Thriving not surviving

How resilience thinking will help you succeed as the world around you changes

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STM Week 2017: The Future of Publishing
Our organisations are part of a dynamic reality
Outline

1. What is resilience?
2. What is the relevance for Scholarly Communications?
3. What is the Adaptive Cycle?
4. What does this mean for organisations & Scholarly Communications?
1. What is Resilience?
“The capacity of a system to absorb disturbance, and still retain its basic function and structure”
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Complex adaptive systems have...

1) Feedback loops

2) Thresholds
A system’s ability to respond depends on diversity
2. How does this relate to Scholarly Communications?
The Scholarly Communication Ecosystem
3. What is the Adaptive Cycle?
The Adaptive Cycle

- Weak structures
- High activity
- Short timeframes

Rapid Growth

- Innovation
- New ideas
- New ways of working

Conservation

- Slower growth
- Process
- Structure
- Rigidity

Reorganisation

- Process unravels
- Unpredictable change

Release
The Adaptive Cycle

The Fore Loop
- Rapid Growth
- Conservation

The Back Loop
- Reorganisation
- Release

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The “Late Conservation Stage”:

- Increases in efficiencies
- Increased command and control
- A preoccupation with process
- One-size-fits-all solutions
- Subsidies not to change rather than to change
- Less support for novelty or experimentation
- More “sunk cost” effects
4. What does this mean for Scholarly Communications?
A resilient system has:

- **Diversity** – of entities and responses
- **Modularity** – interconnected, but not overconnected
- **Tight feedback loops** – change is picked up on quickly
The Scholarly Communication Ecosystem

- Universities
- Librarians
- Publishers
- Researchers
- Start-ups
- Platforms
- Funders
“The capacity of a system to absorb disturbance, and still retain its basic function and structure”
• Prioritise diversity, innovation, learning, and adaptation
• Reengineer constantly
• Recruit the right staff to help you
• Change before you have to
Resilience is not necessarily a good thing
• What does “Resilience Thinking” mean for how we approach change in Scholarly Communications?

• How resilient is your organisation?

• Where is it in the Adaptive Cycle? And what forces are holding it there?

• What does it need to focus on to increase its capability for resilience?
Questions?
Further reading:


• Podcast/recorded lecture of Professor Brian Walker – email me if you would like a copy (Isabel.Thompson@StoneAndRiver.com)

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