

POLYSCOPY IN TWO PICTURES

DINO KARABEG WORDS
FREDRIK EIVE REFSLI FORM

Information Design Challenge *ideogram*



We are traveling into the future in a bus
with candle headlights.

POLYSCOPY IS A PARADIGM proposal. According to Thomas Kuhn, a new paradigm is way to conceive and organize a domain of knowledge that resolves the existing anomalies and opens a new frontier to development. Multiple paradigms are allowed to coexist, to fulfill different purposes. Polyscopy is proposed as a new paradigm in knowledge work as a whole. Its purpose is to help us orient the change that is now driven by technology.

THE INFORMATION DESIGN CHALLENGE IDEOGRAM expresses the essence of this proposal in a nutshell. This *ideogram* depicts our contemporary civilization as a bus, and our conventional knowledge work as its candle headlights. Technology has enabled us to surge into the future. But our information-related practices—inadvertently inherited from the past— fail to provide us the vision that we now need for steering.

IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO FIND A WAY to change course, wrote Aurelio Peccei, The Club of Rome's first president. Technology can help us reach a future we may most truly desire. The Information Design Challenge ideogram points to a natural way to achieve this—by developing a knowledge work that can illuminate the way.

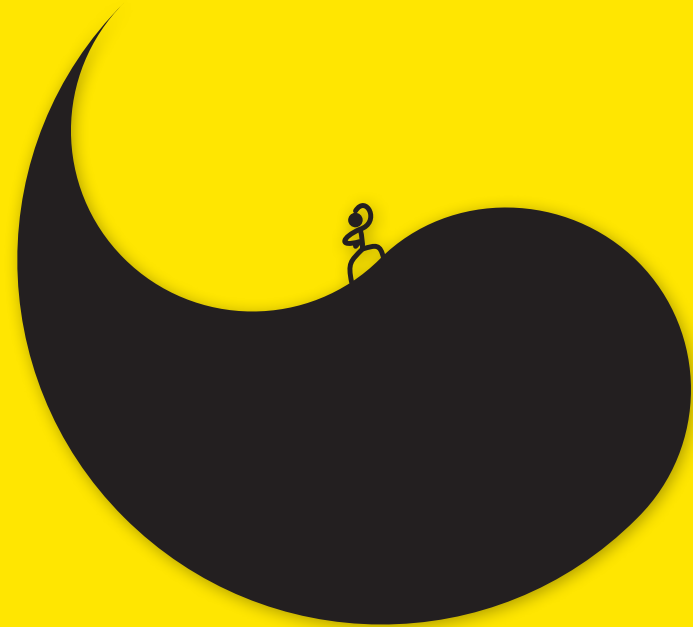
THE INFORMATION AGE is the name we have given to our era because of the impact the information technology has had on our lives. Polyscopy projects a vision of an *informed* Information Age. As the comparison of a candle with a light bulb might suggest, the knowledge work that can fulfill this vision, while enabled by technology, will be entirely different from the inherited one. What might the information that shows the way be like? By what methods, and what social processes can it be created? How can it be put into real-world, institutional use? The polyscopy proposal offers carefully developed answers, which are already being tested in practice.



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Convenience Paradox ideogram



The easy way seems difficult.

THE FUTURE will either be the inspired product of a great cultural revival, or there will be no future, wrote Aurelio Peccei. The Convenience Paradox *ideogram* shows how the approach to knowledge that is the subject of polyscopy might contribute to a large cultural change.

THE LITTLE HUMAN in the *ideogram* is standing and wondering which way to go. The way going down, which appears to be easier and more pleasant, becomes forbiddingly difficult when followed and vice versa. This ideogram depicts a common situation or *pattern* where a more convenient direction leads to a less convenient condition. The quotation from the Lao Tzu's ancient classic suggests that the right direction may already be known in a world tradition. The methods of polyscopy allow us to combine a variety of insights from disparate traditions, including the contemporary and academic ones, to empower an insight that shows the way.

CONVENIENCE (favoring what seems easy and pleasant) is the naive value supported by advertising, which has become our culture's dominant one. The Convenience Paradox *ideogram* suggests that the pursuit of convenience might be no better than always going down because that feels easier, instead of going to a place where we truly want to be.

THE CONVENIENCE PARADOX IDEOGRAM indicates how polyscopy may contribute to the emergence of a new cultural direction—simply by allowing for an *informed* pursuit of happiness.

