

GROUNDLED AND NIMBLE: RCP Leadership and Communication Structures for Memory Retention and Adaptability

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Overview

- Research Recap and Relevant Findings
 - ▣ Risks to Organizational Resilience
 - ▣ Knowledge Transfer and Communication Infrastructure
 - ▣ Explicit vs. Tacit knowledge
- Activity

Defining the Problem

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- Conservation theory promotes collaboration, yet practice is often “top-down.”
- No normalized pathway for practice to influence theory, and a resistance to on-the-ground, systemic, interdisciplinary practice.

(Gordon, 1954; Gunderson, 1995; Hardin, 1969; Kemmis, 2002; Karl et al., 2012; Olsson, Folke, & Berkes, 2004; Ostrom, 1990; Perera et al. 2007; Salafsky et al., 2002)

Defining the Problem

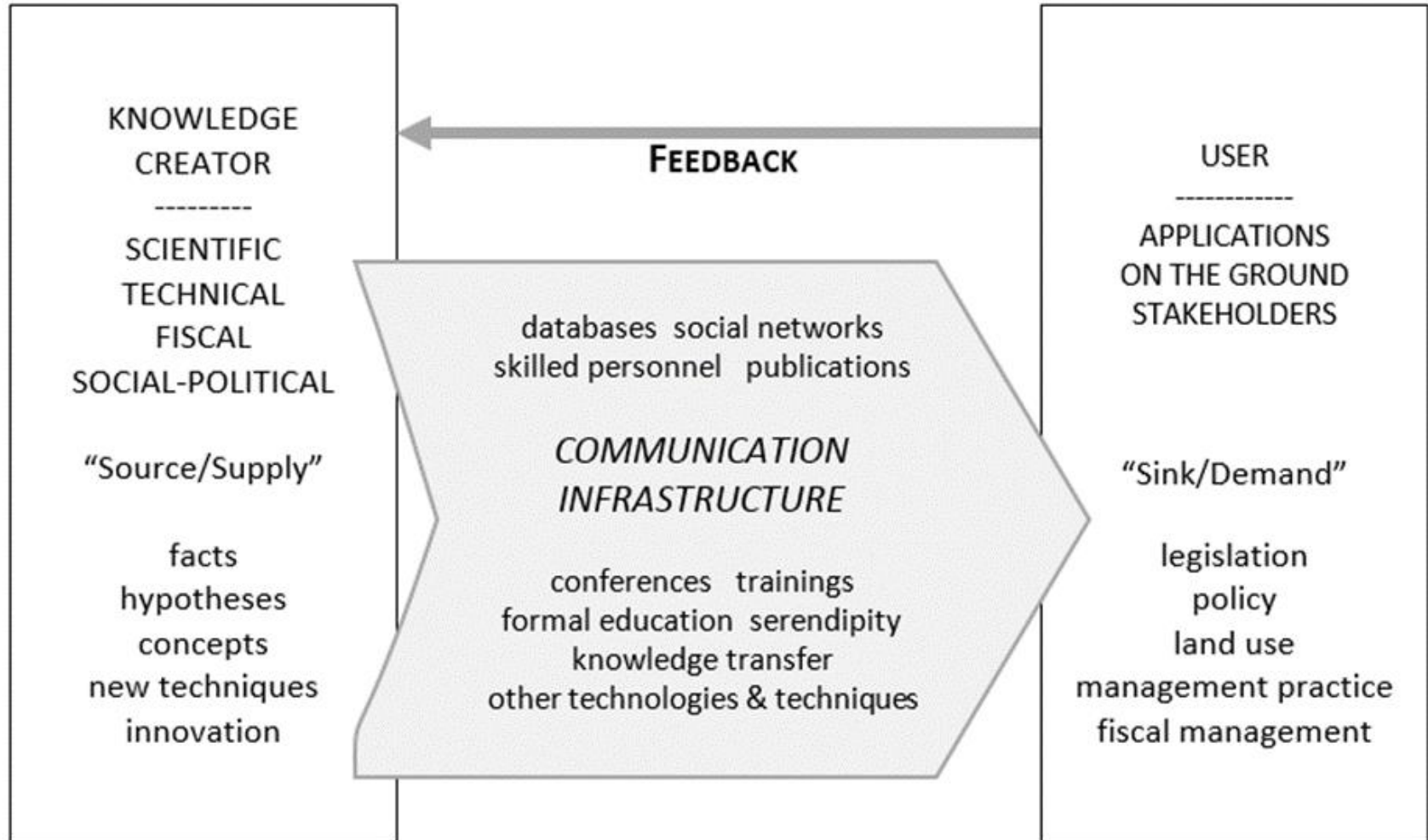
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- There is a disconnect between how we manage social and natural systems even though one is reliant on the other.
- There are barriers between disciplines and practices; lack of communication infrastructure between.

