

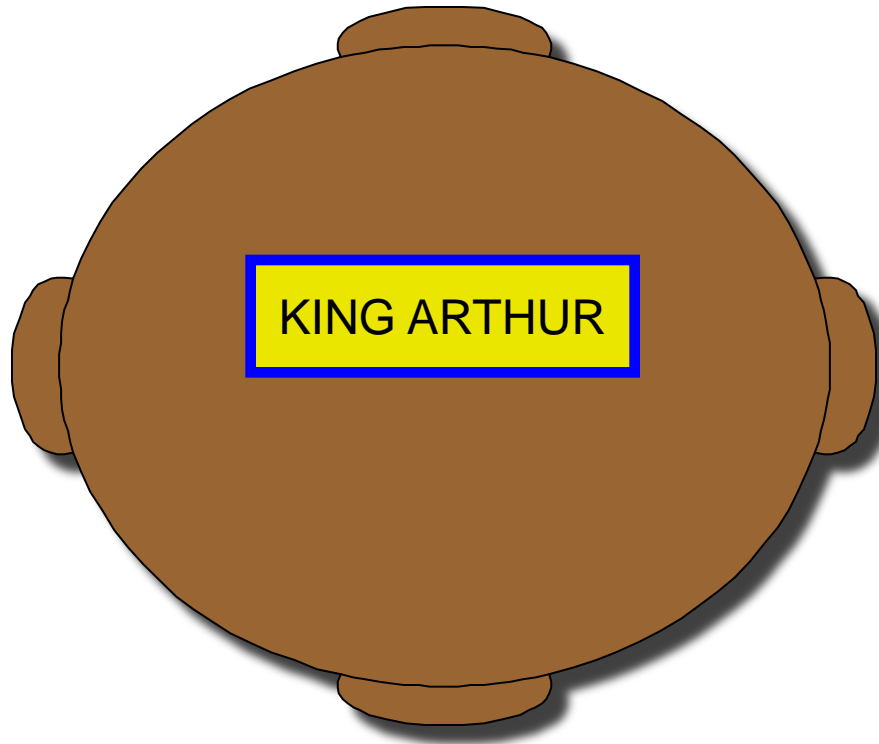
SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT NETWORKS

Inverness Research Associates
October 16, 2011

What is a Network?

