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Wicked Tame Assignment

The read “Wicked Problems and Social Complexity” by Jeff Conklin explains the unique process that people go through to solve problems. In this chapter, it focuses on how there are different factors that play into problem solving. With each problem comes a new set of ideas, thoughts and ways of approaching the solution. The difficult part is that when working in a group, you have many different styles and ideas of solving the problem therefore it makes reaching a final answer very difficult.

After conducting a study on how programmers designed an elevator system, the results showed a vast difference in how they thought out the problem. The linear way of thinking called “the waterfall”, shows how problem solving starts with understanding the data, then formulating a solution, and finally implementing the solution. After the study was completed, researchers found that that is not at all how these scholars approached the problem. They found them to be bouncing back and forth from analyzing the data to coming up with a solution, to then going back to the data and so on. Multiple studies showed these same results which concludes that everyone processes information differently, making working in a group that much more difficult to come to a final, collective solution.

This article relates to what we’re talking about in class because it shows the different ways people think in order to come up with a solution. With different ways of approaching a problem, comes different ideas. People like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs had similar goals but both went at the problem in their own way with their own team, which in the end created a completely different product in the same line of work. This goes to show that there is no concrete “right” answer and with all the information out there now, new ideas and applications or limitless.
After watching the video about all the massive amounts of information emerging in our generation and reading this article, it goes to show that the amount of possibilities to create things and make existing things more efficient is infinite. Seeing in class the film on where we started with computers to where we are now truly shows the capability of advancement which is really cool to think about. The computer and internet were created relatively recent so to think what will be imagined and created in the future is exciting.

Questions:

1. If there is a “no stopping rule” with wicked problems, how can anyone ever be satisfied knowing there isn’t a concrete answer to any problem?

2. If working in groups provides more ideas but also creates more fragmentation, is it more efficient to work alone?

3. Since everyone processes problems and solutions differently, how can we figure out which is the most productive way to find the best solution?

Work Cited