Education as Platform

The MOOC Experience and what we can do to make it better

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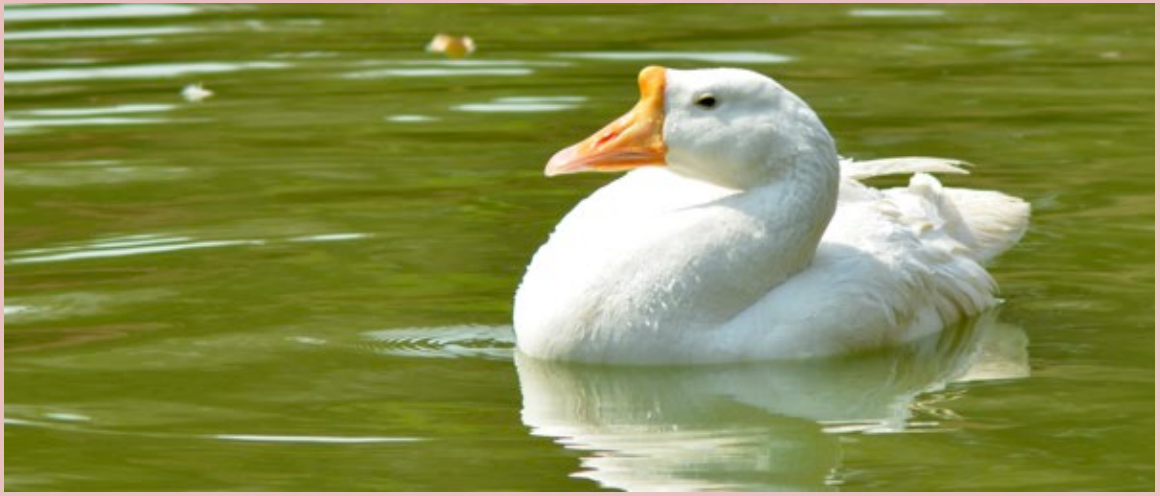
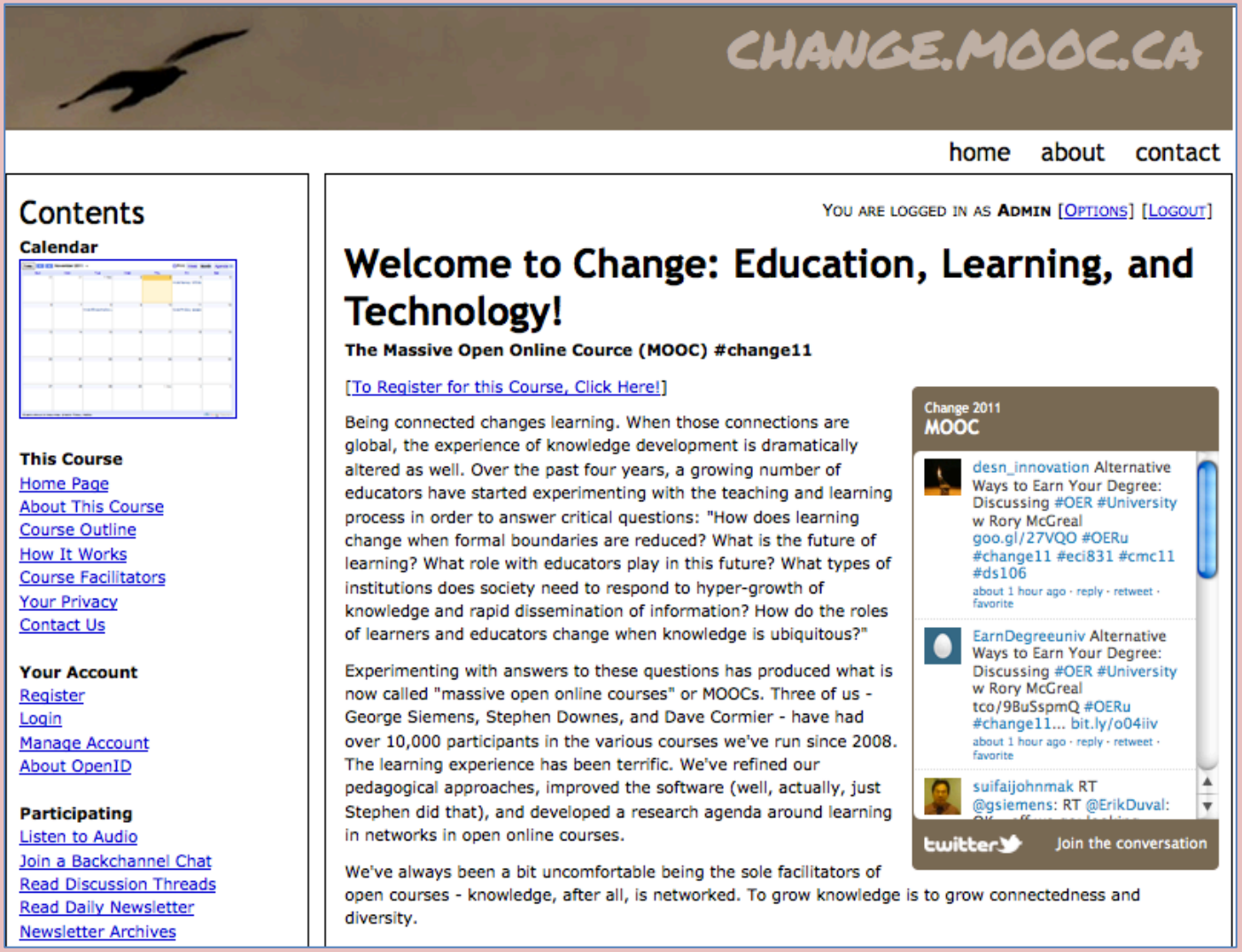
March 12, 2012

1. A bit about MOOC Structure
2. Where MOOCs Fail
3. Reconceptualizing MOOCs
4. Chess Net
5. The Budget Game
6. The Education Platform