The Original Network

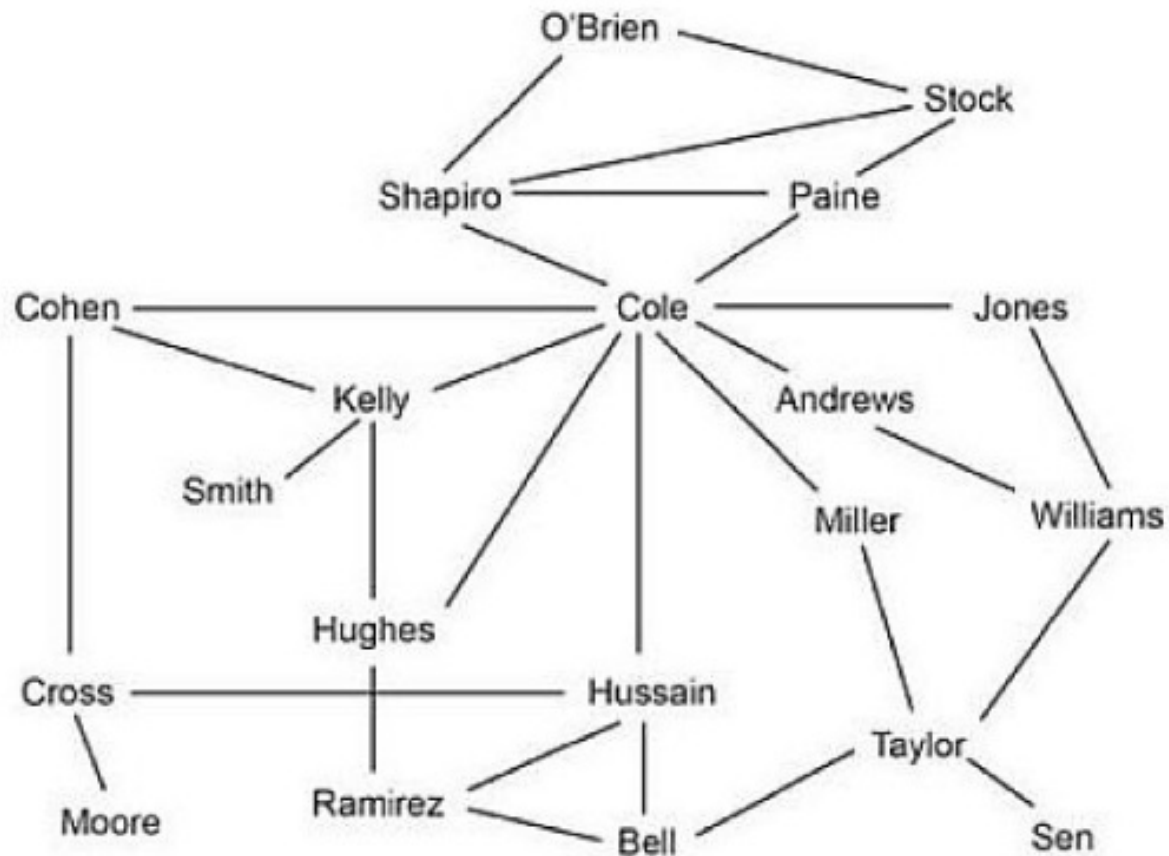
One for all and all for one!



***Designing the
Networked
Organization***

by
Ken Everett

Network Example



“Networking” vs. “Networked Organization”

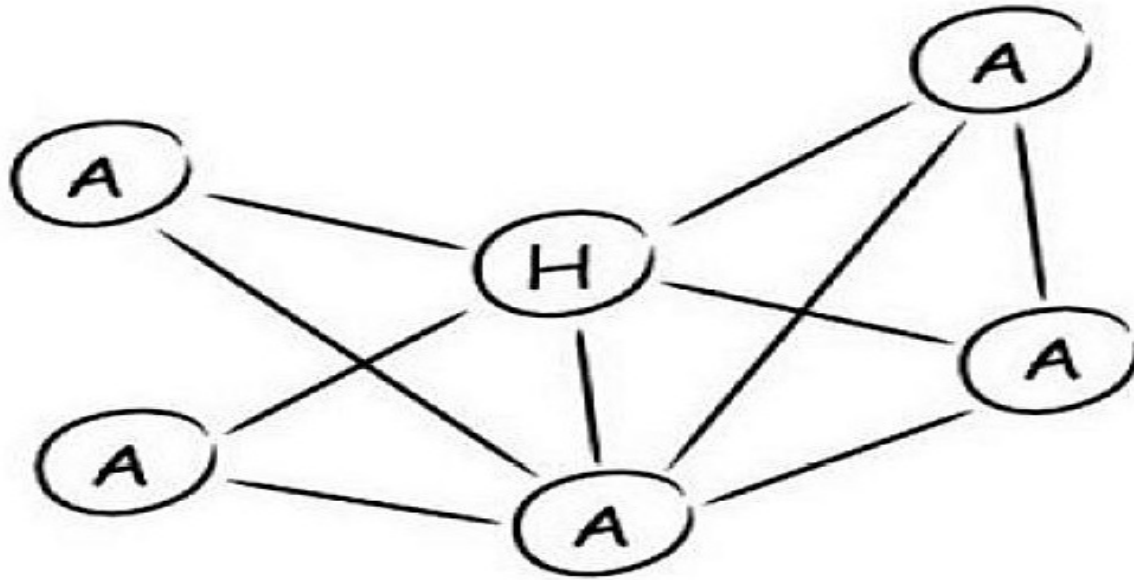
- ***Networking as an end in itself***
 - Facebook
 - Linked In, Plaxo
 - ASTC?
- ***Networking as a means to an end***
 - YouthAlive
 - NiseNet
 - COSEE

Network Organizations

“Network organizations exist to do work... not just to allow people to “network” with each other....”

