Heads in the clouds

Being human in the age of cloud computing

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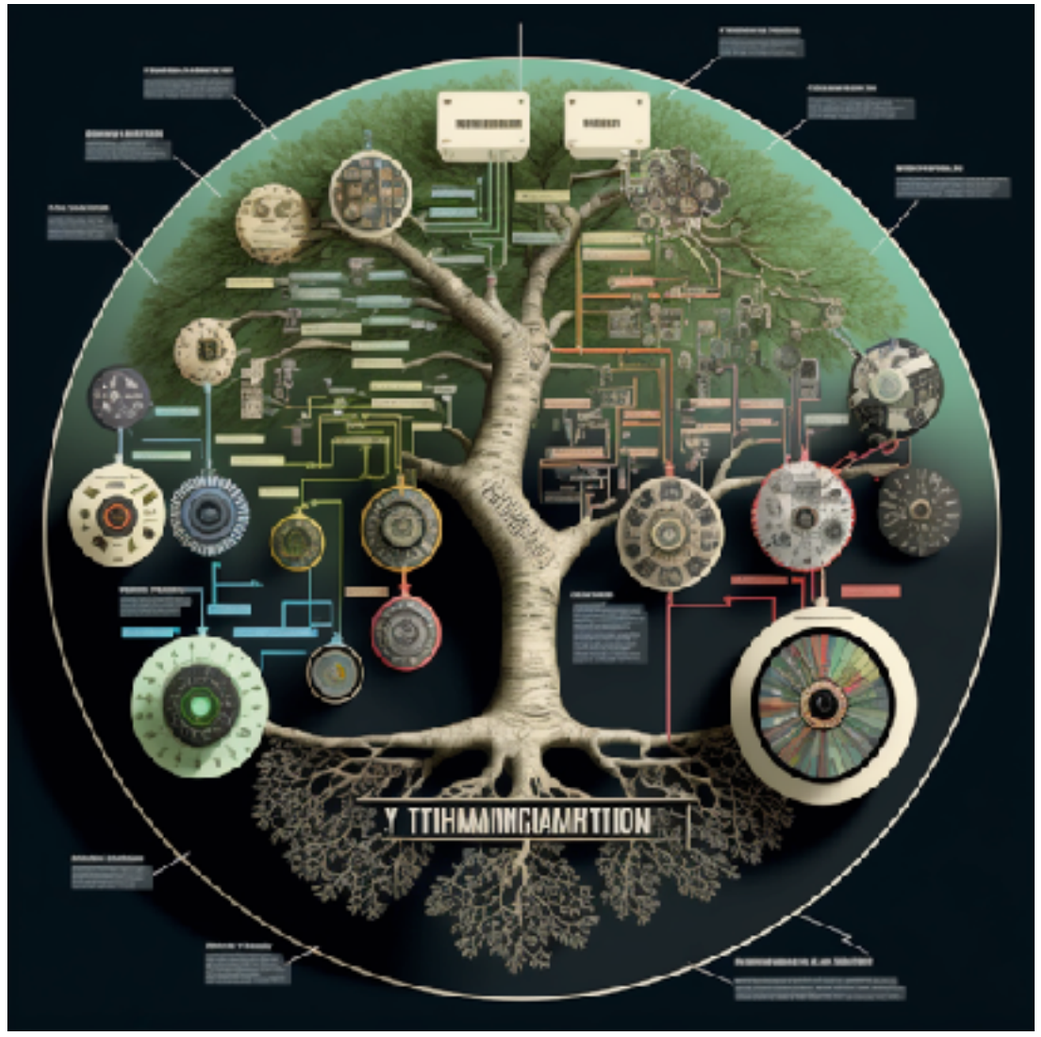
Technology: organizing stuff to do stuff

(the orchestration of phenomena to some use)



The stuff that we organize to do stuff usually includes stuff that has been organized to do stuff

(technologies evolve by assembly)

Counter technologies

Many/most technologies in an assembly are needed only to fix problems caused by *other* technologies in the assembly…

Including **those we enact ourselves**

Soft and hard technologies

- **Soft technologies are *made* to have gaps inventively filled.**
- **Hard technologies *force* us to fill the gaps correctly, as cogs in the machine.**

However, *any* technologies can be assembled with others in new and unprestatable ways.

