THE UNIVERSAL POST:
COLLABORATION DESIGN FOR
A POST-EMAIL WORLD

By Daniel W. Rasmus

Executive Summary

In my 2010 book, *Management by Design*, I observed that we often let our practices, our space and our technology happen to us, rather than engaging in any effort to design meaningful work experiences. There is no place that this is more evident than in the development of collaborative software that either bolts on to e-mail in all of its ubiquity and dysfunction, or complements and supplements e-mail through fragmented, parallel approaches that never seem complete, or completely useful, as an alternative to e-mail. In order to achieve a new perspective, developers need to step away from the assumption of an e-mail centric world and reimagine collaboration. This paper focuses on a new idea, the Universal Post, that brings the functions of personal communication, blogs, wikis, document management, and other concepts into a flexible, adaptive and integrated model.

About the author

Daniel W. Rasmus is an independent strategist and analyst focused on helping organizations put their future in context. Rasmus is a recognized leader in education, knowledge management and collaboration. He is the former VP of Knowledge Management and Collaboration at Forrester Research. Rasmus is the author of *Management by Design* and *Listening to the Future*. He serves as adjunct faculty at Bellevue College where he teaches strategy and marketing with a social media emphasis.

Daniel W. Rasmus
Strategist

ıı1ıı1ıı
CISCO

Collaboration is broken. A variety of tools put information into specialized, out-of- the-way places. A plethora of communication channels fragments the flow of information between people. Rather than improving productivity and reducing friction, a collaboration environment may actually encumber the efficiency of the organization because it increases the complexity of the work experience.

Many organizations describe themselves as e-mail centric, which make all other attempts to introduce collaboration complementary, even second-class. The default approach to communications and collaboration falls to e-mail. Will we see e-mail go away? Not any time soon. Will we see e-mail revert to communications and away from "collaboration?" Perhaps.

To realize the potential of a post-email world we have to rethink several assumptions about the work we do, the tools we use and the way we approach the design of work experiences.

RETHINKING DEFINITIONS

The term collaboration has come to mean too many things. All work done by more than one person has been lumped together into one big conceptual bucket. Collaboration, however, defines a particular way of working together. Andrew Campbell, director of the Ashridge Strategic Management Centre, wrote in his September 1, 2011 blog that "...to my mind the biggest problem is that people confuse collaboration with teamwork." Other definitional issues arise when people confuse communications with collaboration.

For this discussion, let's use the following characteristics for each of these ideas:

Communications involves sending a message to one or more people. This message may come in the form of text, sound, image or video. Communications does not imply any relationship or agreement among participants, and participants need not be human. Communications push information in one direction while, in most cases, allowing for a response or acknowledgement to the originator, or some arbitrary group of recipients. Example: The HR Department communicates its professional development schedule.
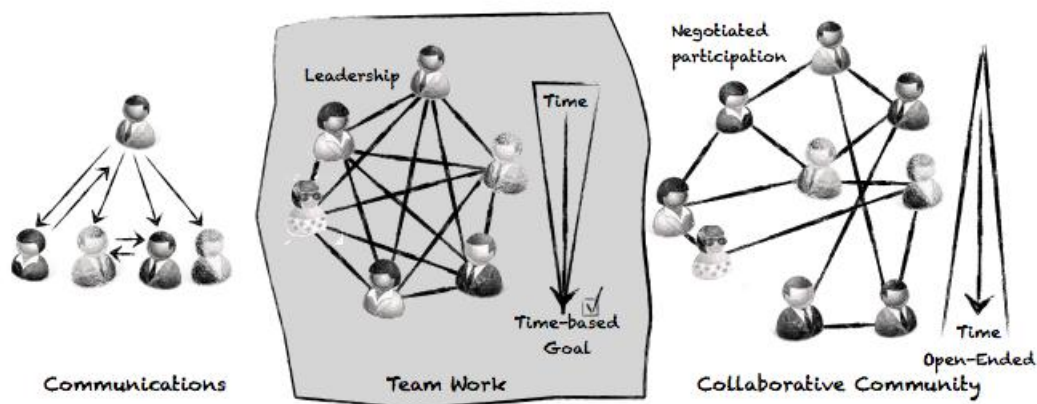
Teamwork involves a group of people brought together to meet a specific objective. Teams necessarily coordinate their actions in order to meet their objectives, and constrain unilateral action that may lead to negative outcomes. Teams possess clear leadership, and those leaders practice dispute resolution approaches that guide the team forward even when team members sharply

disagree. Teamwork, if not the team itself, usually involves a fixed time by which the work must be completed. Example: Teamwork drives the introduction of a new product.