-Mary Ann Smith, National Writing Project

Networked Organization -- Hub and Affiliates



Basic building blocks



Figure 2.2. The hub-affiliate relationship.



Figure 2.3. The manager-employee relationship.

Key Attributes of Network Bonds

***AUTONOMY /
INDEPENDENCE***

**CONNECTIONS AND
COMMUNITY**

SHARED MISSION,
VISION, VALUES,
CULTURE....

The Paradox: Networks promote both autonomy and community

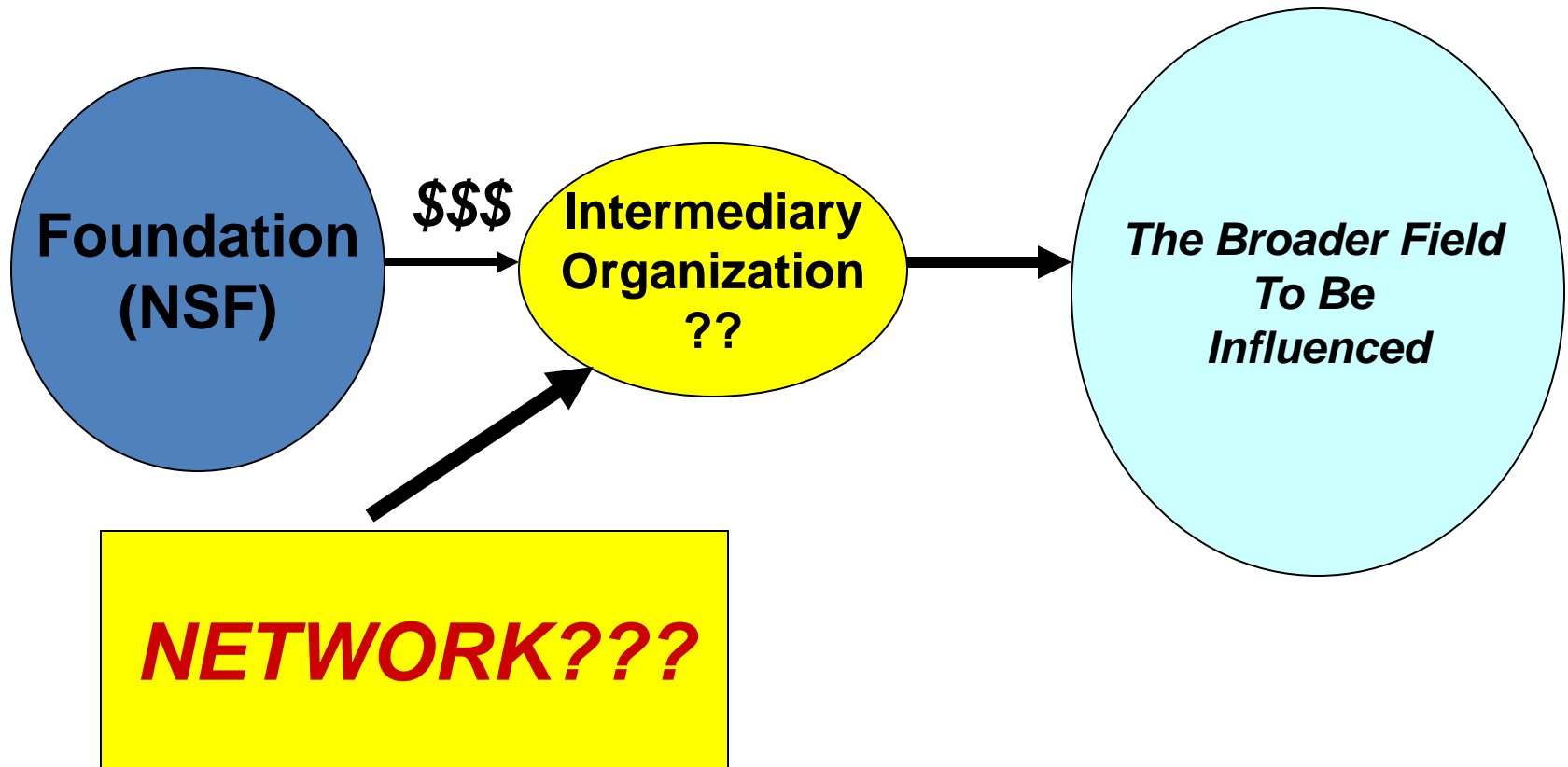
Hundreds of research papers... point to the same conclusion. Human beings have an innate drive to be autonomous, self-determined, and connected to one another. And when that drive is liberated, people achieve more and live richer lives. (My emphasis)