1. A bit about MOOC Structure

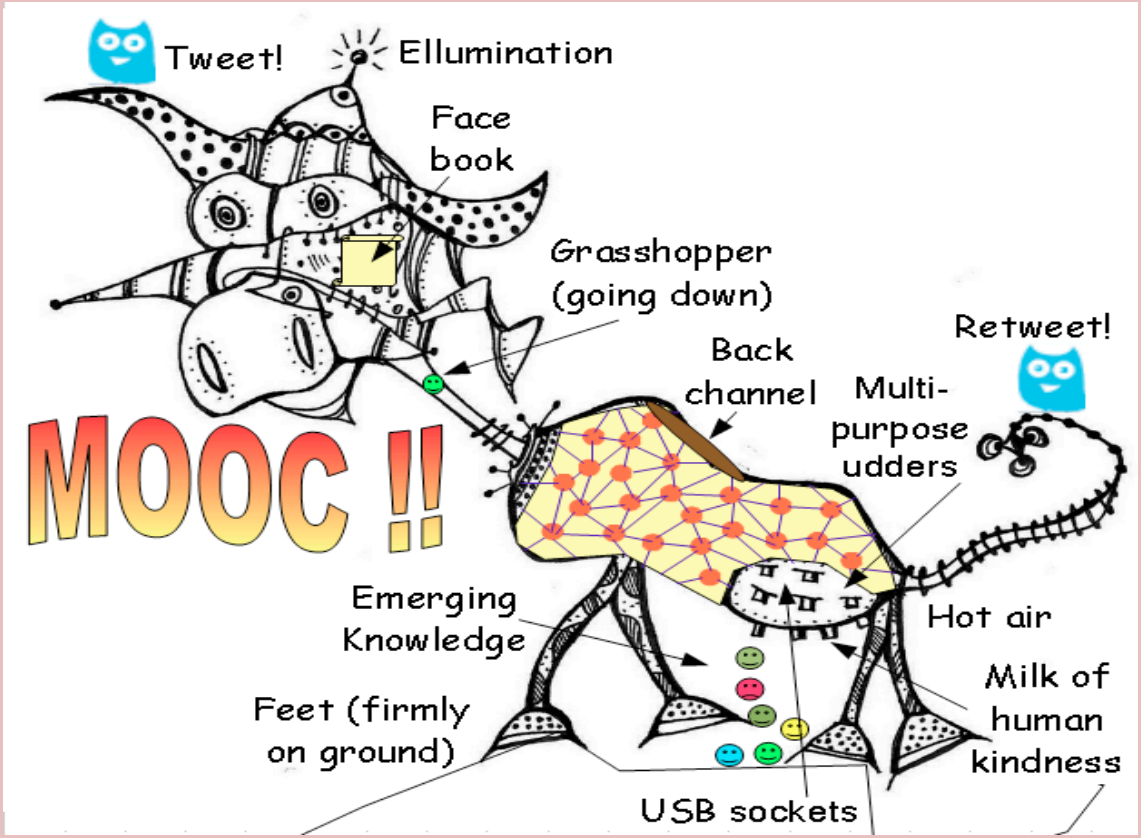
The MOOC Experience



Open

Mix of levels – novice and experienced

The network structure



http://cor-ar.blogspot.in/2012/03/two-distinct-course-formats-in-delivery.html

Aggregation – bringing together

gRSS hopper

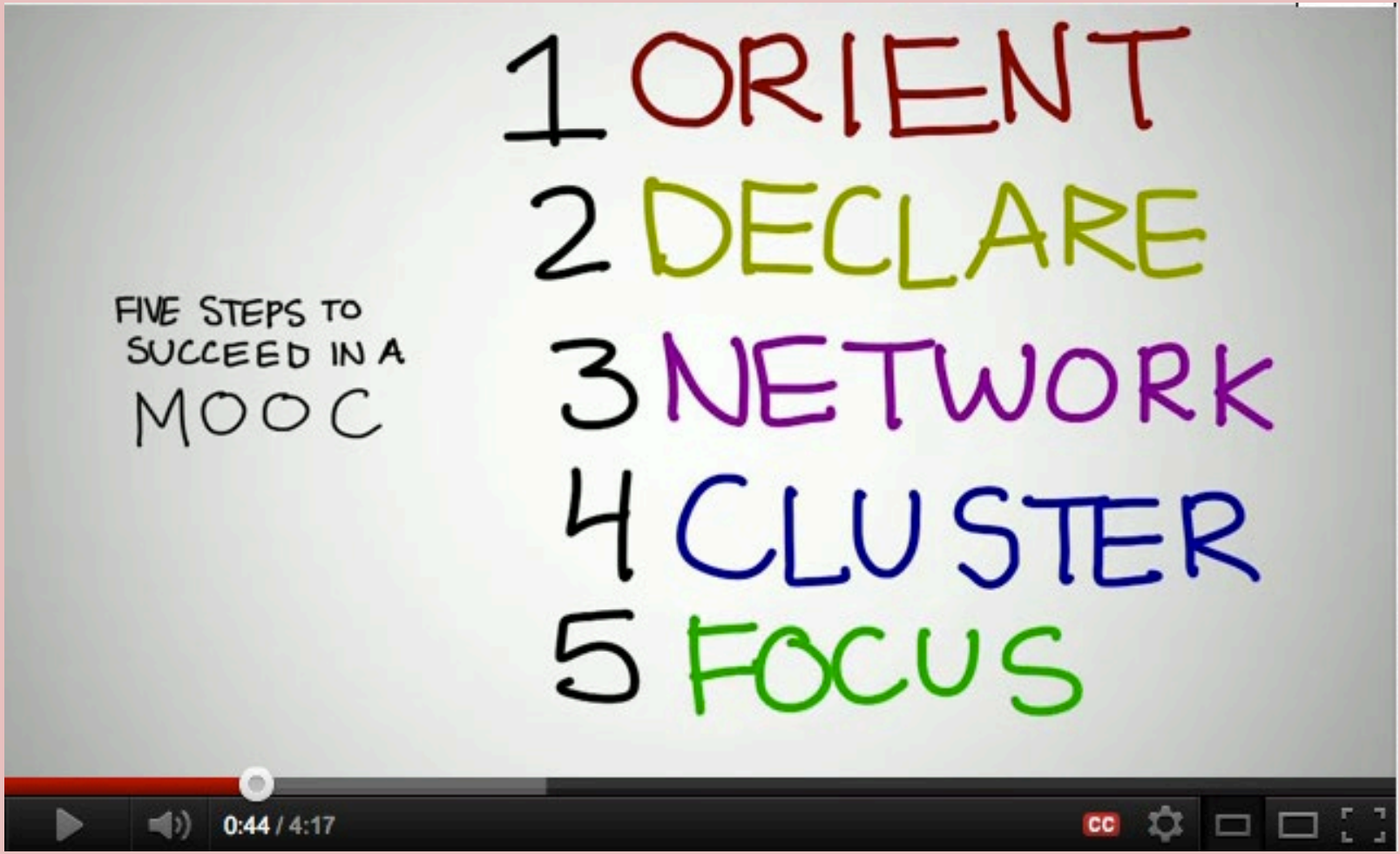
The abundance of content

- Some analogies:
  - following football – there are more games in the world than you could possibly watch
  - recipes – there is more food int eh world than you could possibly eat, more ways of eating food than you could experience in a lifetime
  - places to visit – the world is vast, ou cannot possibly see everything

Social versus Solo

http://blog.learnlets.com/?p=2562

Success in a MOOC



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8avYQ5ZqM0

Self-Education

Bates: “They belong philosophically within the context of thinkers such as R. H. Tawney, Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire, who believed strongly in self-education, as part of their broader socialist views on equality, the need to open access to knowledge, and to educate the workers in order to break the existing hegemony, etc.”