Collaborative Work involves the often voluntary act of working with individuals or groups on some aspect of their work that is often not a primary responsibility. Because collaboration does not specify a leadership structure, collaborative work requires negotiated agreements among participants. Collaborative work often does not have a fixed end-point or goal. A collaborative relationship, once entered, is not easily dissolved. Collaborations, and the work they produce, may evolve over time. Example: A community of practice collaborates on developing professional practices.

Now let me add back in one confusing thought: the technology marketed as communication-oriented, or collaborative, can be used to meet the needs for any of these definitions. How people employ technology comes not from the functions of the tools, but from the intent, agreements and objectives of the people using them.

This discussion will focus on **teamwork** and **collaboration**.

RETHINKING HOW WE WORK

The first inclination on reading those definitions is that every communication act, every project and every group or community should be classified—in order to perform better, we must define what we are doing in terms of those definitions.

Organizations should not, however, embark on a taxonomic quest to categorize all of their work and come up with a framework for classifying all future work. Definitions should be provided, and the groups working together should select the models that work best for them.

At the individual project management level, leaders and their members should understand what model they plan to use. Will the team look to a strong leadership model to meet a deadline, or will a more collaborative approach be taken, one where individuals will offer services and insight based on negotiated expectations, time commitments and scope of work?

In order to "rethink" how we work, we have to eliminate assumptions about policy and practice, space and technology.

Collaboration often fails, as Andrew Campbell points out, precisely because people think they are collaborating when they are either in, or should be in, a team environment.

Regardless of being in a team, or a collaborative community, or just communicating as individuals, users of collaborative technology should be able to better control their information environment. There should be no need to select from complex taxonomies or select a particular tool before we work. Irrelevant information should not appear in an activity stream. People need not be subjected to activities that don't add value to their work. The products of work should not be scattered among repositories that conceal access. Communications should not skip channels haltingly as people attempt to align their message with the fidelity of the channel.

Organizations have embraced distributed physical work, often outsourcing large parts of their business to partners. They have reduced the requirement for many workers to sit in one physical location all day. Some have even embraced the punctuated work day, allowing people to choose where and when they work.

But with the wealth of technology available, individual knowledge workers know that the tools they use hinder their ability to meet objectives, rather than assist them. So they ignore, circumvent or otherwise work around the official tools and define ways to work that get things done.

Perhaps it is time to not only accept the new ways in which people work, but to rethink the technology that supports them.

RETHINKING TECHNOLOGY

Two fundamental technology issues hinder our ability to effectively use technology to collaborate. One has already been mentioned: the dominance of e-mail. The second is the proliferation of collaborative techniques and their instantiation as tools.

In some ways, the second issue is more difficult to overcome than the first. Many organizations invest in collaborative tools at multiple levels. They buy enterprise level technology. They acquire function-specific department solutions. And they use business, or consumer, cloud-based services. The ease of access to new collaboration tools makes their proliferation nearly inevitable.

Organizations can eliminate the search for new tools by delivering a technology environment that seamlessly enhances the way people work. A rationalized communication-and-collaboration environment reduces friction by eliminating time spent worrying about what blogs are intended for, or when to use a wiki and when to microblog. Organizations should insist that vendors produce, and that technology departments deploy, communications-and-collaboration infrastructure that aligns with organizational dynamics and creates a holistic view of collaborative work.

A post-based communication-and-collaboration infrastructure transforms networks into flexible places to post ideas, suggestions, challenges and questions—and to collaboratively facilitate exploration, coordination, sense making and discovery.

One of the best models for fluid work across communications, teamwork and collaboration comes in the form of a *post*.

If you think back to your childhood, one of your earliest memories may come from a drawing posted on the refrigerator door with a magnet. Everyone who entered the kitchen saw the drawing. Your front door acted as access control. Only the people your family knew, or your parents authorized, were able to see your work.

At work, we often post images of our family on our desks and our walls, even the desktops of our computers. We expand the sphere of people who can see these items, because they now exist in a semi-public space, one in which we have only tangential access control.