—Daniel Pink, *Drive*

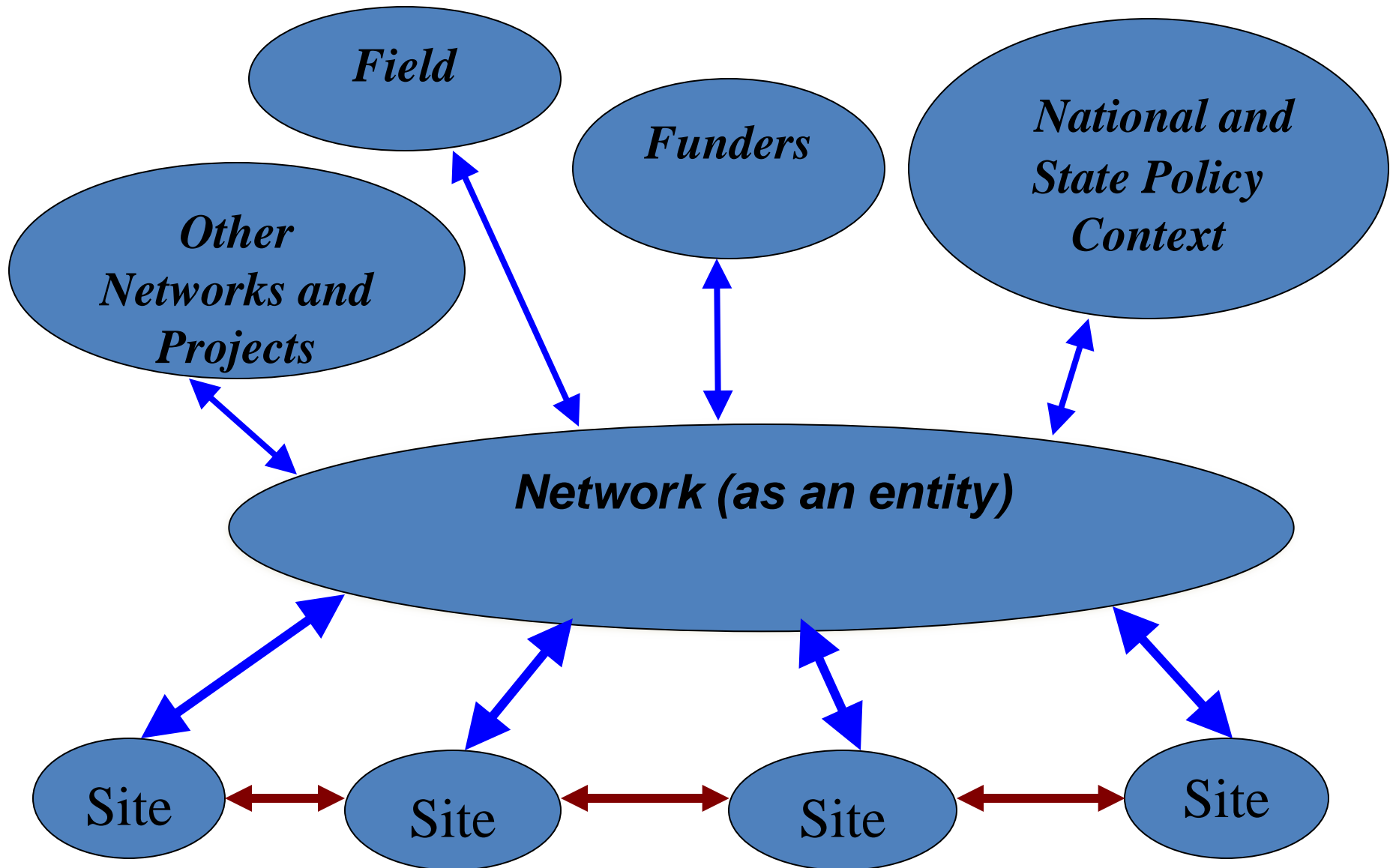
Network Organizations

- *McDonalds?*
- *An army platoon?*
- *The Association of Science-Technology Centers?*
- *The Internet?*
- *NISE Net?*
- *COSEE?*
- *Inverness Research?*

The Network As A Vehicle For Investing In A Broader Field



Network Organizations



Functions – *Site to Site*

Examples:

- ***Sites assist one another by sharing ideas***
- ***Sites engage in common experiences to strengthen relationships between them***
- ***Sites collaborate on projects***
- ***Sites pool and share resources***
- ***Sites examine areas of overlap***
- ***Sites help other sites, mentor new sites***

Functions – Site to Network, and Network to Site

Examples:

- ***Sites contribute special expertise to the network***
- ***Sites contribute knowledge of context to the network and to other sites***
- ***Sites agree to participate in special external initiatives that allow the network to serve outside itself***

Functions – Site to Network, and Network to Site

Examples:

- ***Network creates leadership opportunities***
- ***Network offers advanced professional development***
- ***Network convenes site leaders to develop shared programs to meet site and national priorities***
- ***Network conducts and collects research beneficial to all sites***
- ***Network gathers and disseminates publications, resource books, websites, listservs, etc.***
- ***Network communicates and interprets key policies, events, changes to sites***

Functions – Network to External World

Examples

- ***Networks can cultivate relationships with research communities, professional associations, legislators, etc.***
- ***Networks serve as unitary entity that is able to represent the sites collectively to the broader field, funders, etc.***
