THE HUB

CHARLIE ALICE RAYA

easy town books

A brief introduction

THE HUB

There are several ways to deal with anger.

You can start punching and shouting.

You can become a cynic, finding your superiority in the knowledge that humans are too insignificant to give them a second thought.

You can decide to bite back by becoming a brainless profiteer.

Or you can sit yourself down and ask a few questions, like what makes me angry about the internet, and what would it take so I don't get angry any more?

And here is a funny thing. I had several reasons to sit myself down for a rethink of the internet (one of them is the easy town story I write), but so far the result is that I get angrier about the internet — and faster — because now I have a pretty good idea what I want the internet to be like. And the only way out of that anger is to actually build the Hub, and be done with the Tech Giants.

Now you might say: What's your anger to me? And why should we build something you want?

Well, my hope is that I am not the only person who is fed up with today's internet, and since I love the Hub, I invite you to take a look at the ideas.

The Hub

A summary

The Hub was developed in the easy town story. The following summary draws on the ideas as presented in the story.
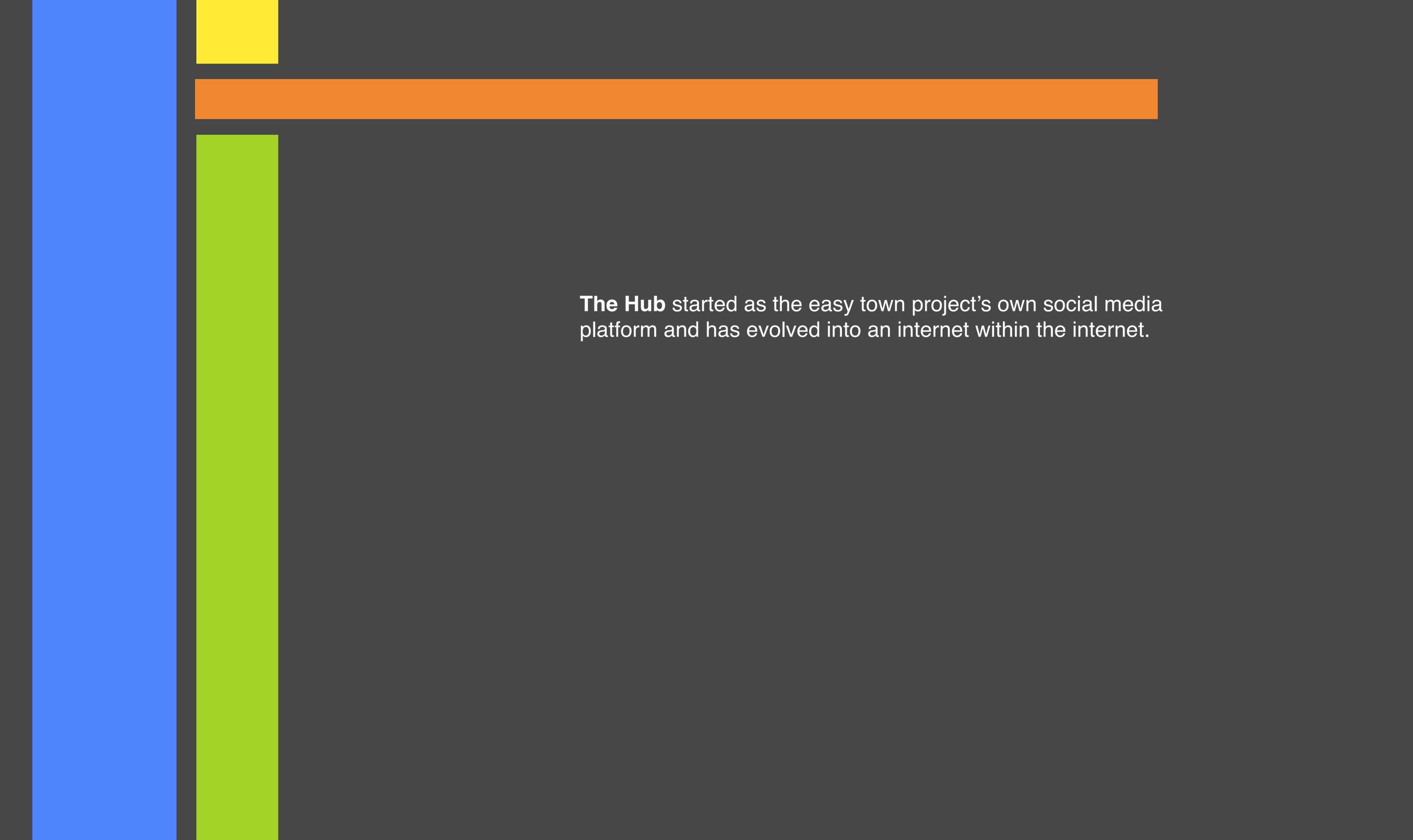
The Hub started as the easy town project's own social media platform and has evolved into an internet within the internet.