Similarly, the post benefits from being simple, in both concept and design. And like e-mail, it can be a universal container. A post-based communication-and-collaboration infrastructure transforms networks into flexible places to post ideas, suggestions, challenges and questions—and to collaboratively facilitate exploration, coordination, sense making and discovery.

THE PROBLEMS WITH E-MAIL

But before we explore posts in more depth, let us first return to e-mail. Why doesn't e-mail offer the same utility as a post?

Lack of Boundaries E-mail contains no sense of boundaries. Although relationships can be described in a directory, no one need respect the boundaries implied in those relationships. Let's say the group decides to work collaboratively and then has a heated discussion about something. One member may decide to forward what they consider an offensive discussion to another member's manager, or even management team. And once that e-mail is sent, the recipients have the full ability to respond to that string; forward it anywhere they want and, perhaps most problematically, exclude people who were on the original thread from future correspondence. Any agreements sent by the team can be violated by any team member with few, if any, automated controls or easily accessible audit trails to reveal the boundary, or the extent of the boundary violation.

Interaction Model E-mail does little more than store and forward messages. Although a message may be quoted, even edited in subsequent versions of that message, the original message, and any content associated with it, is locked in time. There is no way to see, from looking at original content, if or how it may have changed overtime without manually skimming through the message thread and comparing information. Not even the simple revision tracking found in word processors applies to content inside the body of an e-mail message.

No Universal Context E-mail messages are context free. Although an e-mail message may have a subject line, there is no obligation technologically, nor usually culturally, for a person to stay affixed to that topic. That means that a mail message with a subject line about a project deliverable, may, over time, no longer have anything to do with the subject line. Because the right people for another topic are involved in the conversation, the thread becomes hijacked for another purpose.

Closed history E-mail history only exists for those included. If people aren't copied on an e-mail message, then they aren't privy to the history of conversation. People dropped back into a conversation may never be able to completely recover the history.

Enterprise spam E-mail permits enterprise spam by allowing people to send messages to very broad distribution lists with little or no retribution. Enterprise spam degrades the relevance of important messages by increasing information overload and more likely making an important message slip through a person's individual information filters.

Not designed for "open" collaboration E-mail is essentially private. E-mail has no greater responsibility than to take a message from one person (or entity) and deliver it to another person (or entity). The conversation is confined to those in that message chain. What is retained, how long it is kept, even where one chooses to store archives, is end-user controlled in most organizations that use an e-mail client. Using a cloud-based (private or public) service may limit the enterprise exposure to e-mail loss, or aid in the implementation of retention policies, but private, limited messages between individuals remain at the core of the e-mail model . Imagine a new employee joining a team. It is nearly impossible for that person to be inserted into an ongoing project stream of multiple e-mail messages and threads. Within most systems the only way to do that would be to attach messages to a message, which would further disorient the content and the receiver.

Not secure E-mail is not secure. Yes, you can turn down all of the screws and limit where e-mail goes and what can be done with attachments, but that puts e-mail into the pure communications camp. In highly secure e-mail environments, e-mail is not used for collaboration and rarely for teamwork. In most enterprises, however, e-mail gateways are open and messages and attachments flow freely between employees and their intended recipients inside *and outside* the firewall. And when e-mail is locked down, employees find ways around it through the use of personal e-mail or Internet-oriented file sharing tools. Getting work done trumps any real or imagined retribution related to policy violation.

Creates personal repositories E-mail creates a personal repository that must be managed, forcing people to add additional tasks to their workload. These tasks include managing spam, information organization, and deleting (or ignoring) unwanted or extraneous messages.

E-mail, however, is not without it merits. Within enterprises, it offers a strong identification model. People know who you are. E-mail allows participants to control where and when they interact, and being asynchronous, it does not require others to engage immediately, but rather when or where they choose to interact. Most e-mail systems include a sense of priority, so the sender can notify the recipient if something is important. Unfortunately, the old adage: *a failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency for me*, often applies.

Many in the "collaboration industry" point out that of e-mail's failures overshadow its increasingly scant benefits. The "collaboration industry" offers myriad collaboration tools, which are, in whole or part, designed in response to one or more of e-mail's limitations. List serves create historical repositories for certain e-mail messages. Discussion groups and forums shift topic-based conversations from e-mail to threaded discussion technology. Repositories and content management systems offer content version and document lifecycles. (See the sidebar: *Limitations of Common Collaboration Tools* for an overview.)