(Buse & Perera, 2006; Gera, 2012; Lin et al., 2007; Meadows, 1997; Perera, Buse, & Crow, 2007; Olsson, Folke, & Hahn, 2004; Williams & Ellefson, 1997)

Defining communication infrastructure

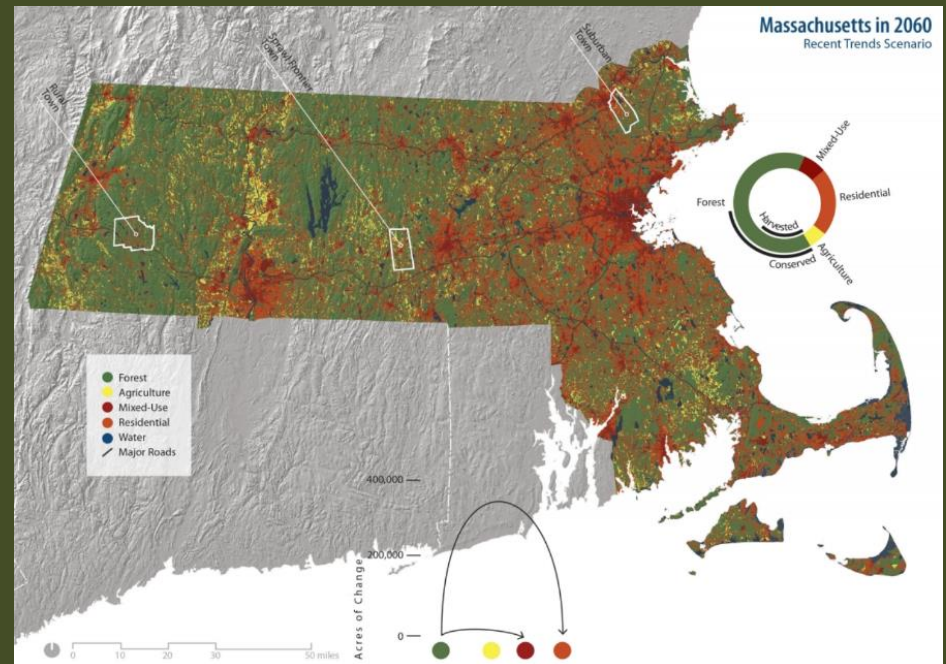
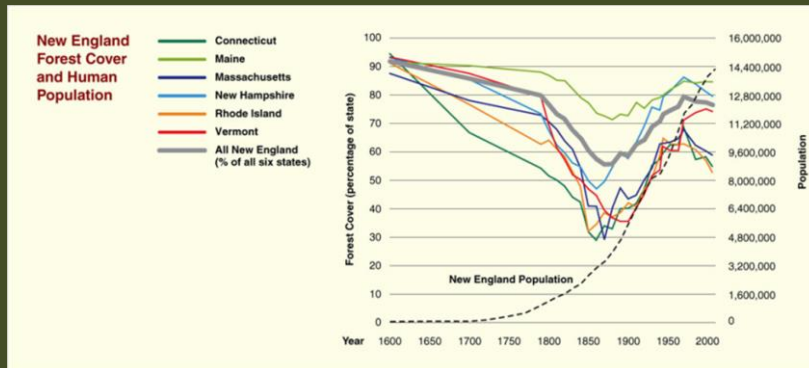
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Challenges for NE Landscapes

