



Making Research More Usable: Notes from the Field

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Outline

- What do we mean by making research more “usable”?
- Challenging our “mental models”
- Many pathways to making research usable
- Ten steps for making your research usable

Research that is “usable” means research that is relevant, timely, trusted, and available for decisions made by others.



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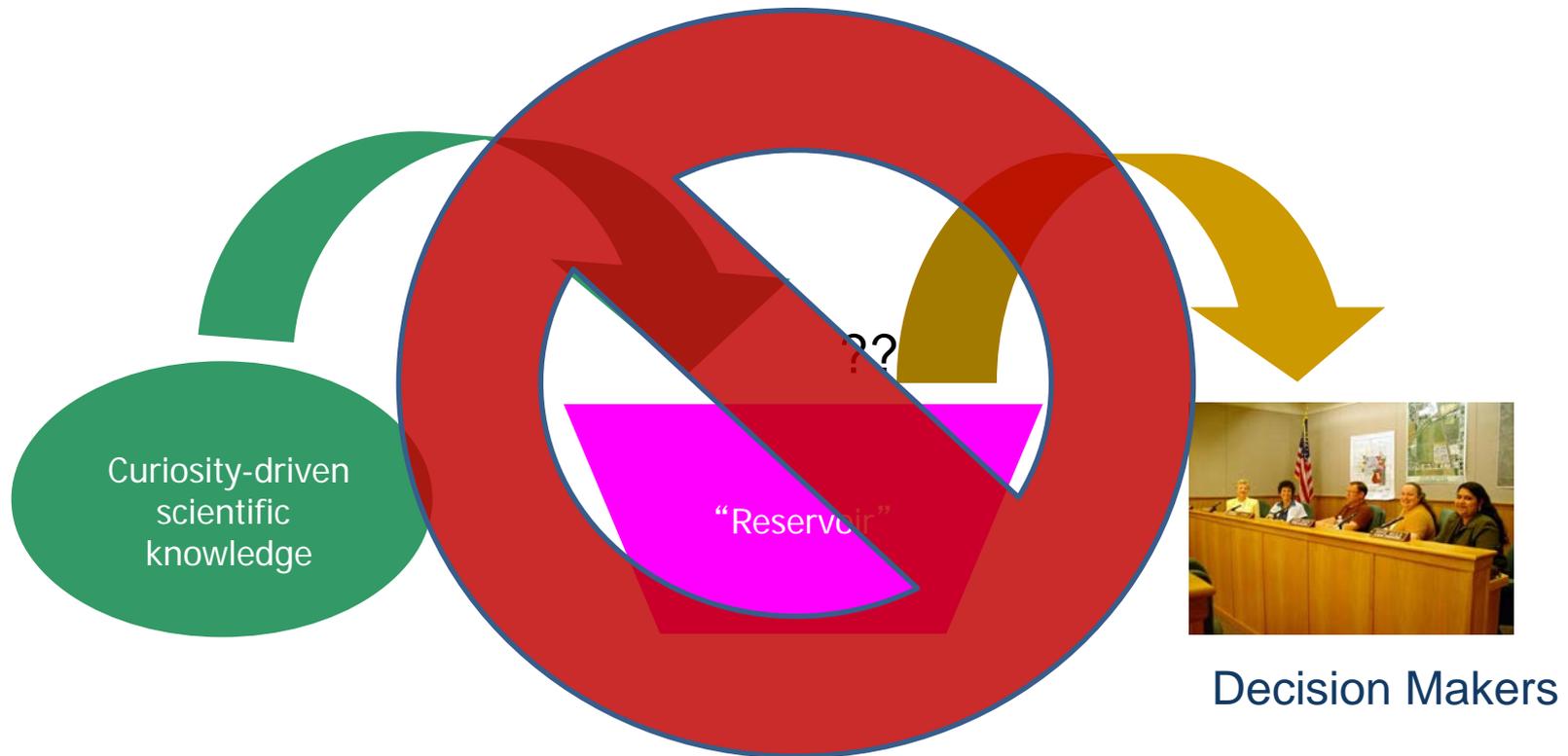


BreckPatrol

So how does research become usable?