Each tool, rather than being a solution, introduces additional complexity. Other tools, rather than being

Limitations of Common Collaboration Tools

Virtual Workspaces offer a networked space, which is an improvement over e-mails personal repositories. They also offer shared calendar and task management, but they often fragmented work.

Document Repositories offer strong document features, including access permissions, organization, versions and document discussions and lifecycles. Document repositories also introduce complex administrative processes and management overhead that drive people to work outside of the system, leading to naming issues and version conflicts by people using e-mail or other tools for content authoring and editing.

Blogs provide a voice, but often a voice in the wilderness. People need not, and often do not, visit a blog.

Wikis offer a shared work environment, but one that is often arcane and technical. In addition, Wiki content could be started by individuals and/or communities and later be abandoned, leading to skepticism about the accuracy or currency of the content.

Microblogs provide a light-weight form of communication, often used as alternatives to instant messaging. Microblogs are strictly time-based streams with little or no management. They are good ways to promote visibility among interested parties, but they are not collaboration tools.

Instant Messaging and Unified Communications offer channels for voice, text and video in real-time and can be part of a collaboration infrastructure, but extend the dysfunction of e-mail rather than solving its fundamental challenges. Given that communication is not going away, richer forms are necessary evolutions and provide their own value. They do not, however, offer advantages to those collaborating over time unless conversations initiated across those channels can be converted to searchable archives within the collaboration environment.

retired, continue to exist alongside the new entrants as remedies to the flaws of the predecessors. The new tools also introduce new information silos and new choices. Rather than choose how to solve a problem, the information worker must first choose which set of tools to use to solve the problem. And once selected, he or she has little choice but to soldier on if the choice proves less than optimal. Collaboration tools seldom provide a way to transform content from one platform to another, except of course, through e-mail. Neither the tools, nor the work experience, prove adaptable.

When examined historically, it is clear that the e-mail experience was never designed—e-mail just happened to people. E-mail was an available tool for storing and forwarding messages, and like so many early entrants to a field, it became the de facto standard for its function: communication. When businesses realized they needed more than communications, collaboration features were bolted on to e-mail. And eventually, not even bolted on, just introduce as parallel capabilities running in separate processes or on separate servers.

It is time to step back and imagine a world without e-mail and consider how a different model, the post, might better suit the needs of teams and collaborative partners.

A UNIVERSAL POST DESIGN

In my book, *Management by Design* (Wiley, 2010), I developed a methodology to help managers and organizations design work experiences. The challenge here is how to design a work experience that remedies the deficiencies found in e-mail and current collaboration solutions.

Rather than accept tools like e-mail as a given, this methodology examines what needs to be done, and then provides constraints for the design that come not from technology and its limitations, but from the needs and expectations of the people within the experience.

At the highest level, the design goal should be this: an easy to use, universal electronic information environment that spans fixed and mobile devices. This environment should offer the capabilities to perform collaborative and team-based work, store content and report information atop a security model that permits individual and universal controls and accountabilities.

The core of the methodology suggests that the tools of work—policy and practice, technology and space—be examined and shaped through the lens of simplicity, flexibility, equitability and forgivability. The following design used the methodology to shape its specification.

Universal Post Object The creation of a universal post results in the instantiation of a Universal Post Object that includes state, ownership, permissions, categories, tags and other metadata and control data that will permit the posting infrastructure to discern the state of the object and how it will appear to end users depending on their permissions. The original author retains ultimate control of an object, which remains associated with his or her profile, unless explicitly delegated or transferred. The Universal Post Object may also be considered as a "social object" in that it may act as a connector between two people. This relationship data elevates the Universal Post Object as a first-class member of the social graph. Metadata for posts should include categories, which are curated by the organization (either formally or informally) and tags, which are arbitrary numerical or texts associated with a post, and curated by the poster. Universal Post Objects may also be collected in folders.

Rich Profiles Individuals should be represented by rich profiles. These profiles should include the capability for initial instantiation from an enterprise directory. Rich profiles should include organizational, professional and topical insight to those accessing them. The content of profiles should be linked or inherited by Universal Post Objects to create the initial metadata about those objects (e.g., that the author of the post was a marketing manager with identified expertise in social media marketing). People with a profile may be a member of a community.