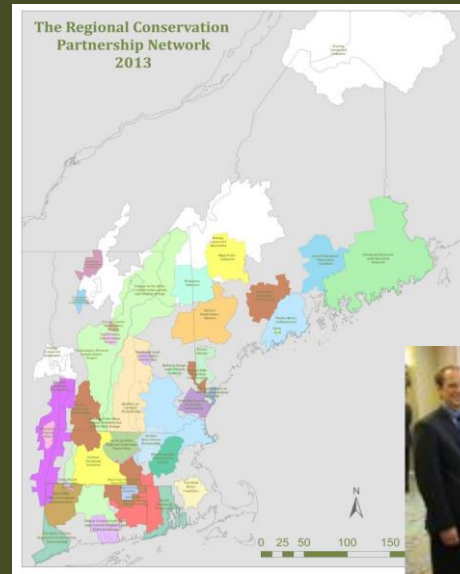
- Large percentage of private land owners
- Changing demographics and priorities
- Government agencies under new pressures
 - Low/ no staff
 - New restrictions

2060
projected
scenario for
MA from
Harvard Forest



Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) Network

- Land trusts, local governments, landowners and localized conservation action groups.
- Region-focused; pursue functional landscapes.
- Both a physical and psychological presence for policymakers and the public.
- Anecdotal success for landscape scale conservation.



Research Purpose

- Define the nature of RCPs in New England and identify promising communication and collaboration practices that support landscape scale conservation work.
- Secondary benefits of RCPs: communication infrastructure for communication theory and practice to be shared.

What are Conservation Networks?

- An association of individuals that cooperatively manage a resource, collaborate to meet conservation goals, and/ or support a conservation initiative.

(Batterbury, 2003; Forman & Godron, 1986; Lankford, 1997; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008)



What are Conservation Networks?

- They are valuable because of their on the ground experience, shared expertise, and interdisciplinary nature.
- Networks can share and sort an overload of information.

(Batterbury, 2003; Forman & Godron, 1986; Lankford, 1997; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008)



RCP Characteristics

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- Primary goal: to conserve land.
- Most valued: information sharing and strategic planning.*
- They partner to pool resources and increase capacity.
- Trend in strategic partnerships 2008-2010.
- One individual represents an organization in the RCP.
- RCPs have coordinators and often host organizations, but strict equality between organizations is emphasized.

RCP Findings

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RCPs aid conservation goals at different scales.

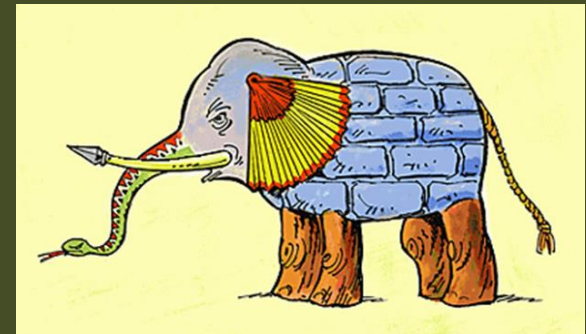
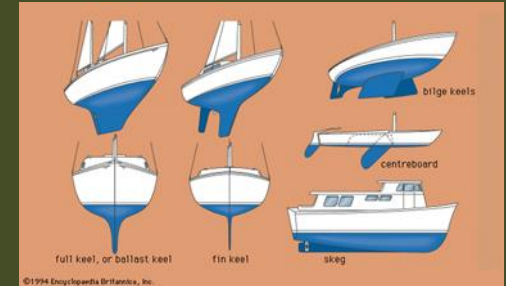
- Cover small patch to large watershed-scale landscapes.
- They pursue “functional landscapes”
 - Protect ecosystems and corridors.
 - Carbon sequestration.
 - Maintain ecological services for people.
 - Resilience in both social and ecological frames.

