Designing for the Personal InfoCloud

Thomas Vander Wal

Presented at: University Maryland, MIM

July 26, 2005

The Focus of the Web has Changed

Was

I Go Get

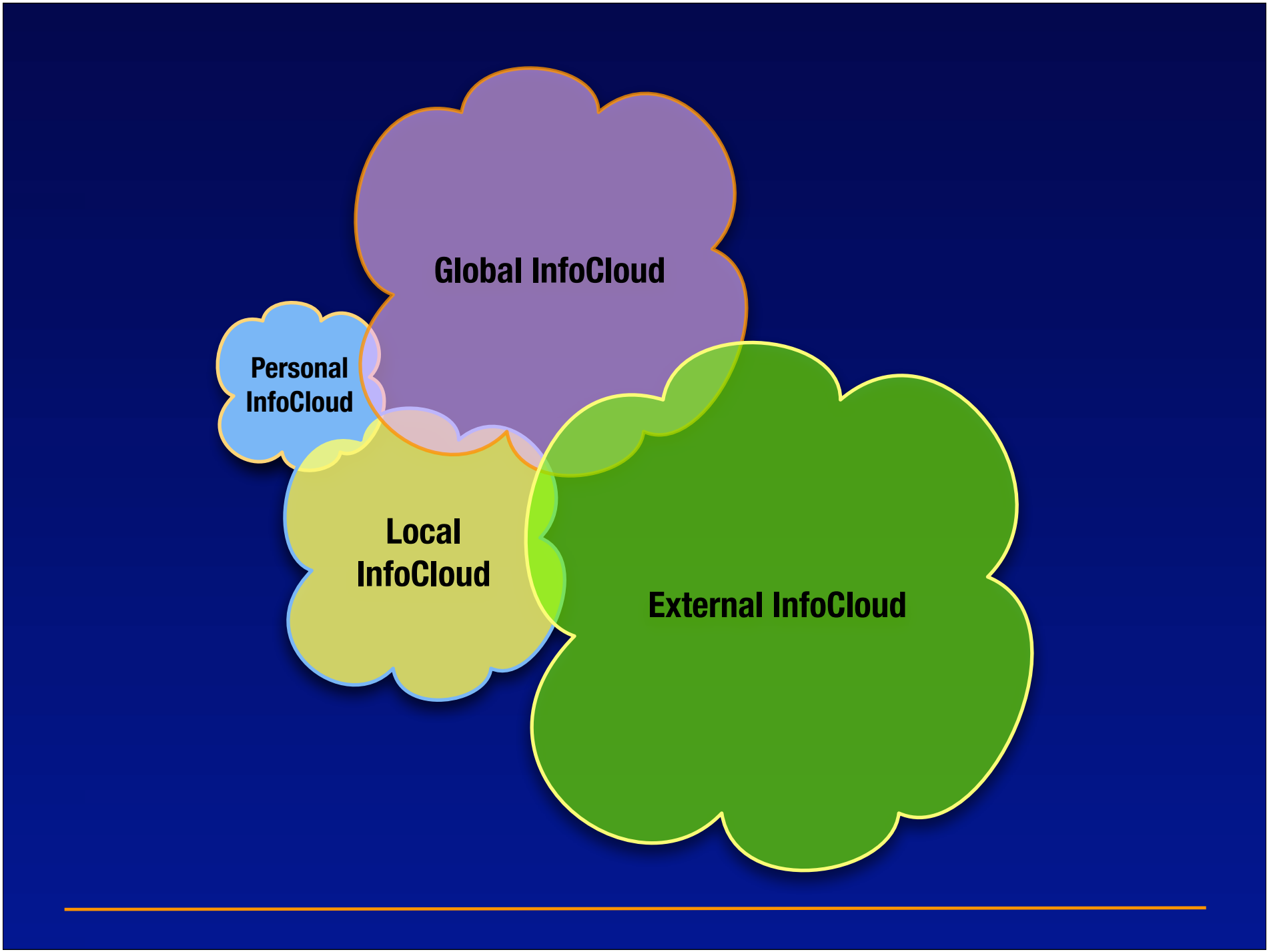
- We sought "their" information
- Focus on content provider
- One device
- One use
- Proprietary formats
- Findability focus