Embedded Collaboration Rather than "communicating" through one tool and "collaborating" through another, the post model should accommodate both modes of work. The store-and-forward model for e-mail was an architectural choice made at its inception, and it need not be assumed in future communication platforms. The ability to initially create a one-to-one post that is visible only to the creator and the recipient would satisfy this specification. However, the ability to then modify that original post by making it more open, more editable or more shareable, offers advantages that store-and-forward models do not. Embedded collaboration would consolidate information into the activity streams or watch lists based on user designated triggers.

Personal Libraries All Universal Post Objects exist in the author's personal library and are exposed to other libraries, personal and public, based on author or delegate permissions. Expertise categories and miscellaneous tags, either explicitly described by a participant or derived algorithmically, will be linked to personal library data to offer reinforcement and substantiation of expertise claims.

Communities The users of Universal Posts will be organized by communities, with one-to-one or many-to-many membership. Object permissions may be set to a community level. Communities are also an organizing container for posts that are not designated as individual-to-individual.

Activity Stream The Universal Post model should include a content stream that presents all relevant (related) posts for which a person is subscribed. The activity stream should also include content for people, categories, tags and folders that a person has decided to follow. The activity stream should, at minimum, include views based on time, activity and membership.

Personal Watch List Individuals should be able to view pertinent posts through filters that include time, topics, categories, tags, folders, team member activity or other designations based on post metadata.

Community-based Prioritization Most e-mail systems offer some sort of priority setting that allows individuals to communicate the relative importance of an item. In the post model, the interaction of the community generates the priority. Even though an individual may feel something is important, the community determines, through their comments and responses to a post, which posts require attention and which do not — which are important, and which are not.

Transformation An object may begin as a private post, but may be transformed by its author into a more collaborative object through the extension of permissions to others. It may be shared for reading, it may be open for commentary, or it may be transformed into an editable object with full revision tracking. Transformation may be policy-based. For instance, when an object is assigned an "approved" state, it may no longer be transformed, although it may be copied as a new object.

Edit Social posts, including their metadata, should be editable after their initial creation by authorized editors. The editing environment should be adequate but not complex. The Universal Post is not intended to replace publishing systems for paper-based or electronic content that requires complex formatting. Editing is a higher level privilege than commenting.

Repository independent Although the technical architecture may specify a database or databases in which posts and their content resides, the end user never needs to specify these locations, or seek them out in order to discover information.

Responses Posts should allow for comments by those with permission to comment. Comment permissions should be seen as a lower-level privilege than editing. Posts should also allow for replies that generate a system managed conversation thread that is logically maintained and visually displayed via the user interface.

Object Permission Control Posts should include a permission control capability that allows authors and content controllers to expand or restrict editing and comment activity. The original author may delegate editing to other individuals, or, by increasing the "openness" of a post, permit members of a community to edit or otherwise control the object.

Rich Attachments Posts should accept any type of attachment as a valid augmentation of their rich-text content.

Metadata Universal Post Objects should include rich metadata, including tags and categories. Hashtags (#) should be avoided as formal parts of the specification, Although they are simple to implement, hashtags offer no stored definitions, nor do they offer any retrieval construct beyond text strings. Tags are free-form alphanumeric strings curated by individual posters. Categories are formally curated by the organization and reside in a table that is called by the posting interface. End users may suggest new categories, but they require approval prior to assignment, depending on an organization's policies.

Deep Search Universal Posts, and their attachments and metadata, should be available to enterprise search engines for indexing.

Collaborative Workflows Posts should exist in a number of states, including, but not limited to: private, editable, in-review, approved, accepted, rejected and revised. These states create the basis

Management by Design suggests that the tools of work experience design, namely, policies and procedures, technology and space, be seen through the lens of simplicity, equitability, flexibility and forgivability.

Simplicity The Universal Post model offers simplicity in several ways. First, it simplifies the authoring and edit process for shared content. The Universal Post eliminates the need for a number of disparate tools, including e-mail. The Universal Post also simplifies the creation of collaborative workflows.

Flexibility The Universal Post allows content to be created in a number of ways, from posts to attachments. Posts can cycle through collaborative workflows or stand as individual objects. Posts, most importantly, can evolve from static objects to collaborative ones — as can post containers which may start out as repositories and evolve into collaborative communities.

