You Can't Engage if you Don't Feel Welcome

1   Digital Inclusion Sequence

The digital inclusion mindset has become deeply rooted in the way that we conceive the purposes and role of contemporary public services. This mindset, which tends to regard the furthering of digital engagement techniques and service provision as a natural good, is widespread and is deeply affixed in the technical and cultural assumptions of the people who support the administration, planning, provision and operation of contemporary public services. Across the board, whether it is health and wellbeing, civic deliberation, education, social communications or workplace skills, the effective provision of those services is dependent on the ability of workers, citizens, patients, learners, and so on, to demonstrate that they have the appropriate skills to use them. According to Jack Orlik, Juan Casasbuenas and Karoliina Helkkula, given the pace of these changes and the scale of the transformation that is affecting society at all levels, the provision of these services is itself resulting in further "continuous shifts in the demand" for the skills necessary to act on and use these services (Orlik, Casasbuenas, & Helkkula, 2018, p. 10). As James Surwillo argues, "communication, collaboration, and new opportunities for the distribution of ideas and technologies are the most powerful force in the world" (Surwillo, 2017, p. 95), but that with each wave of digital innovation, there is also the further reinforcement of the need to ensure that all members of our societies are equipped with the skills, literacies and aptitudes that will help them to meet the challenges of using these new technologies and incorporating them into their worldviews.

We might call this process the *digital inclusion sequence*. It is a sequence founded on an assumption, as Bob Gann describes, in which inclusion is believed to be about:

> "Working with communities to address issues of opportunity, access, knowledge and skill in relation to using technology, and in particular, the internet. Many different terms are used interchangeably – digital inclusion, basic digital skills, digital participation, digital competence, digital capability, digital engagement, digital literacy, information literacy. Essentially, digital inclusion is about people being able to use digital technologies, particularly the internet, in ways that enhance their lives and contribute to helping them overcome other disadvantages which they might face" (Gann, 2018, p. 12).

The assumptions in this sequence, then, are that people will inevitably have to access digital interface technologies and will therefore be expected to learn how to use these digital technologies in ways that are embedded in the practices of their everyday lives and meeting strategic goals and aims that they might have. These practices will either be discretely managed in the background, or they will be overtly embedded technologies in networks and devices such as the internet of things, mobile communications and smart devices. Mostly it will be a combination and augmentation of the two, and as the supporting equipment and connection technologies become cheaper, and the interface design and interactive potential of computing and ICT devices becomes more expansive and varied, then the reach of these services becomes pervasive. New interface and operability experiences are likely to be *fitted* to a wider range of multimodal operational forms, i.e. as voice or gesture activation, in addition to text or written instructions. As the speed of the interconnections, the robustness of those connections, and the ability to connect at relatively low costs is improved with each successive upsurge of innovation, then there is a reciprocal wave of corresponding skills and attitudes that people are expected to catch-up with and accommodate in their living and social arrangements, regardless of the *fit* these may have with their established worldview.

In many respects, however, and as Bob Gann goes on to points out, "barriers still exist for significant numbers of people, preventing them from participating with the digital world." Specifically, Gann argues, this is related to a one core factor, a "lack of confidence" which prevents people from moving from a limited expectation of using digital technology, to a more varied and interoperable use of digital technologies. According to Gann, this lack of confidence in using digital technology is often the most significant factor preventing a person moving from a "reluctant, single-purpose user to someone who truly reaps the benefits of being online" (Gann, 2018, p. 12). The *digital inclusion sequence* moves onward in advancing cycles with each wave of innovation being followed by a demand for new skills and capabilities, which is in turn followed by more innovation, supposedly moving forward in a virtuous cycle of improvement. However, as Jyldyz Djumalieva and Cath Sleeman point out, the path we need to follow that will accommodate these new practices and skills is not certain, and that the accommodations that we have established and made peace with in the past, are unlikely to be a good guide for what will be needed in the future. The digital skills that may prove to be most effective in the future, according to Djumalieva and Sleeman "are ones that are used in non-routine tasks, problem-solving and the creation of digital outputs." (Djumalieva & Sleeman, 2018, p. 7). The reason for this, as James Surwillo points out, is that "twenty-first-century dilemmas [will be] unique and complex," and this will require us to "be able to sort out the noise and solve problems." As Surwillo also notes "this will require incremental change and a nuanced approach," and it "will require ingenuity, creativity, and maybe, most importantly, curiosity." However, and with a more sceptical tone, Surwillo also suggests that even this sense of curiosity has limits, because for many reasons "people feel safe in the arms of certainty, even if that certainty turns out to be completely wrong" (Surwillo, 2017, p. 165).

This limitation presents us, therefore, with a major problem. On the one hand digital inclusion is argued to be a necessary, even inevitable obligation for all citizens to consider, while on the other hand, the lack of certainty about what the modes of practice and alignment that people will need to be prepared for is problematic and uncertain. We cannot predict and say with certainty what digital skills and aptitudes we will need in the future. As a general rule our past experiences are often a poor guide to our future situations, because what we have assumed about digital technologies and their development has been, to date, structured schematically through centrally managed organisational logics, technologies and institutions. However, as the next wave of change is likely to be inherently decentralising (Tapscott & Tapscott, 2018), there is no guarantee that the principles applied in the past will relate to the way that digital services will be implemented and structured in the future. What this means, therefore, is that the challenges of incorporating and using digital technology across all levels of society and models of citizenship, are deeply problematic because they are rooted in a much more fundamental set of psycho-social challenges that underpin our social experience than might otherwise be assumed to be usual by proponents of the *digital inclusion cycle*.

