain to network about (but that's part of the problem with NE - non pourous. You are right that they have it easier.

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Lots of time culture plays a significant role in order to participate and it is very important to understand key agents for particpation from different issues

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well, if an online network, how to encourage more participants to contribute to the discussion, comment on other posts, initiate posts, etc

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Online networks are like the tips of icebergs. Much of what goes on (after a given exchange) is beneath the surface (i.e. not shared publicly via the email list)

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How big is the group Sara? I ask, because in very large groups, you don't want everyone to do this all the time. There is the natural dynamic of a few represent most of the participation and then an implicit goal is to diversify the active pool. IF that is the goal, the we can start thinking of strategies. And some of them are social, some are domain related and some are the "how" or practice. We actually have many options.

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@nancy, yes i agree it's contextual. i was reacting to sarah's comment. but regardless of number of members, my observation is that there are always roles within a network. and participation depends on the roles the members take. of course the bigger the networks are, and the "looser" these are, then the greater the possibility of lesser participation/interaction from other people

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I think it is helpful to think of networks as having a life cycle

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participation in terms of encouraging members to come to face to face events, respond to on-line discussions (sharing their experiences) - idea being to encourage sharing of experiences between members working on similar challenges (challenges being bounded by the spefic thematic areas)

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I agree w/ Rick. We cant make it all explicit and visible. I don't think we could cognitively handle it. The question is how do we bring the most value based on our participation habits, time, attention.

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I agree with Rick, and it is a reason that makes evaluation of impact so difficult

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Jasmin's pointer towards role is an explicit strategy for Sara. When we make roles visible, when we invite participation specifically, people are more apt to respond than to something like "join the conversatioN!"

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Emergent networks are probably quite allergic to the kinds of analysis / external capacity building the ODI framework offers - but very relevant for commissioned networks. Both exist within international development but the latter have more attention.

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So one strategy is focused, time delimited, doable requests for a particular role or response.

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wouldn't we all love to know more about what's happening to the iceberg under the water..

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The second strategy is to focus on building social flow because people interested in the domain are already engaged in the content flow. This is NOT useful in all contexts, but if you look at the work of Heather Gold (improv artist) she has some remarkable insights about what triggers engagement. I need to find a link.

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(Likewise, content strategies are avail/useful, etc. Lots of diverse practices... and yes, they all take time!!!)

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+++ rick's comment on the audio

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can we also have a copy of this chat? lots of nice and interesting links and ideas

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Yeah, I'[ll grab it Jasmin

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thanks nancy!

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Thanks Ben for ADRRN please do visit out website [http://www.adrrn.net](http://www.adrrn.net/)

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thanks nancy

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I'll post on [http://www.fullcirc.com](http://www.fullcirc.com/) as well as send to the ODI guys!

Cool beans. And for those who know me, chocolate beans

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Hey you in the chat room -- feel free to answer the question yourself here in the chat room. Would love to know YOUR network and insights from our shared conversation!!

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i love km4dev too!

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Yes! I've learned a lot from being part of the KM4Dev network:)

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Wow - the Well that was pre-web right

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DItto for KM4Dev!

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I belong to Freecycle Seattle, Carl

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Ben, I like your attention to Nodes -- and it feels complementary to my attention to boundaries. Thanks for helping me expand

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Well was Pre-web, but I joined "late" in 1999

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Your closing lessons here folks?

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Yes, Nancy! My interest is in understanding inter-governmental or inter-institutional networks

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Social network analysis is extremely powerful and sometimes not well understood.

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pelican <http://dgroups.org/Community.aspx?c=3c4b8b5b-d151-4c38-9e7b-7a8a1a456f20>

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Your closing lessons here folks?

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Yes, Nancy! My interest is in understanding inter-governmental or inter-institutional networks

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Social network analysis is extremely powerful and sometimes not well understood.

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pelican <http://dgroups.org/Community.aspx?c=3c4b8b5b-d151-4c38-9e7b-7a8a1a456f20>

[b5b-d151-4c38-9e7b-7a8a1a456f20](http://dgroups.org/Community.aspx?c=3c4b8b5b-d151-4c38-9e7b-7a8a1a456f20)

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How about we create a Practionary on Networks (practical dictionary that can hold multiple definitions of the same words, their history and application)

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**Rick mentioned Pelican Initiative,** which was facilitated by Niels Keijzer

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Hi Christine CGIAR!

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Pelican is great:)

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Niels, my apologies for forgetting his name!

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Agreed, Simon!

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Hi Rick, I have been advocating on SNA after our session in Prague:)

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thank you for this engaging webinar and chat. catch up again with all of you soon.

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Yes thanks very much to you all!

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This session has opened a big window for me- clearer understanding of networks now. Thanks!

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Thanks for a nice webinar are we organizing it again in near future?

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Great Webinar everyone, thanks to ODI, IDS, Full Circle and MandDE for convening

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Great! Hope we will get the papers to read

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think the questions of organistions vs individuals can sometimes relate to the ability of people to engage in networks - for some organisations (many?) staff participating in networks is not seen as "work" or "learning" - so the organisational buy in required to enable individuals to participate.  But conversely when individuals are asked to participate in newtorks on behalf of an organsiation they rarely do!

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that is right, simon: if it does not exist already, why is it. do not assume you are the first one to think of it and that all that is needed is money.

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Thanks so much, everyone - very interesting! Many take aways from this.

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Thanks for the comments on INEE, Simon. Indeed, the multi-funding of actions/initiatives is a key feature of INEE. Not one that makes our small Secretariat particularly comfortable, but it is a very action-focussed approach, and it keeps us on our toes.:)

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Thank you. It was a very good webinar!!! I am looking forward to receiving the presentations and chat transcript. Cheers!

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I did not say facebook friends, Jeff. not all are 'real' friends

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hi peter - great to see you here

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Re: INEE important role of charismatic figures. inspiring figures

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Would love to see any reading suggestions on networks here: https://onlinefacilitation.wikispaces.com/Communities+and+Networks+Reading+List

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(right now a starting mess!)

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thank you, learned a lot

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Thanks all!

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thank you!

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Thanks again, bye all

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Thank you have a good day

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bye everyone and thank you!!1

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hope ODI hosts more such events

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thanks sarah, we'll try!

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Nancy, Your comments about 'learning the language" was a comfort to me.  This webinar will be very helpful as I try to introduce this "new to my organization" concept. Thank you all for a wonderful experience.

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Any other feedback on this event, by those still online?