

The Shift to Remote Work

Melissa Valentine
Stanford University



1. The Organization as **Holding Environment**
2. The Organization as **Collaboration Space**
3. The Organization as **Operating System**

The Organization as 'Holding' Environment

'Holding' describes the way another person, often an authority figure, *contains* and *interprets* what's happening in times of uncertainty.



Gianpiero Petriglieri

<https://hbr.org/2020/04/the-psychology-behind-effective-crisis-leadership>

The Organization as 'Holding' Environment

New learning and discussions on
parts of selves being held

Action items

- Institutional holds and
interpersonal, peer holding



Gianpiero Petriglieri

<https://hbr.org/2020/04/the-psychology-behind-effective-crisis-leadership>

The Organization as Collaboration Space

“Increasingly, the way that coordination, learning, and core work activities are accomplished are through episodes of *interpersonal interaction* and *mutual adjustment*... or TEAMING”



Amy Edmondson

<https://hbr.org/2012/04/teamwork-on-the-fly-2>

What is the level of “Process Knowledge” Routine, Complex, Innovation Operations

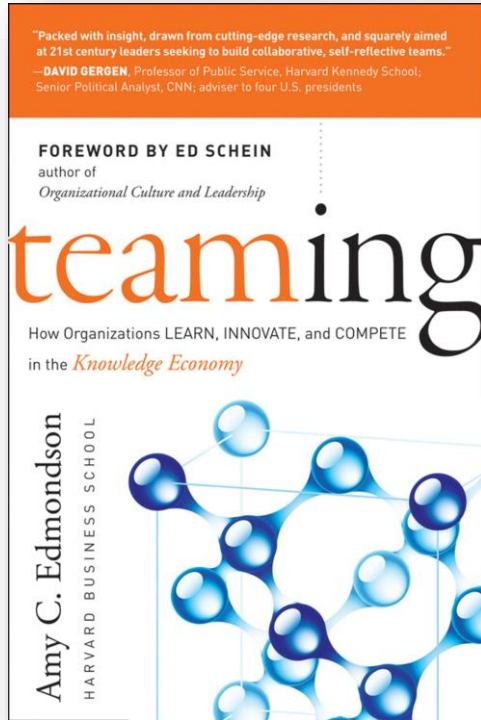


Table 1.2: How Organizations Encompass Routine, Complex, and Innovation Operations

	Routine Operations	Complex Operations	Innovation Operations
Automotive Company	Assembly Plant	Supply Chain Management	Design and development of future cars
Computer Chip Maker	Fabrication Plant	Supply Chain Management	Design and development of next-generation chips
Personal Computer Company	Assembly Plant	Support and service for large business customers	Design and development of future computing devices
Fast Food Company	Restaurants	Supply Chain Management	Research and development of future products and services
University	Dormitory Management	Building Construction Project	Research labs Curriculum redesign group
Space Exploration Agency	Payroll Operations	Space Missions	Developing future programs
Airport	Security Food Services	Air Traffic Control	Future planning
Hospital	Phlebotomy	Emergency Room	EMR implementation



Location Independent Collaboration

Dr. Jen Rhymer, Stanford University

Breath of Location Independent Organizations

- Over 200 identified from job boards and open database (FROGS)
 - Several with 1000+ employees (80% with less than 200 employees currently)
 - Spans industries including professional services (e.g., marketing, HR, legal, financial), education, and e-commerce, but the vast majority are in software



- Growing support within startup ecosystem
 - Increasing investment in remote organizations (e.g., Remote First Capital)

Distinguishing Two Communication Models

Organization	Layers of Hierarchy	Project Team Structure	Project Cycle Time	Retreats (org)	Retreats (team)	Weekly Meeting Count*	Expected Response to Ad Hoc Comm.	Schedule Expectations
Tromelin	5	Multi-disciplinary product teams and functional departments	2 weeks	Annual	No	3	At convenience (within a few hours if online)	None
Raoul	5	Multi-disciplinary product teams and functional departments	~ 4 weeks	Every 9 months	Yes (trial)	2^	At convenience	None
Niue	3	Multi-disciplinary squad and discipline team	4 weeks	Every 9 months	Yes (trial)	1	At convenience	None
Macquarie	3	Multi-disciplinary product teams and functional departments	~ 4 weeks	Annual	Yes	3	ASAP and available for real time chat	Status updated during work hours
Pitcairn	5	Multi-disciplinary teams in product zones	2 weeks; 4 weeks	Annual	Yes (trial)	8	ASAP and available for real time chat	Suggested work hours
Keeling	3	Multi-disciplinary product focused teams	4 weeks	Every 6 months	No	6	ASAP and available for real time chat	Status updated during work hours
Floreana	3	Multi-disciplinary product teams and functional departments	~ 4 weeks	Annual	No	8	ASAP and available for real time chat	Expected work hours