Many of the recent reports and literature associated with the policy development process for digital inclusion advocates a somewhat 'self-defined' process of engagement with people. For example, the Digitally Savvy Citizens report is a framework of skills and access requirements for workplace-based digital services and information. However, this report is not a critical examination of the economic, political or social imperatives driving these scenarios (White, 2017). Which points, therefore, to a deeper problem. A problem which relates to the question of why so many people remain reluctant to embrace digital services or to get online. The acknowledgement and further exploration of this deeper problem might help us to account with greater clarity how the apparent lack of confidence that many people feel about engaging with these digital services, is regarded as being so problematic. The problem, simply stated, is that we have been asked to invest in technologies and devices, both in terms of skills and capabilities, and in terms of services and networks, that might not be relevant tomorrow. Why would a seemingly rational person embrace many of these new technologies if the perceived return on that symbolic and practical investment is potentially so limited, chaotic, unpredictable and time-constrained that it borders on the meaninglessness? Why would a logical and thoughtful person seek to acquire difficult and complex skills, knowledge and capabilities, if they run the risk that they may have to forget all the skills they have previously acquired and then learn a new set of skills that will replace them at some point? This rather blunt question, moreover, also points towards a clearly significant and deep-rooted challenge that we have to try to work out and understand. However, while our first instinctual reaction might be that the reluctance to engage with the *digital inclusion sequence* is often one of consternation, it should not be taken as evidence of faulty reasoning or as a supposed state of cognitive dissonance by those involved and identified. We should accept, instead, that however alien to our own experiences and thought processes we might find this reluctance to engage,

the logic behind those who reject or avoid the embrace of the *digital inclusion sequence* is a perfectly rational and legitimate response in the circumstances.

Anyone who demonstrates an unwillingness to embrace the techno-centric view of the future, either in the form of digital technologies and digital services, is often pigeonholed as a social problem who may be in need of remedial social or educational therapy. If you are identified as someone who doesn't fit with the dominant model of social engagement and administration, you are too often assumed to lack intellectual capacity, and are thought need additional support, training and education. However, the cause needs to be separated from the effect, as it is quite possible that the normalising of the administrative process, the systems design process, and the testing and evaluation process, will tend to lead to an assumption by the people employed to deliver and manage that process, to a categorical misunderstanding about other people's motives and needs. The capacity and worldview of the people who are often recruited to work in government and administrative organisations and digital service developers, are in all other respects regarded as the norm. Therefore, their ability to look to the future, anticipate change and imagine a place in that changed world becomes highly valued and normalised by those in design and development professionals. This is cognitive bias that is skewing our ability to manage this process properly. Not everyone in our society is motivated by the same aims and aspirations, and therefore not everyone is able to face the future in the same way that is normalised by the digital service developers and their administrative sponsors.

Instead, we need to recognise that there are many motivational and cognitive issues that shape our engagement with the world. Assuming, however, that these motivations are uniform and evenly distributed is a major error. What is intriguing, though, is that many of the more recent digital inclusion publications demonstrate there is an emerging willingness to question this bias and to look again at whether we ought to be thinking about, and attempting to test and understand, the ways in which people are *motivated* to go online. As Tom French, Lauren Quinn and Simeon Yates have noted, that for "some time, the key barriers associated with digital exclusion have been understood in UK policy and practice as:

- The basic/essential digital skills gap;
- A lack of access to a connection and/or device;
- The motivational barriers preventing people from engaging" (French, Quinn, & Yates, 2018, p. 3).

And that of these three issues, "motivation is underlined in research as the most significant in terms of the number of people affected, and the most persistent and hard to address" (French et al., 2018, p. 4). According to French, Quinn and Yates, "we need to tackle digital motivational barriers head on and develop models that understand people" (French et al., 2018, p. 8).

Accordingly, then, this means looking at the design of *digital inclusion cycle* practices and re-evaluating them in order to identify to what extent, and in what way, our awareness of the behavioural conditions of the people who are either embracing these technologies, or those who are proving to be reluctant, and are potentially at risk of social exclusion, are behaving in-line with their settled world view - their weltanschauung. This means considering to what extent this motivational form is conditional or is structural? It also means asking in what way it is symbolic or representative of other forms of cross-purposeful thinking. As French, Quinn and Yates point out, "digital inclusion works best when it recognises and reflects individual needs, and helps people achieve outcomes that are relevant to their lives," and that in order to best address the challenge of digital exclusion, we should bring together the challenges of digital exclusion with the more general concerns about wider social exclusion. According to French, Quinn and Yates, there is a case "for embedding digital inclusion in all types of social support programme, whether public, private or community sector" (French et al., 2018, p. 8). It is perhaps indicative of the crisis of inclusion, however, that this point even has to be made, and that anyone advocating for enhanced digital services in isolation needs to be remaindered that they have a social and civic context to consider.

