

Discipline

Systemic design

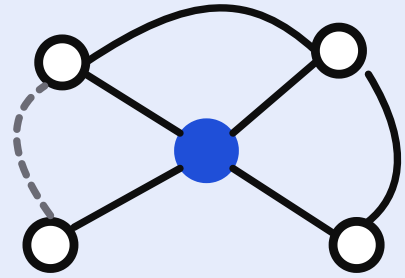
Combines systems thinking with human-centered design to understand complex systems with many actors, such as health care or transportation, and intervene in them.

In Spanish

Diseño sistémico

Origin

Banathy (1996); Jones (2014)



What it deals with

Many problems have no single cause or owner: fixing one part of the system can make another worse.

Principles

See the system

Map actors, relationships and loops.

Widen the boundaries

Include those affected by the problem, even if they are not customers.

Leverage points

Look for where a small change moves a lot.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Draw the whole system before proposing a solution.

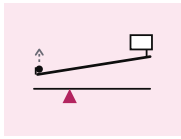
✗ Avoid

Treating a complex problem as solved with a single product or service.

👁 Don't fall for it

In a system, every solution has side effects: look for them.

Models

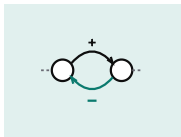


Model

Leverage points

The places in a system where a small change can produce a big effect, from shallowest to deepest.

Methods and tools



Method

Causal loop diagram

A map of arrows that shows how some things push others until they form circles.



Method

Ecosystem map

Drawing all the actors in a service and what they exchange, to see the whole system.

Connections

Builds on

■ Four orders of design

Related to

■ Design for policy

■ Service design

■ Transition design

■ Organizational design

■ Regenerative design

■ Sustainable design

Authors and works

1996

Béla H. Banathy

Proposed designing social systems, not just objects.

2014

Peter H. Jones

Set out principles of systemic design for complex social systems.

Sources

Original sources

- Banathy, B. H. (1996). Designing social systems in a changing world. Plenum Press.
- Jones, P. H. (2014). Systemic design principles for complex social systems. In G. S. Metcalf (Ed.), Social systems and design (pp. 91–128). Springer. [View source \(https://doi.org/10.1007/978-4-431-54478-4_4\)](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-4-431-54478-4_4)

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