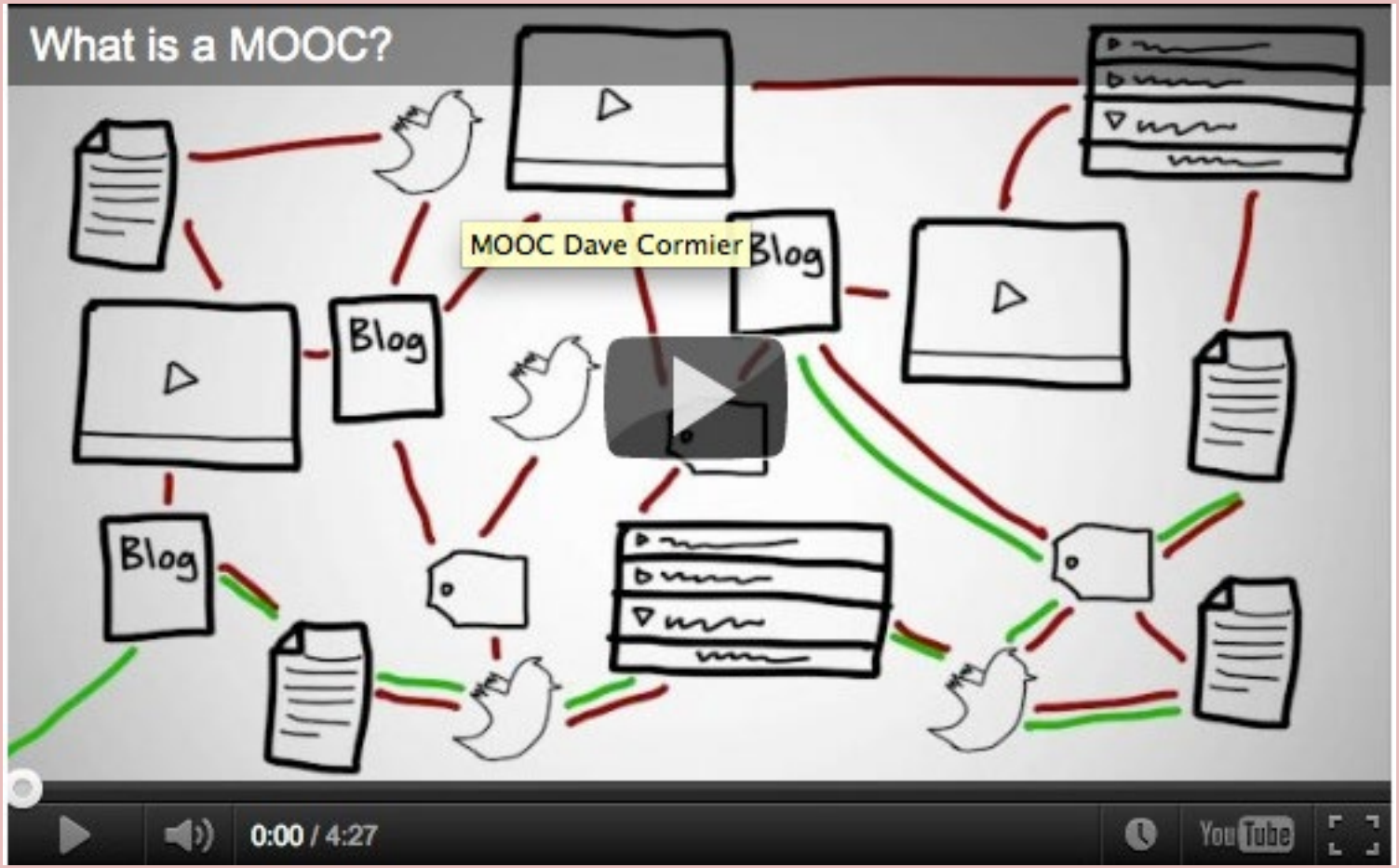
http://www.tonybates.ca/2012/03/03/more-reflections-on-moocs-and-mitx/

Knowledge as Grown

There is a contrast between knowledge as something that is acquired, ingested, retained, remembered, and knowledge that is something that is grown as a response to experience rather than as a representation of it

2. Where MOOCs Fail

The Bootstrap Problem



http://www.tonybates.ca/2012/03/03/more-reflections-on-moocs-and-mitx/

Navigation

Sheesh
Gumbad
Pond
Bada Gumbad
Complex
Turret
Mosque
Tomb of

Size versus Connectedness

Lisa Chamberlin and Tracy Parish
http://elearnmag.acm.org/featured.cfm?aid=2016017

Elitism

Effectiveness

- What is learning if it isn't learning content? How can we assess it, credentialize it?

3. Reconceptualizing MOOCs

Open

- everybody can participate – but more importantly, there are many ways to participate
  - ‘open’ means being able to watch
  - ‘open’ means being able to participate at your own level
  - ‘open’ means participating publicly, so others can watch

Online

- means that it is connective, interactive
- You can’t put a MOOC on a DVD
- The MOOC is the *process*
- It is a process that is greatly aided by being online
  - many tasks are automated, scaffolded
  - much greater communicative capacity
  - more access to data, calculations

Connective

- To the extent that a MOOC is about content, the MOOC fails
  - it's like confusing the learning of a game, or the playing of a game with memorizing the rules of a game
  - it's like confusing enjoying food and knowing how to cook with the memorization of recipes
  - it's like confusing the experience of travel with knowing where things are on a map

Restating the Problem

- our MOOCs are insufficiently connective, and tend to slip toward an emphasis on content
  - the form of connectivity – online conversation – is at once too simplistic and too complex
  - looking for other ways to connect – eg., artwork (a la ds106) or activities/projects (but these have been *very* poorly defined in our courses)

Rediscovering Process

- As we fail to provide process, the courses revert to their old ways
  - people think the course is about the content
  - they gravitate toward dependence on the leadership, and away from personal participation
- It's not that we don't scaffold enough, it's that there are not opportunities for participants to 'play'

