Coherent Policy-making Beyond the Information Barrier

Circumventing dependence on access, classification, penetration, dissemination, property, surveillance, interpretation, disinformation, and credibility
(http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/infopol.php)

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www.uia.org

Workshop on Information in the Policy Process Project,
organized by the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development
and the World Affairs Council (San Francisco, December 1999)

UIA - Quick Overview

- Develop and manage large databases
- Non-profit research on international organization
- Largely self-financed -- cost-recovery
- Sale of information services
- Concerned with meaningful use of information
- Operates from Brussels since 1910

Prime UIA Data Sets

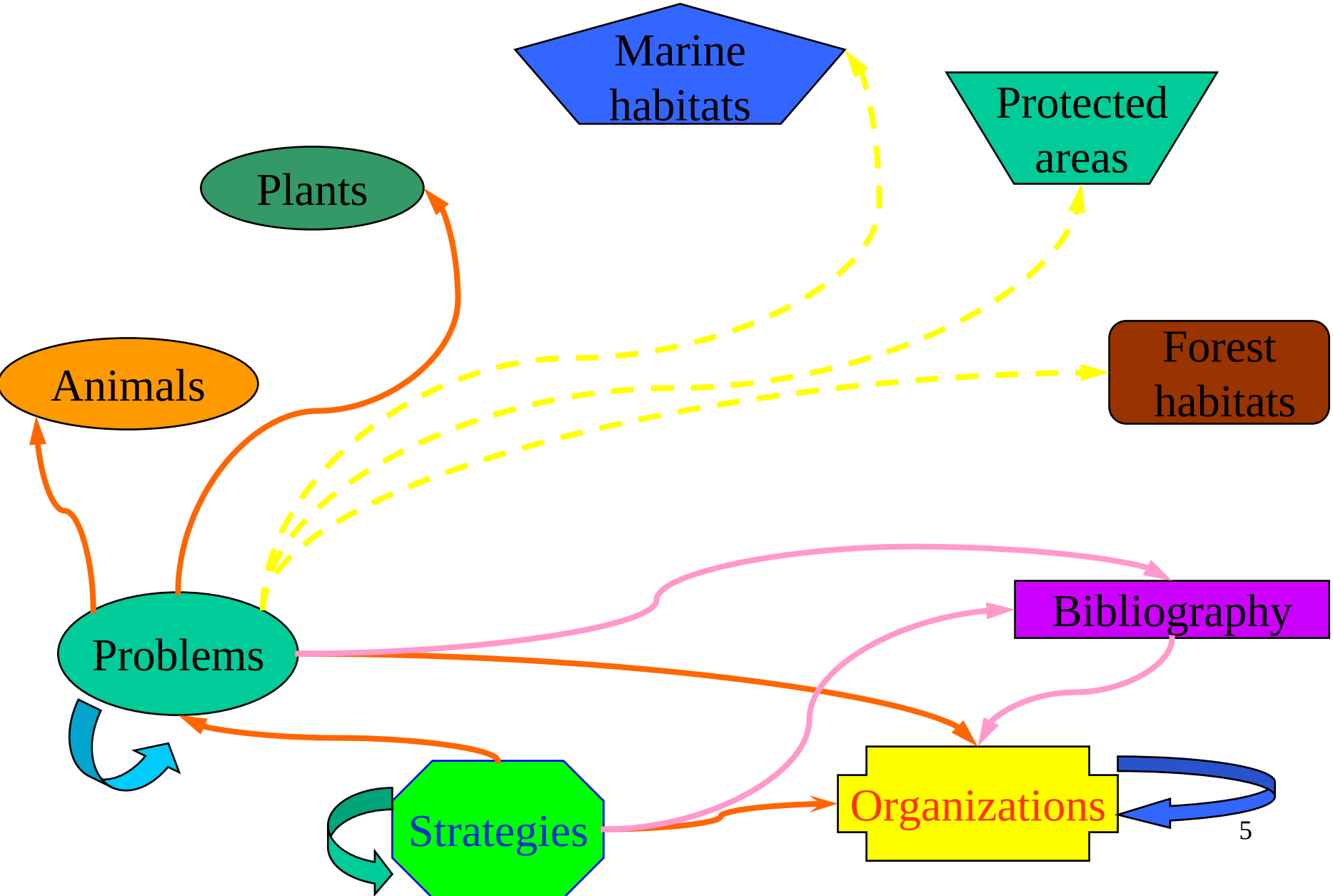
International	Profiles	(Hyper)Links
Organizations	**40,000**	**137,000**
Problems	**30,000**	**150,000**
Strategies	**38,000**	**110,000**
Meetings	**150,000**	**90,000**
Human values	**2,200**	**14,500**
Doc. Refs.	**50,000**	

Specific Products (Projects)

- Yearbook of International Organizations
  - vol 1: Profiles
  - vol 2: By country
  - vol 3: By subject
  - vol 4: Bibliographical
- Encyclopedia
  - vol 1: World Problems (also via web)
  - vol 2: Human Potential (also via web)
  - vol 3: Strategies (also via web)
- International Congress Calendar
- Who's Who in International Organizations

[more info via http://www.uia.org/]

