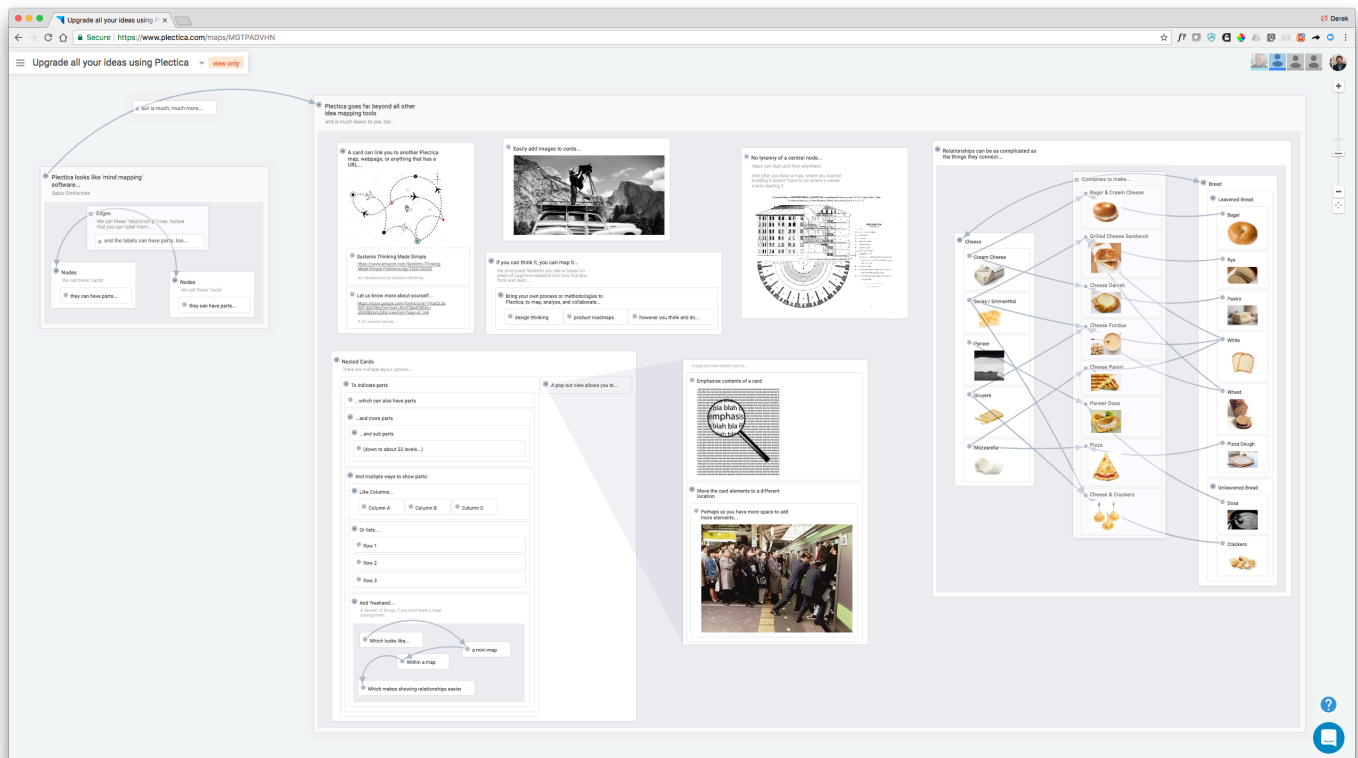




OUTTHINK | OUTSYNC OUTDO | OUTLAST

Plectica Mapping Tools Help Individuals and Teams
Iterate Real-World Solutions





In *Why You Should Map: The Science Behind Visual Mapping* (#1 in a 3-part series of short white papers) you learned why visual/tactile maps are so critically important to your success in any domain. In *Not All Visual Maps Are Created Equal: The Cognitive Style of Visual Maps* (#2 in the series, you learned that the cognitive architecture behind the visual mapping tools and techniques you use matters for transforming your ideas into action. Here, we'll discuss how visual maps powered by Plectica can be implemented in the real world for adaptive solutions and organizations.

Plectica Helps Organizations Build Knowledge in a VUCA World

You need to build knowledge in order to possess it. That means you need to take information and structure it yourself, organize it yourself, make meaning out of it. We should recognize that 1) information is data 2) thinking is the process of structuring information to make it useful, and 3) knowledge (also known as a mental model) is built when you structure information to give it meaning. In other words,

Information + Thinking = Knowledge (or Mental Model)

Knowledge is not the same as information. Knowledge is information transformed into meaning through thinking.