We can see this as an indicator, therefore, of the ongoing one-sidedness of the debates and discussions that are taking place among administrative and technical professionals. However, this discussion should not be seen as a total indication of all that can be imagined or brought into being. To put this in context, and as Orlik, Casasbuenas, Helkkula point out, it is the job of governments to "uncover and promote interventions which foster intrinsic motivation to learn and consequently drive behaviour change and a learning mindset" (Orlik et al., 2018, p. 28). Government is simply doing what government does, though the wider ethical and political questions often get side-lined and papered over. The question, most crucially, is for what purpose are we investing in digital inclusion and towards what ends are we changing our model of social interaction? It is then a question of asking what comes afterwards? For as Hanzi Freinacht argues, "all according to the metamodern dictum: after deconstruction must follow reconstruction" (Freinacht, 2017, p. 347). The *digital inclusion cycle*, therefore, might be good at asking useful question, but it is less well equipped to propose a workable and long-term solution.

What might be even more alarming, moreover, is the way that many of the systems that are developed as part of the *digital inclusion cycle*, are underpinned by a highly problematic behaviouralist attitude. This is an outlook that views behaviour-change of the individuals and the communities identified as a priority for governmental action. It is not, as has already been stated, a systematic questioning and reform of the environment and culture surrounding those expectations. As French, Quinn and Yates argue, "digital inclusion policy and practice should focus efforts on moments of transition and crisis, where people benefit from support services." And that this should be done "through a nudge approach," that can provide entry points into the world of digital services by "making it relevant and integrated" (French et al., 2018, p. 18). And

while we might be in agreement about the associated sentiment and the aim of a more egalitarian and democratic approach to the *digital inclusion sequence*, there are some obvious concerns about the potential methods that might be assumed and adopted in order to bring this about. As Orlik, Casasbuenas and Helkkula point out:

> "The field of behavioural science has provided many insights into what motivates people to change their behaviour. It reveals that a person's decision to act is dependent on many factors, such as social influence, or the way a request is communicated. By exploring factors such as these and experimenting through RCTs, policymakers can begin to identify how to drive workers' intrinsic motivation to learn. As the example of the Dutch Behavioural Insights Network in this section shows, experimental approaches have already helped to increase the effectiveness of policies relating to employment and skills" (Orlik et al., 2018, p. 29).

However, if our warning lights of social accountability and good governance are not yet ringing at the prospect of a near-total take-over of instrumental thinking like this, then a cursory reminder of the controversy surrounding the work of the large data communications conglomerates must surely be a timely warning about the potential misuses of power that is wielded by people deploying these large-scale data analysis techniques. Especially when they can run amok, and sweep-up vast amounts of data that can be managed at scale and across different datapoints using different frameworks of analysis. Elsewhere I've called this the 'silicon valley mindset', and it is the mindset of engagement without accountability that the free market ideology of unfettered exploitation of our private data by the large tech corporations has led to (Watson, 2019). Therefore, we must remain sceptical and vigilant that we don't normalise this model of engagement in all other areas of our lives.

2   Addressing Engagement and Inclusion

While the aim of much of digital engagement policy, on the surface, appears to want to address issues of engagement and inclusion, we shouldn't accept this assertion at face value. Instead, we should reflect on the evaluative processes that we use to determine our judgements about the policies and practices of implementation and administration that are tied together. We need an approach that can see beyond the dominant transactionalist and systems models that are applied to digital engagement policies. We need to be able to explore other methodologies that can get to grips with the subjective and divergent human experience and practices of meaning making and belonging. As I will argue repeatedly, the people who appear to be the least likely or willing to engage with digital media services require a different approach. An approach that should be founded on identification with established social patterns of interaction, or meaningful ways of being in the word, as they are expressed in recognisable archetypal figures, and not as reluctant problems associated with the under-engagers. To get people to engage, they have to feel that they

belong. Therefore, coming to a clear understanding of what it means to belong in the many different social situations that we face in our daily lives, and not just in theory, but also in practice, is essential. As Richard Crisp points out, "social acceptance and the need to belong are adaptive mechanisms, fundamental for survival and reproduction throughout human history" (Crisp, 2015, p. 73).

Here, then, I will try to map out and define a methodological approach that can help to account for the practices and experiences of participants in digital platforms, for whom the search for meaning and belonging are tied together, as we attempt to establish and manage an ongoing a sense of social co-presence with one another. This can be expressed directly in social interactions, but it can also be found in forms of media practice and participation. We can see these patterns of social expression in both legacy forms of media, and as they are enacted in emergent forms of social and digital services. To paraphrase John Ruskin, the question is not what we get from producing digital services, or even what we make when we produce and manage these service, it is who we connect with, and what we become in the process of engaging with these others and these services. As we use the available technologies, techniques and affordances of different types of media, they help us, as McLuhan identified, to become something more than we were previously. But rather than being technologically deterministic and focusing on the medium, I want to suggest that a difference approach needs to be taken to understanding social change, which goes beyond simply looking at the digital systems that we use, and the behaviourist theories that drive their design. I want to argue, instead, that we should be thinking about the generative and development approach advocated by people like Carl Jung, in which recognise that we use media to express and demonstrate who we are, both individually and collectively. For as Jung argues

> "In my experience the conscience mind can claim only a relatively central position and must accept the fact that the unconscious psyche transcends and as it were surrounds it on all sides. Unconscious contents connect it backwards with physiological states on the one hand and archetypal data on the other. But it is extended forwards by intuitions which are determined partly by archetypes and partly by subliminal perceptions depending on the relativity of time and space in the unconscious" (Jung, 1968, p. 110).

