

# **Subject matrices: an innovative approach to serving the agricultural and biological science disciplines**

Livia Olsen, Jason Coleman, Jenny Oleen

## **How to cite this presentation**

If you make reference to this version of the manuscript, use the following information:

Olsen, L., Coleman, J., & Oleen, J. (2013, April). Subject matrices: An innovative approach to serving the agricultural and biological disciplines. Retrieved from <http://krex.ksu.edu>

## **Citation of Unpublished Symposium**

### **Citation:**

Olsen, L., Coleman, J., & Oleen, J. (2013, April). Subject matrices: An innovative approach to serving the agricultural and biological disciplines. Poster session presented at the Association of College and Research Libraries 16<sup>th</sup> National Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

This item was retrieved from the K-State Research Exchange (K-REx), the institutional repository of Kansas State University. K-REx is available at <http://krex.ksu.edu>



# Subject Matrices: An innovative approach to serving the agricultural and biological science disciplines

by Livia Olsen, Jason Coleman, Jenny Oleen | Kansas State University Libraries

## A library reorganization story . . .

### Before:

- Departments broken into the traditional areas of Public & Technical Services
- Public Services in TRADITIONAL SUBJECT SILOS: Social Sciences, Humanities, and the Sciences
- Interdepartmental collaboration took place through committees

### After:

- Departments belonging traditionally in public services are DIVIDED BY USER TYPE: Undergraduate & Community Services (UCS) and Faculty & Graduate Services (FGS)
- Emphasis on internal & external collaboration
- SUBJECT MATRICES offer a comprehensive approach to collaboration and addressing user needs

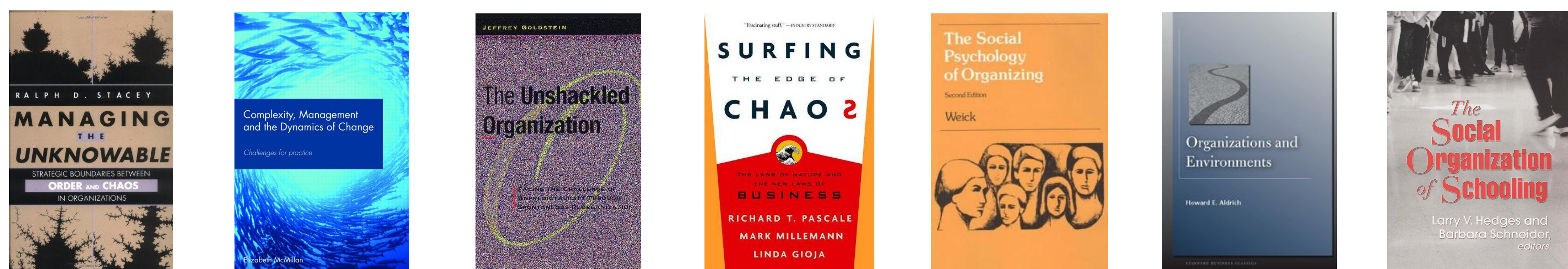
## Theoretical Inspirations

### Complexity Theory

- Creativity in organizations can be achieved by resisting the temptation to plan and control.
- Innovation is promoted by states of tension and uncertainty.
- Systems self-organize to meet challenges. Attempts to shape the self-organization may compromise adaptation.
- Managers can loosely guide organizations toward desired outcomes by introducing disturbances similar to those outcomes

### Loosely Coupled Systems Theory

- Environments can be shaped by strategic choices of organizations.
- Complex systems are composed of multiple subsystems of less complexity. Organizational structures that react slowly to changes in interactions among subsystems enable novel intermediate adaptations to arise.
- Loose coupling can be achieved by altering the timing between receipt of feedback about a system's functioning and implementation of changes based on that feedback.



## K-State Libraries Agriculture & Biological Sciences Matrix

- The matrix is people!
- Librarians from UCS, FGS, Content Development, and Scholarly Communications & Publishing departments are involved.

## Successes

Increased communication across library departments about reference, instruction, and the Libraries' collection

Learning opportunities for matrix members to share their skills and experiences with fellow librarians

Idea generation that will potentially serve the whole university

Created unique outreach opportunities leading to the addition of K-State's Research & Extension Librarian joining the group



## Challenges

- Do faculty and students understand how this new system works? Does it matter?
- How to assess success or failure?
- How does the matrix communicate outside the Libraries?
- Do the matrix members have time for matrix activities?