MOOC, Meet Game

- The MOOCs we have offered have been very high level, involving professional presentations and conversations – but what would a MOOC look like for a 10-year old?
- My answer: it would look like a game

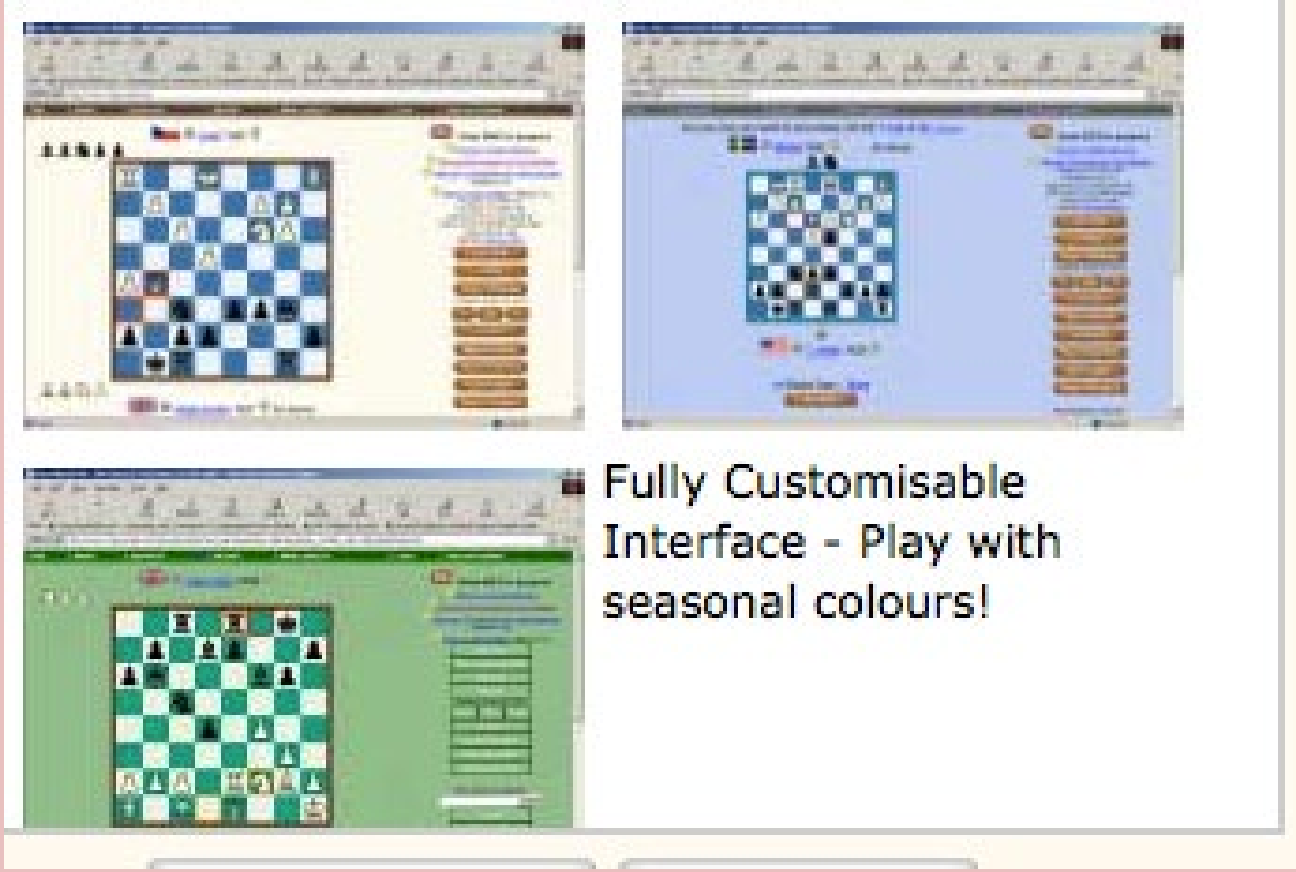
4. Chess Net

Searching for Chess Net - 1

Chess.net

http://www.chess.net

Searching for Chess Net - 2



Chess World

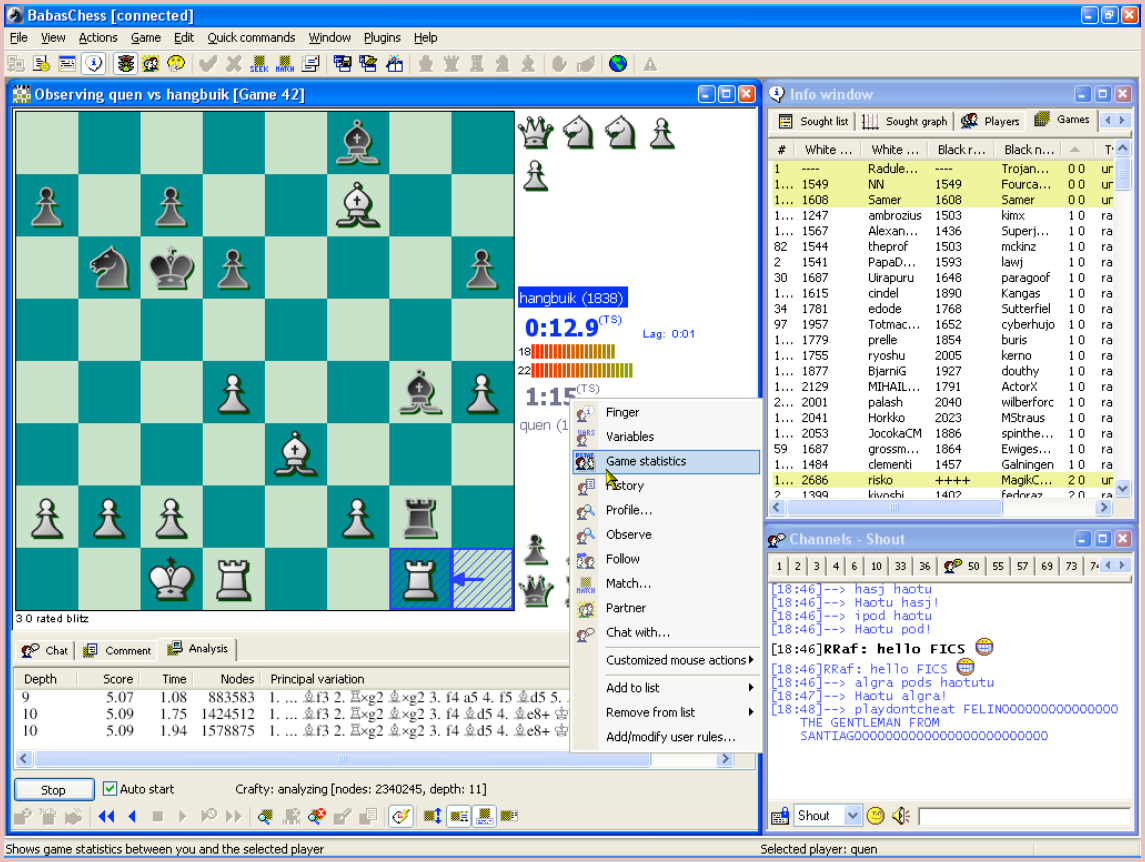
