

# System of Learning Systems: Vertical Multi-Paradigmatic View



Dr. Janne J. Korhonen  
SCiO Finland

Nothing is as dangerous in architecture as dealing with separated problems. If we split life into separated problems we split the possibilities to make good building art. – Alvar Aalto (1898–1976)



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

# Black Box Perspective



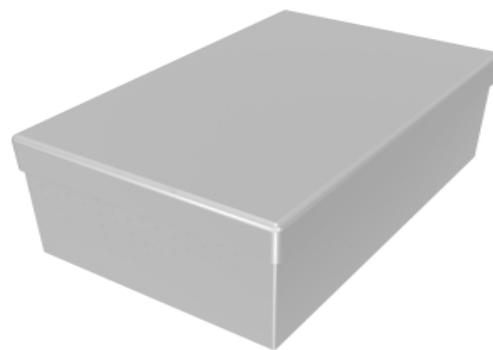
“The entropy of a closed system never decreases.”  
— Anthony Doerr

Logic: “Command and Control”

What the system <b>can</b> do?	What the system <b>cannot</b> do?
Choose the course of action to achieve predefined goals, staying within established tolerances.	Choose or redefine the goals that guide its behavior.
Categorize situations based on known models and select matching responses from a known repertoire.	Apply expertise to reinterpret situations beyond given models.

# White Box Perspective

Logic: “Analyze and Respond”



“Being an open system means --- that there is experience and energy outside of what you bring that can add to your personal and organizational infrastructure, and you open yourself up to it.”

— Henry Cloud

## What the system **can** do?

Revise goals, targets, and strategies in response to changing conditions.

Model and simulate complex cause-and-effect relationships.

## What the system **cannot** do?

Question the normative framework within which goals are formulated.

Respond meaningfully, when cause and effect are not linear.

# Out-of-Box Perspective

Logic: “Sense and Respond”



“The way to build a complex system that works is to build it from very simple systems that work.”

— Kevin Kelly

## What the system **can** do?

Critically examine and redefine underlying norms and values to pursue its purpose.

Sense causal patterns and reinforce and attenuate them for adaptive response.

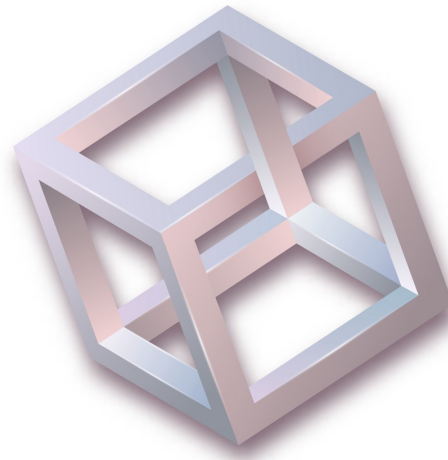
## What the system **cannot** do?

Transcend the contingency of purpose itself in pursuit of unattainable ideals.

Act decisively even when the causal patterns are elusive.

# What box?

Logic: “Transpire and Transcend”



The system orients to unattainable ideals.

The system is perennially becoming.

The system “resolves” complexity.

“A concept is a brick. It can be used to build a courthouse of reason. Or it can be thrown through the window.”

— Gilles Deleuze

# Vertical Multi-Paradigmatism (VMP)

What Box?



Out-of-Box



White Box



Black Box



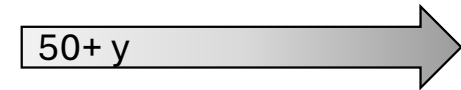
Civilizational–Planetary  
(purpose-indifferent)

Macrosocial System  
(norm-autonomous)

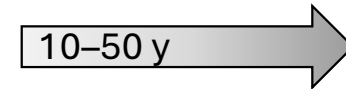
Whole Organization  
(goal-autonomous)

Work Systems  
(plan-autonomous)

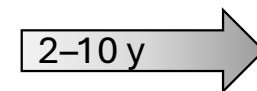
50+ y



10–50 y



2–10 y



1–2 y

