

# **Information Infrastructure to address Societal Grand Challenges**

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# Special Thanks

CNI

Brown University Library

40+ researchers, information experts, and administrators who gave me time for interviews

# The top 8 things I learned

**1. Climate change is a “wicked” problem  
(uncertainty about relevant factors and  
desired outcomes)**

**2. Research on wicked problems is different from research defined within disciplinary structures (relative certainty about relevant factors and desired outcomes)**

**3. Research into wicked problems requires special structures, such as research centers and institutes capable of fostering information sharing across disciplines and with the public**

**4. Campus information experts, such as library liaisons, tend to focus on departments, not research centers and institutes**

**5. There are different types of research centers and institutes, most of which are faculty-focused**



**6. “Standard” research centers institutes are institutionally supported, problem-focused, and interdisciplinary**

**7. Science policy favors “integration” as the goal of interdisciplinary work, which favors interaction among researchers in closely related disciplines**

**8. Because wicked problems require broad interaction across many disciplines and with the public, “problem feeding” is a more practical and effective goal for work across disciplines and with the public**

**I recommend four adjustments in the service policies of campus information experts to more effectively support wicked problem research:**

- 1. Focus on “standard” (university-supported) centers and institutes devoted to wicked problem research,**

**And within these centers:**

## **2. Foster skills needed for problem-feeding across fields in the sciences, social sciences and humanities**

### **3. Support the engagement of researchers with local communities in defining and co-producing research**

## **4. Enhance data support to accommodate the nature and scale of interdisciplinary and public contributions**





**How can I improve the report?**

**Thank You!**

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