Hyperlinking datasets between institutions

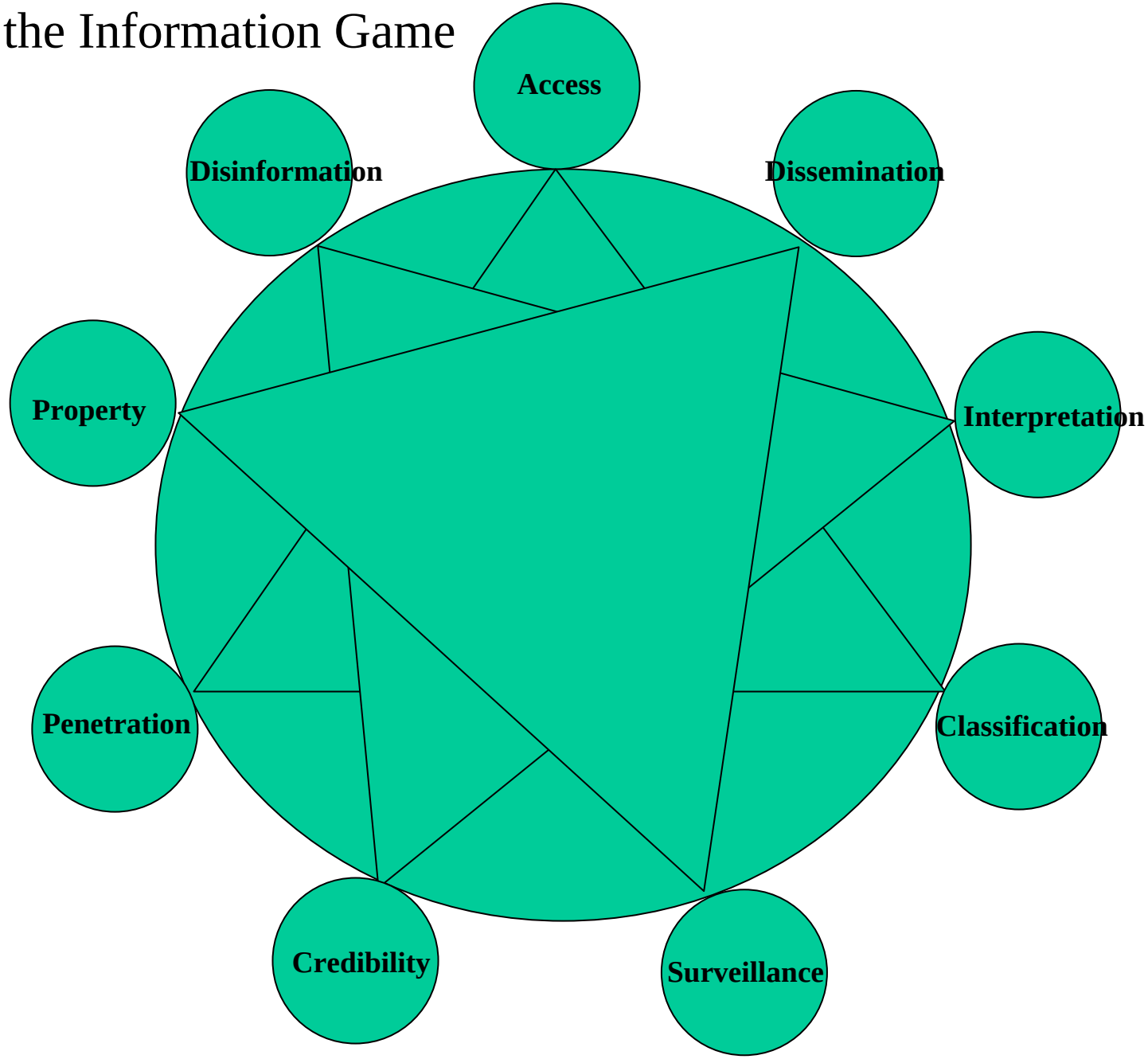


UIA Integrative Focus

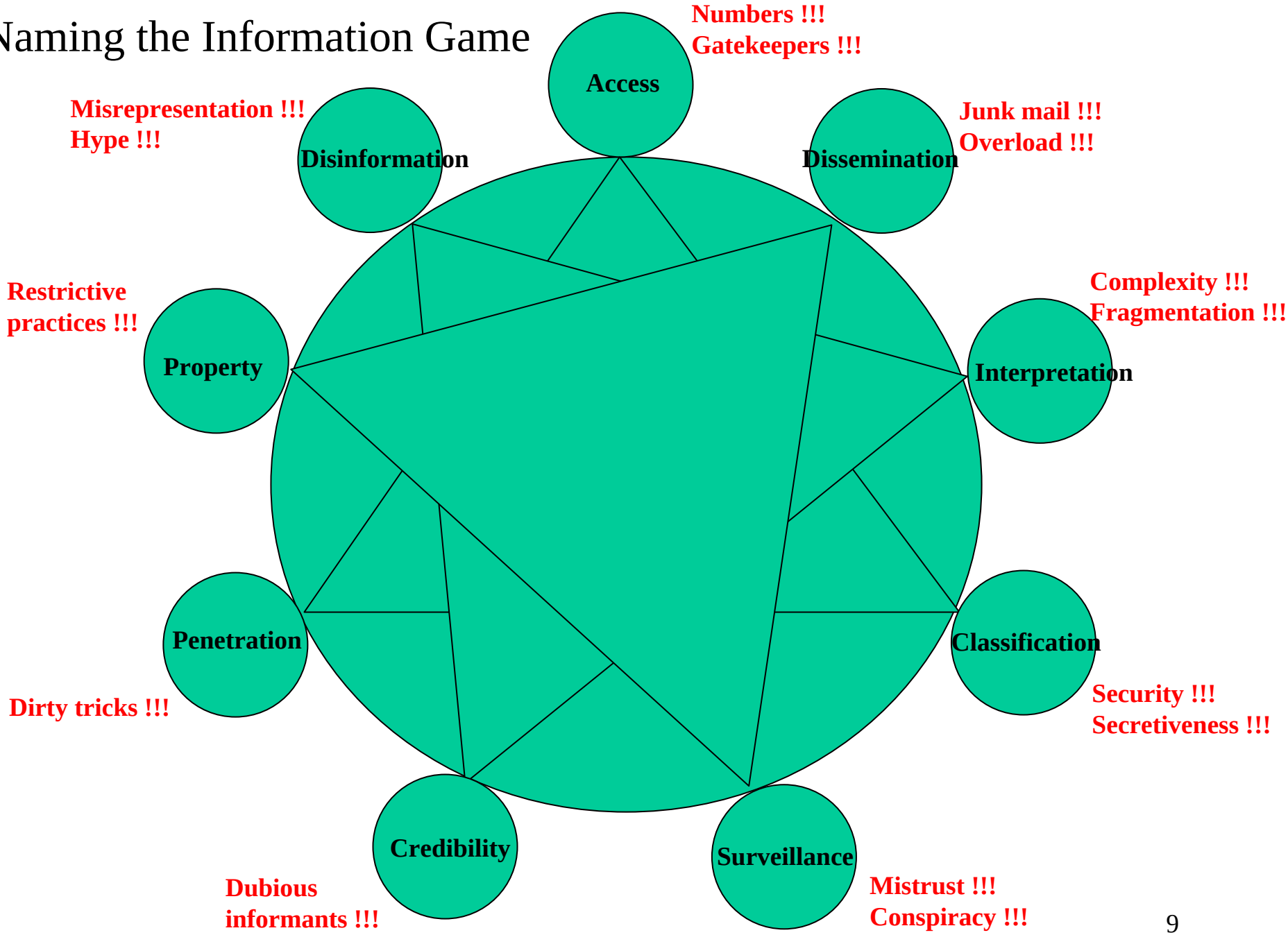
- Problems (world, regional, social, etc)
- Strategies and initiatives in response
- Responsible international organizations
- Values guiding initiatives
- Human development objectives and modes
- Bibliographical and web resources
- Comprehensibility for governance

Identifying the Information Barrier

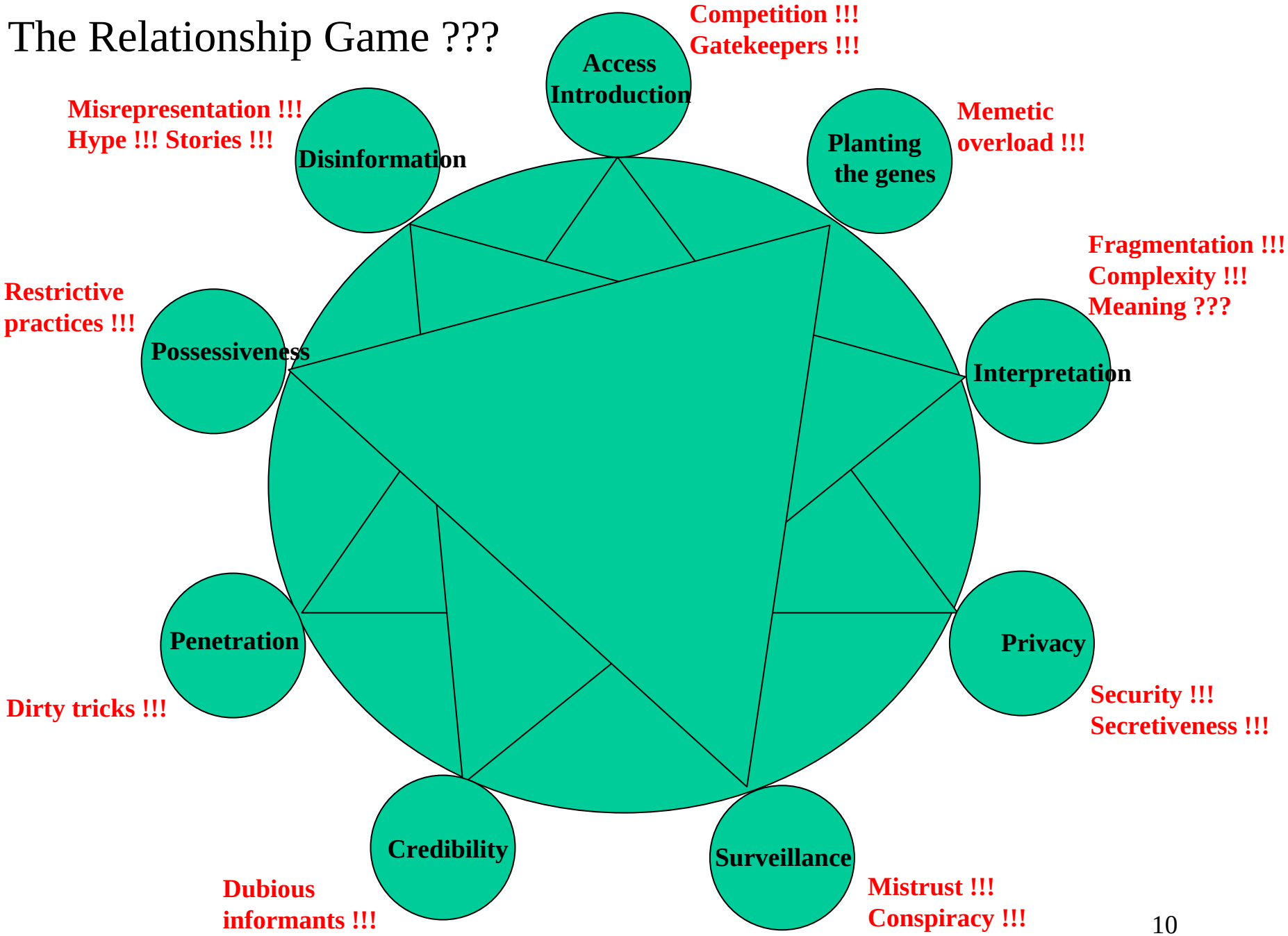
Naming the Information Game



Naming the Information Game



The Relationship Game ???



Information Policy Dilemma !!??

"User satisfaction"