Addressing Risks to RCP Resilience

- Why stay “resilient”

- Institutional memory

- Knowledge Transfer



Related Findings

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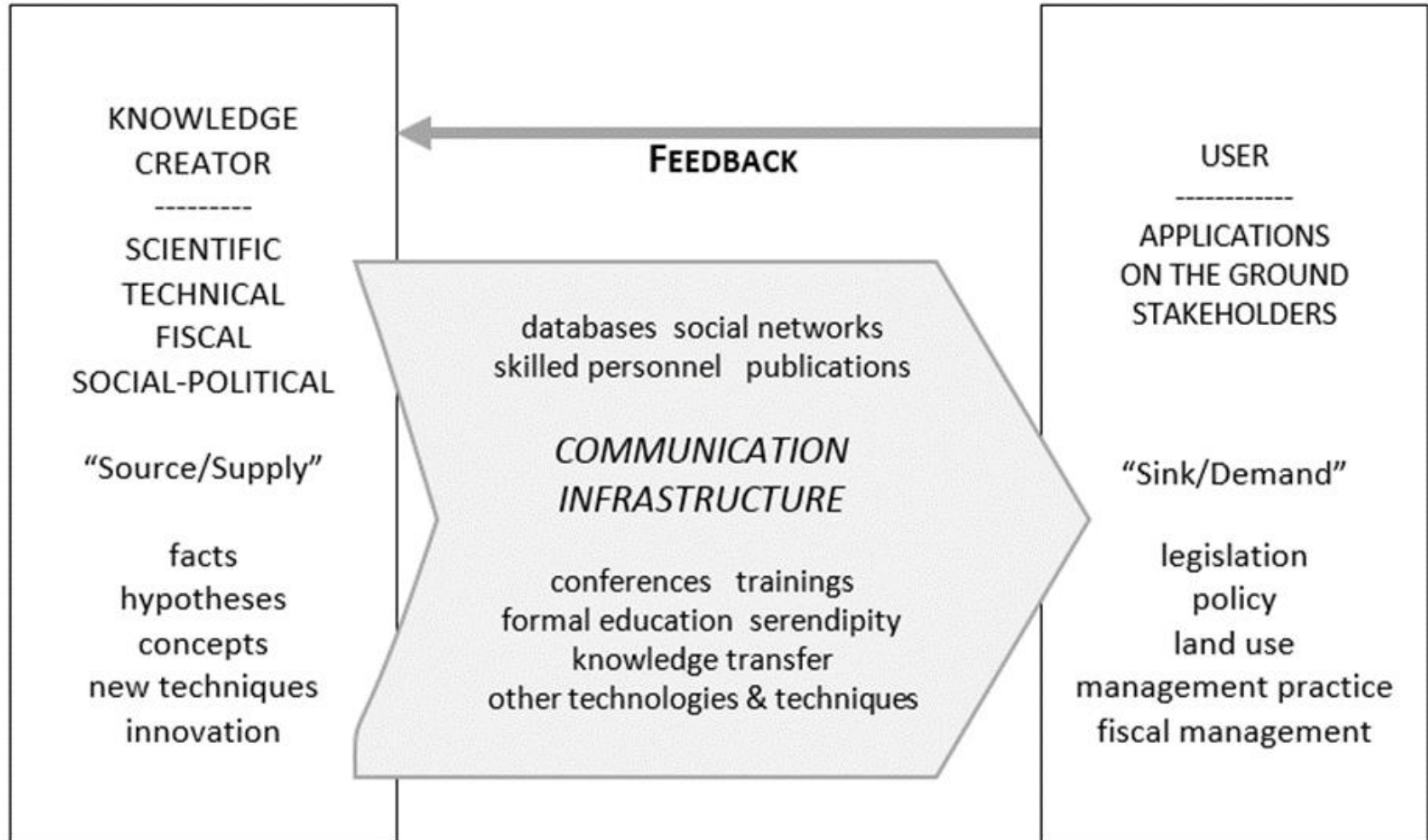


