

[Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors without Borders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A9decins_Sans_Fronti%C3%A8res)

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Red Crescent Turkey and Syria



Yvonne Lam @yvonnezlam · Jul 9, 2021

I keep coming back to Susan Leigh Star's idea that **infrastructure is relational** -- basically, we declare things to be **infrastructure** when we know we need them but we don't want to think about them -- and trying to think out what this implies for support code and its people

Jessica Joy Kerr @jessitron · Jul 4, 2021

That support code is part of the product, because the product IS its continuity of change.

The future of the software is also your product  
twitter.com/johncutlefish/...

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<https://twitter.com/yvonnezlam/status/1413535468621156353?s=20&t=3wHNqLknUA2o-e9Zft1tbQ>



Yvonne Lam @yvonnezlam

A thing I've started doing is asking people what they want to get out of meetings and then asking them how they think that will happen.

John Cutler @johncutlefish · Dec 8, 2022

"we need smaller meetings... they are more effective"

run meeting...

then a bunch of 1:1s to communicate what happened

tons of rework work and telephone game  
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no... you need more empowerment and fewer dependencies OR a larger more effective meeting

9:53 PM · Dec 8, 2022

<https://twitter.com/yvonnezlam/status/1601047292089634818>



Yvonne Lam @yvonnezlam · Jul 6, 2022

(coming to this late, because it has been a week)

Q1. This made me think of **complicated technical systems** I have encountered that seem to have no idea that people will not approach them in exactly the way that is most convenient for the system. #UXreads

Alba Villamil @albanvillamil · Jun 29, 2022

Week 1 is here! Join @\_arvind @justinthrelkeld @otlhogilegordon @yvonnezlam and I as we reflect on PotO and how it can help us reimagine our design practice. Comment below each red prompt and add #UXreads so we don't miss your insights--no worries if you haven't read chap 1 yet 🙄 twitter.com/albanvillamil/...

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In Chapter 1, Freire sets up the role of the **oppressors** as those who seek a position of superiority by either situating themselves as "more than human" or situating others as "less than human." How does this dynamic show up in design? #UXreads

ALT Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Chapter 1

#UXreads

<https://twitter.com/yvonnezlam/status/1544533464325558272?s=20&t=3wHNqLknUA2o-e9Zft1tbQ>

## Topics

- Tension between transparency and micro-managing
- Exposing infrastructure
- Properties of infrastructure
- Messaging from leadership not directed at groups that do infrastructure.
- Creating software that provides reproducible/consistent experiences
- Surprise that the paper has not been more influential (1999 pub).
- Methodology of viewing infrastructure through different lenses, resonates perhaps because of the persistence of infrastructure across time and culture.
- Tempo of infrastructure changes based on properties of creators/users.
- Infrastructure isn't the "boring stuff". Solving the problems of communication, connectivity of experts, etc. is the fundamental challenge of cooperation.
- Infrastructure is a utility, it is stable. Not boring requires novelty or new features. (see Wardley map).
- Infrastructure has basic expectations or understandings (e.g., power/electricity) when it is missing, it becomes visible.

Jessica DeVita

The discussion of temporality reminds me of Marisa Leavitt Cohn's excellent paper *Unruly Bodies of Code in Time* "software is bound up with philosophical commitments and morality. What I have highlighted here is how the moral economy of software work also applies to its aging and obsolescence. As John Durham Peters states, "obsolescence always raises moral questions about the subjects and objects we neglect" In the aging and obsolescence of software, time and code are configured together. In long-lived systems, particular temporalities of work must be maintained in order for the system to remain vital, and likewise a system can "fail" for lack of those who know how to program in older languages." <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9789048550753-012/pdf>

### Anna Tsing on Nonscalability

<https://asletaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/On-nonscalability.pdf>

