

Workshop Communication for the 21th Century: Analyzing Web 2.0 Applications

Presented by Stefan Holtel

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Understanding Life - from Within

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How to analyze Web 2.0 in this regard?



Content

- Means of Web 2.0 Analysis
- Activity Theory
- Flusser Philosophy
- Exercise



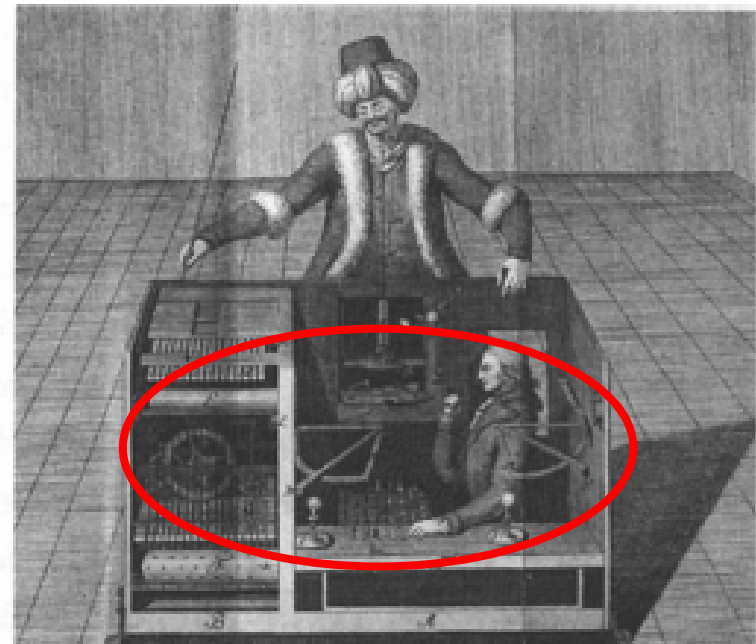
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Kempelen's Chess Turk

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Analyze a system from inside or from outside?



“Inside“ and “Outside“ Methodologies for Analyzing Web 2.0 Services

1. Activity Theory

- from psychology
- explains a Web 2.0 service “from outside“
- addresses issues beyond technical attributes
- embraces e.g. organizational and social topics

2. Media Theory according to Vilem Flusser

- from philosophy
- explains a Web 2.0 service “from inside“
- describes principle acts of communication
- beyond limited meanings of content and communication