We live in a world characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). And while the real world is VUCA, we tend to think about the world in linear, anthropocentric, mechanistic, ordered (LAMO) ways (Table 1).

Most problems we face in the world result from the misalignment between how we think the world works and how it actually works. The real world works in systems—complex networks of many interacting variables.

Better thinking means building mental models that better align how we think with how the real world works. These mental models are representations, approximations, guesses, hypotheses, biases, or predictions about the real world (Figure 1).

VUCA World	LAMO Thinking
The real world is nonlinear...	but we think in linear ways.
The real world is agnostic about human endeavors...	yet we tend to look at things through a human-centered (anthropocentric) lens.
The real world is adaptive and organic...	yet we tend to think mechanistically and the metaphors we use reference machines (e.g., universe is like a clock-work; mind is a computer).
The real world is networked and complex with a sprinkling of randomness...	yet we think of things in ordered categories and hierarchies.

Table 1: VUCA world, LAMO thinking

To determine whether our mental model is accurate, we try it out in the real world and see what happens—that is, we seek feedback. If what we expect to occur occurs, this feedback tells us our mental model is well-constructed.

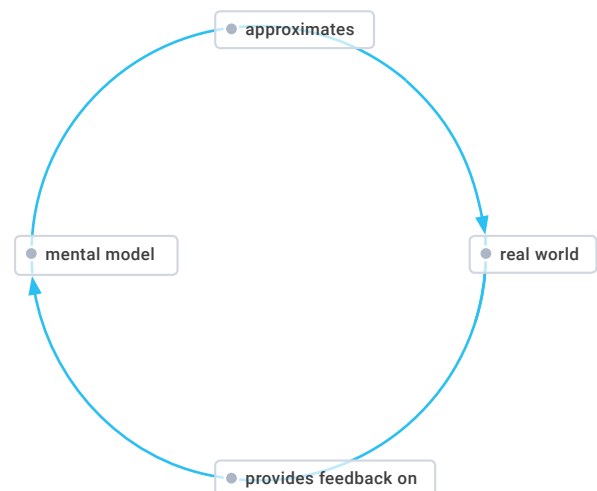
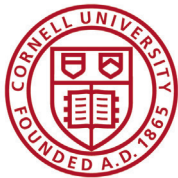


Figure 1: Thinking as a feedback cycle leads to iterative learning, design, and innovation



If we expect something to occur and it doesn't, this feedback tells us our model needs some work. Either way, we take in these new data, which can inform a continuous process of mental model improvement.

For an organization, better thinking at the individual employee level makes the difference between an adaptive learning organization that can iterate real-world solutions and a stagnant, ill-equipped institution (Figure 2).

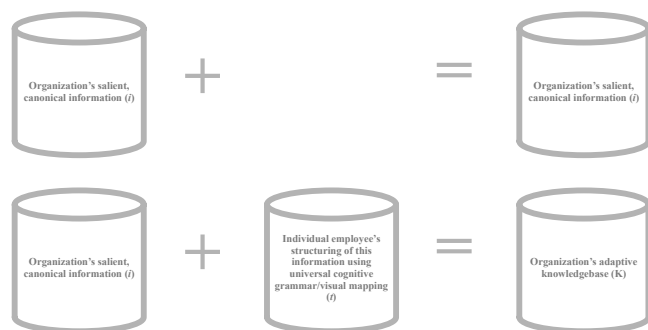


Figure 2: In corporate knowledgebases, the t-function in $K = i + t$ is often left out

Plectica Amplifies the Performance of Individuals and Teams

While there is a lot of talk about artificial intelligence, there is a need to think about how these limited forms of artificial intelligence can harness and augment human intelligence. When we utilize technology to help us visually map thinking, two things are clear:

1. We should develop tools that are built based on how human minds are wired. That is, visual and tactile, object-oriented tools and technology.
2. We should develop tools that are built based on how humans think. That is, tools that facilitate, not hinder, our adaptive cognitive abilities.

Such tools and technologies can truly harness existing human talent and augment existing human intelligence. Plectica is mapping technology that is designed in alignment with these criteria: it is a visual and tactile,

object-oriented tool based in the universal cognitive grammar of DSRP. Visual maps powered by Plectica can be used to model ANY idea, no matter how simple or complex and no matter the subject.

Applied to the organizational context, visually mapping concepts, ideas, workflows, problems, and challenges with Plectica leads to performance outcomes that allow you to OutThink, OutSync, OutDo, and OutLast your competition (Figure 3).