What we need to do, I believe, is adopt a more nuanced approach to digital inclusion models. An approach that is more responsive and understanding of the cognitive and psychological differences that people face and are blessed with, and as they seek to apply them meaningfully in the circumstances of their lives. As Richard Crisp state, "the ability to create and maintain social bonds is, and remains, hardwired into the human brain" (Crisp, 2015, p. 73). However, the recognition of this intrinsic human impulse can easily be undermined if we are unable to demonstrate and exercise intersubjective understanding, i.e. empathy, between ourselves and others. As Richard Bartlett argues, "it's impossible to sustain a thriving collaborative culture if the load of care is not shared fairly" (Bartlett, 2018, p. 13).

3   Socialmeaining

Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionist approach to social enquiry proposes that **social arrangements and meaning are linked**. Blumer recognises that they are relative and relational concepts, that are defined by corresponding process-based set of relationships. For simplification I have called this '*Socialmeaining,*' as an homage to Einstein and his understanding that space and time are best understood as linked in one process or phenomenon known as *spacetime*. Space and time are not separate categories as they appear on a day-to-day or common-sense basis. Instead, Einstein's theory of General Relativity suggests that as our proximity to the mass of an object changes, then there is a relative change to both time and geometry. So, if time changes then the structure of our geometry changes. Likewise, if geometry changes then there is a corresponding change in the structure of time. Neither factor is the product of the other, nor are they the sole factors from which the other results, but they are the *setting* and the *processes* by which things in the universe are arranged and interact. What we think of as gravitational forces are actually distortions in the shape and texture of spacetime.
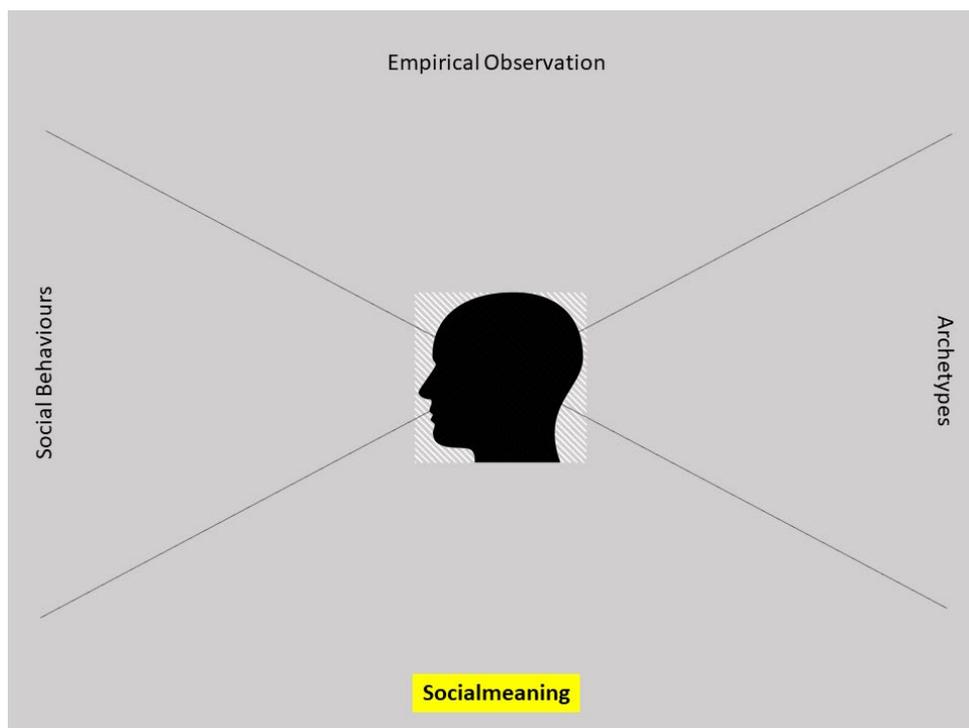
The implication of this assertion, I believe, is that when we pay attention to the characteristic indicators of a social environment, for example the texts that are circulated in our cultures, or the practices that are rit-ualised in our daily lives, then we will not understand why those indicators are important by examining them in isolation, as discreate and designated categories or experiences. Nor will we understand them simply by accumulating and aggregating enough samples and points of information in a process of data

accumulation. Simply put, in amassing evidence of the object and the social marker, as is often the focus of quantitative forms of enquiry, will not necessarily explain the processes by which these artefacts and objects become present in our minds and our culture – their archetypal resonance. Nor will they show what processes govern their ongoing interaction and meaningfulness. As Horst Helle summarises,

> "To put it briefly, therefore, meaning is action through space and time. The meaning of objects is identical to their potential for action. This applies both to actually existing objects and to those, which are imagined, objects of physical reality and products of human fantasy alike" (Helle, 2005, p. 25).