Is

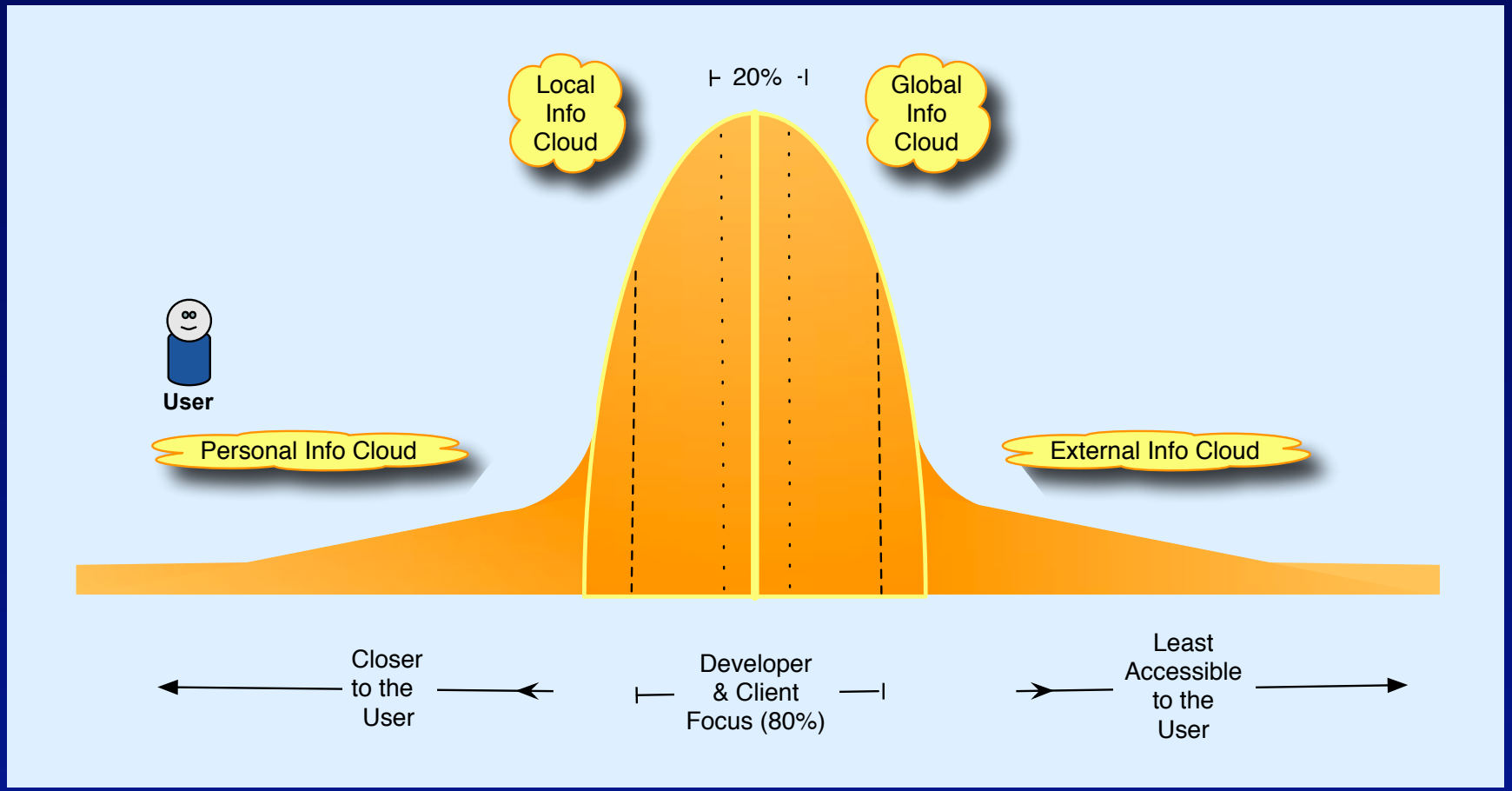
Come To Me

- Our information we found or created
- Focus on person using
- Reuse
- Attracting and keeping attracted
- Across devices
- Open formats
- Refindability focus