OutThink: Map and Improve Ideas

You can transform how you frame, design, predict and react to real-world events. Plectica helps to structure your thoughts by prompting you to use systems thinking as a robust method of interrogation to clarify, analyze, connect, and more fully understand your ideas from conception through every iteration of development.¹

The four simple, logical rules for structuring information are embedded into the functionality of the software. As you create “cards” in the software to model complex ideas, you apply DSRP cognitive theory by proxy:

1. Distinctions Rule: Each card can be distinct from other cards
2. Systems Rule: Each card can have sub-parts or be part of other cards
3. Relationships Rule: Any card can be related to any other card
4. Perspectives Rule: Any card can be a perspective on other cards

We can better understand complex problems in our VUCA world when we map them.^{2,3} We use the science of cognition and metacognition to our advantage so that we can improve ideas by breaking down existing mental models, shaping new ones, and adapting to new, changing contexts.

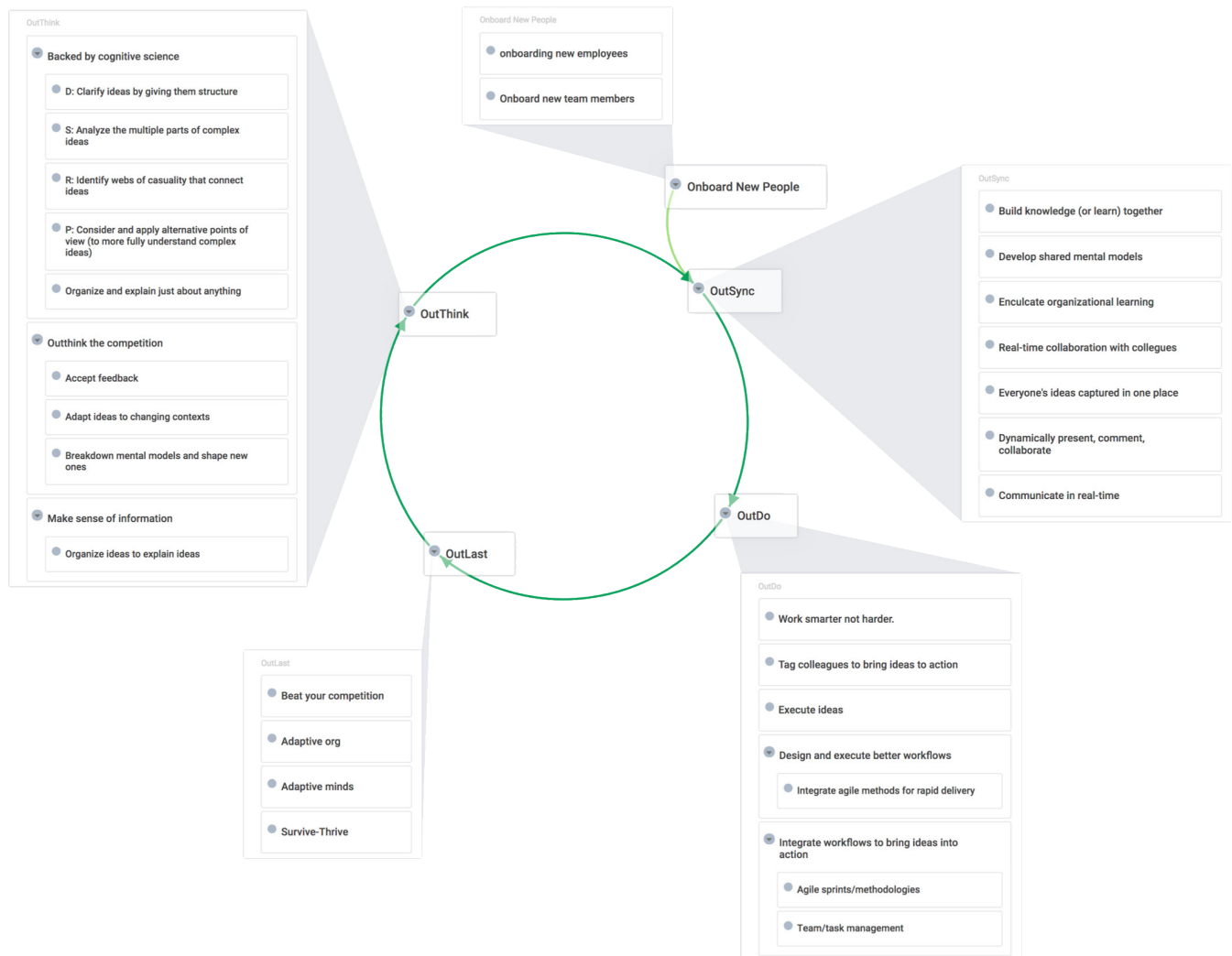
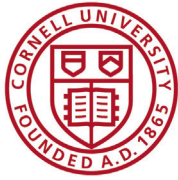