=

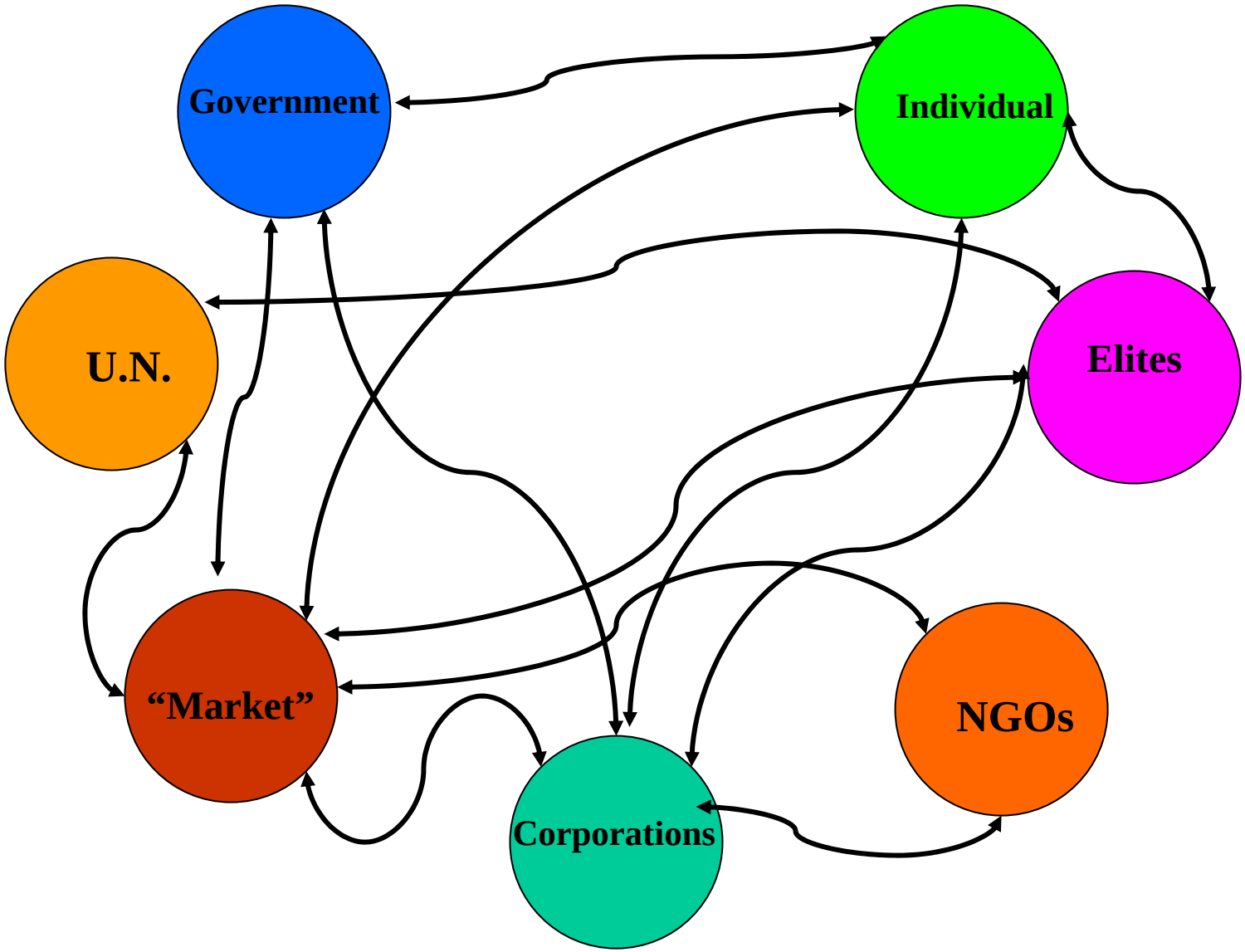
Reinforcing the pattern of denial to which we are accustomed !

=

Tunnel vision

Who Decides ?

Gang rape or Mutual seduction?



Policy-making *vs* Architecture

Architects:

- lack of attention to how real people use spaces
- failure to revisit buildings to learn from their use

[Stewart Brand. *How Buildings Learn : what happens after they're built.* Penguin, 1995]

Policy-makers:

- how do real people live with their policies ?
- are policies revisited to learn from their use ?

Possible Ways Forward

- A: More communication technology
  - infrastructure beyond “the last telephone pole”
- B: Better communication metaphors
  - remedying metaphoric impoverishment of policy
- C: Better software configuration of insight
  - patterning structural complexity in new ways
- D: Integrating “B” and “C”
  - marrying “Beauty” and the “Beast”

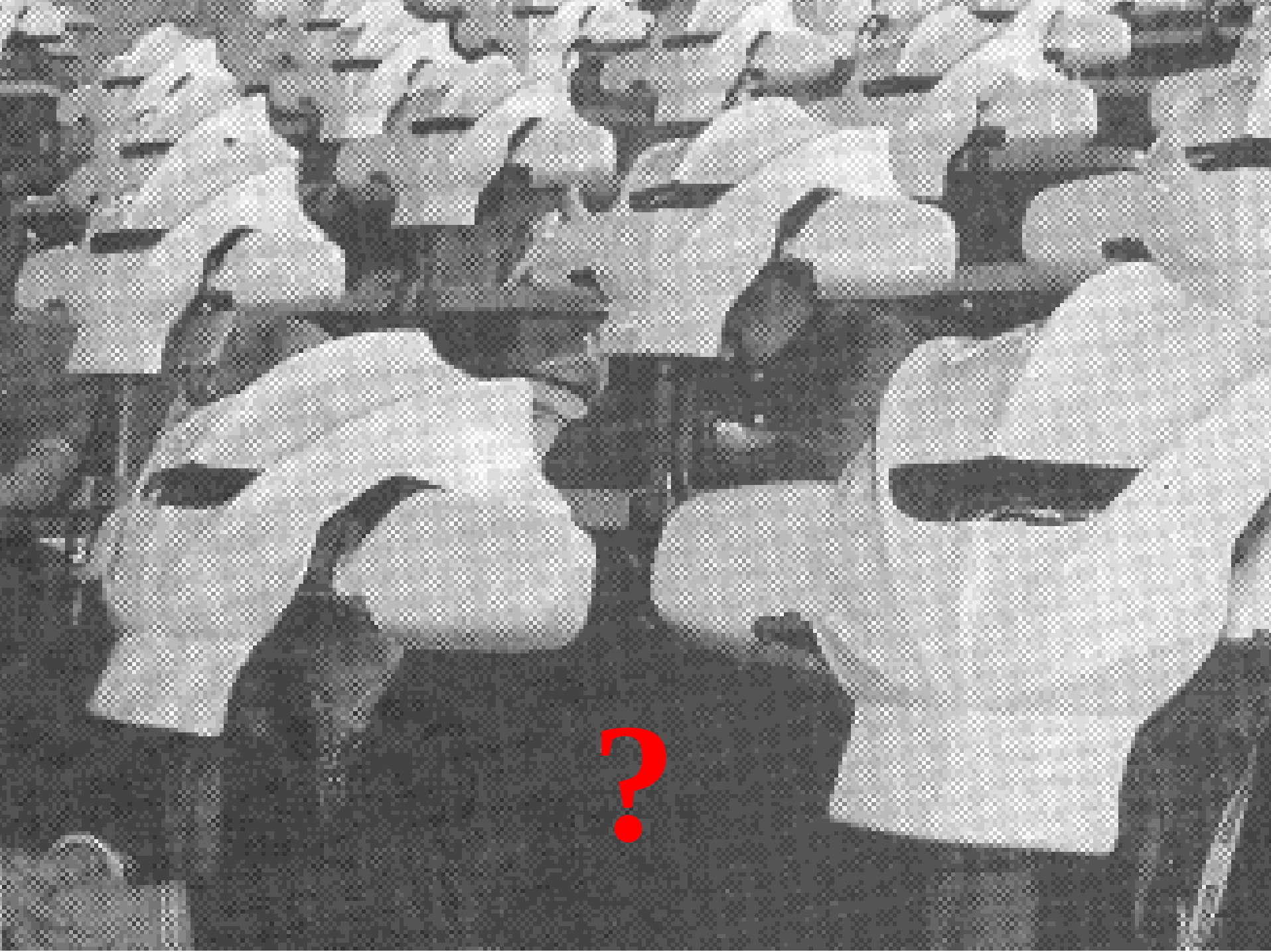
A: More communication technology

infrastructure to beyond

“the last telephone pole”

Example: electronic enhancement of “podium communication”

- Beamers
- Control of microphone use
- Restricted microphone movement
- Wall-screen (video conference)
- Controlled voting
- Electronic security



B: Better communication metaphors

remedying metaphoric impoverishment of policy in dealing with intractable differences