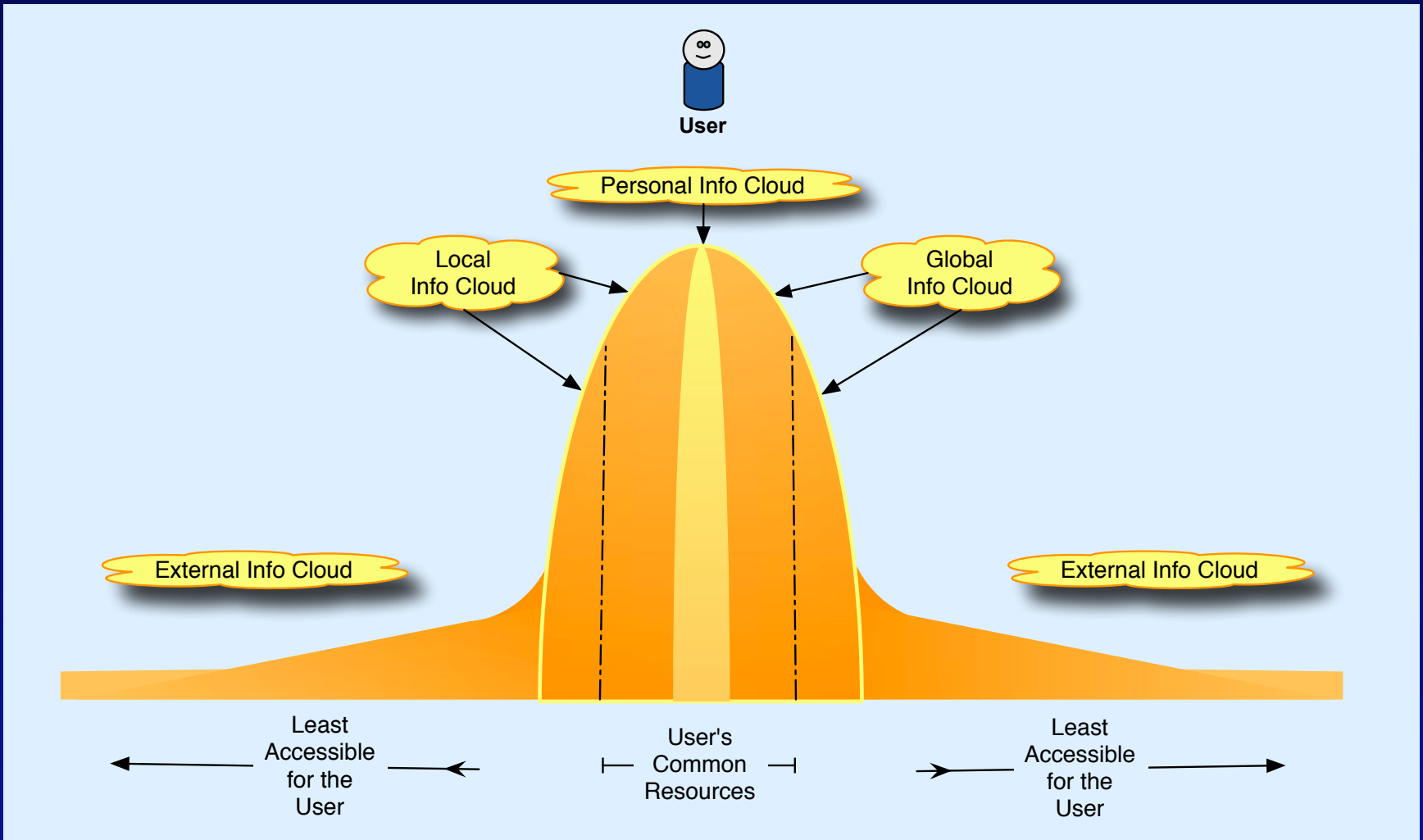
Personal
InfoCloud


Global InfoCloud
Personal InfoCloud
Local InfoCloud
External InfoCloud

Designer/Developer View



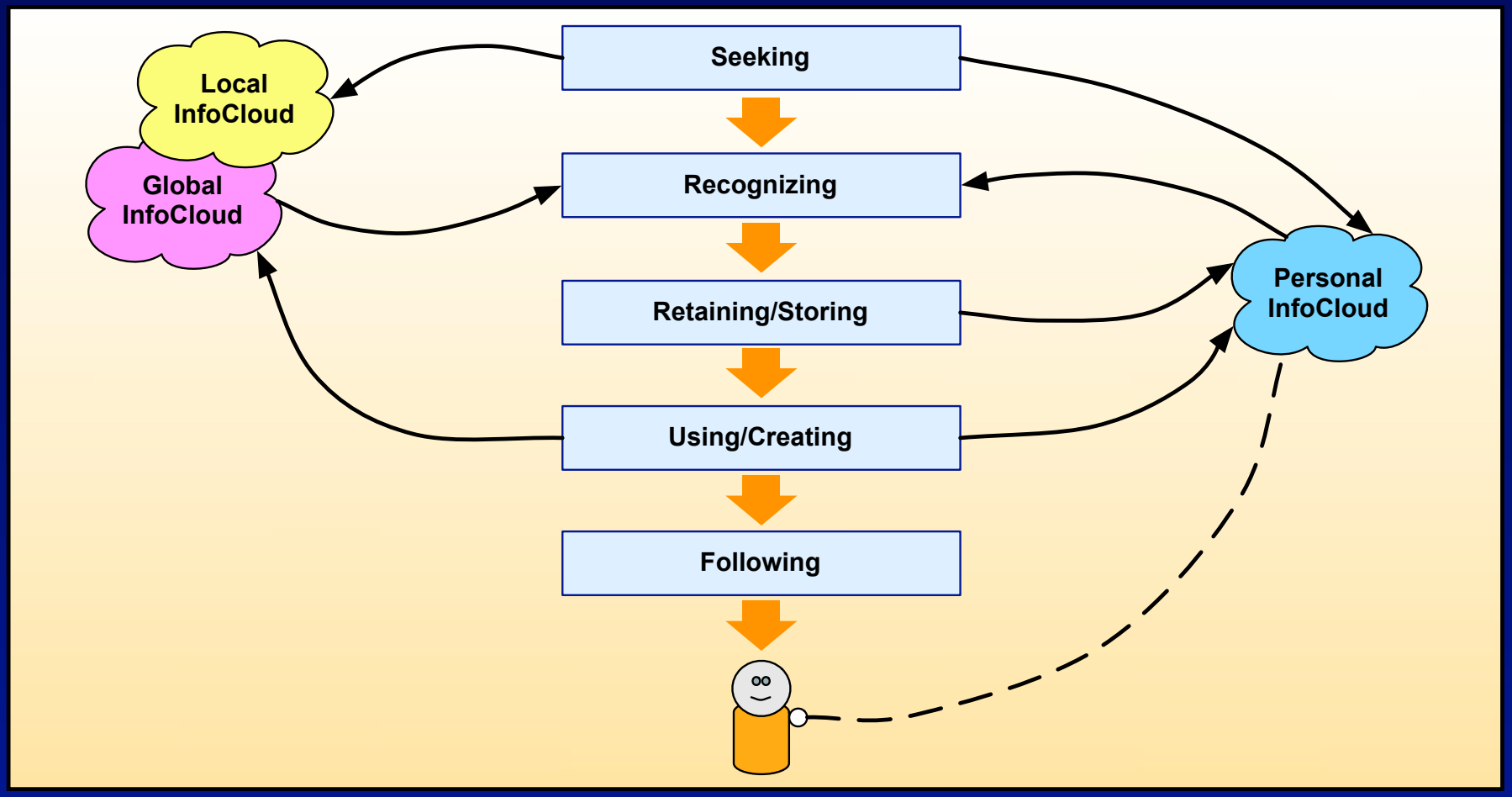
Personal View



Personal InfoCloud: Key Properties

- Person-centered
- Continuous access
- Organized for self
- Task, action, and context aware