Equitability Posts offer equitability to different modes of communication and collaboration, be it individual, team or collaborative. They offer equitability in terms of time and distance. They support a variety of content types, so that people with different learning styles of physical or mental perspectives can consume content in a way that meets their needs, and communicate in a way that best express their capabilities.

Forgivability Universal Post social objects are malleable, allowing them to transform from messages into collaborative objects, and from stand-alone information to social objects that connect people through the objects.

for collaborative workflows by allowing individuals and groups to assign a hierarchy of states through which a Post must progress. A special instance of collaborative workflow is the **Q&A model**, which facilitates answering questions posted universally, to a community, or to individuals. States for Q&A include: unanswered, answered.

Extranet and External Access The security model for the Universal Post environment should include external participants, either ad hoc members vetted through internal policy and granted provisional access, or trusted partners where company directories are either partially or completely federated.

Policy The Universal Post environment should include rules at the personal, group/community and global level. Personal rules could be used for notification and classification related to how items appear in the Personal Watch List. Community rules would include assignable categories and user interface themes. Global policies would be related to storage, retention management, backup and compliance-related issues.

Analytics The Universal Post infrastructure should ultimately include deep analytics that reveal social influence, participation models, topic interest trends and expertise identification. The Universal Post infrastructure would likely not include its own analytics, but use textual and collaboration services available in the compute infrastructure.

Application Programming Interface (API) The Universal Post infrastructure must include an API so that its communications and collaboration features can be easily embedded in functional applications.

Context is a design element that does not fit neatly as a high-level feature specification, but the Universal Post model must create meaningful context, or it will fail as an alternative to other collaboration tools. Designers must avoid fragmenting the experience between tools or repositories. If the design goal is to create an electronic work experience, then the results of that experience must result in meaningful context for its users. Depending on implementation, Universal Posts Objects may create context through subtypes, such as status updates, meetings, or ideas that provide additional descriptive data or functions that specialize those objects for specific use cases while maintaining compatibility with viewing, editing, streaming and other aspects of the Universal Post Model.

Developers who choose to implement such a model may use messaging of some sort, including e-mail, as a notification mechanism, but they should avoid tight integration with e-mail, lest they run the risk of reinforcing obsolete approaches.

This design is not complete, but offers an alternative, work experience-based design that provides a rationalized, enterprise-level collaboration and communication environment designed for the needs of the business, and those working for it. In implementation, the design should not be limited to the technical specification, but should include design elements for space and policy and practice that create a positive, effective, work experience.
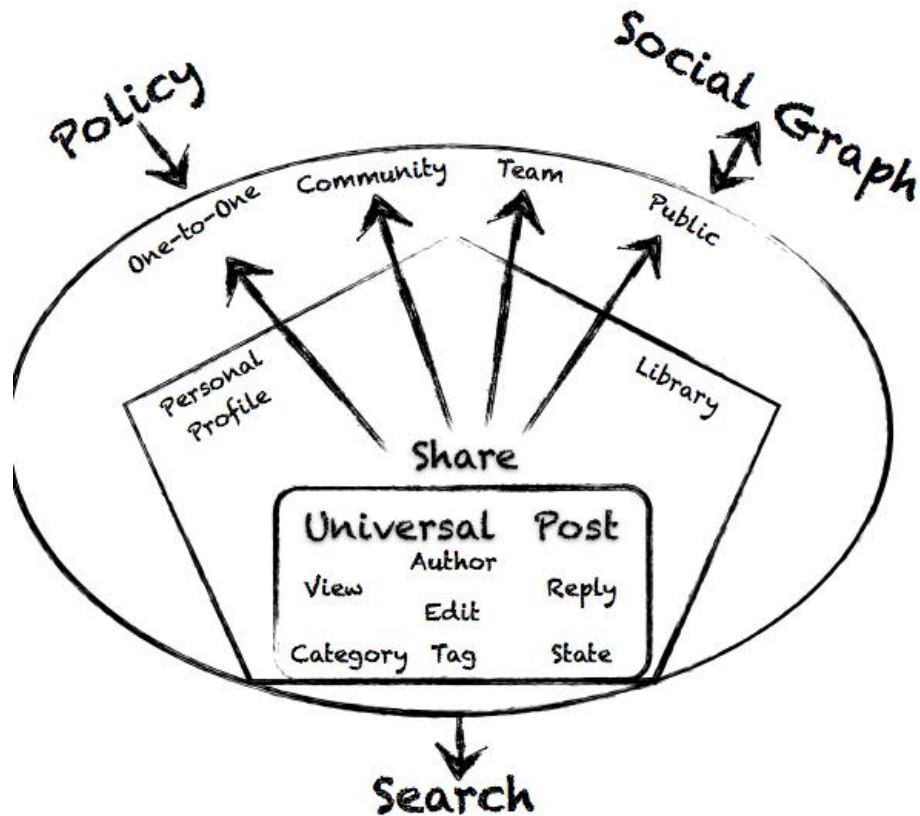
COLLABORATION IN A POST E-MAIL WORLD