Crop rotation as a policy metaphor

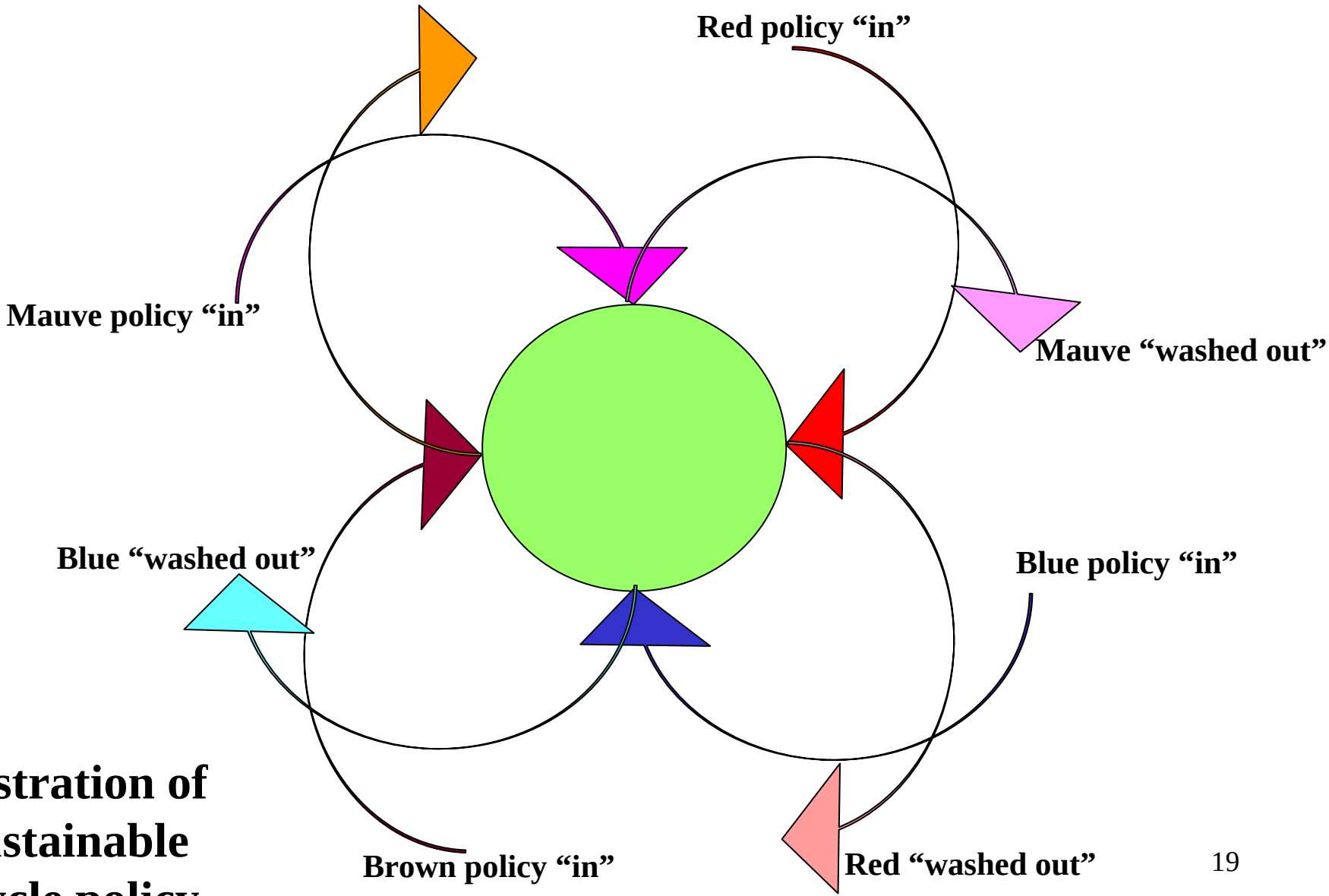
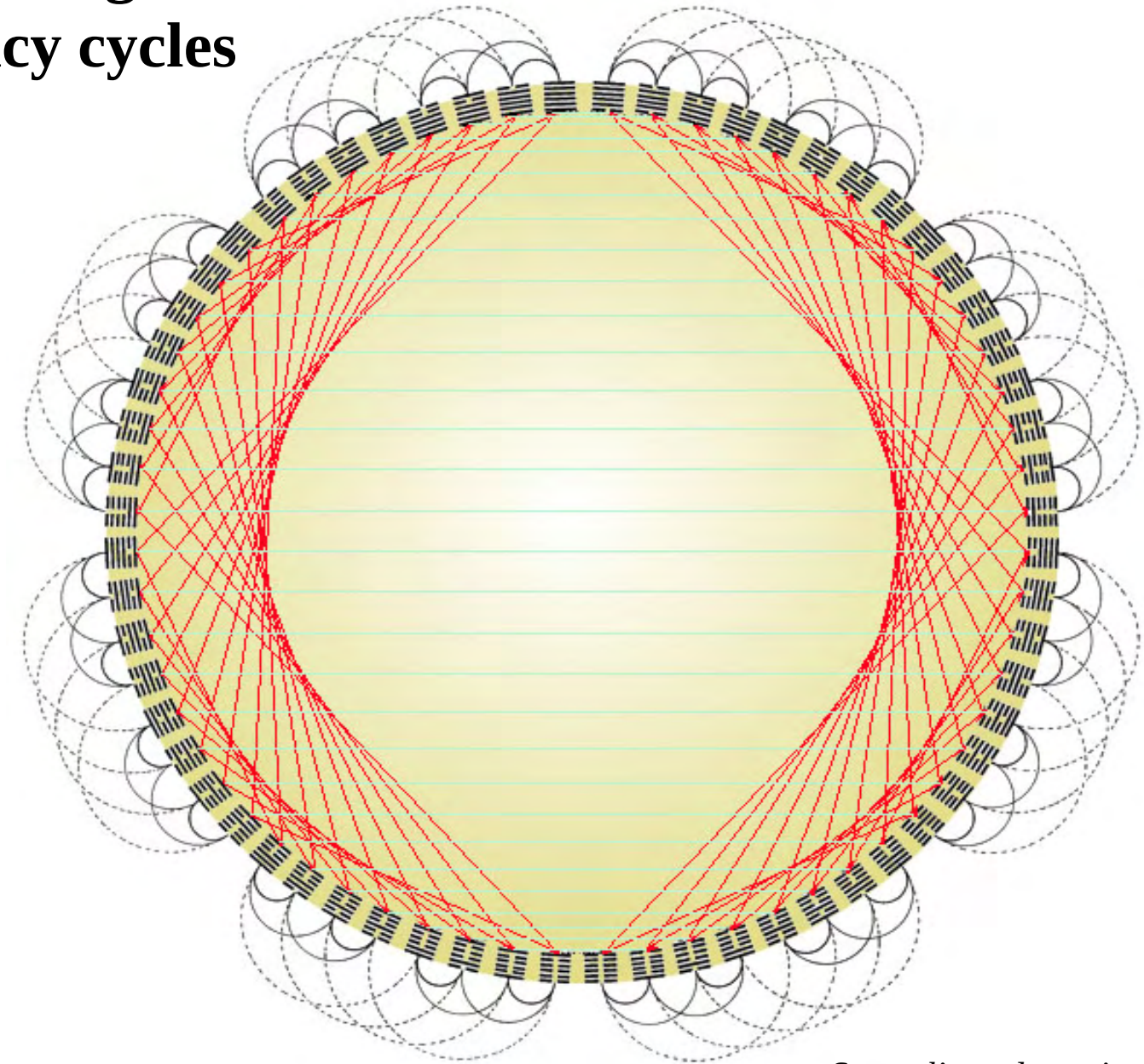


Illustration of a sustainable 4-cycle policy

Chinese insights into policy cycles



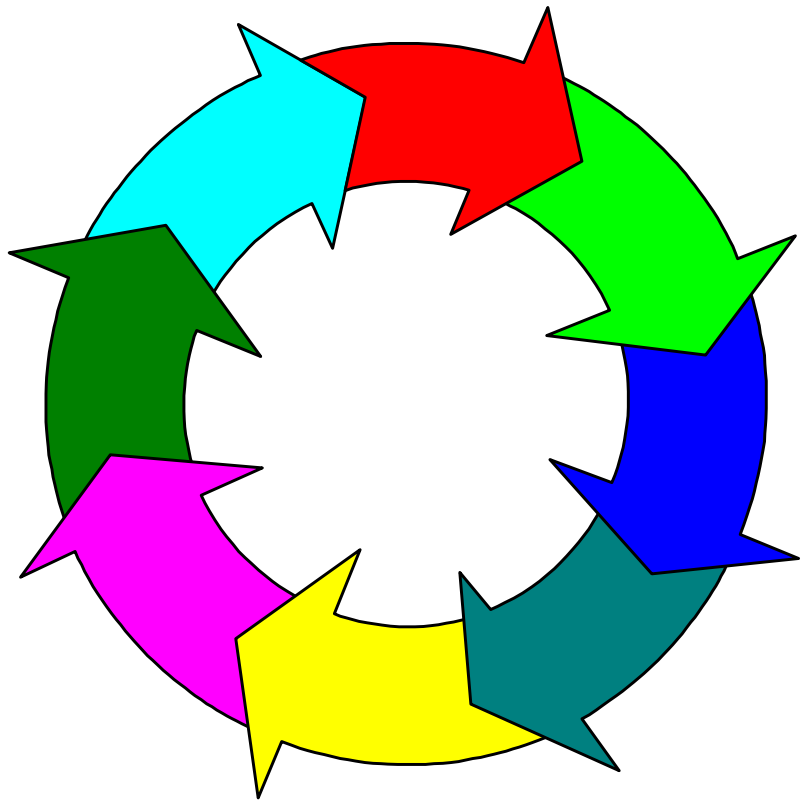
See policy adaptation / demo at:
http://www.uia.org/met/chingndx.htm