Abstraction from Web 2.0 technology is paramount



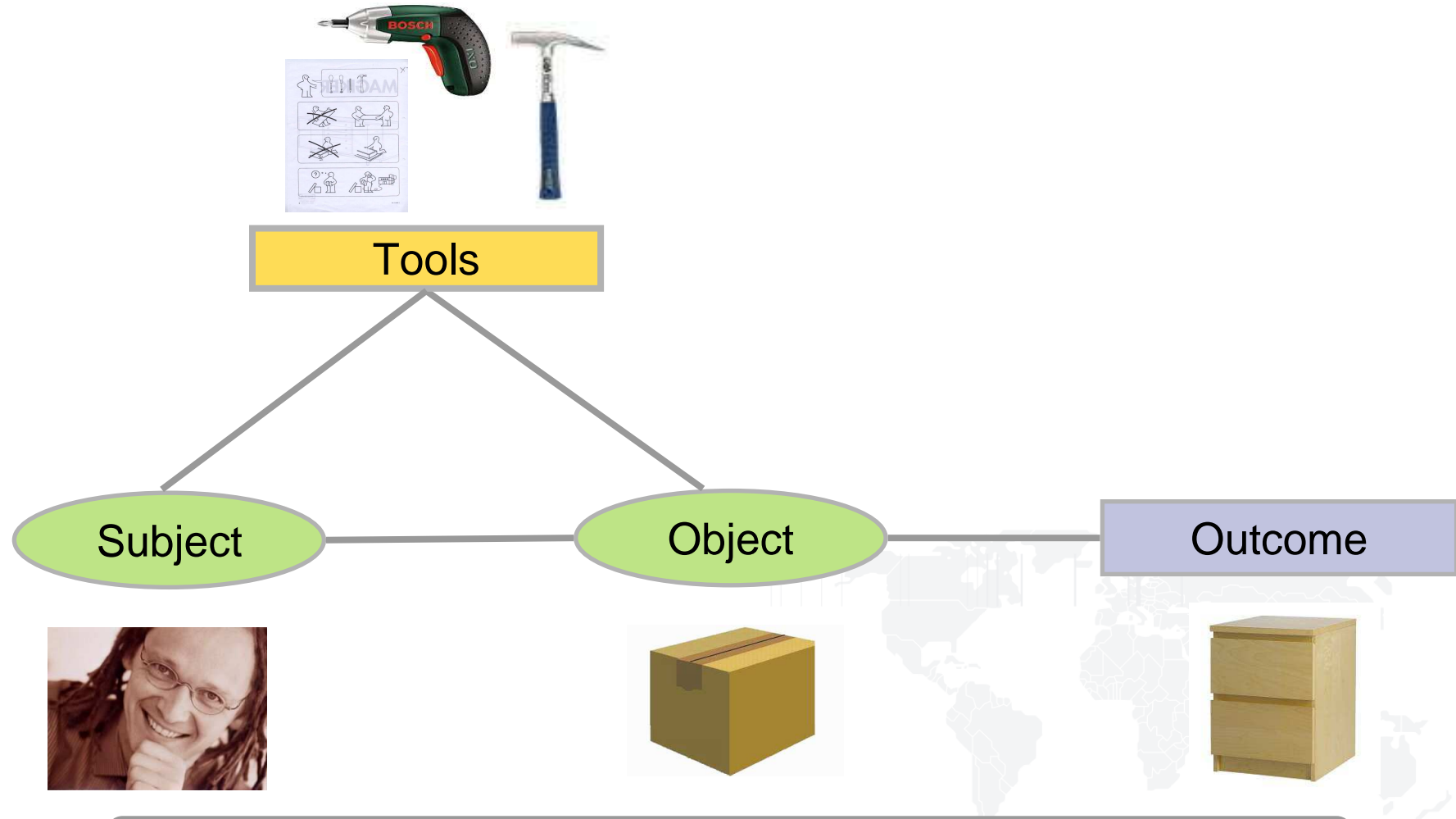
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Activity