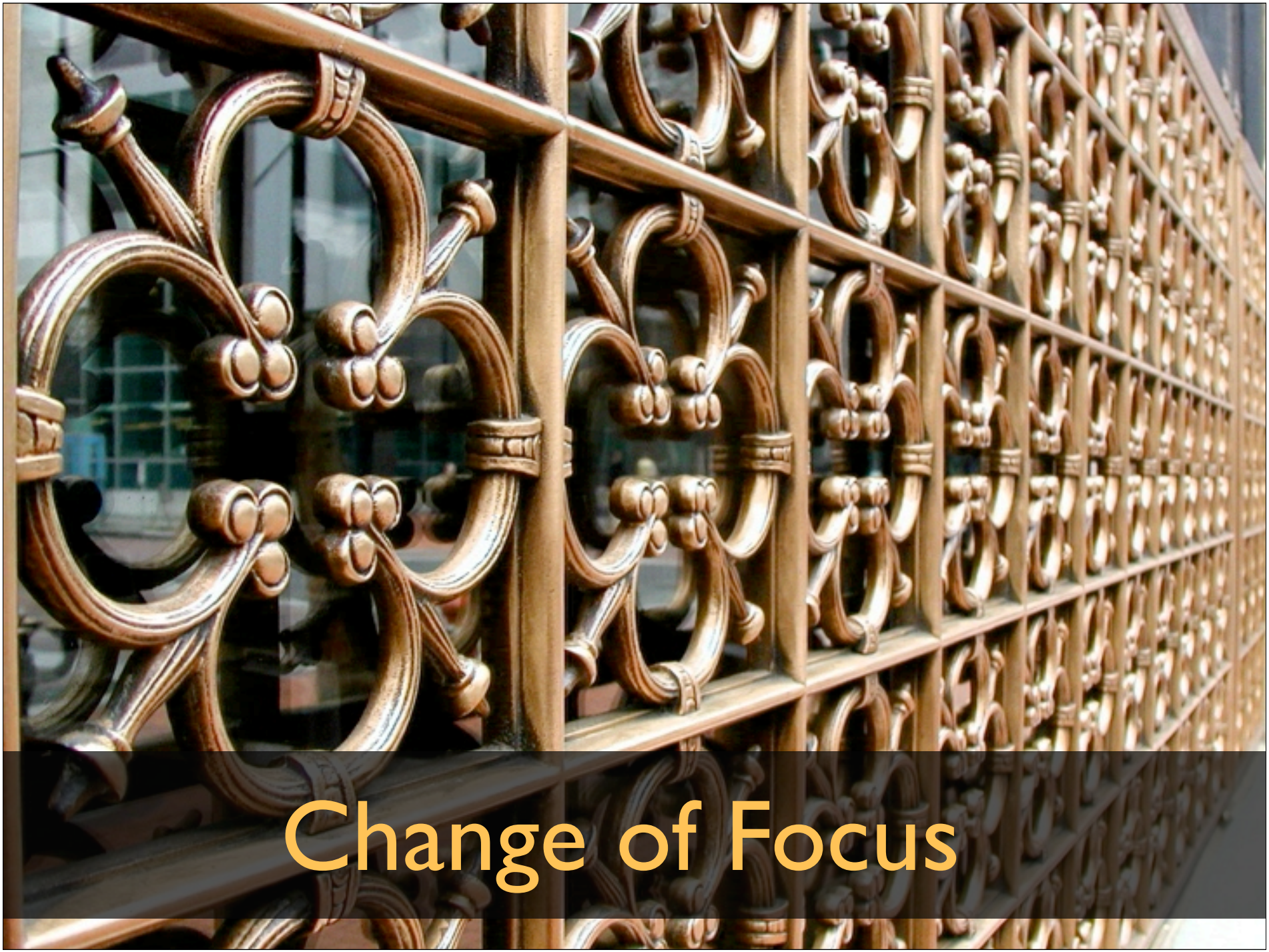
Personal Info Cycle



Designing for the Personal InfoCloud

Everybody Wins

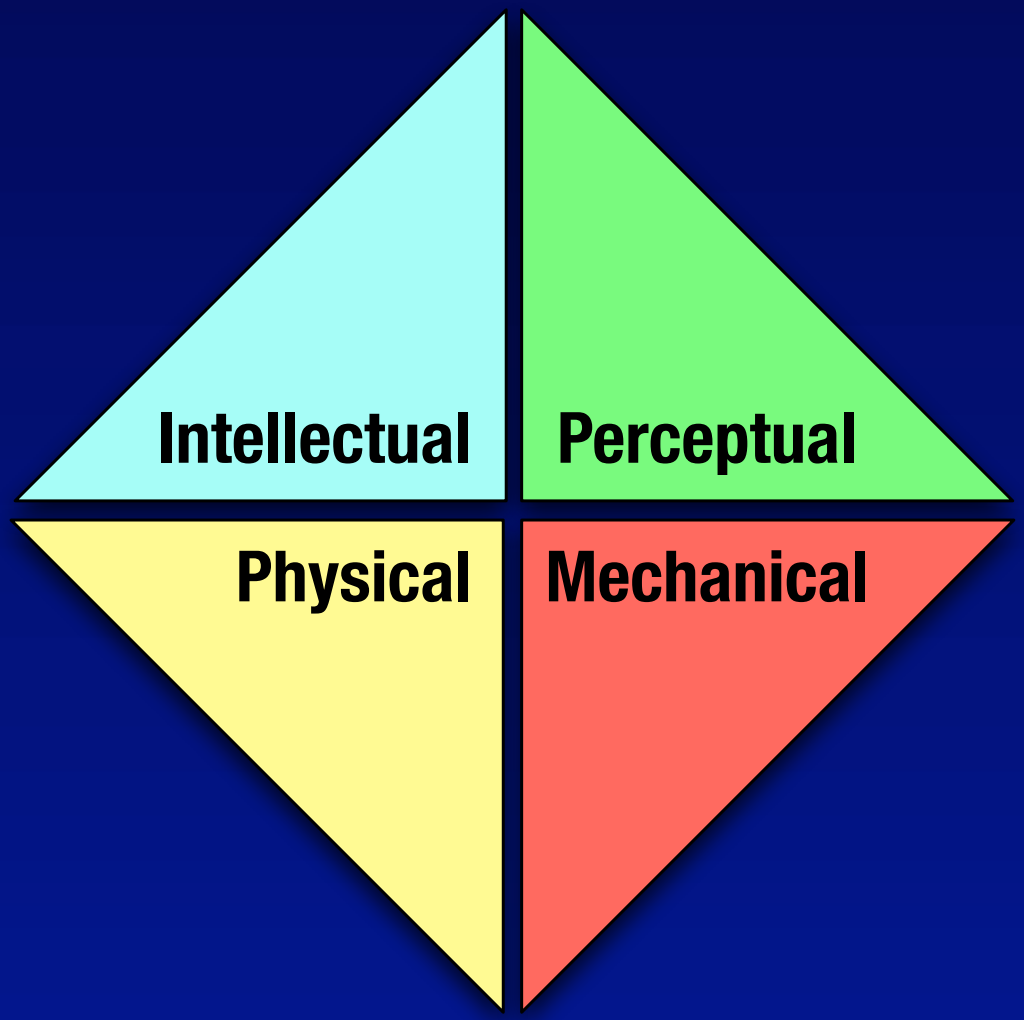
- Build a healthy relationship with users
- Strengthen the ties to people interested
- Keeping current
- Spread the word
- Everybody is connected & interconnected


Change of Focus

Focus on Personal Convergence

- Build for use and re-use
- Subscription model
- Portability
- Ease interaction between people and content provider

Model of Attraction - Receptors



Begin the Examination

Examination: Offerings

- Assess what you provide - get granular
- Content inventory
  - Site structure
  - Page types and document types
  - Content object types on the pages
  - Related objects
  - Content volatility (frequency of change)