C: Better software configuration of insight

patterning structural complexity in new ways

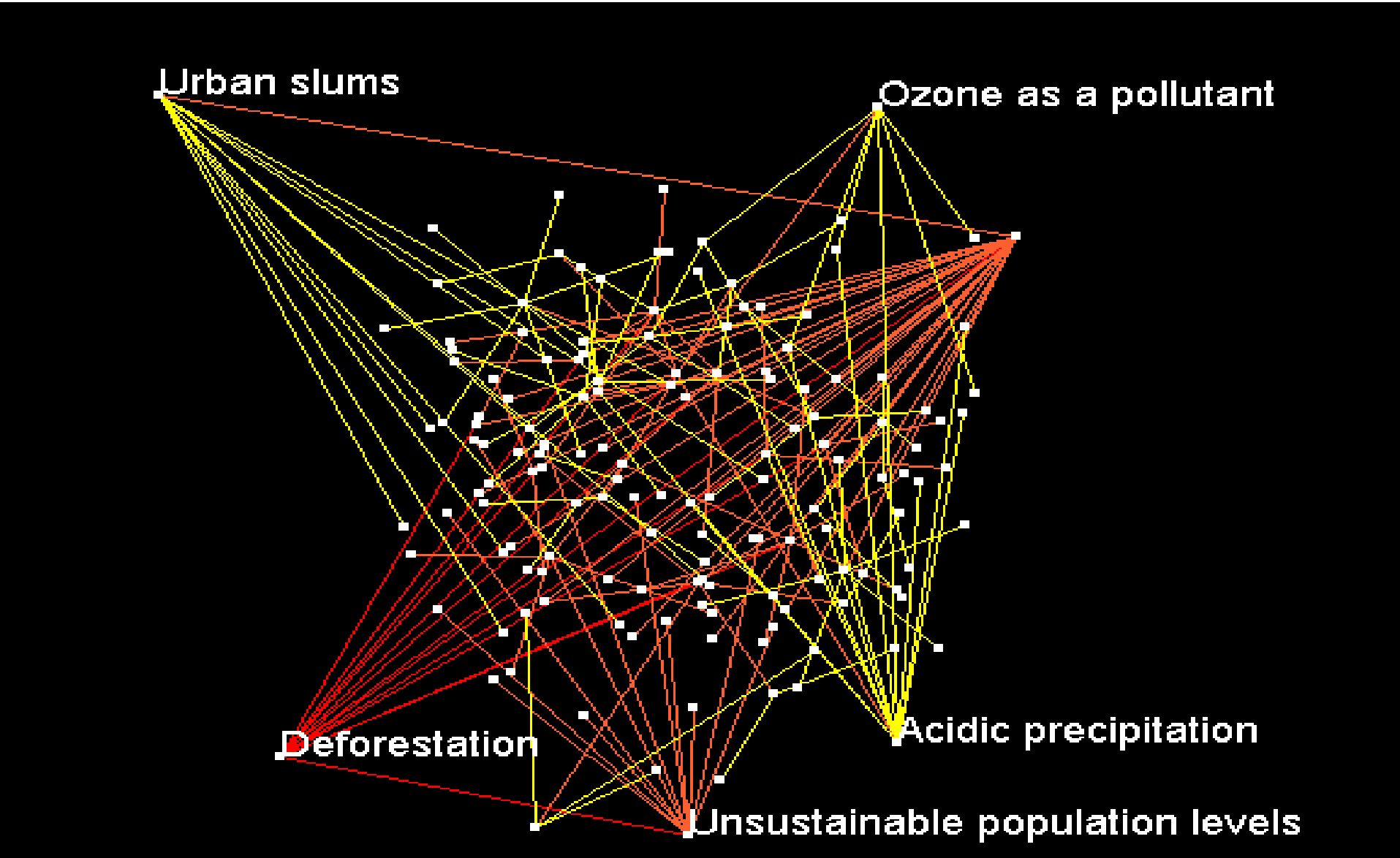
Recognizing feedback loops

- Criminal offences against the environment >>>
- Violence by fanatical environmentalists >>>
- Failure of green politics >>>
- Simplistic images of environmental protection >>>
- Failure to take account of externalities of systems >>>
- Undervaluation of nature in planning and decision-making >>>



UIA Conference mind-mapping

http://www.uia.org/data.htm



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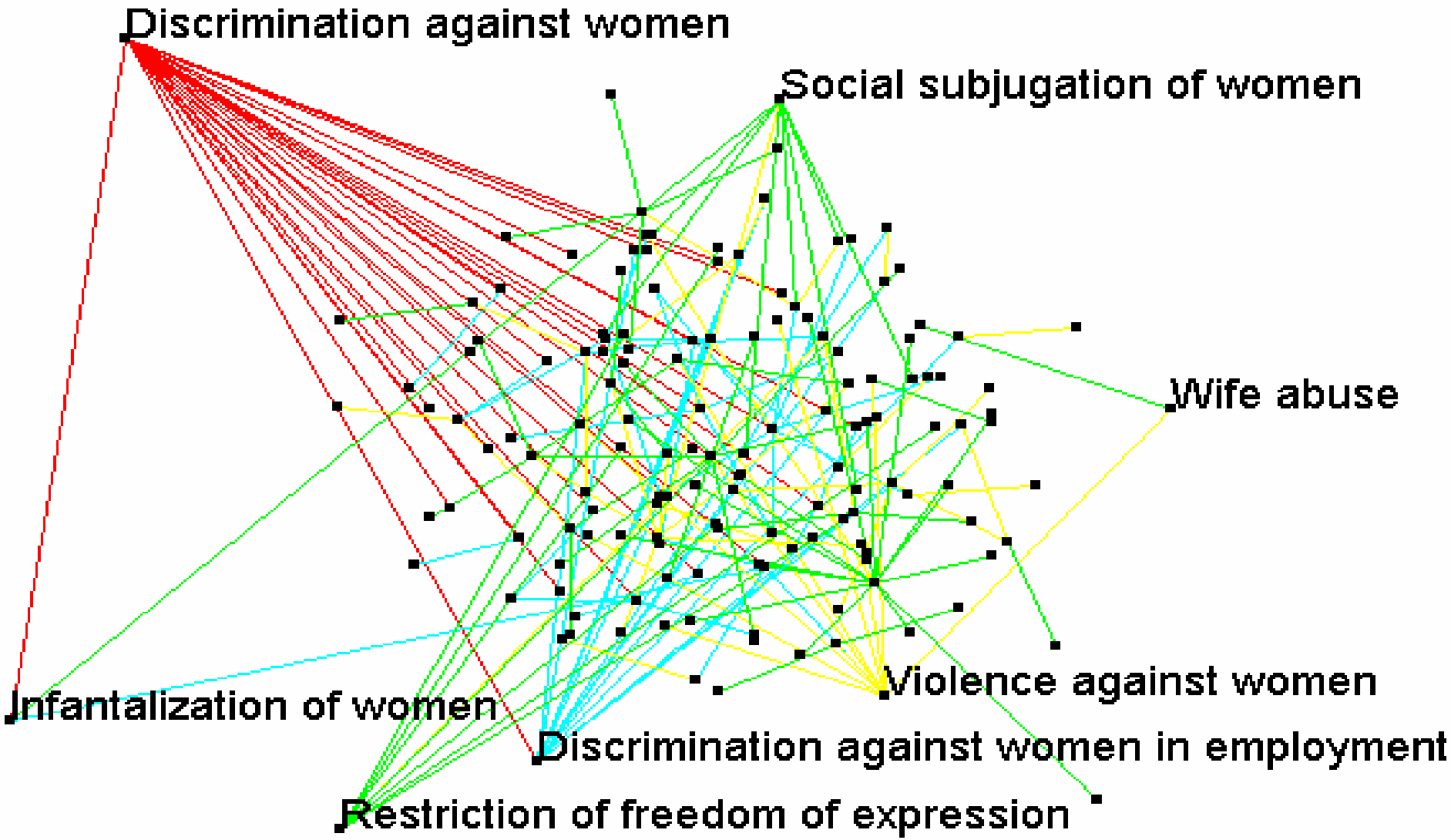
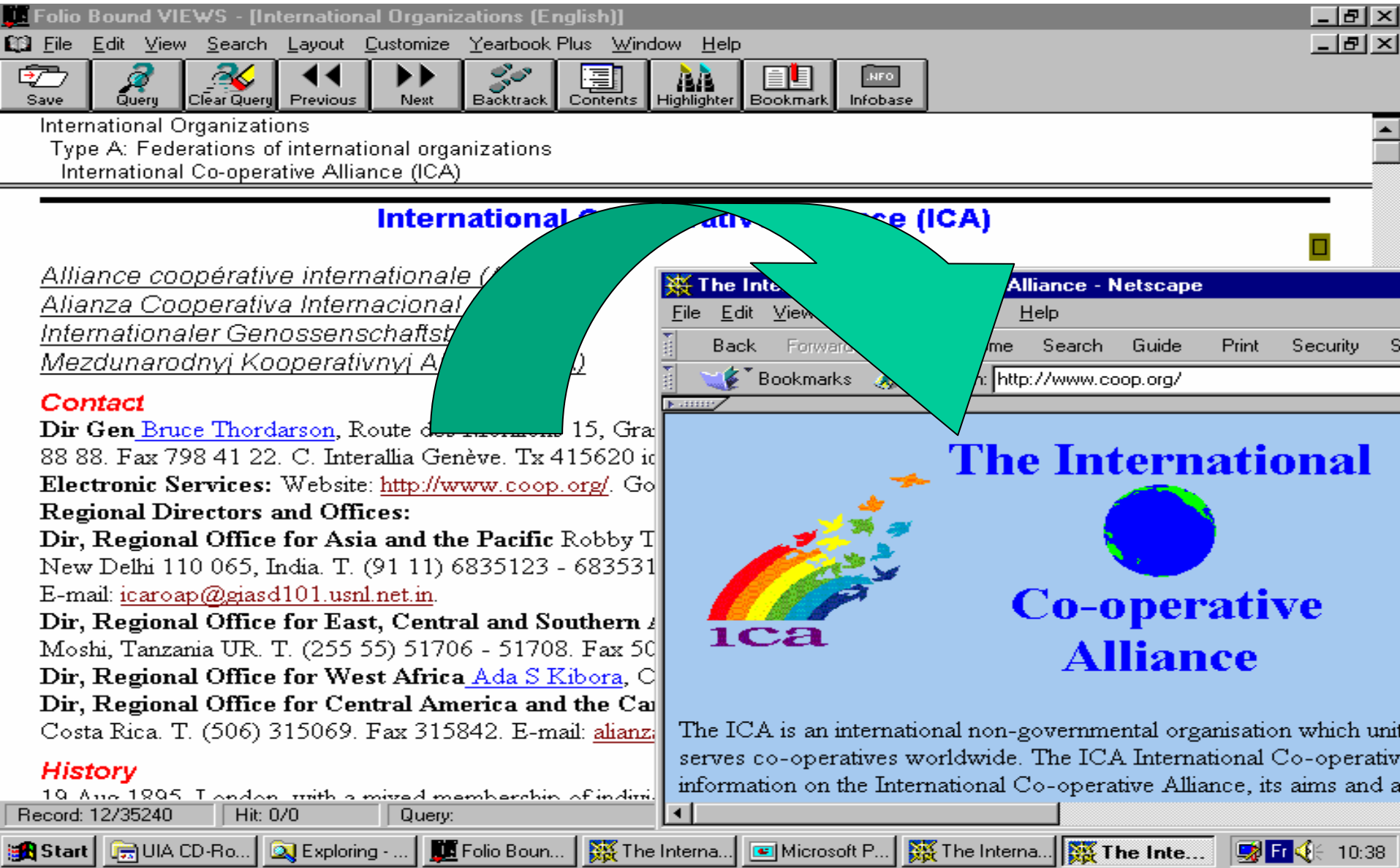
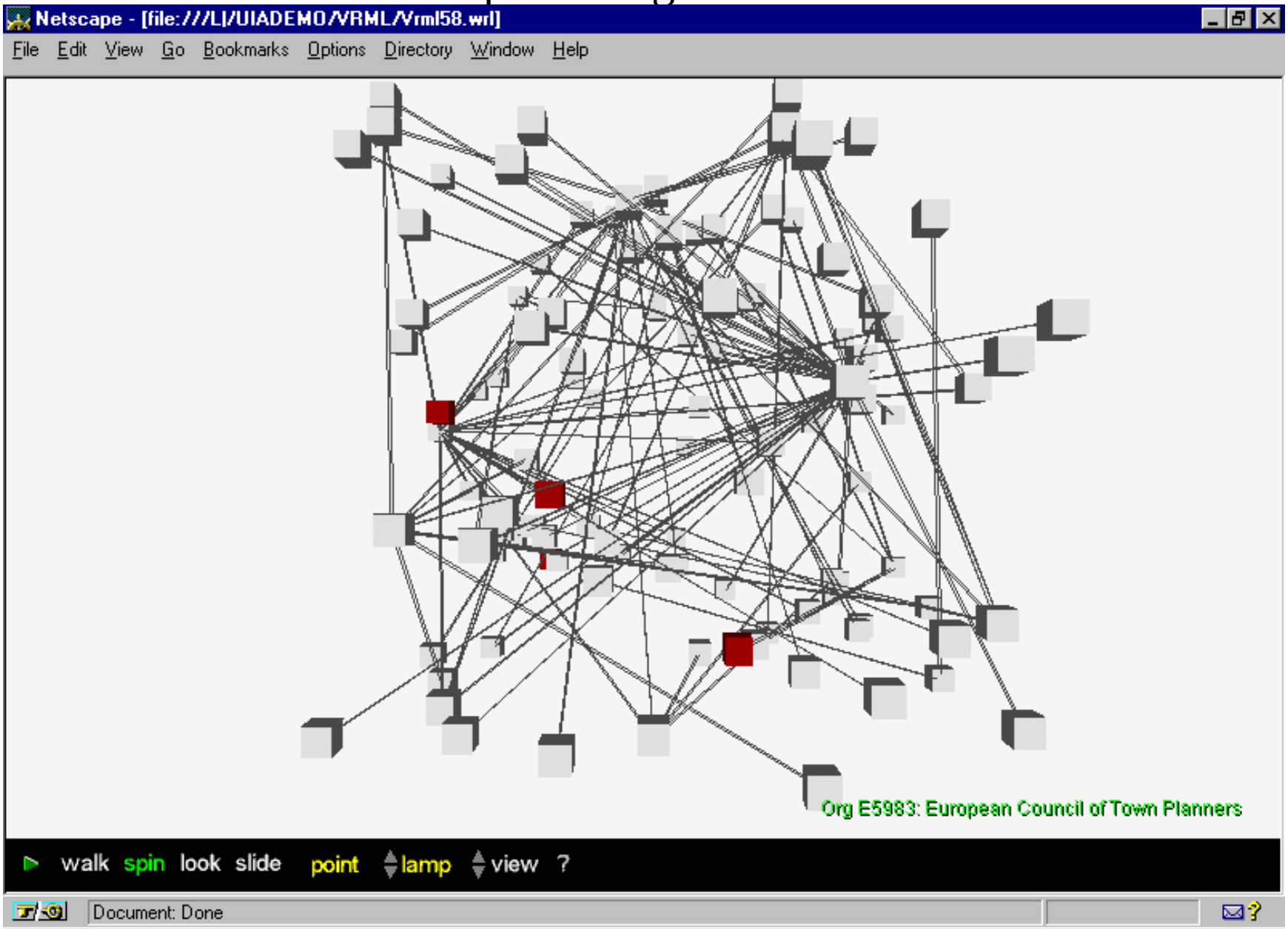