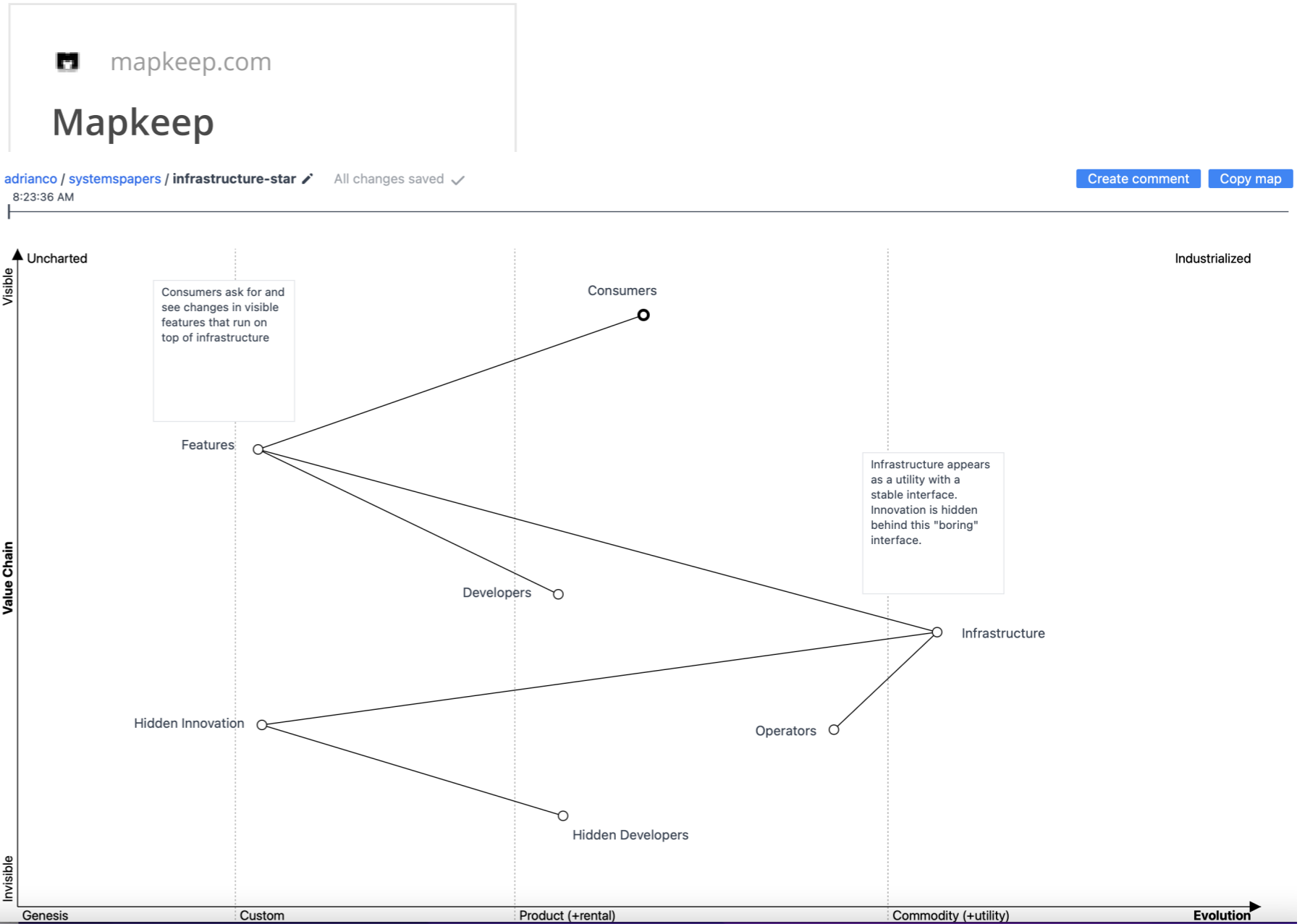
### ON NONSCALABILITY

The Living World Is Not Amenable to Precision-Nested Scales

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing

There is something disturbingly beautiful about precision, even when we know it fails us. A century ago, people stood awestruck at the terrible precision of the factory; today it is the precision of the computer. Precision has mesmerized not just engineers but all kinds of designers, scholars, and observers. One arena where precision has gained a malevolent hegemony is the use of scale. As in digital media, with its power to make the great tiny and the tiny great in an effortless zoom, *scale* has become a verb that requires precision; to scale well is to develop the quality called *scalability*, that is, the ability to expand—and expand, and expand—without rethinking basic elements. Scalability is, indeed, a triumph of precision design, not just in computers but in business, development, the “conquest” of nature, and, more generally, world making. It is a form of design that has a long history of dividing winners and losers. Yet it disguises such divisions by blocking our ability to notice the heterogeneity of the world; by its design, scalability allows us to see only uniform blocks, ready for further expansion. This essay recalls attention to the wild diversity of life on earth through the argument that it is time for a theory of *nonscalability*!