- ***Networks can work to make the mission of the network visible and important on a national or state level***
- ***Networks can collaborate with other national organizations and agencies to co-sponsor conferences, strategize on responding to state initiatives, etc.***
- ***Networks can apply for federal and/or private funding***
- ***Networks can contribute research to the field***
- ***Networks can connect to other networks, projects and initiatives***

The Defining Features of Effective Networks

A network works well when members of the network:

- *have a shared sense of purpose*
- *have a collective and shared identity*
- *do work together*
- *have deep knowledge and trust of each other*
- *develop leadership in a collective and distributed fashion*
- *assume shared responsibility for the mission of the network*

Sample Criteria for Evaluating the Health of a Network

- ***Clarity of mission and shared vision***
- ***Independence and community***
- ***Mutual respect and trust***
- ***Network strategic leadership***
- ***Win-win, symbiotic relationships***
- ***Value-added contributions***
- ***Communication***
- ***Accessibility, equity***
- ***Supportive of diversity of members, modes of engagement, levels of participation***
- ***Cumulative, self-sustaining***

Strengths of Network Organizations

- *Flexibility and responsiveness*
- *Optimizing uses of resources*
- *Resilience and sustainability*
- *Innovation*
- *Promoting leadership*
- *Cumulative capacity building*
- *Broader promotion and representation*

The Paradox of Network Organization Leadership

Strong Stewardship

- Of mission
- Of quality
- Of values and norms
- Of collaboration
- Of independence and of community

End