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“[Real time chat] wasn't working for us ... we needed something more asynchronous. Especially with the time zone situations.” [Niue]

“We're not asynchronous, everyone needs an overlap during the day so they can talk.” [Keeling]

Asynchronous Collaboration Elements

- Asynchronous collaboration, with limited real time interactions, is achieved through decoupling of individuals from information and independent action
- Four distinct elements identified
 - “Open Single Source of Truth”
 - “Rich Public Decision Trails”
 - “Search Imperative”
 - “Permissioned Autonomy”

The Organization as Collaboration Space

Action items

- Communication model
- Knowledge management strategy



Jen Rhymer

The Organization as Operating System

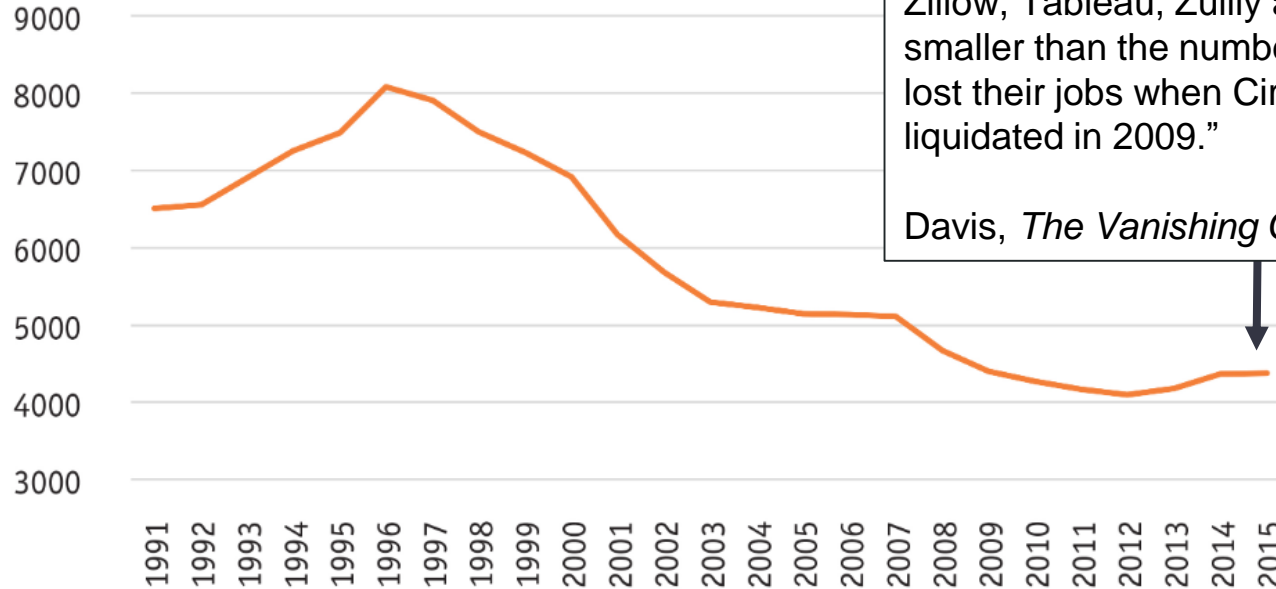
“Organizational design is now a subfield of computer science”

Jerry Davis

[What Might Replace the Modern Corporation?](#)