Studying the social situation, then, in which the process of participation and engagement is practiced as an interplay and negotiation between many different forms of media and digital systems, we may be able, and adapting Blumer, to see how "people respond to the demands and opportunities that are set in the situation" (Blumer, 1990, p. 157). The caveat, however, is that each situation varies, and the motivations for our responses will not always be clear. There are many social factors that are in play which have to be understood and actively incorporated if we are to make sense of the driving process.

The symbolic interactionist tradition argues that meanings must be found in the experiences of the individuals first, before they can be said to exist for those people who are conducting the social study into what the relevance of these social arrangements and meanings might be. For symbolic interactionists, social relationships are an interplay between the production and the interpretation of meanings. Any action that individuals undertake, or seeks to achieve, has to be intelligible. They have to *fit* within the social perspectives that individuals inherit, carry and experience, not only as participants, but also within the wider collective and social milieu. As Helle describes,

> "The social perspective exists in the experience of the individual insofar as it is intelligible, and it is its intelligibility that is the condition of the individual entering into the perspectives of others, especially of the group" (Helle, 2005, p. 29).

Thus, as with fish in water, if we question the objectivity of our perspective, that all fish only exist satisfactorily in water, then any fish that proposes that it is possible to exists outside of water stops being a fish, and becomes, instead, something else. We call our sense of self into question because we are changing the perspective from which we are defined. We have gained our social meaning and our understanding of our self only in relation to others in our social world. Our consciousness is individually located, but it is socially experienced, and it also can't be understood if it is not accounted for within the milieu of others, as negotiated in relation to the perspectives of others. As Helle summarises, the social perspective underlying our actions thus exists as an experience in our consciousness. Therefore,

"The individual defines the social perspective as objective and valid and extracts from it the interpretative ideas to interpret both its own self and the objects around him. As he does he sees himself from the same perspective as others and the other, he is able to understand" (Helle, 2005, p. 31).

Accordingly, meaning is generated and established in the course of social interaction. Meaning is principally formed on the basis of the actual or expected reactions that we have with of others. The consequence of which is that we can move beyond instrumental and transactional models of social engagement and instead develop models that assume that

"Human beings are neither victims of their impulses nor unconsciously exposed to external stimuli; they are active organisms able to plan and control their actions by attributing meaning to the constantly changing world around them, thereby interpreting it" (Helle, 2005, p. 69).

This is why we have shared perspectives and shared cultures. They come about because we have to participate in the shared processes of social communication. As Helle further describes,

"Social participation enables individuals to internalise the perspective shared by the members of a group. This opens up a processual view: Depending on how frequently and with what intensity one participates in certain groups, one will or will not acquire those groups' perspectives" (Helle, 2005, p. 112).

The social process, therefore, is one that is based on the search and practice of negotiation between the concepts that we want to introduce, or which we are calling on from our pasts in order to establish common ground and a shared premise that might meet the terms of our future actions. To paraphrase Richard Rorty, language is only useful as long as it continues to bake our bread. If it stops being useful, then we either stop using it, or we shift and change the meanings that are associated with it. As Anselm Strauss argues,

"Clearly the formal criteria are not sufficient. In a more subtle sense, you may and you may not actually belong but participate much, and you may not actually belong but participate a good deal. To ticket a man as formally holding membership in such and such groups barely suggests the nature and quality for his allegiances" (Strauss, 2017, p. 152).

4   Group Life Communication

If this framework of symbolic interaction is accepted, we should now think about how it might be applied in different social situations, and what the consequences are for digital engagement research, and the processes and policies that follow from this research might be. In acknowledging that group life can't exist if it

is determined by purely individual or private meanings, there then has to be explicit recognition of the common elements of our social engagements. We can look in more detail, then, at the use of language and the shared cultural artefacts that we produce in new ways. The emergent and the developmental becomes more important. As Strauss argued,

> "Group life is organised around communication. Communication consists not merely in the transmission of ideas from the head of one person to that of another, it signifies shared meanings. 'Shared' means more than that terms are used in ways sufficiently alike so that persons understand each other; it also means that terms arise out of and in turn permit community action" (Strauss, 2017, p. 150).

The reason that members of a community are able to participate in their common life, moreover, is because they are able to coordinate their activities based on a common use of symbolic forms of expression, of language and representation. We begin by using commonly rooted symbolic forms, so that we can base our future interactions on repeating and negotiated patterns of communication. In turn this allows us to foster further new lines of action. Social interaction results, therefore, in "conjoint communit[ies] of functional use" (Strauss, 2017, p. 151), as groups form around the points of agreement and the new meanings and classifications that have been negotiated. Community is established on the basis of shared social experience and shared symbolic understandings and not just on proximity, function, transaction or identity characteristics.