Not just users but participants

Technologies are partly (sometimes wholly) made of us

Technique: the stuff we do with stuff that is done

Technologies that are enacted by humans

Hard technique and soft technique

- **Soft technique is human, idiosyncratic, always unique, creative, and personal.**
- **Hard technique is how we play our roles correctly.**

To put it another way…

Techniques fill gaps in the hard assembly

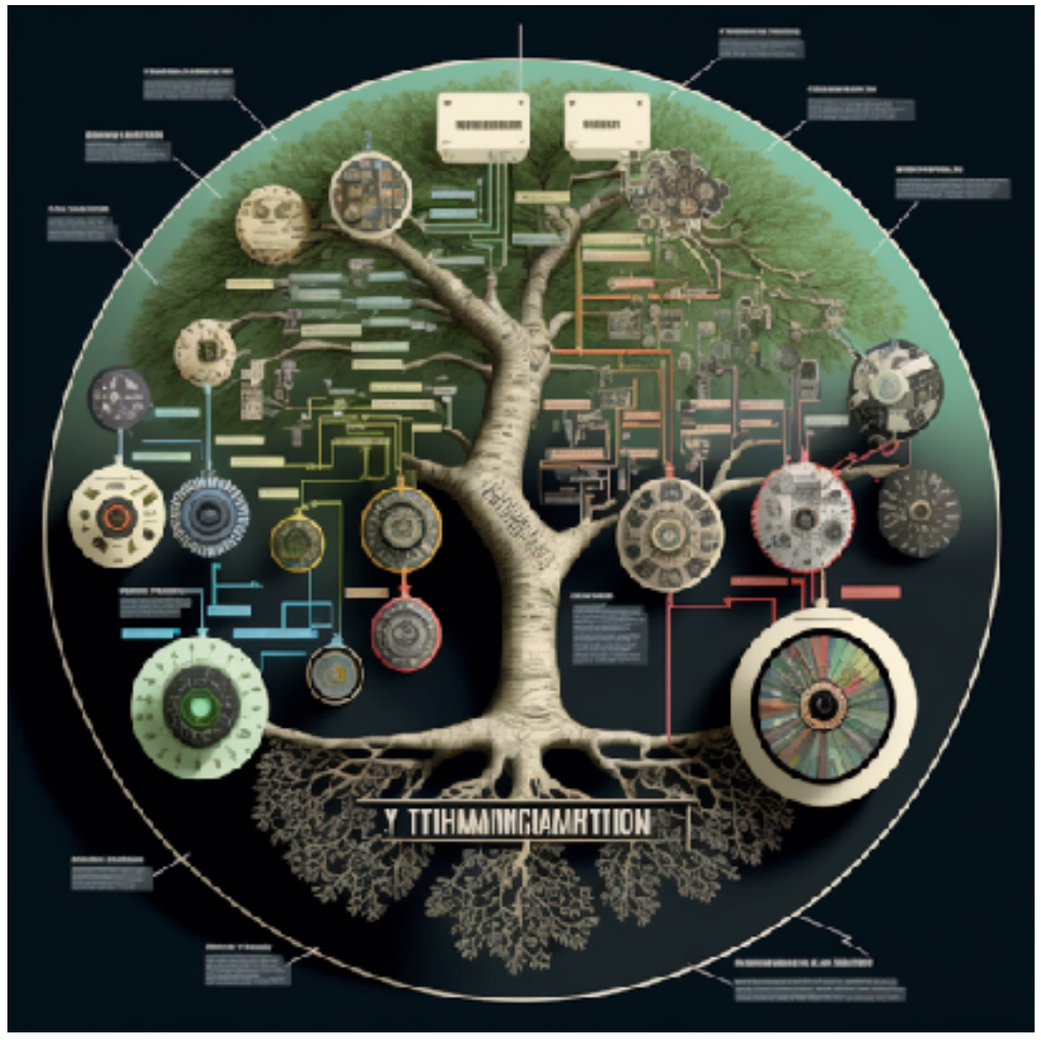
The adjacent possible

There are *always* gaps to fill. Each new technology makes new adjacent possible empty niches. Enablement, not entailment. But…