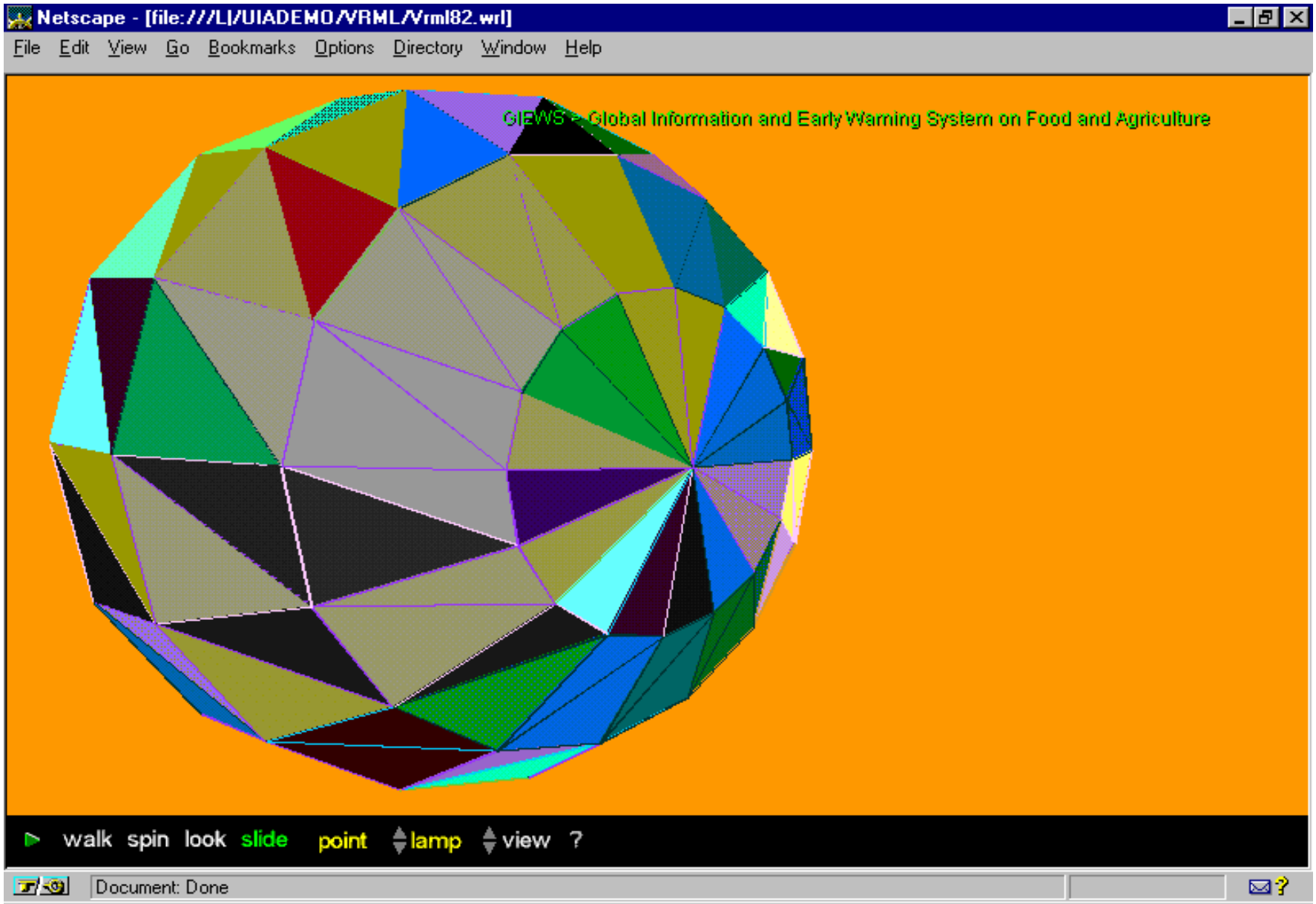
Going to an organization website



VRML Example 2: Organizations - network



VRML Example 5a: Organizations - sphere (EU system)



Virtual reality frame... - Netscape

File Edit View Go Communicator Help

Back Forward Reload Home Search Netscape Print Security Stop

Bookmarks Location: C34=YE&YP36=0&YS36=0&YC36=RA&YP49=3&YS49=0&YC49=RA&YP48=3&YS48=0&YC48=RA What's Related