The question that arises, then, is who and how do people gain and maintain membership of these groups? Strauss argues that it is one thing to apply formal criteria of membership to a social group, but it is another thing to actually participate in a community. There are many instances when it is assumed that we might be a member of a specific community, usually because we share a common social characteristic with other people, such as ethnicity, gender or sexual identity. The problem of membership of communities defined in this way, however, is that this becomes problematic when we try to account for social relationships simply in terms of these potential allegiances. As Strauss points out "to ticket a man as formally holding membership in such and such groups barely suggests the nature and quality for his allegiances" (Strauss, 2017, p. 152). Social motivation, moreover, and the motivations that lead us to either reject or embrace potential group membership associations cannot ultimately be reduced to a transaction of outwardly expressed cultural markers, behaviours and administrative classifications. This would amount to a psychological tyranny if it is imposed by others, and yet much of our digital engagement policies are designed to do just that as they are normalised in the process of classification.

It is worth quickly indicating how symbolic interaction views the wider patterns of social engagement, though there is not enough space here to reflect on each point in greater detail, that will have to be done at a later date. Robert Prus outlines how symbolic interaction views social life in the following terms:

- "Human group life is intersubjective…
- Human group life is (multi) perspectival…
- Human group life is reflective…
- Human group life is activity-based…
- Human group life is negotiable…
- Human group life is relational…
- Human group life is processual" (Prus, 1996, pp. 15-17).

In addition, It is worth considering the argument of Lene Anderson and Tomas Bjőrkman, who suggest that we also see human social life from a processual and developmental perspective. According to Anderson and Bjőrkman, "the ability to see systems within systems and how they interact is a question of maturity." This level of ego-development and maturity comes as we accumulate life experiences, but it can also be fostered, promoted and accelerated through education. As Anderson and Bjőrkman explain, "the most complex systems perspective includes all ten principles of belonging" (Anderson & Bjőrkman, 2017, p. 169). We are each located, according to Anderson and Bjőrkman, within a circle of belonigng. We relate differently to one another within and across these circles of belonging, and we adapt and change to them in different ways at different stages of our lives. The lifecircles of belonging that can be grouped in the following order of personal experience:

1. "Ego/Self
2. Family 1 (parents and siblings)
3. Peer group
4. Family 2 (spouse, children, in-laws)
5. Community (neighbour, church, political party, sports team, colleagues at workplace, etc.)
6. Imagined community (society/country/nation/people/religious denomination)
7. Culture zone
8. Universal principles/international conventions/multilateral alliances
9. Humanity today
10. Planet and future generations beyond great-grandchildren (Anderson & Bjőrkman, 2017, p. 167).

Some of the circles of belonging are more transitonal than others, some are more imagined than others, and some might be more physically focussed than others. However, regardless of the dynamics of interaction associated with each of the circles of belonging, we tend to make sense of them symbolically and meaningfully according to the archetypes of our culture, our recollections of our past experiences, and the way in which we have moved through different cognitive development stages. In other words, as we have navigated the process of *socialmeaning*.

This is a much more fluid and developmental approach to understanding social processes of belonging and inclusion which moves beyond the stark and binary characteristics that administrative processes generally require. The challenge here is how we might look towards and anticipate future social developments so that we can engage in more tolerant and inclusive systems design and planning. The research and implementation process for new digital engagement services must be adaptable to changing social models so that they are able to recognise and account for the these more fluid processes. Can we build a model of civic and social engagement that is process-focussed and developmental? Can we approach these issues developmentally so that they are shaped by the interplay of these factors, thereby allowing for greater variety, indeterminacy and self-identification within its operations? As previously indicated, changes in one part of the symbolic and social environment interact with other parts of the social and symbolic environment, and will, in doing so produce surprising results that are difficult to predict and control. The technological and communications changes of the last forty years are being played out against a backdrop of changing expectations of self-representation and increasingly assertive identity work. Self-identification patterns are being negotiated on a continuous basis by people who are newly linked and visible across global networks. Recognising and engaging with this ongoing process will be a major challenge in years to come.

We are moving away, then, from a unifying identification with traditional social roles in rigid social networks, with fixed and recognisable forms of local engagement. As our communication and relationship management modes change into new processes of meaning-making and symbolic transformation, so too does our need to evaluate these processes afresh on their own terms. As Michael Polanyi argues, we really have to start to think about, and talk about, what kind of society we want to become, and in what way this society will "honour and respect the meaning achievements" of the past, while also creating space for new meaning to emerge? With the introduction of the internet and the world wide web we should be reminded, as Polanyi argues, that we live in a "society made up of a number of associations of free, self-governing personas, participating by mutual adjustment in the pursuit of various ends," and that some of these pursuits and ends are "thought to be of such intrinsic worth that they create obligations to themselves, i.e. they engender respect for themselves" (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975, p. 210). The question, however, is how do we assess and evaluate these obligations and ends in ways that are developmental and caring (Noddings, 2013) and avoid imposing meanings and ruthlessly fixing categorisations on people's identity within the administrative systems?