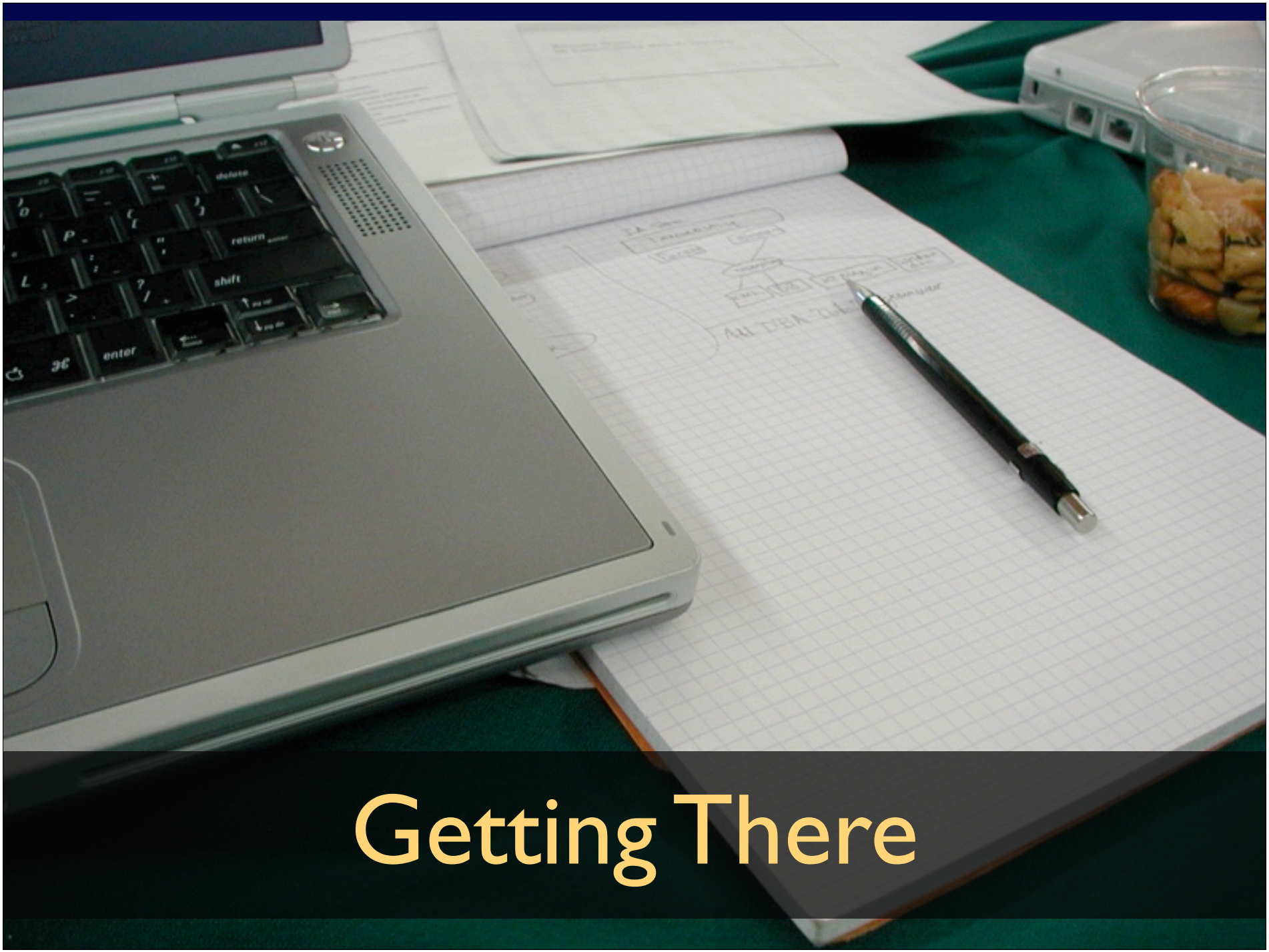
Understanding Use

Examination: Users Focus

- Learn what people do with your information
  - Want to do
  - Could do
- Various use contexts
  - What triggers use
  - Many environments
  - Actions for reuse
- Usable formats for content object type
- What action follows information use?

Examination: Gaps

- Identify the gaps between what you provide and what people want/need
  - Content
  - Delivery
  - Access
  - Format
  - Notification
- Gaps are opportunities to improve
- Current & future gaps


Getting There

Design Phase

- Build persona/scenarios including:
  - Model of Attraction receptors
  - Location/environment
  - User tasks/context
  - Across devices and software
- Design for adaptability
  - People have their own perceptions, needs, and uses for the information

Designing: Structuring Info

Structure information and its container for:

- Deep linking
- Externally stored usage
  - Updates
  - Versioning
- External structuring

Designing: Standards

- Information offerings:
  - Flexible
  - Open Standards
  - Proprietary or Application-based Standards
  - API Friendly
- Offer more than one option