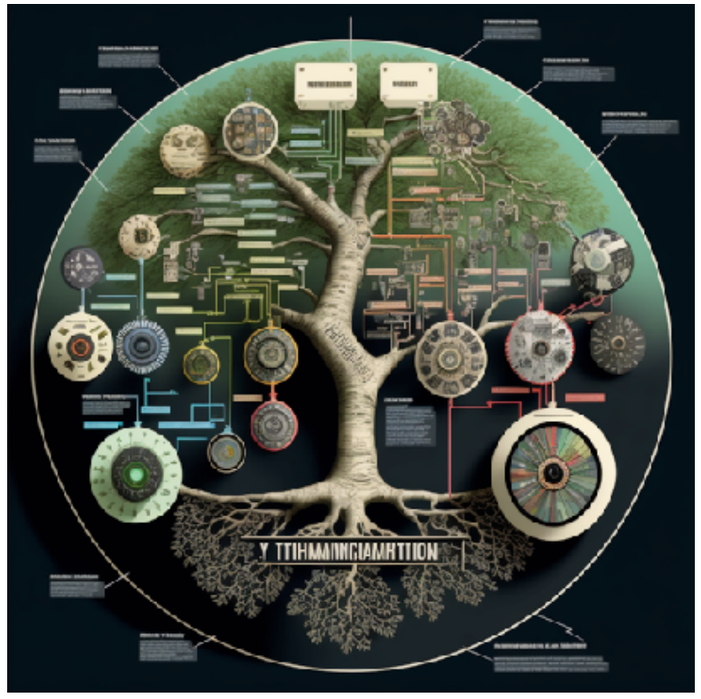
Pace layering

Larger and slower changing technologies have more influence than smaller and faster changing technologies. There are hierarchical layers.

Path dependencies



What exists constrains invention



Hard technologies create the context/environment for soft technologies

What is rigid constrains what is flexible



Synecdoches and wholes

What matters is the *whole* assembly. The parts may be essential, but they are not the technologies of interest.

The cloud

For different stakeholders there are different phenomena, different purposes, different gaps to fill.

Sometimes, they are in conflict

The cloud for the service provider

lock-in is *very* desirable

The cloud for the IT department

lock-in is very undesirable

The cloud for the end user?

Often just feel locked in (or locked out)

Clouds can be great, until the weather changes.

What happens when cloud providers:

Change the tech;

Change the rules;

Are acquired;

Change locations;

Change prices;

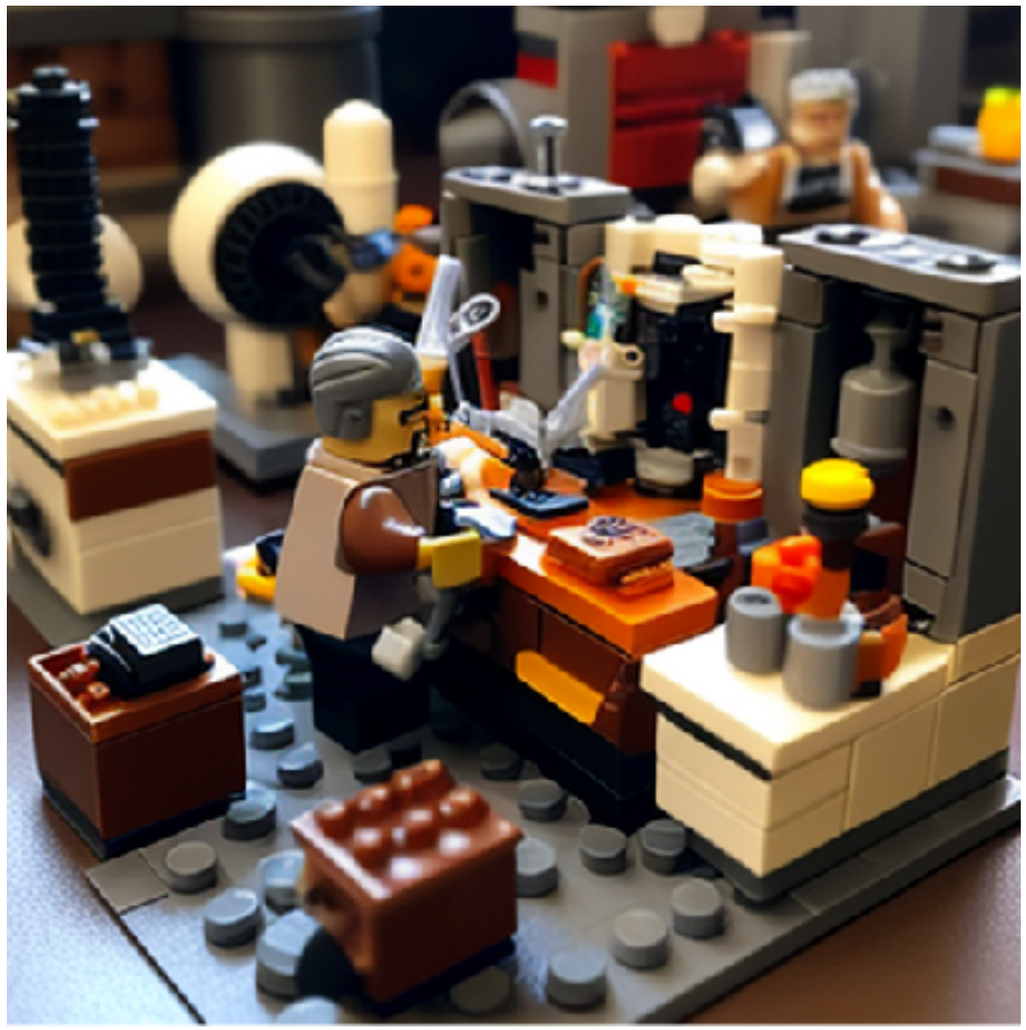
Go out of business?

