



Holotopia domain map

Holotopia summary

“We are living in a period of extraordinary danger, as we are faced with the possibility that our whole species will be eliminated from the evolutionary scene. One necessary condition of successfully continuing our existence is the creation of an atmosphere of hope that the huge problems now confronting us can, in fact, be solved—and can be solved in time.”

— Margaret Mead¹

¹ Margaret Mead, “Continuities in Cultural Evolution”. Yale University Press, 1964.

Holotopia is a realizable vision of a future distinctly better than our present; Holotopia is a **prototype** or project to make this vision come true.

Five **insights**, ten **themes** and a portfolio of about forty **prototypes** define the **holotopia** vision; and constitute the Holotopia **prototype**.

The **insights** follow from published results. They show that dramatic improvements will be reached by updating, evidence-based, our comprehension and handling of pivotal **categories**—the matters that determine our civilization’s evolutionary course: **action** (the way we respond to contingencies, and use our growing ability to induce change), communication, **foundation** and **method** (how truth and meaning are created), and values.

The **themes** show that the **insights** reverse the comprehension and handling of other matters—including education, politics, democracy, science, religion and “the pursuit of happiness”; and offer novel answers to age-old questions such as “how to put an end to war”.

The **prototypes** are models, in varying degrees implemented in practice. They make the **holotopia** vision actionable by showing how exactly our society’s core constituents can be renewed in accord with the **insights**: Collaborology prototypes an education that enables instead of disabling the society’s evolution; the Barcelona Innovation Ecosystem for Good Journalism, abbreviated as BIG J, models a public informing that can illuminate the way; The Lighthouse details the congenial updates in academic communication.

The improvements that the **insights** point to are so co-dependent, that to make any of them we need to make them all. An overarching **insight** follows: Reversing our civilization’s self-destructive course means updating our cultural and societal order of things or **paradigm** as a whole.

The Holotopia **prototype** shows why a comprehensive improvement can be easy, even when piecemeal and obviously necessary changes are impossible—by elaborating an analogy between our contemporary situation and the onset of the Enlightenment; when the synergism of a new way to think and a technology of communication effortlessly engendered a new phase in society’s evolution.

Systemic Innovation

“The tie between information and action has been severed... [Information] comes indiscriminately, directed at no one in particular, disconnected from usefulness; we are glutted with information, drowning in information, have no control over it, don't know what to do with it.”

— Neil Postman²

Think of all the academic articles; and all the information pouring at us from the media. Could it all amount to naught—by leaving us dazzled, not informed? And if the systems whose function is to enlighten us are ineffective—what about the others?

Imagine the systems in which we live and work as gigantic machines; whose function is to make our daily work useful. Consider that they might be creating “the huge problems now confronting us”—and you’ll have a glimpse of **systemic innovation**, the first of **holotopia’s insights**. You’ll see why solutions are impossible without updating systems³. And why **socio**-technical inventions are positioned to mark this century—and have Industrial Revolution-like effects.

Systemic innovation becomes all the more alluring when combined with **collective mind**, the **holo-**

² Neil Postman, Keynote to the German Informatics Society, October 11, 1990.

³ Erich Jantsch, “Integrative Planning for the ‘Joint Systems’ of Society and Technology—The Emerging Role of the University.” MIT Report, 1969.

topia's second *insight*. The interactive, network-interconnected media technology, which we now use to work and communicate, has been created—by Douglas Engelbart and his SRI-based lab—to revolutionize the society's systems; by enabling in them the kind of functions that the nervous system has in an organism⁴. Imagine an organism whose cells use its nervous system to only broadcast data—and you'll have no difficulty comprehending why a different specialization and organization in handling of information will lead to a revolution in communication; commensurate in impact to the one that the printing press enabled.

The key to manifesting such vast opportunities is, of course, a different way of thinking—which *socialized reality*, the *holotopia*'s third *insight*, points to.

Knowledge Federation

“A new type of thinking is essential if mankind is to survive and move toward higher levels.”

— Albert Einstein⁵

Holotopia stems from an uncommon way to think. We could have called it “systemic” or “holistic”, because it demands that we comprehend and handle things based on their roles in larger systems or wholes. We, however, designated it as *academic*—to pinpoint that we are only following the lead that the founders of Academia left us.

The ancients saw clearly that our “reality picture” holds us in a grip; they called it *doxa*. Socrates demonstrated this by engaging the Athenians in *dialogs*; Plato proposed to liberate us by *categorizing* thought; Aristotle developed an understanding of core *categories* as he saw them—and com-

pleted the foundation on which the academic tradition developed.

