

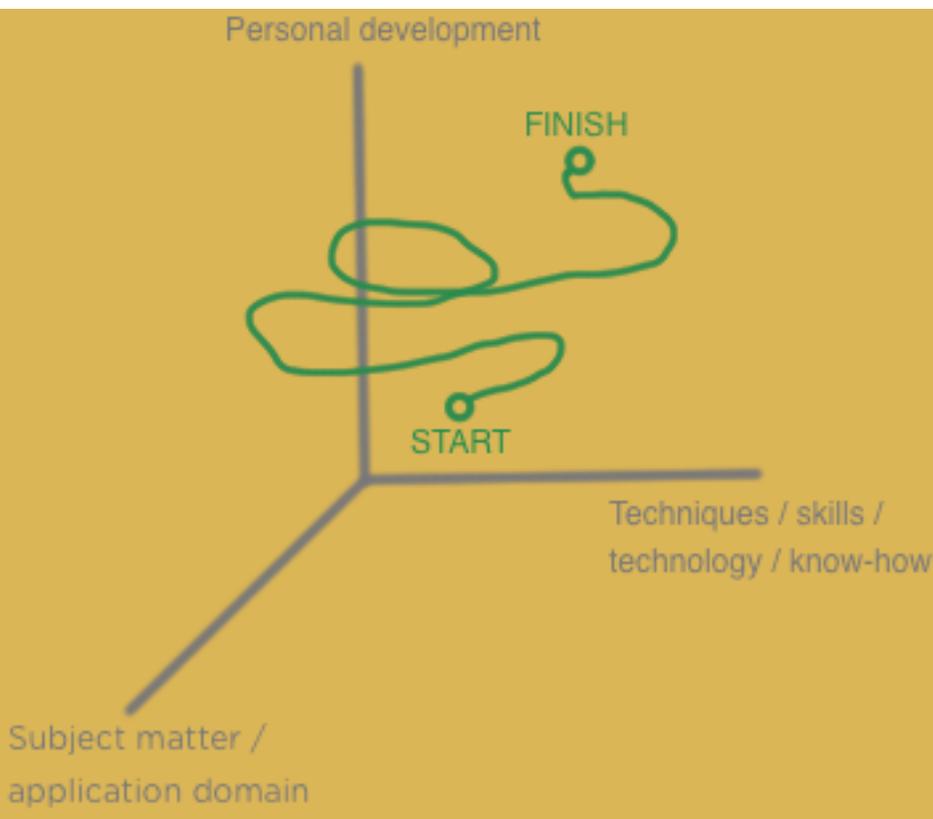
## ZIG Project Description

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# Dissertations

This document will present initial sketches for several dissertation topics that are available within the ZIG Project. We begin with a general outline of the approach; we conclude with an outline of some uncommon value propositions that the ZIG Project extends to its participants.

## The Nature of ZIG Project Dissertations



A ZIG Project dissertation may be envisioned as a guided tour from a starting point to a finish, along a trajectory in a multidimensional space spanned by various learning objectives. Along this way, the student will 'discover' not only interesting and relevant things out there, but also a viable focus for continuing the career. The dissertation process is exploratory and flexible. Our goal is to help young people rise all the way to the top, and be able to make a difference. A related goal is to empower the students to dare to be creative.

The role of the advisors, augmented by the ZIG project, is to provide a good starting point and guidance along the way. This guidance includes opening doors when the student seems to be reaching a wall. Each

student will have a local advisor in the department of study, an international advisor, which is initially by default Dino Karabeg, and access to an international multidisciplinary team in Knowledge Federation.

In what follows we describe a sequence of 'dissertations.' A 'dissertation' is not a fixed dissertation topic, but a starting point, or better said a collection of starting points. This means that a variety of actual dissertations can be tailored from each 'dissertation,' according to the interests and the talents of the student.

## Dissertation E1

Create a viable business model for ‘good journalism’ (public informing capable of fulfilling its key systemic roles). How can good journalism create revenue? How can the money flow empower – rather than inhibit – good journalism? You may present a taxonomy of available approaches and discuss their relative merits. One possibility is to use micro-financing, augmented by the Value Matrix Object (technological component under design by Knowledge Federation); another possibility is to use a value-based marketing designed to empower good products. This project is suitable for a student interested in developing model-making skills, especially in the emerging area of socio-technical system design (see the concluding section).

Additional variants of this topic include:

- Socio-technical system design for corporate social responsibility. Emerging information technologies can be used to create a business ‘ecology’ that supports good practice.
- Is journalism too important as systemic component to be abandoned to commercial forces? Could we also put corporations in charge of the legal system? Use this example to discuss relative merits of regulation and de-regulation. Insights from system science and other studies of evolution may be helpful.

## Dissertation E2

Create a suitable strategy and techniques for managing the transdiscipline (a transdisciplinary innovation ecosystem); test it in practice by coordinating the ZIG project. A challenge presented is to enable a heterogeneous team, consisting of technology experts, business model designers and field experts (concretely journalists) to co-create a radically new practice for a profession, and to bring it into practice. Naturally, the management techniques developed here may take advantage of new or emerging knowledge-work technology.