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43 <body <?php body_
44 <div id="fb-root"></div>
45 <script>(function(d, s, id) {
46     var js, fjs = d.getElementsByTagName(s)[0];
47     if (d.getElementById(id)) return;
48     js = d.createElement(s); js.id = id;
49     js.src = "//connect.facebook.net/en_US/sdk.js#xfbml=1&version=v2.3";
50     fjs.parentNode.insertBefore(js, fjs);
51 })(document, 'script', 'facebook-jssdk');</script>
52 <div id="page" class="site">
53     <a class="skip-link screen-reader-text" href="#content">Skip to content</a>
54     <header id="masthead" class="site-header" role="banner">
55         <div class="site-branding">
56             <div class="navBtn pull-left">
57                 <?php if(is_home() && $xpanel['home'])>
58                     <a href="#" id="openMenu"><i class="fa fa-bars"></i></a>
59                 <?php } else { ?>
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61                 <?php } ?>
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67             </div>
68             <div class="search-box hidden-xs hidden-sm">
69                 <?php get_search_form(); ?>
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71             <div class="submit-btn hidden-xs hidden-sm">
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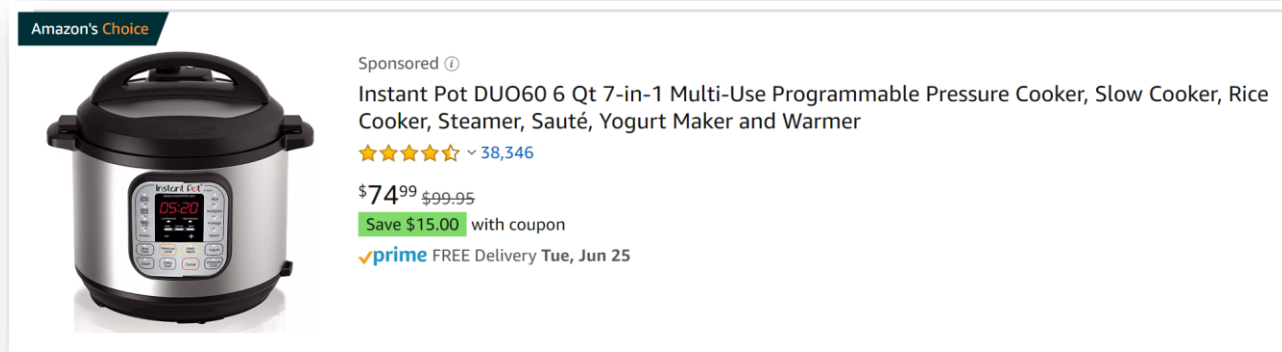
Figure 1: American corporations listed on U.S. stock markets, 1991-2015



“In 2015, the combined workforces of Facebook, Yelp, Zynga, LinkedIn, Zillow, Tableau, Zulily and Box were smaller than the number of people who lost their jobs when Circuit City was liquidated in 2009.”

Davis, *The Vanishing Corporation*

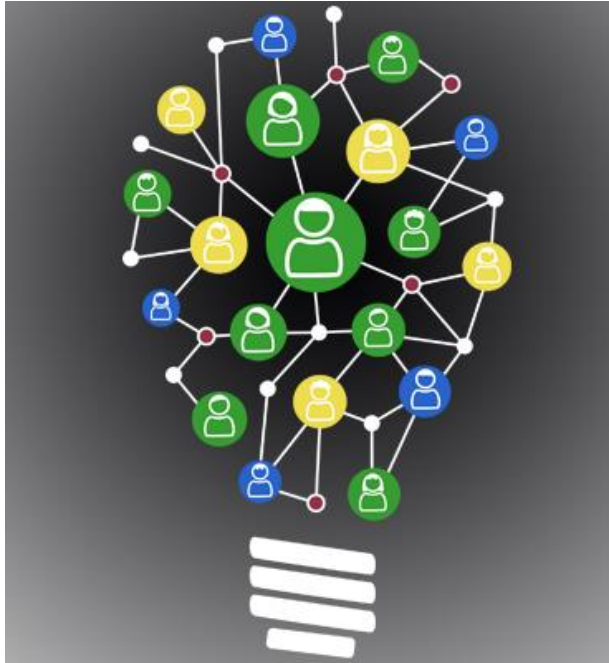
Jerry Davis: “Web page enterprise”



In 2005, the whole thing exploded... Hardware? No, now you just put it on Amazon or Rackspace. Software? It's all open-source. **Distribution?** It's the App Store, it's Facebook. **Customer service?** It's Twitter -- just respond to your best customers on Twitter and Get Satisfaction. **Sales and marketing?** It's Google AdWords, AdSense. So the cost to build and launch a product went from five million...to one million...to five hundred thousand...and it's now to fifty thousand

Nathan Heller, The New Yorker, 14 October 2013.

Flash teams and archival data



Data on available workforce

Platforms assemble teams “on demand”
optimizing for various team properties
(availability, familiarity, role expertise)

Teams coordinate, communicate on platforms

Platforms collect data on work process
Platforms recommend work processes

<https://ecorner.stanford.edu/flash-teams/>

The Organization as Operating System

“Organizational design is now a subfield of computer science”

APIs, Systems of Record,
Archival trace data

Jerry Davis

[What Might Replace the Modern Corporation?](#)

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The Organization as Operating System

Action items

- Data science strategy

Eric Colson

<https://hbr.org/2018/11/curiosity-driven-data-science>

<https://multithreaded.stitchfix.com/blog/2019/03/11/FullStackDS-Generalists/>

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