The Hub features include everything social media has to offer, plus a search engine, communication tools, a book library, a cinema, a sound basement, an art gallery, a bank, a shopping mall and more.

'So what is the Hub?'
'It's all social media in one castle,' Noel proclaimed with pride. 'Without the advertising or the data collecting. And you get to decide whether your castle is a simple two-dimensional space with just a phone booth to call your kids, or a three-dimensional palace with nearly endless rooms, halls, galleries and, for our friends like Daria, dungeons. And you can walk through each and all of them and pick up things as you stroll along.'

book 1, beginning, week 7

Hub users pay an equivalent of one euro a month in return for ad-free online services, full privacy, and full control over features, algorithms and designs.

Noel stood up and declared solemnly: 'This, my friends, this is the end of big brother. This is the restoration of our privacy and of our self-determination. This is us, getting our lives back.'

book 1, beginning, week 1

The Hub offers localised features for towns and cities. This includes all town services, and special services for patients, students and tourists.

'Talk me through it again.'
'A person got a local job and wants to move to our town. First thing they do is register an account on the Hub. Not on the global Hub but our town Hub. Any town can have their own space on the Hub. As soon as the authenticity of the person as well as the job are confirmed, the town Hub offers our person flats or houses. Once a primary job and an accommodation are confirmed, the Hub basically does the rest of the administrative work: a new passport entry, connecting the new home to our micro grid, tax registration, healthcare registration, a local bank account and so on. The user can basically sit back and watch it all happen. And the user can add things like find me a group for morning workouts or a local band, or get me a registration with the local library and alert me to events at the party den, plus I want to join the green days for the town's gardens, though I need some extra training for that, and so on …'
'Sounds good. I'm curious whether it will work.'
'We will make it work. Besides, it's another step to giving people back full control over their data. Everything about the user is saved in an encrypted vault, and without the users permission no one has access.'
'How much will the town Hub cost the user?'
'I've run a few simulations. It really depends on the size of the town, and how much we can automate. The larger the town the lower the costs for the individual user. And there is the open question of how we will deal with taxes. Will taxes be randomly used to pay for admin costs, or do we charge the town Hub users whichever costs they actually incur?'
'Which would mean people know what their payments are used for, and they would pay lower taxes. Yep, still my favoured direction.'