An elastic and vibrant type of collaboration:

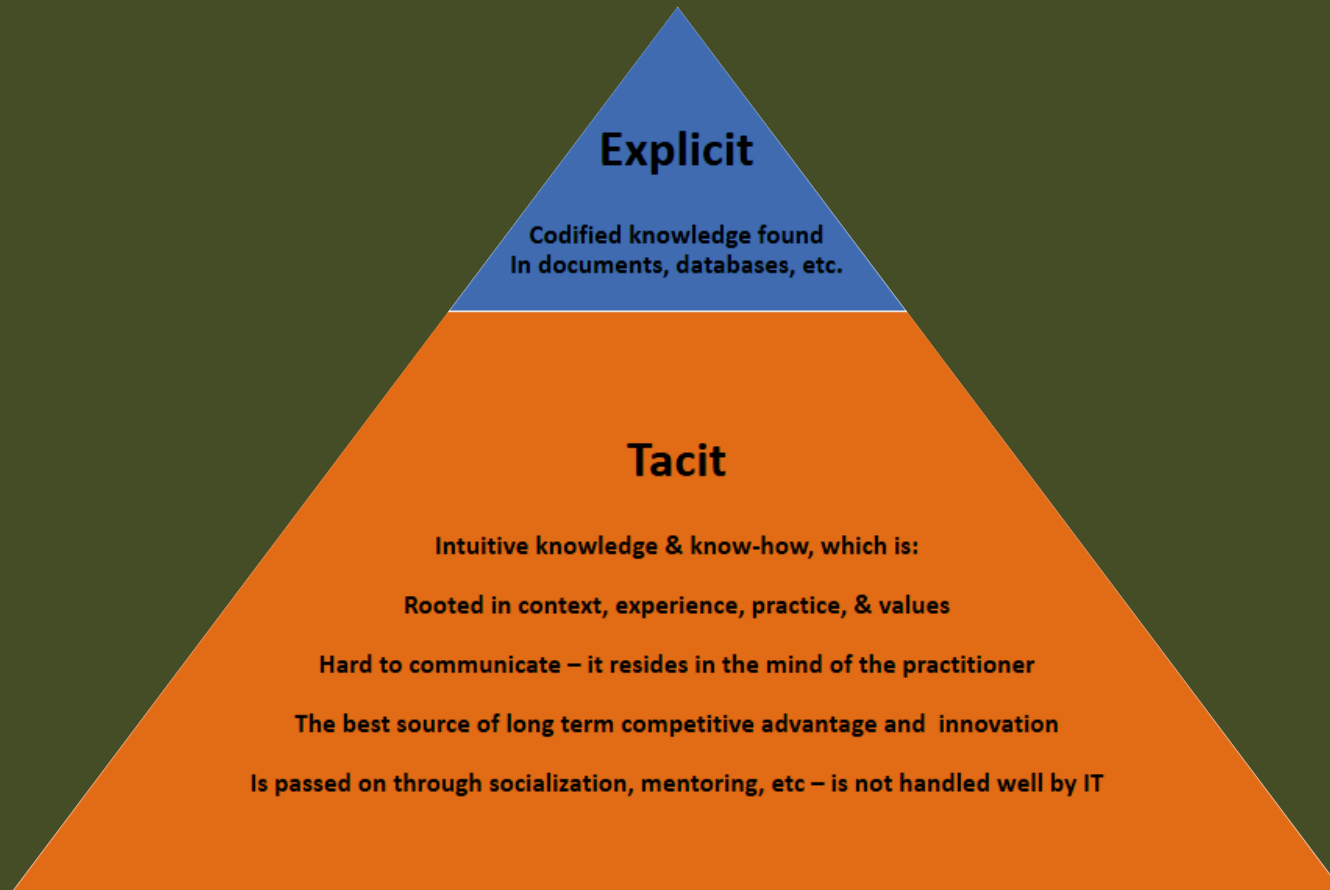
- Individualized by RCP.
- They value trust, clear goals, communication and storytelling.
- Link stakeholders with those who have needed skills.
- Leverage shared resources to conserve land and influence policy.
- Non-brittle, fluid structure – promotes resilience and sustainability.