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this essay was presented at the “Conceptualizing the World” conference at the University of Oslo (September 2011); Conversations with colleagues there, as well as at the University of California, Santa Cruz; Aarhus University; Leiden University; and the University of Wisconsin “Globalization and the Humanities” conference (February 2010) have been most instructive.





twitter.com

From: Tammy Troup:  
The layers of concurrent "advancements" reminds me of ideas explored by indigenous futurism.

From Bruno Felix:  
On the topic of expertise, this paper raises some interesting points:  
[Transparency is Surveillance](https://philpapers.org/rec/Transparency.is.Surveillance)  
[https://philpapers.org/rec/NGUTIS](https://philpapers.org/rec/https://philpapers.org/rec/NGUTIS)

From Andra Sonea:  
The other name I mentioned at the intersection of Information Systems & Science and technology research is Claudio Ciborra

On the topic of the nursing study, expertise in general, and related to transparency and trust:  
<https://philpapers.org/rec/NGUTIS>

Joel Spolsky  
<https://www.joelonsoftware.com/2002/11/11/the-law-of-leaky-abstractions/>

Cognitive Load  
<https://techbeacon.com/app-dev-testing/forget-monoliths-vs-microservices-cognitive-load-what-matters>

on "Master Narrative", "nonpeople", what is missing or unstudied:  
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/41104077-invisible-women> and  
<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/51777543>

Paul Edwards  
<http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/infrastructure.pdf>

Paul Edwards on Twitter:  
<https://twitter.com/AVastMachine>

David Edgerton  
The Shock of the Old  
<https://profilebooks.com/work/the-shock-of-the-old/>

John Allspaw on "the line of representation"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bxj-FLEi10>



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From Jessica DeVita:  
Using Ethnography to Understand Meaning: A Review of Sam Ladner's Practical Ethnographical Ethnography: A Guide to Doing Ethnography in the Private Sector  
<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1203&context=tqr>

Situated Learning:  
<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/655464>

From Anukool Junnarkar:  
David Graeber has a wonderful talk about imagining a politics that \*feels good\*.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eR\\_95slEFw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eR_95slEFw)

From Jessica DeVita:  
An excerpt from Lucy Suchman's excellent book "Human Machine Reconfigurations" "Interaction is always a tentative process, a process of continuously testing the conception one has the other." (Turner 1962: original emphasis)

From Jessica DeVita:  
The discussion of temporality reminds me of Marisa Leavitt Cohn's excellent paper Unruly Bodies of Code in Time "software is bound up with philosophical commitments and morality. What I have highlighted here is how the moral economy of software work also applies to its aging and obsolescence. As John Durham Peters states, "obsolescence always raises moral questions about the subjects and objects we neglect".  
In the aging and obsolescence of software, time and code are configured together. In long-lived systems, particular temporalities of work must be maintained in order for the system to remain vital, and likewise a system can "fail" for lack of those who know how to program in older languages."

From Adrian Cockcroft:  
New History of Humanity by David Graeber

Maintenance and Care, by @shannonmattern  
<https://placesjournal.org/article/maintenance-and-care/>

From Rahul Agrawal:  
This reminds me of paper whose title was - Nobody Ever Gets Credit for Fixing Problems that Never Happened.

From pirmin:  
Doing interviews for Post Incident Reviews feels a bit like Ethnographic interviews:  
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/0PAdx1rVSM3yLQZc8TUgva?si=40b4cfa63f5d4431>

## Code of Conduct

Our participation here reflects our mutual agreement and commitment to each other to follow this code of conduct during our discussion today. It applies equally to all of us (including facilitators).

- We share a commitment to providing a friendly, safe and welcoming meeting experience for all, regardless of level of experience, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, personal appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, age, religion, nationality, or other similar characteristic.
- Please be kind and courteous. Please avoid using terms that might detract from a friendly, safe and welcoming environment for all.
- Respect that people have differences of opinion and that our discussions will reflect different perspectives, trade-offs and impacts. There is seldom a right answer.
- Should anyone insult, demean or harass others in this setting, they will be excluded from interaction (contact the facilitators, if this happens). That is not welcome behavior.
- Likewise any spamming, trolling, flaming, baiting or other attention-stealing behavior is not welcome.

Note: We have adapted this code of conduct from the Ruby Code of Conduct.