Instant Message WebMail People Yellow Pages Download New & Cool Channels

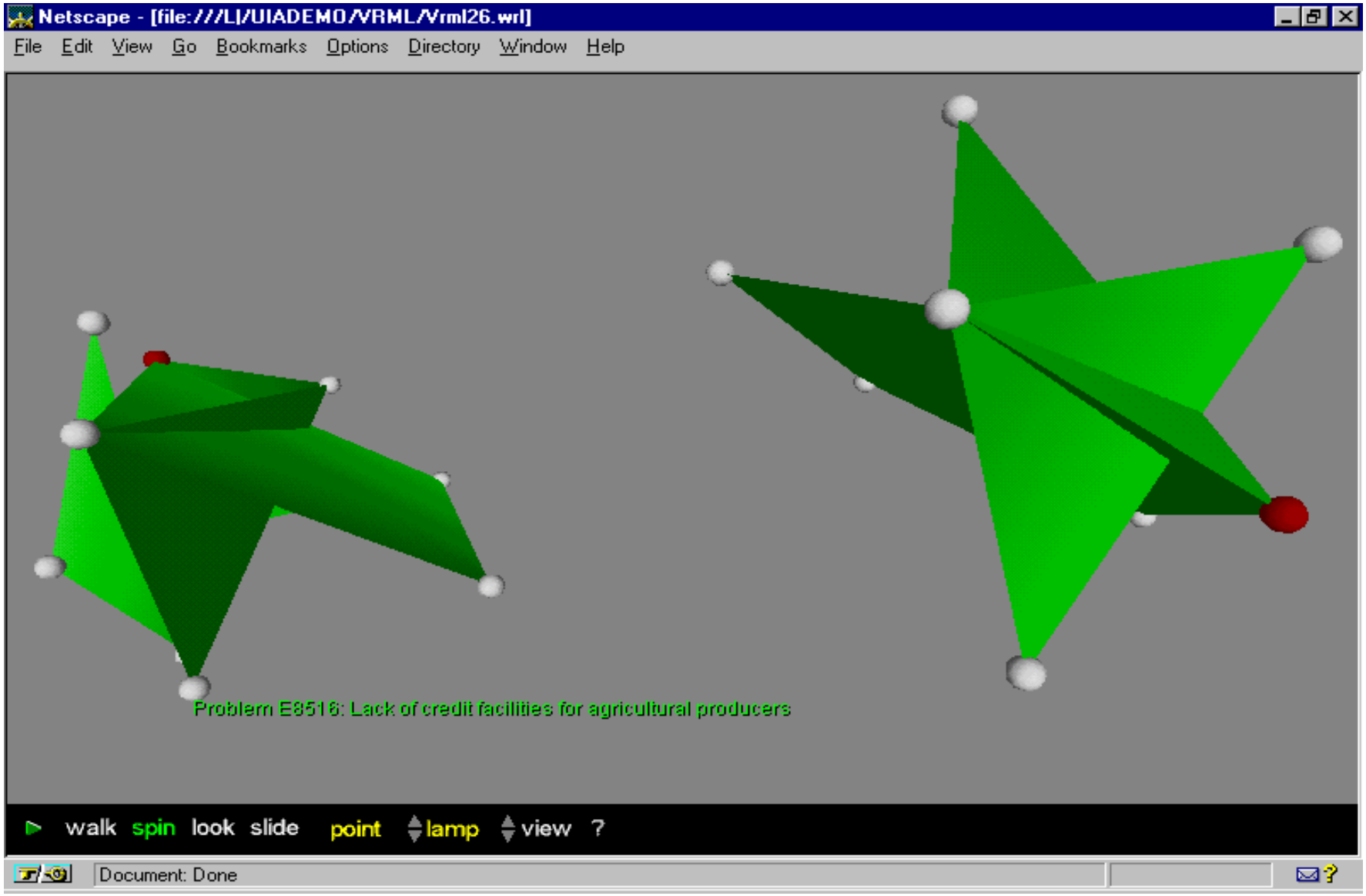
Vulnerability of marriage as an institution 34

Discrimination against women

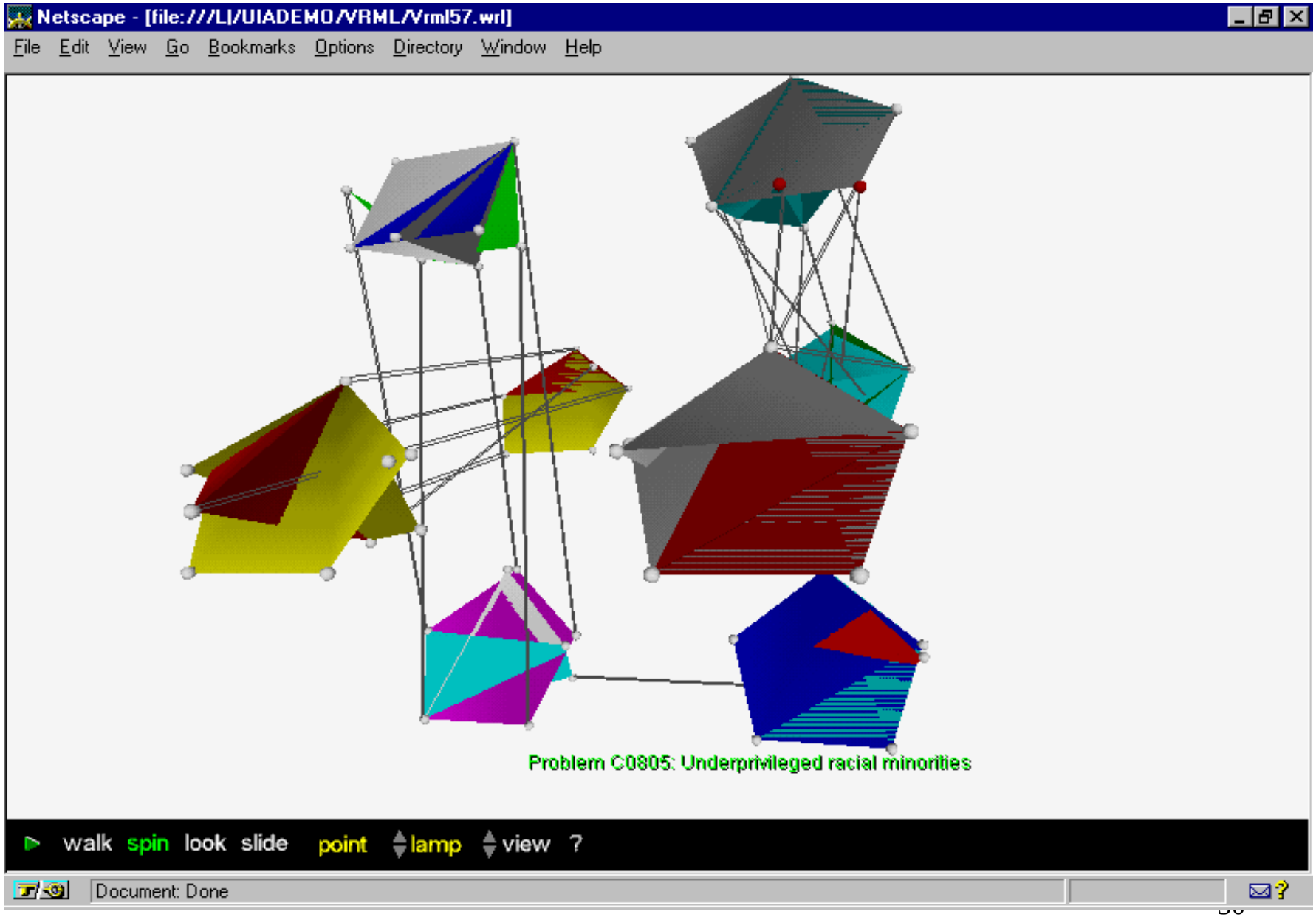
Virtual reality configuration of relationships from World Problems database (see below)

