

# Information In Transition (IIT)

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A 3-day workshop exploring how to support information communication in our local and national Transition hubs. Bringing together “Transitionists” and “Technologists” in service of our community.

## Context

Flow of information is at the heart of Transition. Local hubs generate information that travels both within a community and to other national and international hubs.

Currently information flows sporadically and inefficiently, much like rainfall washes over a desolate landscape:

- Powered by gravity - information flows mostly when an outside force dictates necessity (application, fund-raising, etc.)
- Following a path of least resistance – information is collected and stored on separate computers (usually on those in which it is created) in diverse document formats (word processors, spread-sheets, etc.)
- Draining away rapidly – documents are quickly forgotten and archived, fading out of memory and consciousness.
- Carrying away precious soil fertility – those who create the information are worn down by a recurring and inefficient effort of having to recollect and recreate lost information.

Strategic water design involves:

- Capturing water – harvesting information when it is fresh and vital.
- Slowing it down – providing information a controlled path towards safe storage.
- Storing it – keeping information where it can be organized and easily accessed.
- Directing it when and where it is needed – making information easy to find when it is needed.
- Giving it time to absorb into the soil – presenting information in effective and diverse way to different people in different contexts.

As water is at the heart of landscaping, so information is at the heart of Transition. Correct harvesting, storage, absorption and delivery of information can lead to a healthy and vibrant ecosystem.

## Objective

To bring together diverse skills from within our community (members of Transition, web developers and designers) into a focused workshop during which a co-creative information process will be born.

The workshop will explore how an existing and abundant information flow can be harvested and utilized in service of the purposes of local and national Transition hubs.

Landscape design is founded on a view in which a designated purpose for that landscape brings it into harmony with its inhabitants (people and wildlife). In a similar way an information landscape design requires a similar foundational view of purpose and people. We will explore this idea of “People & Purpose” to guide us in forming and executing an information strategy.

## Purpose: Coming Together

When it comes to information and information technologies there seems to be a divide between those who create & consume it (namely “transitioners”) and those who are able to manipulate it (namely: “developers”).

“Transitioners” interact mostly with people and nature, dealing with malleable and unpredictable dynamics. “Developers” work mostly with computers and code, dealing with well structured, well behaved and predictable dynamics. “Transitioners” drown in information. “Developers” contain and organize information.

These worlds do not mix well on a functional level. It isn't for lack of motivation. It is more like oil and water (that have nothing against each other) that are of different qualities. Yet when making a delicious soup it is not uncommon to find oil and water “collaborating”.

What if instead of trying to get “developers” to understand “transitioners” or vice versa we could find a way to come together around shared interests to which we can all relate (and make a great soup)? We do not have to be confined to a view in which “transitioners” organize community projects” and “developers build websites”.

We can choose to be members and co-creators of our community collaborating towards a shared purpose. We can evolve to be “transitioners” who appreciate how well-structured information can support our efforts. We can evolve to be “developers” who appreciate how structured information has no value unless it serves a purpose.

That is the gift of purpose. If you are reading this document then you probably have an active interest in your community, specifically about making your community better, more pleasant and more resilient.

During this workshop we will explore how clear, shared and stated purpose can transform our differences into valuable complementary assets.

### **Format**

Each day will be made up of sessions. Each session will include:

- Introduction of (a) task(s) and a discussion about how to approach the task.
- Separating into groups who will take on the task(s).
- Regrouping, presenting, integrating and prioritising results.

Over the course of the workshop we will explore:

- Personas: who are the people we wish to support using information technology.
- Purposes: what roles do these people fill in our community and how do we perceive their purpose in the context of Transition.
- Information Structures: viewing information as building blocks.
- WordPress: introducing WordPress and how it views information.
- Website or websites?
- Information sources: how and where is information generated.
- Information uses: how and where is information applied.

### **Outcomes**

- Working website(s) for local and national hubs.
- Content strategy & knowledge how to use it.
- Raising mutual awareness and appreciation amongst Transitioners and developers.
- Establishing collaborative processes which can support a continued process of refinement and evolution.
- Exploring technological innovation as a community building activity.

### **Participants**

The workshop is an invitation for diverse skills from within the Transition movement to come and work together:

- Transition members
- WordPress developers
- Web designers

It is open to people who are committed, driven by purpose, have good collaborative and communication skills. Participants are asked to make themselves fully available for the entire 3 day workshop and to bring with them clarity and enthusiasm.

A few places are available for observers from other social activist circles who wish to witness and learn from the process.