5   Bildung and Communities of Feeling

What is being advocated here, then, is a developmental point of view of social and civic engagement that seeks to incorporate a layered and multi-perspectival view of digital inclusion. Rather than simply thinking of the *digital inclusion cycle* as a linear or unitary process of accumulation, exchange or differentiation, the challenge is to incorporate a view that can foster and build a broad social environment with a dynamic and developmental sense of agreement. This will deliver a compact in which digital inclusion is recognised as a part of a wider social and individual development process. A process that is rooted in progressive thinking, social empathy and civic empowerment. It is a process in which change and transformation are seen as empowering. It will be based on a view human agency that is cognitively diverse, interpersonal and capable of producing a collective sense of belonging and identity. Understanding how and why people hold onto their established worldviews will be vital if we are to seek to foster self-authoring people who can anticipate and cope with change, understand how their assumed place in the world might be shifting in relation to others, and understand how their interactions within the physical, virtual, practical and symbolic spaces that they occupy all interact and correspond with one another. This is not an easy sell. There is no single app that can be provided, or a large-enough system that be designed that will be able to do this work. Instead people must be able to undertake their own journey of self-development, and meet the challenges and pushbacks encountered along the different stages of that journey. As Carl Jung argued, "to round itself out, life calls not for perfection but for completeness; and for this the 'thorn in the flesh' is needed, the suffering of defects without which there is no progress and no ascent" (Jung, 1968, p. 159).

This developmental outlook can usefully be summarised, furthermore, in the form of the Nordic concept of *bildung*. According to Lene Anderson and Tomas Bjőrkman:

> "*Bildung* is the way that the individual matures and takes upon him or herself every bigger personal responsibility towards family, friends, fellow citizens, society, humanity, our globe, and the global heritage of our species, while enjoying ever bigger personal, moral and existential freedoms. It is the enculturation and life-long learning that forces us to grow and change, it is existential and emotional depth, it is life-long interaction and struggles with new knowledge, culture, art, science, new perspectives, new people. *Bildung* is a constant process that never ends" (Anderson & Bjőrkman, 2017, p. 14).

Anderson and Bjőrkman refer to *bildung* as the ability to think developmentally, and to anticipate our individual and collective development as self-authoring individuals who are "able to independently form our own opinion on important matters and hold our in-groups accountable to higher moral standards than just in-group loyalty" (Anderson & Bjőrkman, 2017, p. 61). This requires a level of emotional, social and psychological maturity in which the boundaries of our awareness are spread outwards to a more global and long-term view. Our identity is formed and held within our social world, as Robert Keegan stresses, not so much as individuals, but as "embedduals" (Keegan, 1982, p. 116). Being an embedded member of a community

or society means that we are not defined by any exclusive or unique individual properties, but rather by the accumulation of interactive forms of "interindividuality" (Keegan, 1982, p. 68) that we enact, experience and negotiate. As Anderson and Björkman note, "two common human experiences are at the core of ego-development." Firstly, we are defined by an increasingly expanding awareness of what it is that we can be "aware of or conscious about;" and then, by an increase in what we feel is our "responsibility" towards one another and the world. This is "consciousness and conscience," with the latter depending on the former in a reciprocal relationship. If these awareness are neither explored, tested, understood, practiced or reflected on, then they will be stunted and retarded in their development (Anderson & Björkman, 2017, p. 34).

Hanzi Freinacht argues that the coming age, defined as the Great Disruption, is giving rise to the need for more complex thinkers. What Frienacht calls a "metamodern aristocracy" will emerge who "never resort to magic beliefs or reductionism, and who are moved by a profound inner depth, who can work transnationally and work to create a more listening society, and who can treat all of the other value memes with kindness and respect" (Freinacht, 2017, p. 350). According to Frienacht this requires an obsession with development processes, both personal and social. And while development is "messy, context bound and problematic" it is the only alternative that we have to a heavy-handed "moralism" (Freinacht, 2017, p. 355). As Freinacht argues, we have to believe that development matters, and that the "inner dimensions matter," and that we subsequently need to "balance science and cognitive complexity with inner growth – and vice versa?" (Freinacht, 2017, p. 344).

Orlik, Casasbuenas and Helkkula highlight how understanding the potential complexity of the digital transformations we are facing necessitate thinking in a different way about skills and services. In order to: "create effective policy for skills in the digital age, policymakers must go beyond merely understanding the methods and competencies they can use." According to Orlik, Casasbuenas and Helkkula "they need to apply them, embed them in their work practices, and spread them to their colleagues" (Orlik et al., 2018, p. 41). This is mapped out as a set of progressive steps that can be used in different situations, in different ways, and between different groups of people. It does not expect the same outcomes each time, and nor can it predict the level of value of the outcome. Indeed, there challenge of the developmental view is that we will have to get used to asymmetric outcomes. Those things that we spend a lot of time and resources nurturing may not produce any obvious benefits, and yet, some items of seemingly small value will produce large and sustainable differences. The challenge is to be pragmatic in one's approach and to look holistically at the general outcomes and not get bogged-down in the details. And as Richard Crisp suggests:

> "To promote more positive intercultural relations we must devise a public policy that will switch on coalition thinking in the social brain. For instance, strategies that embrace diversity should help

nurture creativity and cognitive flexibility. The implication is that intercultural contact can encourage people to embrace innovative ideas" (Crisp, 2015, p. 152).