Document: Done

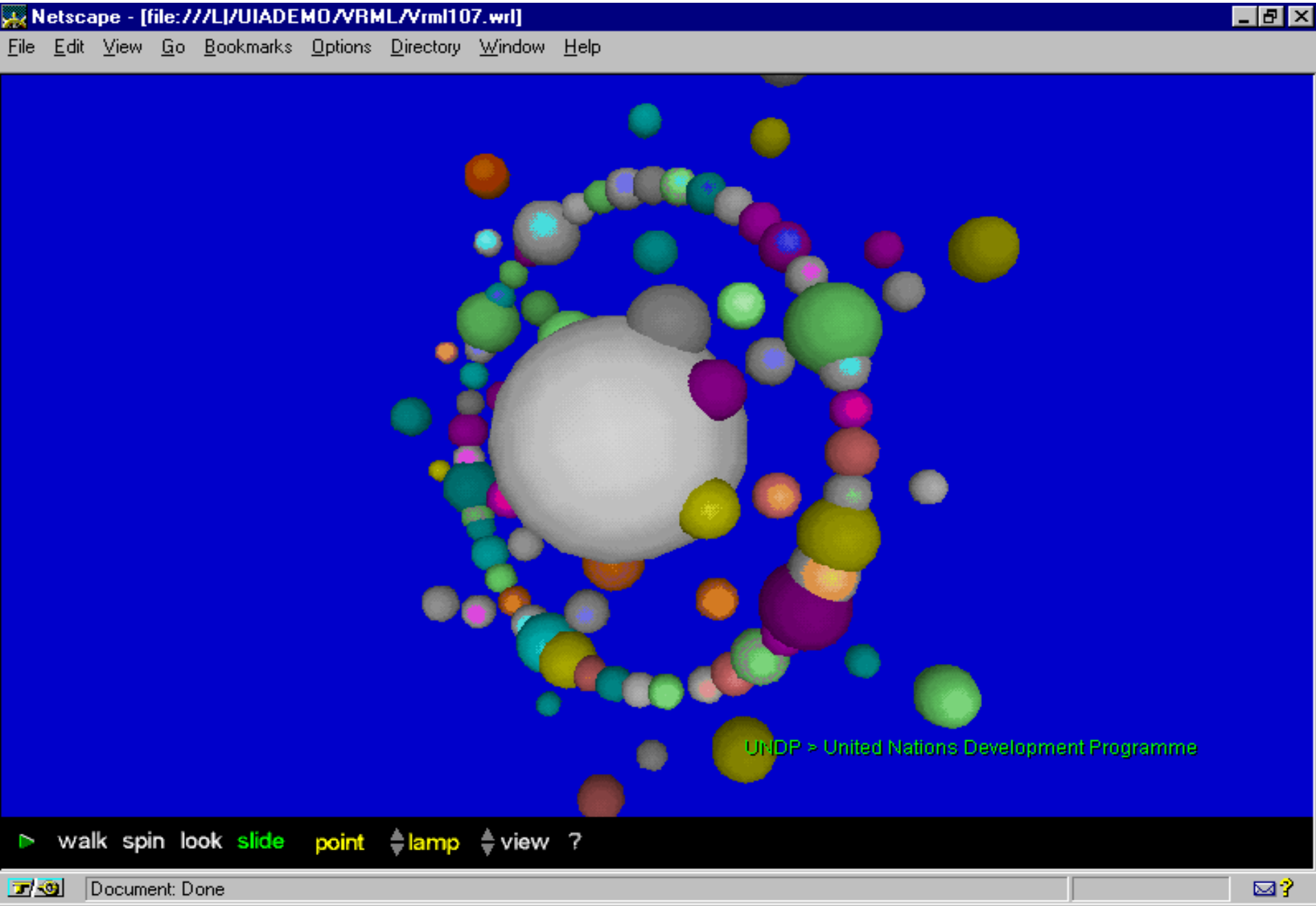
VRML Example 1: World problem loop interlocks



VRML Example 4: World problem loop interlocks



VRML Example 6: Organizations - solar (World Bank system)



UIA Paragraph Feedback - Netscape
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Your Improvements / Comments / Feedback (by paragraph)
Database: **International Meetings**

Meeting: **Annual science conference (990927-1002)**

- ○ Dates
- ○ Country
- ○ Town
- ○ International organization
- ○ National organization
- ○ Meeting name
- ○ Theme
- ○ Participant (eg 250)
- ○ Countries (eg 25)
- ○ Exhibition
- ○ Contact (international)
- ○ Contact (local)
- ○ Relevant websites
- ◉ Meeting details

Date changed to 991003-07

Your name: Anthony_Judge Your e-mail: judge@uia.be Submit Reset

See general editorial commentary for information on criteria, scope and intent of this database
E-mail general queries on the International Meetings database to calendar@uia.be

Document: Done

D: Integrating new metaphor with configurative software

marrying “Beauty” and the “Beast”

towards insight scaffolding & prosthetics

Beyond: “Active Worlds” ??

http://www.activeworlds.com/

- Home to hundreds of thousands of users and millions of kilometers of virtual territory.
- In Active Worlds you can:
  - explore over 1000 unique virtual worlds (3D “conferences” ?)
  - build your own 3D world on the Internet (own conference centre?)
  - make new contacts and chat with people from all over the world
  - play interactive 2D and 3D games
  - choose from a vast range of identities (conference roles?)
  - shop online in a 3D virtual mall
- **Future relevance to policy elaboration ???**

Gardening Knowledge !!!

- Cultivating patterns of knowledge
  - from menus to petals
- Ecologies of policies
  - conserving policy ecosystems
- Working virtually with patterns of hyperlinks
  - towards memetic engineering
- Integrating musical feedback
  - towards resonant knowledgescapes

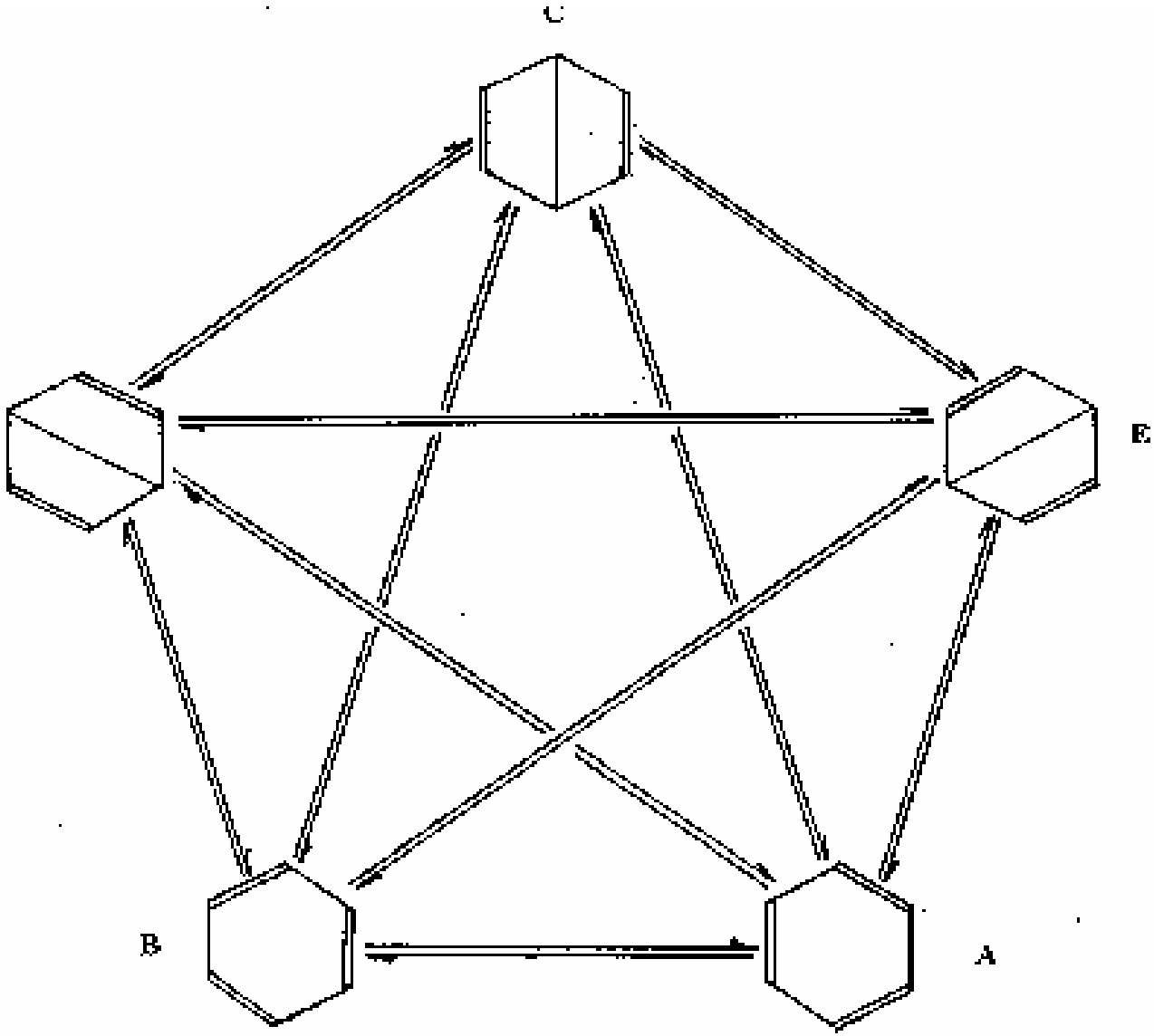
Psycho-technical challenges

- Massaging active (web) information into memorable integrative configurations
- Enabling (web) users to explore their own aesthetic/imaginative preferences in doing so
- Converting such structures into communication templates (patterning/filtering message flow)
- Converting such evolving templates into evolving policy, legal and funding structures

Beyond policy billboards !!!

- Dependence on strategic “vision” metaphor
  - **vision:** myopia, blindness, billboarditis
- Complementary metaphors
  - **sound:** hearing the voice of the people (soundscapes)
  - **touch:** touching the hearts of the people (touchscapes)
  - **smell:** policies that stink !!! (policy smellscapes)
  - **taste:** tasteless policy (policy tastescapes)
- Sound (as opposed to Vision)
  - as the metaphoric key to strategic harmony

Resonance Hybrids: Key to future sustainability ?



Future challenges -- for memorable policies with soul

- *Agenda 21* versus the *Mahabarata* (or *Dynasty* !)
- A singable *Declaration of Human Rights* to make it memorable
- *UN Charter* as a poem integrated by a pattern of resonant associations
- The set of UN Specialized Agencies as an integrated mythological pantheon