http://www.chessworld.net/

Searching for Chess Net - 3

Net-Chess.Com

http://net-chess.com

Searching for Chess Net - 4



BabasChess - The Free Internet Chess Client

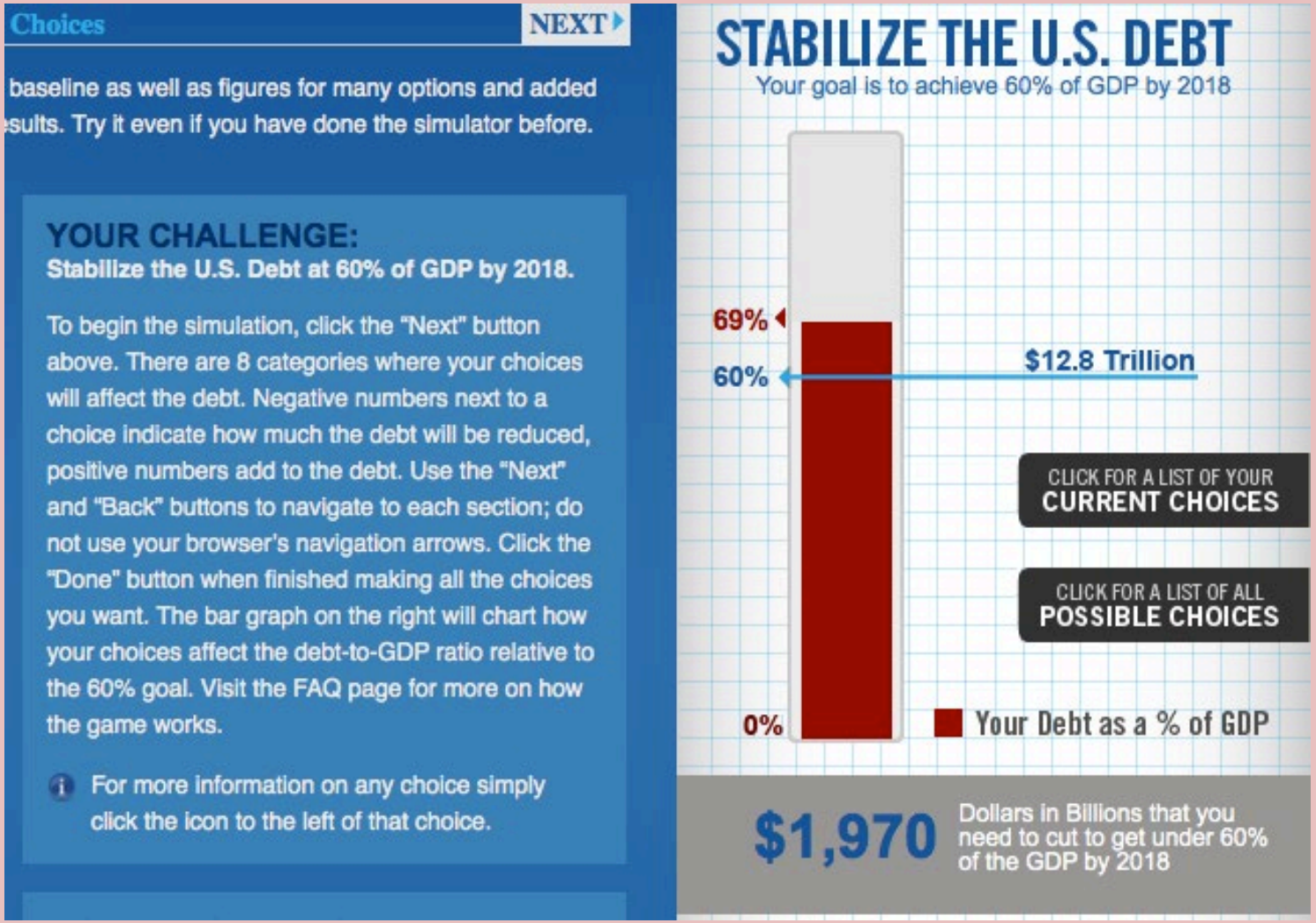
http://www.babaschess.net/

Searching for Chess Net - 5

- European Chess Union
- http://europechess.net/
- “introduction of the programme ‘Chess in School’ in the educational systems of the European Union”

