

Stewart Brand's six levels of a healthy civilization

Time scale for movement/change

1. Quick, irrelevant, engaging, self-preoccupied and fickle. Drives energy for commerce

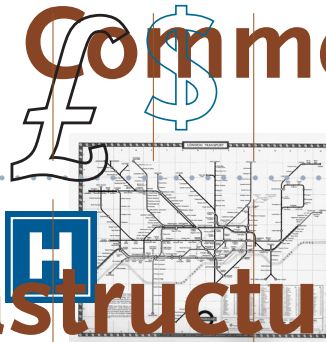
Fashion & Art



Years: Individual

2. Takes good ideas from above and informs levels below. Exploits and absorb shocks, passing velocity & wealth on to infrastructure. Can become crime if left unfettered by governance & culture.

Commerce



Decades: Family

3. Education, science, medicine, transportation, communication etc. Must be supported by governance & culture because payback period is too long for standard investment.

Infrastructure



Centuries: Tribe or Nation

4. Tempers the faster moving layers above and creates checks and balances. NGO's and other entities act on culture-level concerns in the domain of governance.

Governance



Millennia: Culture

5. Moves slower than political and economic history at the pace of language and religion. It is the work of whole peoples and moves at the speed of centuries and millennia.

Culture



Tens of millennia: Species

6. Moves slowest but is the most powerful. When we disturb nature at its own scale (*as with the greenhouse gases of recent times*) we risk triggering apocalyptic forces.

Nature



Eons: The Web of Life on Earth