notes for book 3, shaping
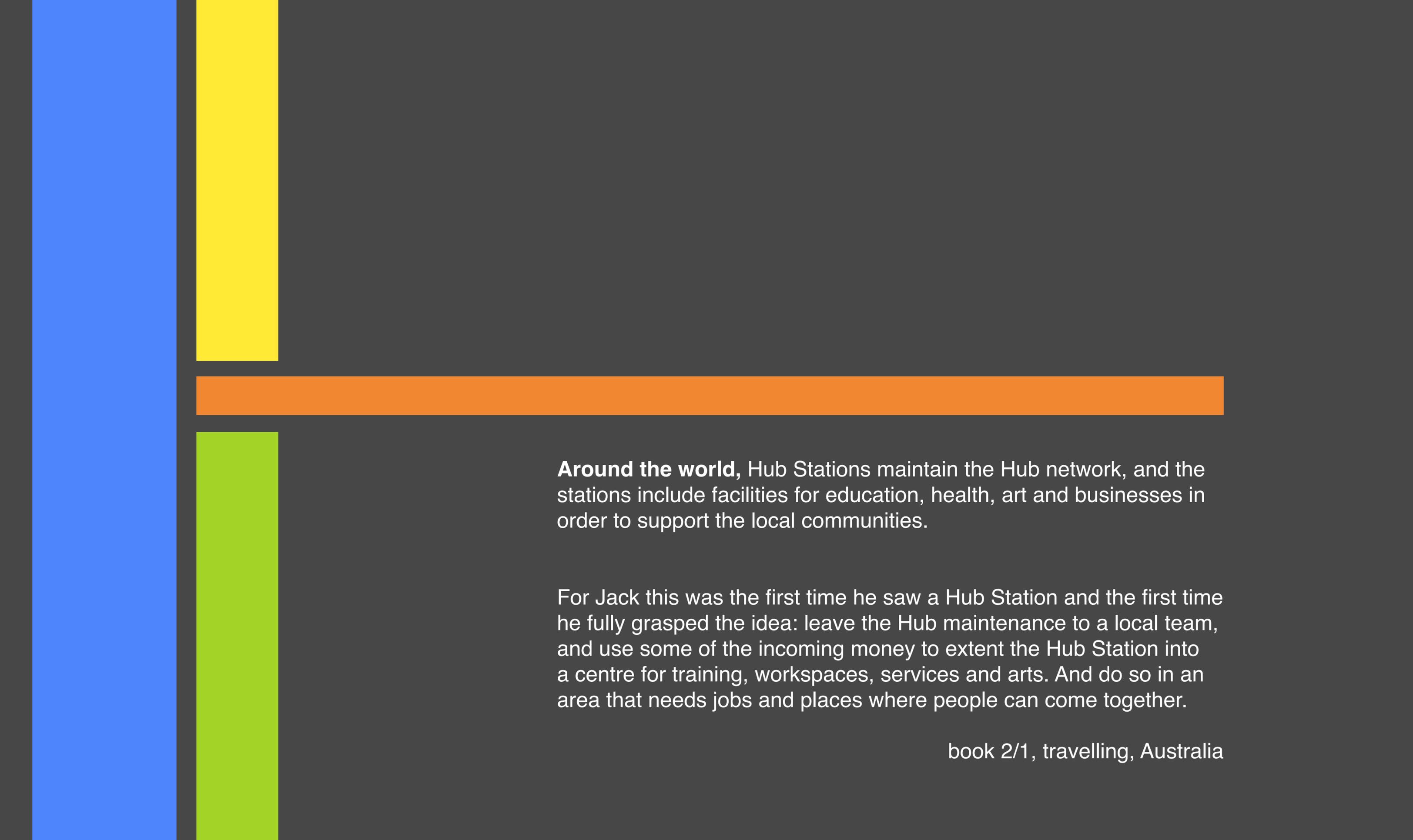
Around the world, Hub Stations maintain the Hub network, and the stations include facilities for education, health, art and businesses in order to support the local communities.

For Jack this was the first time he saw a Hub Station and the first time he fully grasped the idea: leave the Hub maintenance to a local team, and use some of the incoming money to extent the Hub Station into a centre for training, workspaces, services and arts. And do so in an area that needs jobs and places where people can come together.

book 2/1, travelling, Australia

The Hub acknowledges past and present injustices and neglect.

Back in June, the Hub Developers Team, the Hub Executive Team and Alice decided to acknowledge past injustices by giving indigenous tribes priority for the locations and for the management of the next Hub Stations.

book 2/1, travelling, San Francisco

The Hub Developer Team comprises 777 developers from around the world, with near gender parity and a balanced age structure.

'Seven hundred and seventy-six sounds like a lot,' Daria said, 'but someone who wanted a job on the Hub Team needed at least three verified programmers who'd vouch for the newcomer. And we checked whether the programmers in question code reliably, clean and without any shenanigans. And whether they agree with what we stand for. We also made sure that we have near parity between the genders—'

'To tell the truth,' Noel interrupted with a wink, 'you are unbalancing the balance. Besides, we got programmers from every corner of the world and from nearly all age groups, the youngest being impressive and fourteen, something of a reverse Daria, dark complexion and always dressed in white, and the oldest, eighty-four, who's something of a programming Roger. I don't know what it is with old guys, these deep rolling voices. But his code— First class.'

book 1, beginning, week 7

The Hub is international and independent.