Designing: Personal Web Components

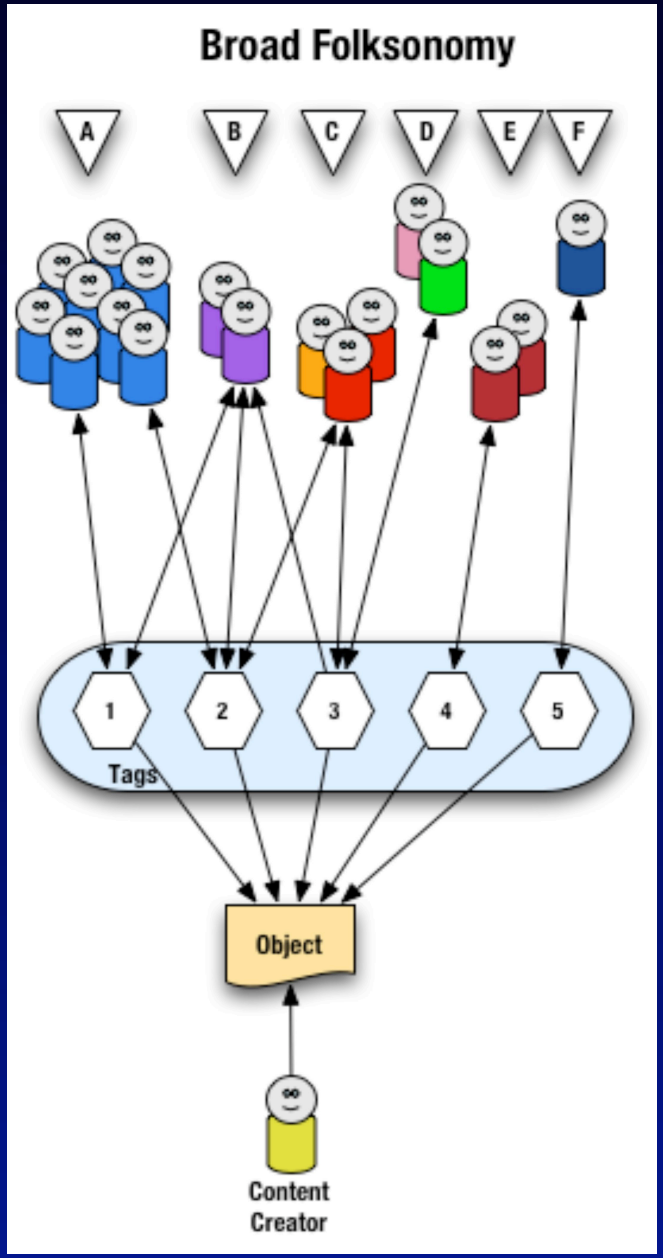
- RSS (text and enclosures (podcasts, etc.))
- E-mail
- SMS/MMS
- iCal/vCard
- Web Services
- Syncing
- Microformats
- Folksonomy
- API

What is Folksonomy?

- Actual vocabulary used for objects in a community and across communities
- Network-based selfish bookmarking
- Free-tagging
- Socially shared
- Externally structuring content