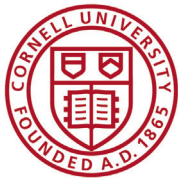
Figure 3: OutThink, OutSync, OutDo, OutLast.

OutSync: Collaborate and Share Ideas

Shared mental models across your team or organization is critically important to remaining viable in a dynamic, VUCA environment. With syncing features informed by swarm intelligence,^{4,5} synchronicity⁶ and emergent behavior,⁷ Plectica mapping technology increases the speed with which ideas evolve by providing a collaborative space to help individuals and teams adapt visual maps as new thinking or new information becomes available. Individuals and leaders can use visual maps as tools for

creating shared meeting agendas and managing the agenda of work across scale, from a single meeting to a team project to refining the company's mission. Visual maps built with Plectica facilitate communication and teamwork to ensure that everyone shares the same mental model of your work, systems, processes, and challenges.

Sharing your ideas with colleagues has a profound effect on the degree to which organizational knowledge is built, communicated, refined, captured, and distributed to increase efficiencies and effectiveness. The software's presentation mode allows you to present your ideas with



clarity and fidelity in a dynamic stepwise process that helps everyone to build the same meaning, not merely see the same information.^{8,9} You can also develop an adaptive knowledgebase within Plectica through archivable maps, content, and canonical databases. You won't have to reinvent the wheel to increase understanding across your organization. The syncing functionality and collaborative design of the software get you on the same page and keep you there.

OutDo: Align Ideas to Action

The importance of aligning our ideas to action is underscored by new understandings of human behavior and cognition. Action (what we do, how we do it, and how effective it is) is intimately tied to our mental model of the system in which we are acting. Our mental models describe, predict, and alter our behavior. When we use mapping technology backed by DSRP cognitive theory to examine and better understand our thinking, we receive feedback that verifies how well our mental models approximate the real world. We can make newfound clarity actionable by aligning it with work assignments, to-do lists and workflows.

Plectica is a mapping tool that makes it possible for you to design, execute, and integrate workflows to bring ideas into action. Your course of action is embedded in the context of a clear understanding of the systems you map. You can create individual and team tasks in context by using maps of your mental models to create and assign tasks that keep actions (how/what) closely aligned with purpose (why). Within the software, you can create tasks and assignments directly out of cards that are already part of your systems map. This simple idea ensures that what you do is never out of alignment or detached from why you are doing it.

OutLast: Adapt, Survive and Thrive

From the study of nature and evolutionary biology, we know that the survival of the fittest does not mean the survival of the strongest or most brutish.^{10,11} It means survival of the most adaptive. In our current VUCA world, the survival of individuals and organizations alike depends on the ability to learn (accept feedback, adapt mental models), and translate that learning into action.^{12,13,14}

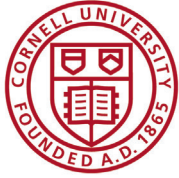
Plectica provides the means to this end:

- Adapt mental models using feedback loops that underlie all ways of thinking. Your team will thrive with a shared understanding of your concepts, ideas, workflows, problems, and challenges that reflects and engages with the dynamism of reality.
- Survive the day-to-day with an iterative, additive, agile mapping process integrated into operations management. With seamless ideation on the virtual canvas and clear steps to align those ideas with action, you can achieve goals more quickly, and more holistically with a multitude of voices.
- Thrive in the marketplace of ideas by embracing a corporate culture of organizational learning. Archive your core maps and adapt them as contexts change for embedded knowledgebases that evolve with you.

By building and sharing mental models together, you can build a strong and adaptive network of thinkers within your organization and transform your workforce into a thinkforce.

Conclusion

Plectica visual mapping software offers a powerful enterprise solution for building knowledge, cultivating adaptive teams, and delivering actionable solutions. Plectica is an innovative tech solution that allows you to collaboratively map and improve on your ideas (OutThink), share ideas (OutSync), and align your ideas with action (OutDo). With this level of adaptability, you will outlast your competition.



End Notes

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