5. The Budget Game

Budget Simulators

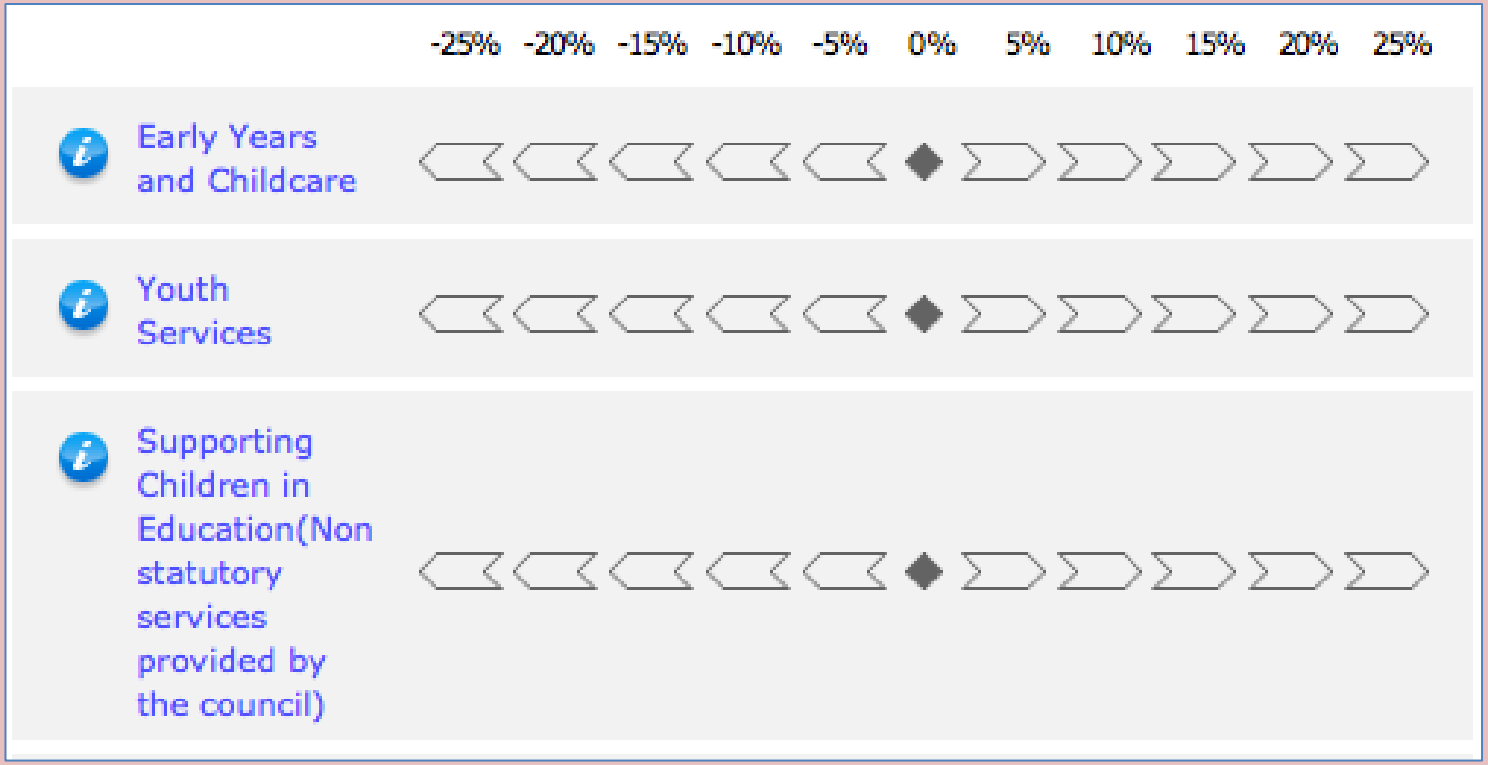


http://crfb.org/stabilizethedebt/

Meeting the Challenge

http://www.budgetsimulator.com/info/

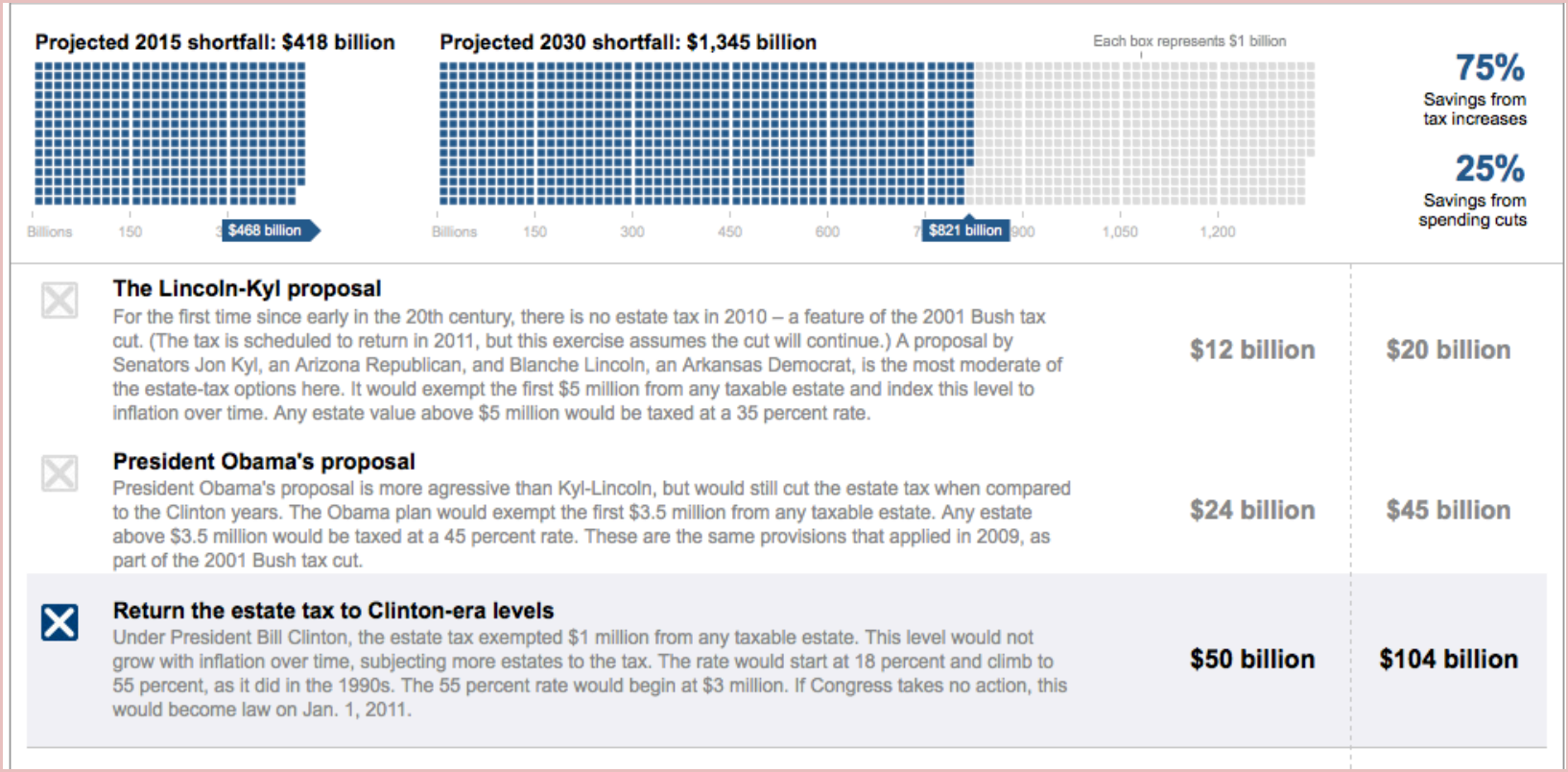
Fixed and Opaque



Budget Simulator

http://www.budgetsimulator.com/brightonandhove

NY Times ‘Solve the Deficit’