Defining communication infrastructure

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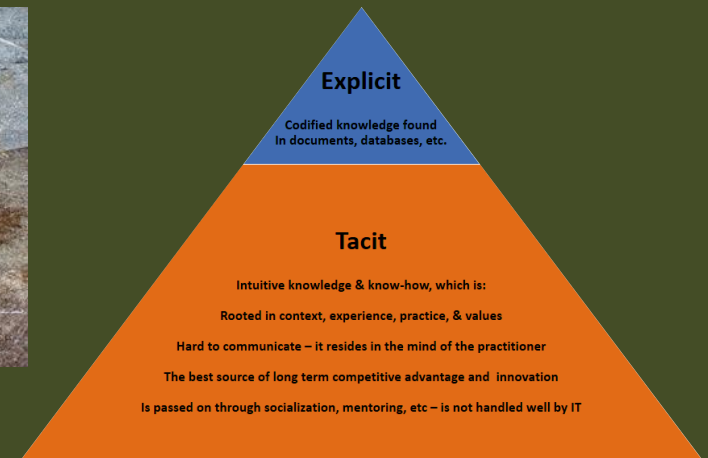
The problem of tacit knowledge



Knowledge Transfer

- Captures, organizes and/or distributes knowledge
- Adds value to knowledge through *personalization*.
- Addresses tacit knowledge problem through *codification*.

Argote and Ingram 2000



Related Findings

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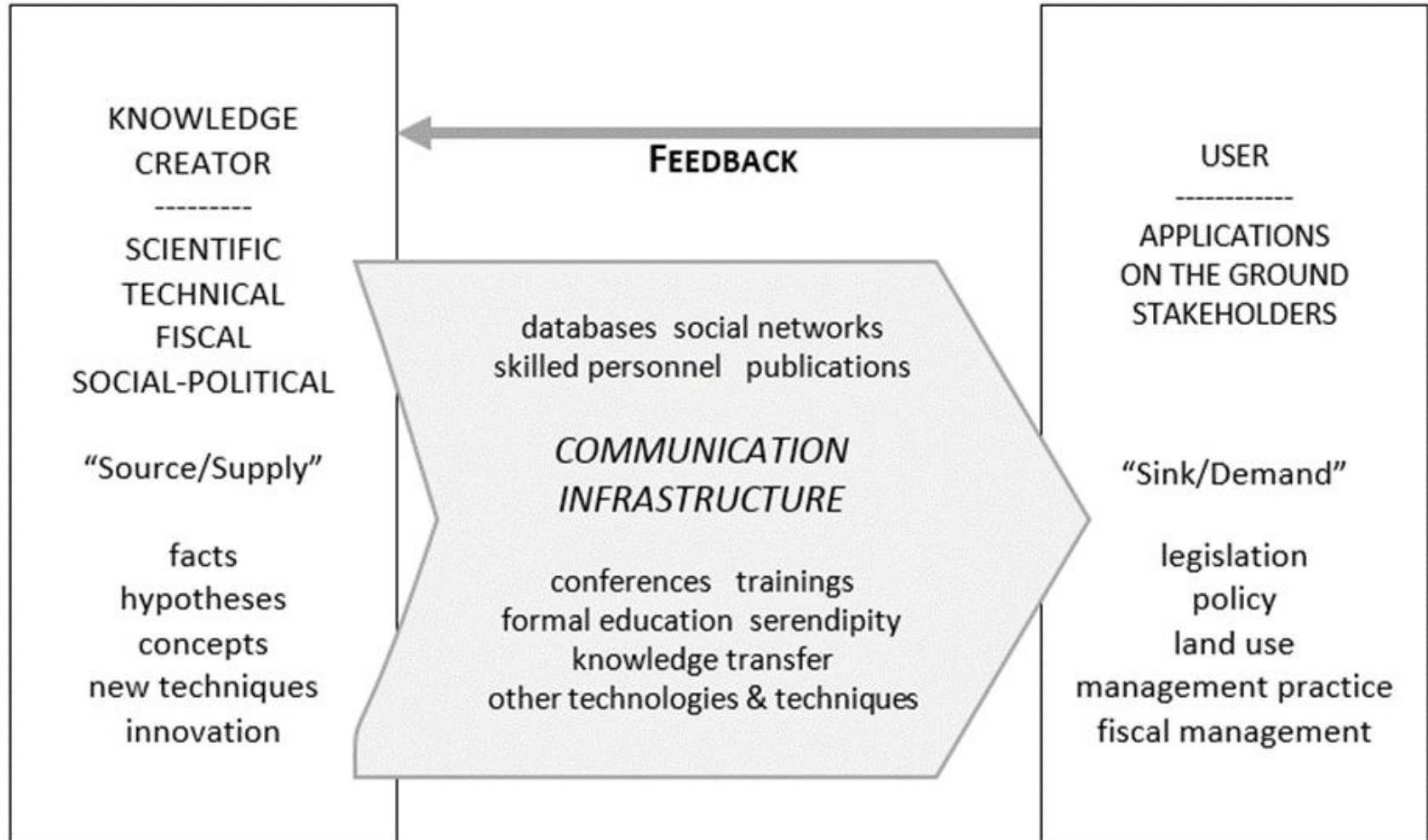