Theory: Assembling the IKEA 'Malm' Cabinet

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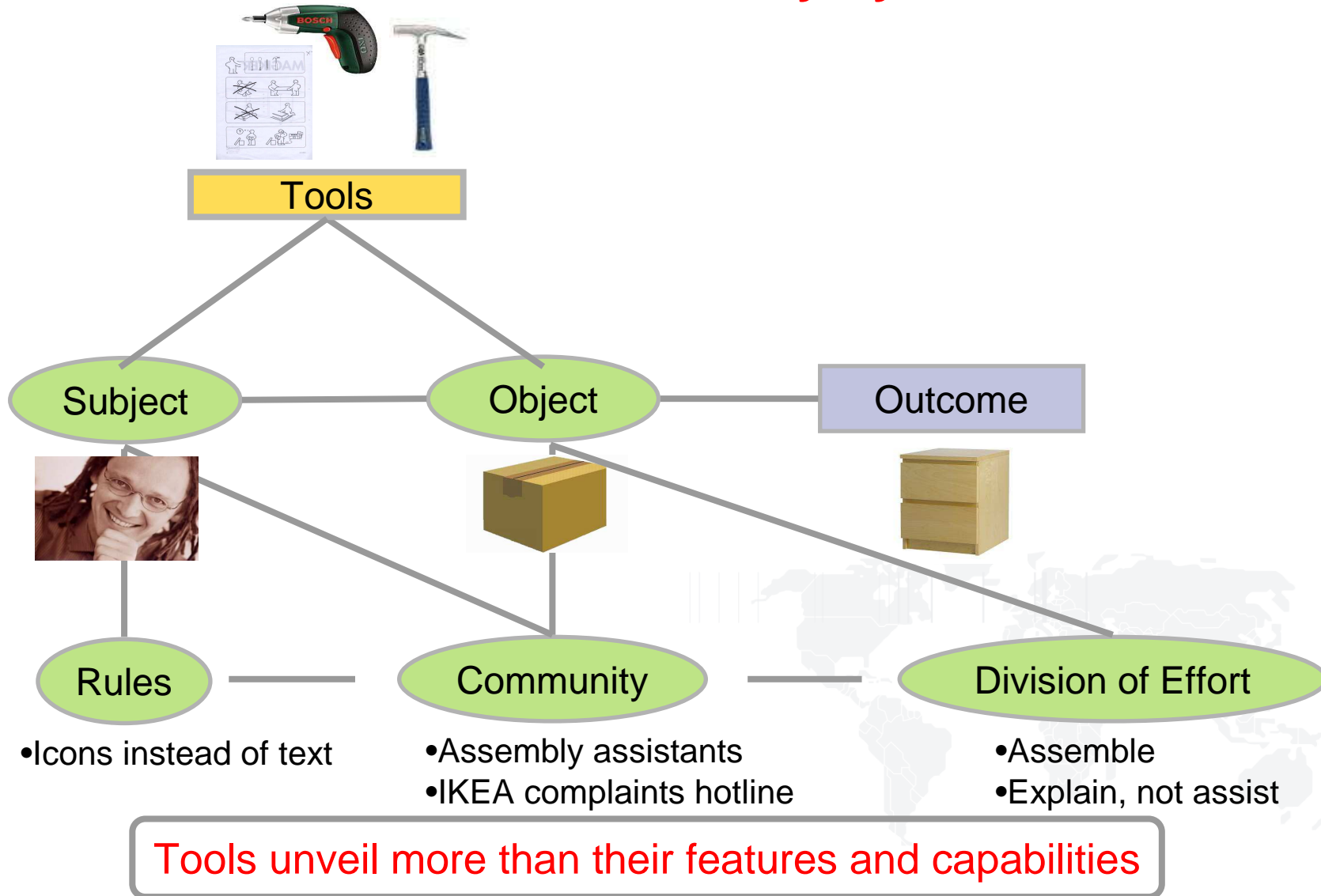


