

## **Document Purpose**

This document is intended to provide getting-started-reference material for those stakeholders interested in contributing to the design of the Ackoff Virtual Inquiry Center. (AVIC)

## **Historical view on AVIC Design**

Early on, the original vision for AVIC, offered by Dr. John Pourdehnad, was that it serve as a nervous system for the Systems and Design Community in Dr. Russell Ackoff's name. With this belief, Dr. Pourdehnad also made clear the need for AVIC to be designed Ideally and created by the stakeholders themselves.

Affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania, the following Vision, Mission and Value statements were formed, largely via ethnographic interview, by an early student group committed to AVIC's creation.

### *Vision*

*A forum with which to explore Systems and Design thinking for anyone who might be interested.*

### *Mission*

*Our forum will:*

*Provide access to the Systems and Design Thinking world.*

*Provide the opportunity to gain access to other interested parties*

*Facilitate meaningful learning through the promotion of action*

*Promote the creation of new knowledge in the Systems and Design communities*

*Be sustainable*

### *Values*

*Our forum appreciates:*

*Leadership: The setting of direction and the inspiration of action through relationships built on trust and dependability*

*Discovery: The vigorous, self motivated and continuous seeking out of opportunities to increase knowledge*

*Community: The encouragement of cooperation and collaboration that integrates efforts, and allows for the continuous challenge of premise*

Additionally, Dr. Pourdehand envisioned a series of Systems and Design Centers throughout the world, also in Dr Ackoff's name, with purposes of there own. These centers were to achieve significant progress using a Systems mindset. AVIC, was to support these centers.

### ***The Mess: What is it? Ethnographic Interview Results***

The system to replace for one group is the ubiquity of both Systems Thinking and more specifically Idealized Designs application and the cultural fabric Dr Ackoff Provided. Dr. Ackoff was a source of gravity and relevance.

The system to replace for yet another group is the interpersonal characteristics Dr. Ackoff provided. Dr Ackoff provided synthesis of community and a belief, devotion, and drive to action.

A third system to replace is the creation of relevant knowledge in the Systems and Design Thinking communities. This knowledge might be derivative of the methods Dr. Ackoff utilized, his way of doing things and dynamics in general. This should be considered very subjective.

For advocate-types: This group is interested in ways to implement design, explanations and best practices.

For designer-types: This group is interested in new ideas, fun projects and especially opportunities.

For coach-types: This group is interested in helping people and opportunities, as well as educational tools.

Some have suggested that because of Dr. Ackoff's simultaneously universally applicable theories and his strong interpersonal charisma, his presence was a crucial cultural fabric that tangibly filled the heart of the University of Pennsylvania Organizational Dynamics program – like an operating system for the program or the park that a picnic is held in.

### ***How to be an AVIC Designer***

While ethnographic research provides tremendous insight, it also does not afford all stakeholders their due right to contribute to AVIC's design themselves. It is for this reason we invite you to be part of an exciting process to, as designer, create a valuable resource for the Systems and Design Thinking communities. As you know, Dr. Ackoff was a pioneer in the field of management who changed the way individuals and corporations think about business. Our vision is to create an inquiry center in his name within which anyone who is interested in Systems and Design thinking can explore these worlds and gain access to other interested parties. Our hope is that the inquiry center will facilitate meaningful learning through access to both explicit and tacit knowledge in the field.

Over the next several months, we would like to ask you to tap into your creative capabilities to design what this resource should be via a Virtual Idealized Design process.

To do so, please access our community at [syscoi.com](http://syscoi.com) and join the Ackoff Virtual Inquiry Center (AVIC) group. Once a member, you will have the opportunity to contribute your design ideas and help shape our future!

To do this, you'll contribute to a three stage process. Our design process will consist of:

- Diverge: in this stage we will collect your design ideas using an open sourced approach.
- Converge: in this stage we will aggregate and idealize your ideas
- Emerge: in this stage we will make available to you, the initial idealized design for your review and refinement

### The Diverge Stage

In the Diverge stage, we will ask you to contribute your ideas on AVIC's Mission and those Key Properties of the system you would like to see implemented. While our process is open to any and all ideas, there are a few rules we would like to ask you follow. They are:

The Mission should:

- Not be filled with meaningless, terminology (E.G. Be the best in..., Optimize our... Etc.)
- Be challenging and exciting to virtually all stakeholders
- Provide a focus for the planning process that will follow the creation of our design
- Identify the business (term used loosely) in which AVIC wants to be
- Reflect what it *chooses* to do, as opposed to what it *must* do to survive.

Key Properties should:

- Be those properties you believe AVIC should ideally have NOW versus what you believe AVIC should NOT have. (This step will take place when your ideas are aggregated. Creative volume is our goal in this stage.)
- Not be concerned with what is feasible

### The Converge Stage

In the converge stage, a core team of designers will take all your ideas and aggregate them into a cohesive whole. It is in this stage where your ideas will be validated for feasibility and viability and evaluated against the guidelines listed above.

### The Emerge Stage

Once your ideas are aggregated, the result of this aggregation will be presented back to you for review and refinement. You will work together, virtually, to produce our final design.