Nearly every worker, if they work at a small enterprise, a multi-national firm, a government or non-profit agency, knows that the sophisticated technical environment at their disposal offers a multitude of ways to work and communicate. Each day, those workers must configure a work experience that works for them, while taking into account the work experience their colleagues and partners attempt to assert. People want to control their work environment, and when offered so many choices, they select what works for them, often at the detriment of the work experience, as well as product and productivity.

This paper has examined one way to address this issue. It suggests we step back and reexamine, not just the tools we use, but the design of the work experience itself. When doing so, we arrive at the need not for ever more sophisticated tools, but for simple, universal tools that can be malleable in the face of need—they can bend to the moment without breaking.

The Universal Post offers a communications and collaboration model that will meet the needs of most workers in their day-to-day experience. The Universal Post creates a platform for communication and collaboration that addresses many of the deficiencies of e-mail, and offers compelling reasons to migrate. The Universal Post can offer contextual collaboration within functional applications through an API, eliminating yet another collaboration issue: the rampant proliferation of collaboration features inside of functional tools.

Every worker wants to provide value. Organizations need to design work experiences that let them do that by deploying technologies that simplify, rather than overwhelm.

TOUCHSTONES FOR COLLABORATION SUCCESS IN A POSTING WORLD

Executives must lead because if they choose to perpetuate existing ways of working, then the introduction of new approaches will be quickly overwhelmed by how work is getting done, rather than how people say it should be done. Executive leadership, not sponsorship is essential. Success follows from behavior not from rhetoric.

Understand what you are trying to do and select the tools and techniques that best fit your mode of work. Although an idea like a Universal Post will serve the needs of communicators, collaborators and teams, it does not solve the problem of dysfunctional teams or ineffective communication. The organization must hold managers, team members and community participants accountable for working in effective ways. If this is done, the benefits of a rational collaboration environment will be realized—if not, even a siloed, friction-based collaboration environment will do because the dysfunction of the organization will overshadow problems introduced by technology.

Provide permission not incentives. Too many organizations seek ways to create incentives for employees to change behavior when they haven't yet provided permission for their employees to act in ways that they would like to. When attempting to foster collaboration, look first to the impediments on the path to success, not to new paths.

Focus on the goal, not the language. Don't get esoteric on people. When you introduce ideals like collaboration you make people think they are doing sometime more than the job they were hired to do. No organization should have a strategic goal to become more collaborative unless that goal is followed by "in order to more effectively…" sell, make, coordinate. The goal of a rational collaboration environment is to help organizations more effectively execute their business models—to make delivering value more efficient, to create products with higher quality, to deliver a better experience or whatever your measures of success may be.

Organizations need to design their Work Experiences. Too often, work experiences happen to people because organizations don't invest in designing those experiences. Many spend a lot of money developing customer experiences, but few pay the same kind of attention to their workers — to how space, technology and policy and practice create their experience. This leads to a lack of employee engagement, and therefore, a reduced ability to effectively collaborate to meet business goals. If inclusive, collaborative work reflects an organization's values, then it is incumbent on that organization to design an experience that makes collaboration meaningful and engaging to employees and partners.

Deploy rational communications-and-collaboration infrastructure. If you keep putting work into silos, how do you expect your people to move out of them? As much as Intranets promised to create flatter, more integrated, organizations, they have, in many cases, created new silos based on technology expertise, repository access and functional specificity.

Pay Attention to the Serendipity Economy Effects. The Post is not all about efficiency and productivity. In fact, the most important aspect of the Universal Post may be the serendipity it facilitates, and the emergent value that comes from unanticipated interactions.

Design for Mobility. Many organization keep mobility as a parallel technical goal. Collaborate well. Collaborate using devices. Part of "collaborating well" involves designing for mobility.