Hammer, driller, and manual are tools or 'mediating artefacts'

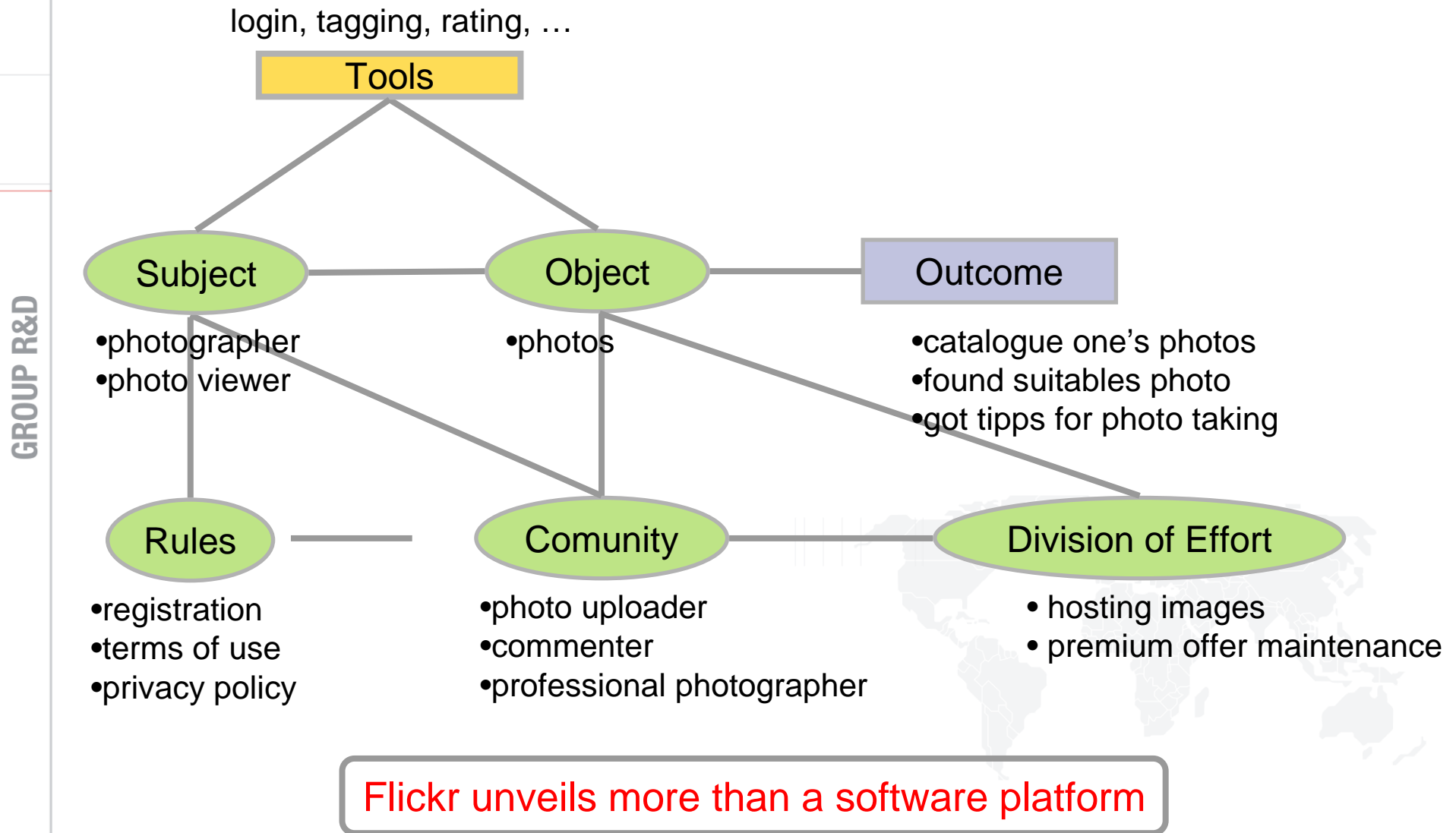


From Individual Activities to Activity Systems

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Flickr as an Activity System



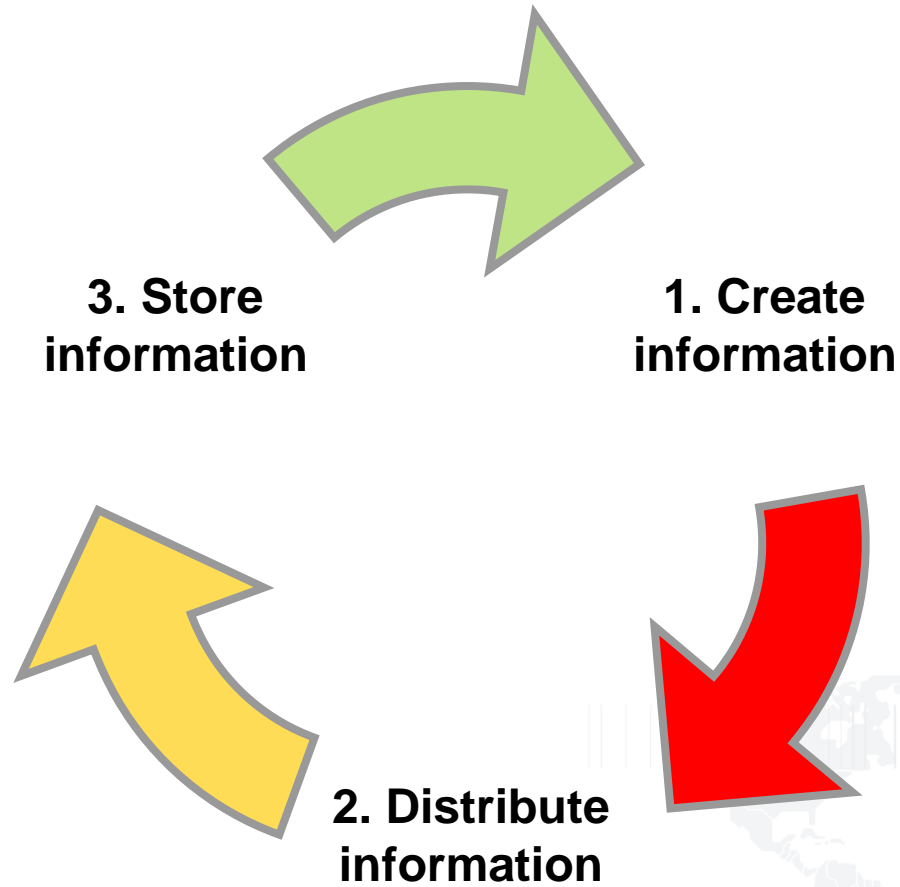
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Initial Steps of ANY Communication