The tasks of the Hub

The Hub has three main tasks:

- Create, further develop, and run the Hub

- Set up, further develop, and maintain a global network of Hub Stations

- Extend the Hub Stations

The Hub Core

The Hub Core is the digital side of the Hub.

The Hub Developers work from all around the world,
ideally with each country being represented by a team.

The developers aim at creating a flexible framework which
makes it simple to individualise applications, Hub rooms,
and Hub services.

The Hub Core

Hub framework

Hub security

Hub processing

Hub sfx

Hub design

Hub communication

Hub work & (re)search

Hub arts & entertainment

Hub wellness & sports

Hub commerce

Hub financial transactions

Hub town features

Hub tourist features

Hub education features

Hub patient features

Hub bespoke
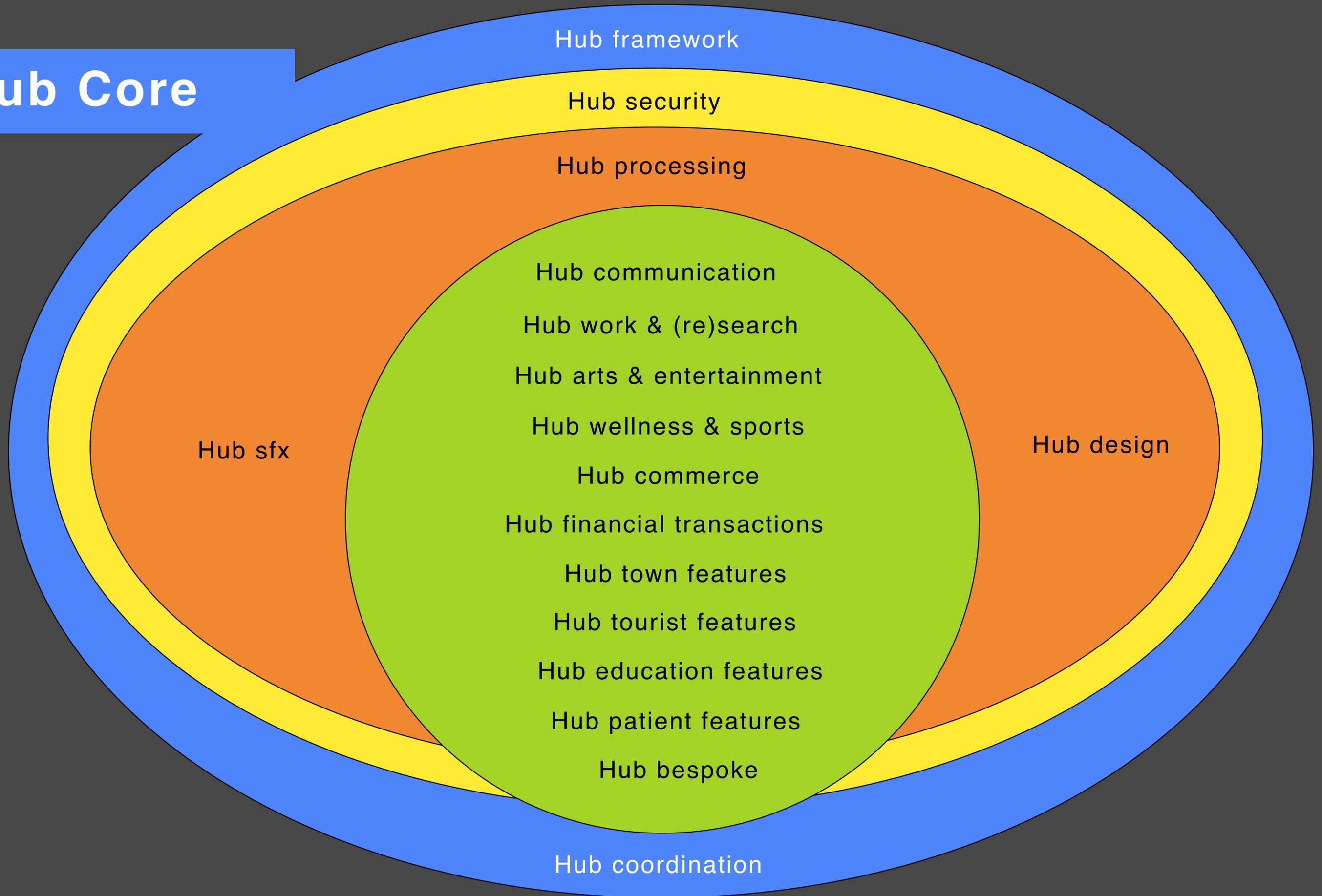
Hub coordination

The Hub International

The Hub International is the guardian and coordinator
of the Hub and of the Hub Stations Network.

The Hub International

coordination

finance

admin

legal

business & contracting

training & job shaking

public relations

Hub Developers

The Hub

Hub Stations

Hub Research

The Hub Research

The Hub is a learning organisation, and wherever possible decisions are based on research.

Hub Research

Hub Reserch technological innovations

Hub Research mechanical innovations

Hub Research energy

Hub Reserch workplaces

Hub Research coexisting

Hub Research sexuality

Hub Research
The Hub's impacts on the user.

Hub Research
The Hub's impact on a balanced economic development.

Hub Research
The Hub's impacts on the community.

Hub Stations

Hub Stations form the physical network of the Hub.

Hub Stations

Andy was excited. And he was looking for Alice. He didn't get excited easily. He was more of a quiet guy, focused on his work. He was also the head of Programming. But that didn't excite him. He knew he could do it. He wanted to do it. So he did it. It was as simple as that.

But now there was the Hub. And as the head of Programming, he was technically the boss of the Hub Team too. And not just technically, he reminded himself while scanning the entrance hall for Alice. He was the boss of the Hub. Period. At least until they had figured out how the Hub would be run and by whom.

