

Shift Paper – The Future by Design, Not Default

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Over the last twenty-five years, there have been a number of overlapping descriptors of the economic systems in which businesses live. Regional and global economies have moved through the Industrial, Informational and Knowledge Economies to the Network, and now into the Creative Economy. All of these shifts have been rapid and each has incorporated and built upon – but certainly not eliminated – the previous ones.

This shift paper is written not as a wrong way/right way to think about and do business, but rather as a way to have a dialog about our assumptions and ways of working in order to increase our fitness for the kinds of situations, decisions and responsibilities that a Creative Economy imposes on us.

The phrases below are not to be taken in isolation as single issues but as a whole for designing and finding new patterns that will work well in a creative economy.

familiar **emerging**

Standards, rules and regulations are imposed at the start of a process, often becoming static	Patterns, principles, and relationships create standards that evolve and shift with new context
Top down; decisions made in exclusivity and chosen from within a few possibilities	Ideas grow from bottom up and are designed with inclusivity of all involved in their development and use
Conforming; drive to get everyone on the same page	Disruptive; value derived from the differences of perspective, experience, intelligence
Design by experts	Experts in collaboration with others from many vantage points
Repeatable, mechanistic processes	Parts reusable, re-create and re-combinable to create entirely new products and services
Decisions made in isolation	Answers emerge from within context and collaborative engagement
Narrowly controlled networks and supply chains	Creates and grows communities and webs of relationships
Closed system	Open system
Rational, logical, analytical	Rational, emotional, intuitive -- engages cognitive diversity and multiple intelligences
Mechanistic	Organic, biomimicry
Linear	Iterative and multi-layered
Single solution based; finding "the answer"	Multi-solution based, finding fitness
We know what we're looking for from the start	Search images guide and shape emergent solutions
Understanding comes first	Rigorous and open-ended; learn by doing and learning through multiple explorations
Using familiar habits	Willingness to start from scratch -- employing a beginner's mind
Short term or long term	Short and long term in symbiotic relationship with each other
Realistic, grounded in assumptions of what is possible	Hopeful, playful and imaginative; aspires to expand and create possibilities