Mental Models: The “reservoir” of knowledge



Emerging from V Bush 1945

Aka “the Loading Dock” model



Figure: Ami Nacu-Schmidt
Loading dock term: Cash et al. 2006

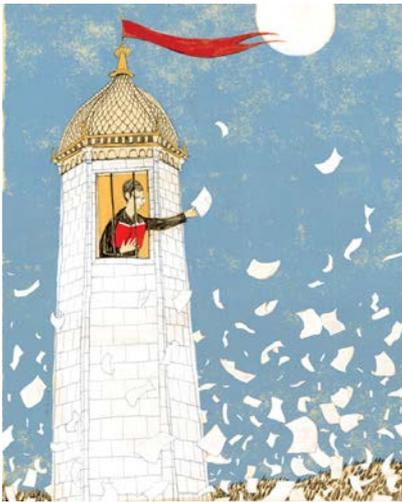
Mental Models: Not just about communication



**Making research usable means
prioritizing the decisions and
needs of those outside of
academia in choosing research
directions or dissemination
strategies.**

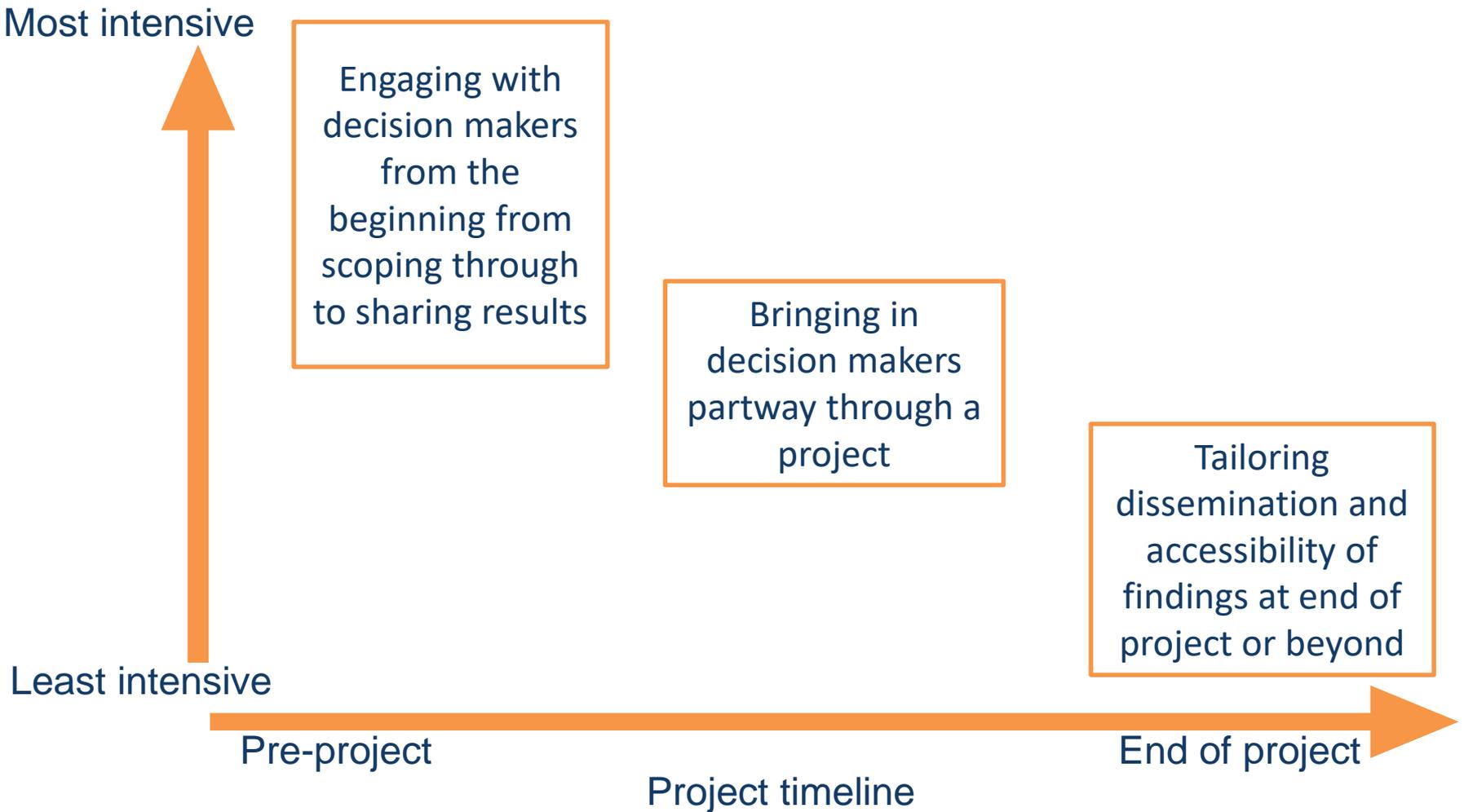
1 Takeaway: Create deliberate connections between research and the needs of decision makers!

No more....



