

Ecology^{of} Care



COPENHAGEN 2016

A call to world changers, from *an Ecology of Care* (EoC)

Why an ecology of Care? What's the problem?

An Ecology of Care (EoC) starts with a view that the world that we have made through our ability to imagine and within which people have adapted and exist today is now exhibiting signs of taking us places that we did not imagine. This is plainly evident on a global scale in terms of severe environmental impacts, unchecked resource depletion, continuous habitat degradation, and increasingly acute exposure to natural phenomena – not to mention the unexplored long-term effects of the many technologies that surround us in every aspect of modern life. These are the unintentional side effects of a technological – ecological imbalance. The Ecology of Care project begins to address this unintentionally careless imbalance by considering the full ecological relations – people/planet/things (plus the many species of technology that have evolved with human help)

What do the terms and the concept mean?

The EoC project draws its meaning from the broader, original concept of Ecology as referring to home (*Oikos*) and from philosophical origins referring to people in the act of *Being* as Care¹.

This conceptual base provides the platform for the development of a field of study that we call an *Ecology of Care* – and it provides various flow-on activities in terms of pedagogical interactions (Care Studies), consultation services (Care Counsel) and wide ranging research activities across many, if not all, disciplines (Care Review). These are the outputs of an Ecological view of Care as a means of addressing many of the socio-technical imbalances at the core of many societal and ecological problems today. An EoC perspective provides a platform for addressing these problems from multi-disciplinary perspectives focussed on problem-based projects with industry partners. This approach also just happens to be rich in opportunity for economic and social gains as we move inexorably towards more virtual service and knowledge based economies.

An Ecology of Care offers a new way forward in a world short on new ideas for responsible change

¹ Care or the German *Sorge* is the term used by Martin Heidegger and others in referring to humans in the process of Being



Ecology of Care as a field of study, research and positive actions

In February 2015 a symposium was held in Copenhagen attended by 20 representatives of 15 different fields from 7 countries. The topic of the symposium was simple – Reform the notion of Care. After discussion, this group unanimously agreed that the conceptualisation of an Ecology of Care as proposed and discussed constituted a new field of study which they were prepared to participate in further and support in terms of ongoing activities. This event has provided the foundations for the congress to be held in November 2016. Experts at this next event will be drawn from many diverse fields and will be invited to present their ideas for how an Ecology of Care might be applied in their industry. They will be asked to formulate and present conceptual scenarios for the practical implementation of an *Ecology of Care* in their field in a way that can be discussed and further developed or applied by the invited audience in all of their differing fields of interest. In this way, EoC theoretical foundations can grow and evolve organically. These two foundational events provide a springboard for sequential gatherings (conferences or other events) through which we can develop the theoretical understandings of an *Ecology of Care* from multiple perspectives alongside the learning to be gained from practical application of the theory across many fields in real world scenarios.

This is a healthy way to grow a field of study that holds human-to-technological balance as its key objective.

Care in academia

We want to build an Ecology of Care as a field of study and research located where multi-disciplinary themes focussed on problem-based projects are already operating. Movements in this direction can be seen within institutions such as Human Centred Design (Brunel), Design Thinking (Stanford), Innovation Design Engineering (RCA/Imperial College) to name just a few evolving from Faculties of Engineering and/or Technology but not excluding contributions from Humanities and Health sciences.

Care in industry

Two of the world's leading Engineering and Health brands have already expressed interest in collaborations that will move an *Ecology of Care* forward within specific projects.

Arup Engineering is a global company (one of the most successful of its kind) with over 11,000 staff based in 83 offices across 38 countries. Discussions with Arup's Strategic Foresight group in the UK and Europe are underway that will explore the role of an *Ecology of Care* in shaping the company's organisational culture as well as a part of the training and staff development programs within Arup University.

The Mayo Clinic, is the #1 hospital in the USA². It employs more than 3,800 physicians and scientists as well as 50,900 allied health staff, and spends over \$500 million a year on research. At the Mayo Clinics, Knowledge and Evaluation Research Unit they are developing projects within the field of Minimally Disruptive Medicine that will enhance health care to patient interactions. This is a project area that we see *Ecology of Care* thinking playing a harmonious and productive role.

An Ecology of Care perspective is not however, limited to these industries and we have begun talks with officers from fields as diverse as defence, entertainment, marketing, manufacturing and food

² CBS, 2015. New #1 as U.S. News & World Report ranks best hospitals. Accessed 26-07-2015, URL <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/u-s-news-and-world-report-ranks-best-hospitals/>

production who see this conceptual perspective as a way that not only offers new economic opportunities (circular economy) but as a way to ethically (read sustainably) provide services that enhance our global ecological future (resilience).

What would we like you to do - what do we need?

In order to build on the EoC platform established so far, we need to return to the beginning. We need to partner with like-minded individuals, organisations and institutions who we can work with to develop and evolve a robust range of activities within the wider field of an *Ecology of Care*. In order to move forward we need to establish models and scenarios within which we and others can see how an Ecology based on Care can help to make a better world.

What do you get out of it? Why you should do it

We need;

- World changers who take a responsible stance in their field who have something to say about how to make change for the better
- World changers that are well respected in their respective fields so that others will want to hear what they have to say
- World changers that others in the field will recognize for their expertise and stature so that subsequent actions will be easier to initiate
- World changers that want to make a lasting, significant and valuable contribution to the world that they have had the privilege of experiencing in their lifetime.

What we would like you to do

- Develop a 'position' on the Ecology of Care in your field and in particular consider how it might be received and/or implemented in practical ways
- Be prepared to speak up at the congress, to debate and discuss your ideas with the key speakers and audience to help develop a more robust picture - a scenario for a caring future
- Take part in moderated discussions with a selected but diverse audience drawn from each of the disciplines or fields represented at the congress
- The above discussions will be recorded and made available for further development.
- Position papers will be developed out of the discussion sessions and combined into an edited publication which forms the basis for further actions, conferences, projects and other means of advancing the Ecology of Care field – a copy of this publication (acknowledging your contributions) will be provided free of charge following the congress.
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Join us to (in)form an Ecology of Care 17-18 November 2016

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