How exactly the successes of Early Scientific Revolution made our ancestors regress to *doxa* has been retold by 20th century's thinkers. They found in *materialism*—which is still commonly considered “the scientific worldview”—more faults than we can enumerate: Max Weber saw it as holding us captive in “the iron cage” of dysfunctional systems⁶; Benjamin Lee Whorf called it “culture-trammled understanding”⁷; Werner Heisenberg considered it “the rigid and narrow frame”, too narrow to let us apprehend and take care of core constituents of culture⁸. Atomic physics disproved the *materialism*'s premises, Heisenberg warned; he expected that a cultural renewal would be his field's main gift to mankind.

Einstein's published fundamental observations are alone sufficient to disqualify *materialism*; and “reality” as the basis for knowledge as such. We added an insight that reaches us from the humanities—that “the social construction of reality” legitimates the society's systems, however dysfunctional and obsolete they might be⁹. The *socialized reality insight* resulted. It shows that we now can, and indeed must, liberate ourselves from *doxa* once and for all. The *Holotopia prototype* explains why this will have similarly sweeping consequences as the ones the Enlightenment engendered.

We took advantage of this insight and formulated a convention or axiom from which the Knowledge Federation *prototype* resulted—to consider *information* as an element in our systems; and to adapt it to the functions it must fulfill. When we no longer reify “democracy” as the mechanics that our society happens to have, and “public informing” as what the journalists happen to be doing—we are ready to ask “What should information be like so that we the people can comprehend the complex world; and be in charge of our destiny?” By asking

⁴ Dino Karabeg, “Doug Engelbart and the Information Age”. Blog post, holoscope.info, 2010.

⁵ “Atomic Education Urged by Einstein”. New York Times, May 25, 1946.

⁶ Max Weber, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”. Routledge, 2001 (1904).

⁷ Benjamin Lee Whorf, “Language, Thought and Reality”. MIT Press, 1956 (1940).

⁸ Werner Heisenberg, “Physics and Philosophy”. Harper, 1958.

⁹ Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, “The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge”. Anchor, 1966.

questions of this kind, and taking advantage of state-of-the-art insights to answer them, we developed Knowledge Federation as a *prototype* of an academic enabler for the “type of thinking” that is necessary if we should be able to “survive and move toward higher levels”.

To *federate knowledge* means to combine published insights and other cultural artifacts across domains of interest and traditions, and update the comprehension and handling of a *category* or *theme*. Political federation unites smaller geopolitical units to give them visibility and impact; *knowledge federation* does that with information. *Knowledge federation* lifts us up from ‘the information jungle’; and lets us see ‘where the roads lead’. When we applied it, the five *insights* and the *holotopia* vision resulted.

Knowledge federation practices *systemic innovation* by creating *prototypes*; a *transdiscipline* is organized around each of them to update it continuously. The Knowledge Federation *transdiscipline* develops *knowledge federation*; and the *transdiscipline* as an academic institutional template.

Knowledge federation federates its own premises and methods. The Polyscopy *prototype* shows how the scientific approach to knowledge can be extended to provide insights about any theme of interest; on any level of generality.

Call to Action

“Make things whole!”

— *Holotopia’s* rule of thumb

Join *holotopia*

It all comes down to a single value; and the corresponding way of being in the world: Instead of asking “what’s in it for me”—we see ourselves as parts in larger wholes; and collaborate and self-organize to make them *whole*. The moment you aspire to emulate this value—you are already in *holotopia*.

You then see the Holotopia project as your own; and as our generation’s evolutionary due. Like Gaudí’s Sagrada Família, *holotopia* is transgenerational: We will not complete it in our lifetime. But **what a difference it will make to begin it!**

Institute *knowledge federation*

Holotopia demands a remedial way to think: To make things *whole*, we must see them *whole!* By fostering this thinking to the society, the *academia* resumes its own revolution.

Knowledge federation is an institutional space where young people can pursue academic careers by working on core contemporary themes; which are relevant to their future. Where they can be creative in the manner the founders of the Scientific Revolution were—by creating, instead of only inheriting, academic methods and procedures.

Ignite the *holotopia* dialog

By developing a media-enabled public *dialog* about the *holotopia* vision, *knowledge federation* returns to the academic tradition’s point of origin; and fulfills the *academia’s* all-important role—restores the faculty of vision to our society.

This intervention to update our *collective mind*—without which lasting solutions to “the huge problems now confronting us” are impossible¹⁰—is the Holotopia project’s first actionable goal.

¹⁰ Bela H. Banathy, “Guided Evolution of Society”. Kluwer Academic, 2000.