Focus on the participant role

What techniques depend on what has changed, what needs to change as a result?

Build with small, robust, assemblable components.

Be the orchestrator, not the orchestrated

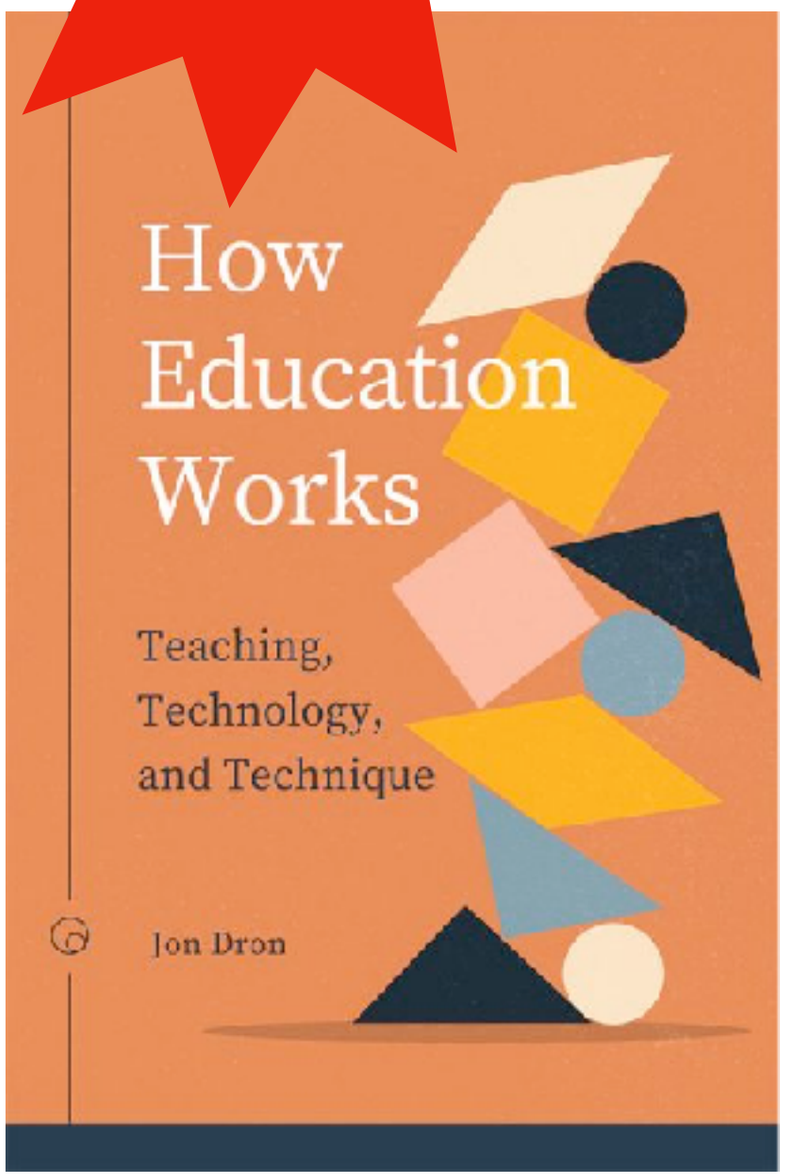


Use open standards, or wrap closed systems in open wrappers (microservices etc)

Rent generic, replaceable services, not monoliths

In summary: make the right things hard and keep the right things soft.

Due out May 2023



Thank you

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