Working Together:	Accelerating Learning:	Leading Change:
Engaging with citizens and stakeholders to create shared ownership of new solutions	Exploring and iterating new ideas to inform and validate solutions	Mobilising resources and legitimacy to make change happen
Citizen and stakeholder engagement: Actively involving citizens, stakeholders and unusual suspects **Creative facilitation:** Creatively processing different perspectives and deliberating multiple options **Building bridges**: Orchestrating interaction to find common ground and create shared ownership **Brokering**: Mediating contrasting interests and reducing friction between multiple stakeholders	**Future acumen:** Connecting long-term vision with short-term achievable tasks **Prototyping and iterating:** Testing ideas and systematically improving them **Data literacy and evidence:** Using different types of data effectively to accelerate sense-making **Systems thinking:** Combining macro and micro perspectives to grasp complexity **Tech literacy:** Understanding technological development and their potential	**Political and bureaucratic awareness:** Operating political dynamics and bureaucratic procedures to ensure strategic support **Financing change:** Understanding the many ways to liberate and use financial resources for innovation **Intrapreneurship:** Being insurgent and using business acumen to create opportunities **Demonstrating value**: Articulating the value of new approaches and solutions for decision-making purposes **Storytelling and advocacy:** Using narratives and media to articulate vision and information in compelling ways

(Orlik et al., 2018, p. 39).

The developmental priority of *bildung* is learning, but the form of learning matters equally as the topic does. So as to encourage people in our community to maintain a continuous and ongoing interest in learning, then there has to be an honesty to it that enables people to enrich their lives both culturally, socially and materially. The most effective models of learning, according to Anderson and Bjőrkman will be values led, and will focus on "justice and truth" (Anderson & Bjőrkman, 2017, p. 184). It will enable learners to expand their circles of engagement themselves, and to raise their own aspirations for their own personal development and wellbeing, while securing deeper roots and a sense of embeddedness in their chosen or located communities. The aim for this should be life-long and go beyond the simple transaction of skills and capabilities, the needs of industry and the needs of business. It should foster a growing, but not fixed, sense of belonging. This model of developmental learning will foster a climate of reflection and challenge, if it is undertaken correctly, as it asks people to overcome their own ego-consolidations, and look forwards to the new modes of reciprocation with others that will be necessary in the future. This will be done through small gestures of supporting and mutual aid, but as Hanzi Freinacht points out,

"When we fail to recognise an obvious inner state or emotion within ourselves. If each person can hardly know her won state, how can we be expected to build a relatable community upon not only our won state, but the states of a whole group of people" (Freinacht, 2017, p. 277).

We need then, as Anderson and Björkman point out, to "understand our number of circles of belonging" from which we come, and towards which we are moving, "until we feel that we belong in and to all of them and that they belong to us." This means adapting our "sense of self to the whole world of people and the planet," while simultaneously taking into account that "many are not ready to identify with all of humanity, future generations and the planet as such" (Anderson & Björkman, 2017, p. 363).

The question that we might raise in future work, then, is how can we understand the digital inclusion cycle more fully, and might this be implemented as a developmental processes that is recognised as a legitimate alternative to the industrialised and professionalised models of digital engagement as a formal set of administrative and online civic engagement practices? Or not, as the case might be! Choices have clearly to be made about how these processes continue to be developed and implemented, and while development approaches are often dismissed as messy because they are sensitive to their context, and they are reflective of the complex lives that people's live. They are often easy to dismiss with either moralism or with claims of their inefficiency. But development does matter, and the processes that we employ to bring that development about matters as much as the outcomes and goals that we are seeking to achieve. As Hanzi Freinacht points out, development is intrinsic to the realisation of our future social potential. A balanced view of development would therefore be one that recognises, not only social interaction, but also cognitive complexity and inner growth. The complexity of this thinking has to see beyond the categorical and instead seek answers in the deeper-rooted archetypes that govern our collective relationships, our social consciousness and the communities of feeling to which we belong. This is because archetypes, as Jung argued, "are *transgressive*." That is, they are not "limited to the psychic realm," but by their nature are archetypal patterns that operate at a transgressive level, as they "can emerge into consciousness either from within the psychic matrix or from the world about us at once. When both happen at the same time, it is called synchronistic" (Stein, 1998, p. 201). As Carl Jung argued "no doubts can exist in the herd; the bigger the crowd the better the truth – and the greater the catastrophe" (Jung, 1968, p. 481). And so it is to the promotion of doubt that we must dedicate ourselves. Doubt about the totalising logic of inclusion. Doubt about the certainty that the world that we inhabit now will be the world we bequeath to future generations, and doubt about any move to more simple truths. To do this we need to reject the linear and serial solutions that are often being suggested in the *digital inclusion cycle* mindset, and we need to take a more personal and social developmental view of the digital inclusion process. We need to look at and understand what meaningful lived experiences are defined by, and we need to ensure that people have the power to define, for themselves, their circle of belonging and the tools that they will use to improve that circle for future generations.

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