Sue Katz

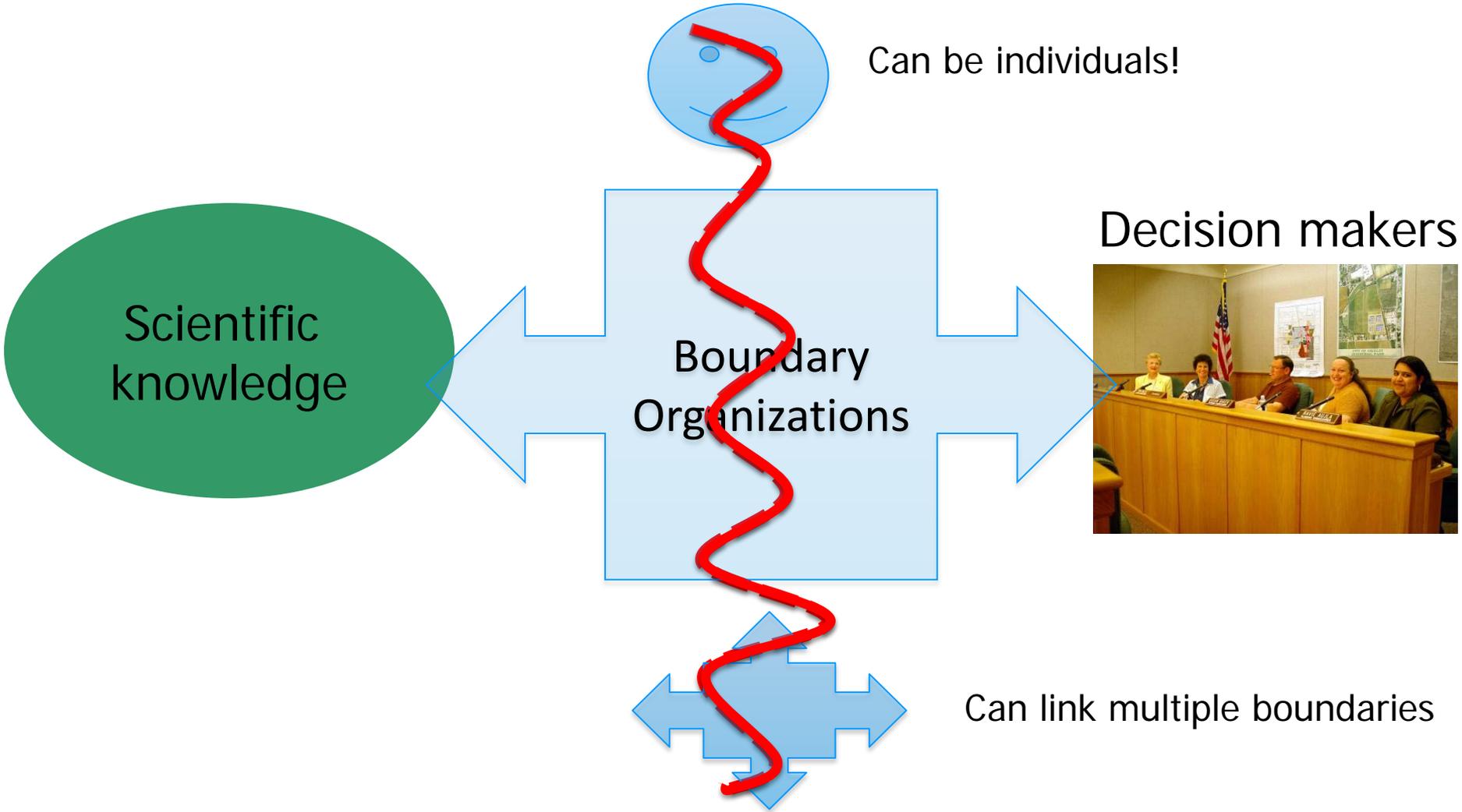
Many different pathways...



Ten Steps to Creating Usable Research

1. Identify decision makers who might benefit from your work
2. Meet with decision makers
3. Take advantage of focusing events
4. “Seed” the dialogue
5. Think about mutual goals
6. Conduct workshops with decision makers
7. Look for partners
8. Communicate your research findings in usable language and formats
9. Survey your audience
10. Dedicate time and personnel

Look for Boundary Organizations to help



Just dive in! You're in good company...

Panelists:

- Dr. Lise St. Denis, Earth Lab
- Dr. Arnaud Chulliat, National Centers for Environmental Information
- Dr. Jeff Deems, National Snow and Ice Data Center

For more info see our new usable research guide online:

https://wwa.colorado.edu/publications/reports/usable_research_guide.pdf