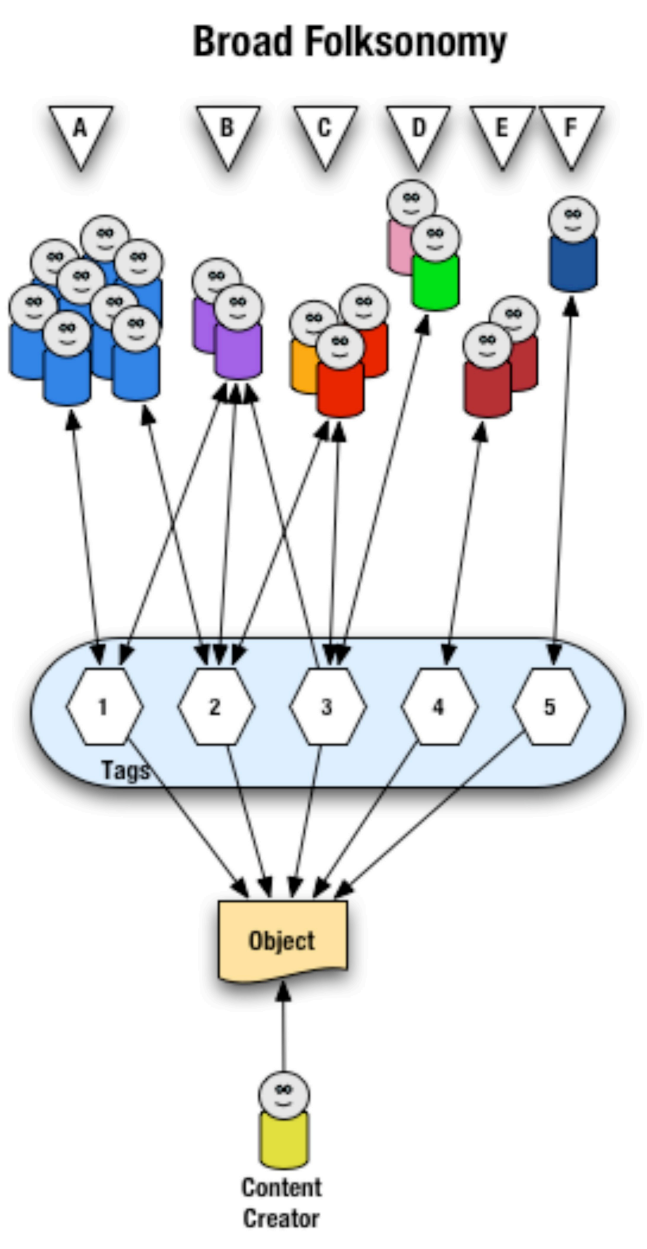
Folksonomy Reference Points

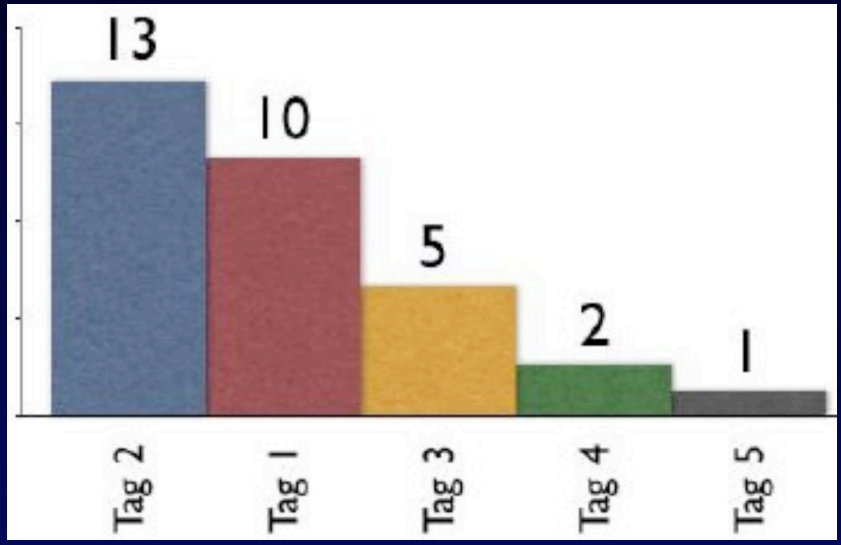
1. Object being tagged
2. Tag term
3. Individual tagging


Broad Folksonomy
A
B
C
D
E
F
1
2
3
4
5
Tags
Object
Content
Creator

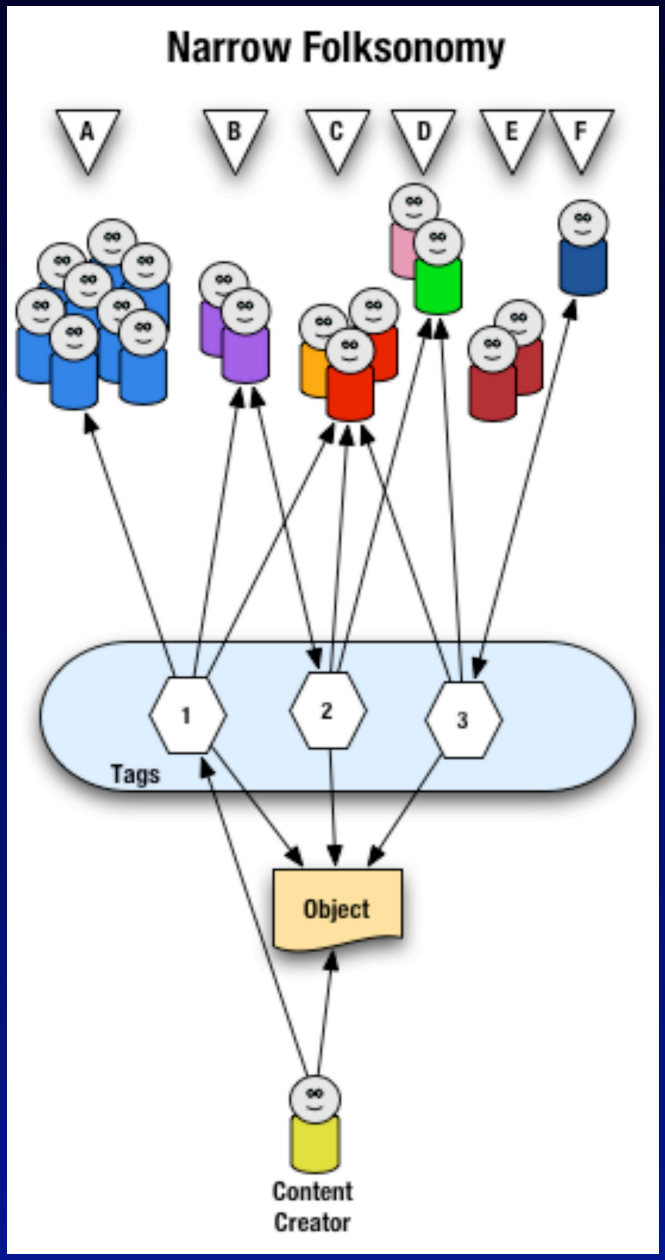
Broad Folksonomy

- Many consumers tag objects with their own vocabulary
- Builds trends, but also builds options
  - Power Curve
  - Long-tail
- Provides cross-discipline and cross-cultural opportunities for understanding
- Find emergent vocabularies and trends
- Informal terms can wrap to formal terms


Broad Folksonomy
A
B
C
D
E
F
1
2
3
4
5
Tags
Object
Content
Creator


13
10
5
2
1
Tag 2
Tag 1
Tag 3
Tag 4
Tag 5

The Marketplace
Sales Volume
Variety
Body
Long Tail


Narrow Folksonomy
A
B
C
D
E
F
1
2
3
Tags
Object
Content
Creator

Narrow Folksonomy

- Content owner tags object
- A others tag directly on the object
- Social tagging not readily exposed
- Improvement for non-text objects
- Can be emergent
- Trends not easily seen

The Anti-Google

- Google
  - Finds what you know you want
- Collaborative Bookmarking
  - Finds what you don't know you want

Simply

- Be friendly
- Strengthen ties to people who use offerings
- Listen, watch, and embrace
- Get granular
- Test frequently
- Let it grow

Contact

E-mail: thomas@vanderwal.net
AIM: vanderwal

Presentation Home:
http://vanderwal.net/essays/pic/050726/