Additional variants of this topic include:

- Economics of Open Innovation. Henry Chesbrough of U.C. Berkeley developed [Open Innovation](#) based on the insight that “companies need to make much greater use of external ideas and technologies in their own business, and let unused internal ideas and technologies go outside to be used in other companies’ businesses.” Induct Software, which implements and markets a Web-based platform for this approach, is a Corporate Stakeholder in Knowledge Federation. Customize (with the help of the Induct experts) the Induct platform and use it to power the innovation ecosystem.

## Dissertation CS1

Complete the technological support for the good journalism prototype. A challenge is to combine sensemaking and other new technology to enable completely new patterns of organization in knowledge work. This dissertation is performed in cooperation with DebateGraph – a Corporate Stakeholder in Knowledge Federation.

## Dissertation CS2

Complete the technological support for the transdiscipline prototype, as instantiated and implemented by the ZIG Project as ‘innovation ecosystem for good journalism.’ A challenge is to create an infrastructure that can enable a heterogeneous team of experts to co-create systemic solutions together. This dissertation is performed in cooperation with Induct Software – a Corporate Stakeholder in Knowledge Federation.

## Dissertation J1

Develop a journalism / public informing model ‘by design,’ i.e. to enable contemporary democracy handle complex contemporary issues. What should this new journalism be like? What technology is needed to support it? What is the new role of the journalist; of the ‘crowd’; of academic researchers?

## Dissertation J2

Assume the role of ‘journalism’ in the multidisciplinary team enacted by the ZIG Project. What must be imported from traditional journalism? How can journalistic techniques help the final goal of the ZIG Project, which is the change of practice?

## Other Possible Dissertations

Other dissertations may also be formulated – in mentioned and other disciplines – as the following hints might suggest (details will be provided on demand):

- **Dissertation Philos1.** By using ‘postulation’ or ‘convention making’ develop: (1) an approach to ‘truth’ with no potential controversies; (2) an approach to ‘truth’ that relies on designing suitable social processes, using new media; (3) a ‘social construction of reality’ (cf. Berger and Luckmann) that caters to urgent societal needs (‘sustainability’; ‘global issues’).
- **Dissertation M1.** Think about mathematics as an abstraction of real-life phenomena, that enables simple reasoning and clear understanding. Begin from the blog “We are the 99%” and observe that what the blog represents is in fact (symbolically speaking) ‘1%’ – the people reporting are the ones who have been ‘left behind’ the mainstream. But the financial crisis may also be seen as “a colossal crime perpetrated on the working-class masses by a greedy few” (see this [Huff Post Business article](#)). Can you devise a simple ‘logic’ or ‘calculus’ that can make this fact transparent? You may apply existing mathematical techniques; or create a whole new one.
- **Dissertation S1.** Same as M1, but use modeling techniques resembling the procedures in the sciences, possibly combined with simulation.
- **Dissertation A1.** Same as M1, but use artistic techniques such as animation, see for ex. Even Westvang's "[Deluge](#)" on Vimeo.

## ZIG Project's Additional Value Propositions

New technology enables radically new ways of orchestrating knowledge work (in public informing, education, science, governance...) – and indeed almost any work in ‘knowledge economy;’ but there is a ‘catch’: No traditional knowledge–work organization (i.e. discipline, or profession) is equipped for taking up this task. As (to the best of our knowledge) the first student project internationally that faces this challenge, the ZIG Project extends additional value propositions to its participants :

- **Synergy.** The participants learn from one another, and help one another. Innovative ideas in business– or in knowledge–work organization depend on innovative solutions in information technology; radically new directions in journalism can be developed only if they can be made feasible – economically, and technologically.
- **Branding and springboarding.** Contemplate the possibility that ‘systemic innovation’ may become ‘the next big thing,’ in research, and in entrepreneurship (see this [one–page teaser](#)). Then the ZIG project, as an international seed and testbed of systemic innovation, may become a brand, roughly analogous to Bauhaus in its time – a symbol of an approach, and a springboard to its participants.
- **Being part of the solution.** It can be argued that ‘systemic innovation’ is a uniquely promising approach to contemporary issues (economy, environment...); and that those issues are indeed only symptoms of larger systemic malfunctions, pointing at possibilities for sweeping systemic improvements. A project that addresses those issues in a bold and radical way opens up uncommon possibilities for impact, networking and funding; it inspires uncommon degrees of purposefulness and enthusiasm.

The final two of the above three points reflect the ZIG Project as part of The Game–Changing Game, as explained in other ZIG Project documents.

A value proposition of The Game–Changing Game to ZIG Project participants may be compared to buying a lottery ticket – it opens up magnificent possibilities for enhancing one’s life and career. A difference is that the success here depends on the participant’s own efforts and ability.

In conclusion, the ZIG Project offers its participants an opportunity to aim unconventionally high, while pursuing conventional goals such as dissertations and startups.

**The realization of these uncommon additional opportunities will depend on our ability to bring together a team of uncommonly able participants.**