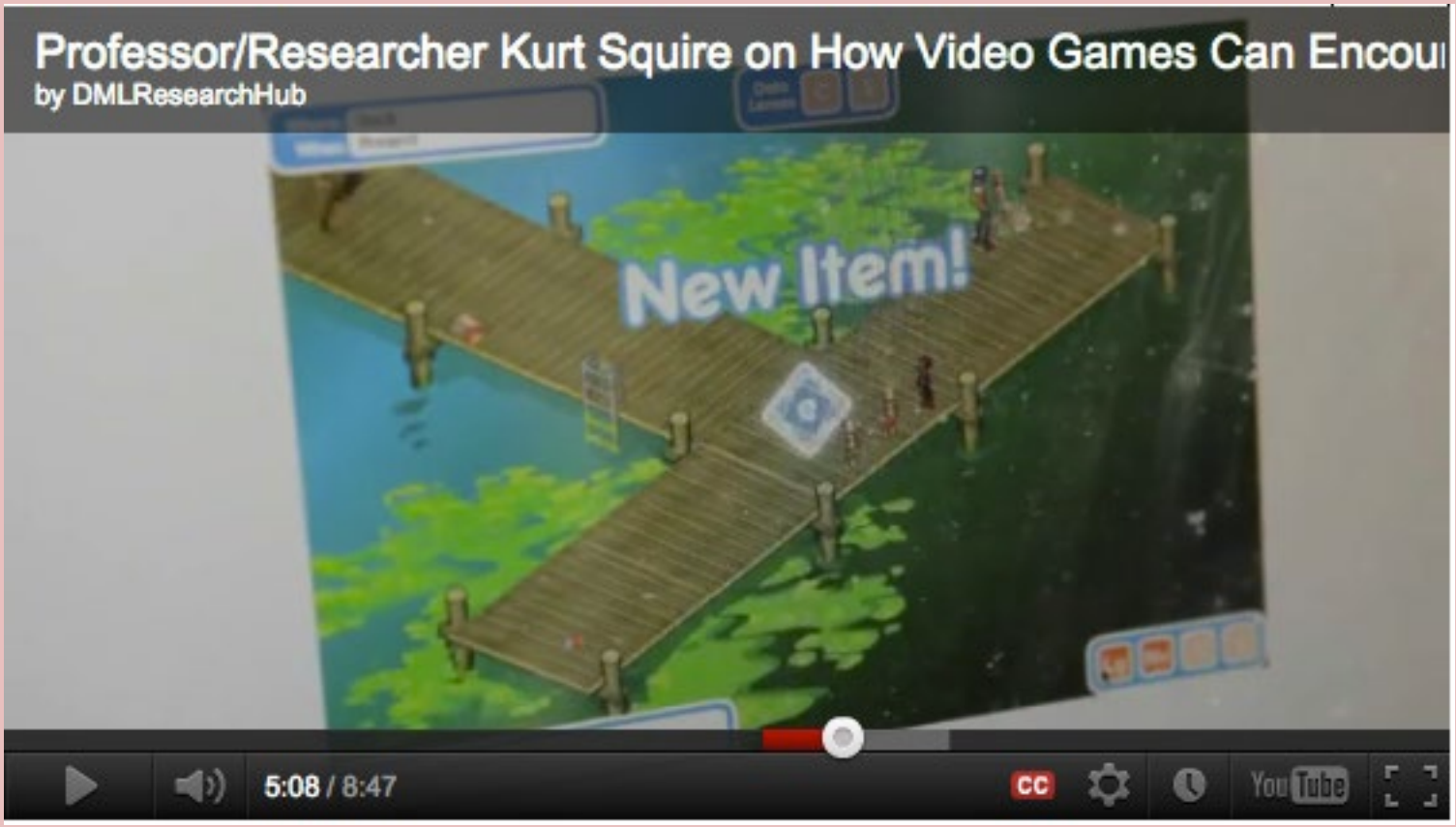
http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/11/13/weekinreview/deficits-graphic.html

What's Wrong With The Simulators

- they try to 'teach' – but instead become propaganda
- they reduce complex problems to simple fixes