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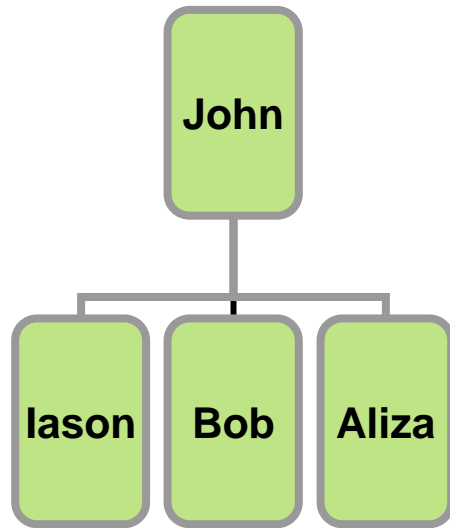
Any act of communication comprises only three basic steps



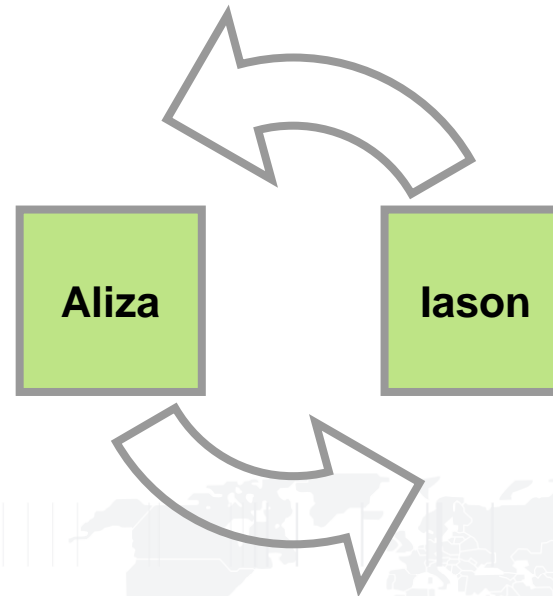
Dialogical and Discursive Acts of Communication

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Discourses



Dialogues



Dialogue = Sum of Discourses

© Vilem Flusser (1993)



Initial Acts of Communication in Web 2.0

— Dialogues

- Recombine given information by exchange of ideas (2-way)
- Divergent, “open form”
- Compute new information
- Web 2.0 examples: annotate an image in Flickr, combine a tag with a movie in YouTube, change an article in Wikipedia

— Discourses

- Convey information from sender to receiver (only 1-way)
- Convergent, “closed form”
- Distribute information
- Web 2.0 examples: publish a movie clip in YouTube, rank a person in Flickr, enter a personal profile in LinkedIn

Dialogues and discourses have to be balanced



Dialogues and Discourses in Flickr

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In the [colorful reflection](#) we have what is [life](#). - J.W. v. Goethe

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Exercise

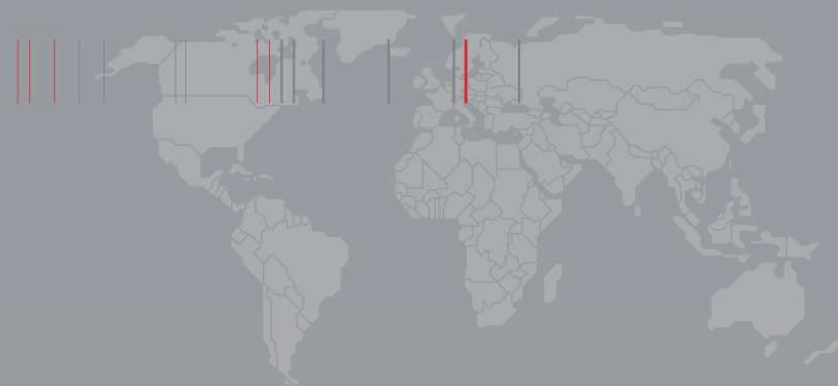
- Select a well-known Web 2.0 service like Amazon, eBay, Google, YouTube, MySpace, ...
- Analyze the given Web 2.0 service by
 - classifying menu items according to Flusser's categorization of dialogues and discourses
 - describing the components of the according Activity System



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