RCPs in New England actively:

- ❑ Create and maintain conduits to share knowledge.
 - ❑ Connect theory to practice to policy.
 - ❑ Maintain feedback loops to improve system.
 - ❑ Pragmatic: Promote and spread good ideas.
- ...essentially creating *communication infrastructure*

Defining communication infrastructure

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Threats to function

- Organizational/Collaboration fatigue
- Breakdown of Knowledge Transfer
 - Individuals with information and knowledge leave organization
 - Member organization leaves RCP
 - Loss for funding
 - Loss of Federal support and relationships

Collaboration Fatigue

...and organizational entropy

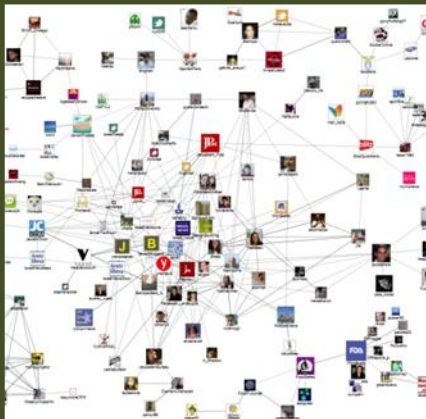
- Learn to recognize it
- Change up routine
- New membership/ ideas
- Get real about resources and/or financial support of your partners and the network as a whole
- Be okay with dissolution



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Actions to address KT Threats



- Identify activities that require tacit knowledge.
- Expand the leadership circle; empower colleagues to try on the role.
- Identify boundary spanners in your organization and support them.
- Strategic planning as operating principle rather than event.

Activity

- Paraphrase your RCP's mission statement
- List activities that directly meet mission, rank
- List activities that are necessary, but do not directly meet mission, rank
- With a partner work together to label each E or T
- Discuss a strategy for addressing your top ranked tacit learning issue.
- Devise and write down action points.

Rank RCP Activities that meet Mission

Examples from the research:

- Conserving Land
- Landowner Outreach
- Other projects and Events
- Fundraising
- Policymaker Outreach

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Rank other organizational tasks

Examples from the research:

- Information sharing among partners
- Strategic planning
- Problem solving
- Research
- Legal
- Event planning

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- List activities that directly meet mission, rank
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Thank you



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Link to related dissertation:

https://etd.ohiolink.edu/pg_10?0::NO:10:P10_ACCESSION_NUM:antioch1468416493

Other sources upon request.

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