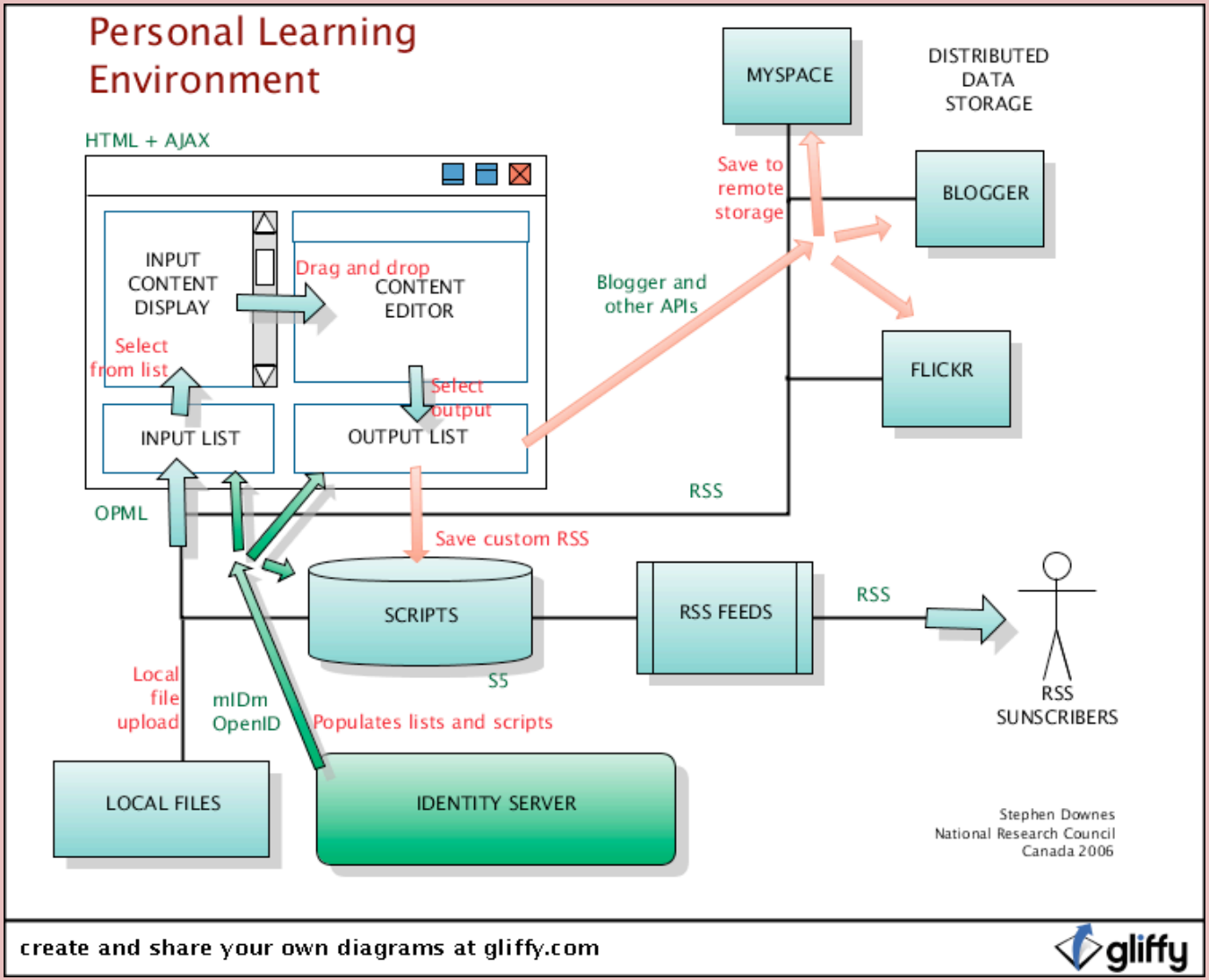
6. The Education Platform

Critiquing the games



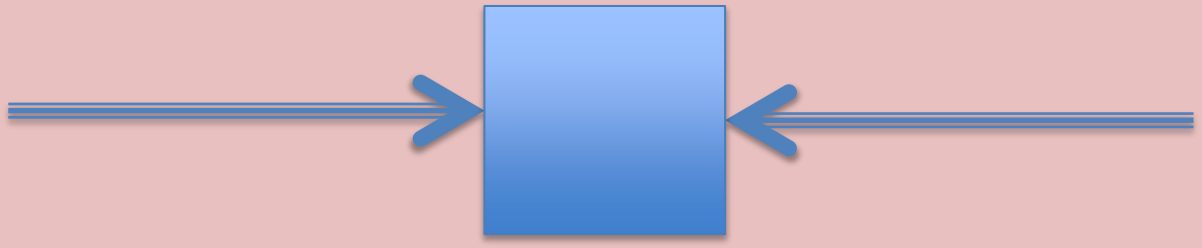
http://www.downes.ca/post/57523

Revisiting the PLE



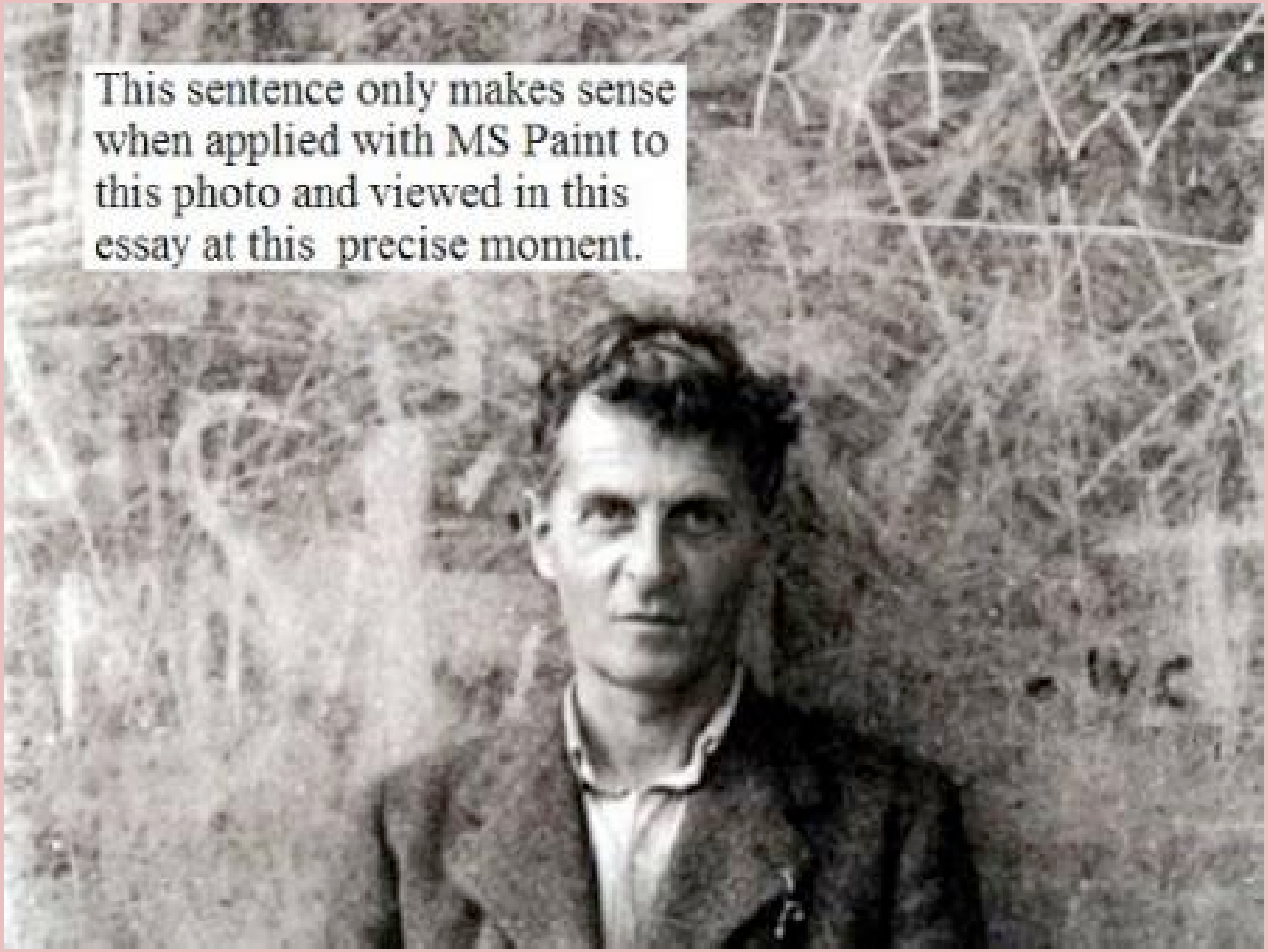
The Connectors

- Things – events, games, arenas, etc., to ‘connect’ individuals with each other
  - either as plug-ins on individual PLEs, or
  - as third-party services, like scrabble.net



Conversation?
Chess game?
Simulation?

Language Games



http://www.popmatters.com/pm/post/65550-games-as-language-systems

Ladders, Vectors, Networks

- Chess and other person-to-person games rank people in ‘ladders’ (people want to ran schools this way too)
- One way to think of a network is as a multidimensional ladder
- Ranking is therefore ‘position’ in a network

The Paucity of Badges

The Emptiness of Analytics

http://www.downes.ca