The thing was that the Hub was a whole new level. And that still unsettled him a bit. There was a big difference between building a simulation for a single town, and building a platform which would be the sum of all possible social media platforms, and which might have an impact far beyond a single town. In fact, a global impact. Also, while Daria was a good friend, despite being a lot younger and far too clever for her age, she had brought some hackers on board for the Hub who made even him take off his cap. The imaginary cap.

Just then, Andy saw Leo, leaving Tom's study. 'Hi, Leo. Do you know where Alice is?'

'She has a meeting with you at two,' Leo replied and hurried away.

Surprise. He knew about that meeting. They wanted to discuss the launch of a first Hub version during the conference in New York. But he wanted to talk to Alice before that meeting. It wasn't necessary. He simply wanted to be the one to tell her. Maybe he even wanted to impress her a little.

He knew Alice disliked people who wanted to impress her. She told a group of newcomers last week: 'Don't ever try to suck up to me. You won't like my response.'

But he didn't want to suck up to her. Just—

Andy sighed, and thought for a moment.

She wasn't with the Health & Care Team. She already had had lunch. She wasn't in the entrance hall—

He was being ridiculous, wasn't he? A bit like being back at school and running all the way to his granny's flat, just to tell her about something that happened at school.

What did it matter who told Alice?

Maybe he should get some fresh air. It wasn't that long to the meeting anyway. Andy got a bottle of water from the bar and crossed the entrance hall.

The Hub.

The new idea came up this morning, in a meeting with Daria, Devery and Javiera. The short version was this: They didn't want the Hub to become another tech giant which infiltrates the world like a virus. On the other hand, the whole point of a social media platform was to connect the world and become just another global infiltrator.

That was a problem. One they wanted to solve.

And then they realised that they could de-giant the Hub with a simple trick. Some Hub tasks needed to remain centralised like development and data protection. But other tasks could be handed to local operators like the maintenance of the network, customer services and even parts of security. Security would, in fact, be higher if different methods were employed in different parts of the system. There could even be competitions to see which team came up with the latest laser shield to blast away attackers.
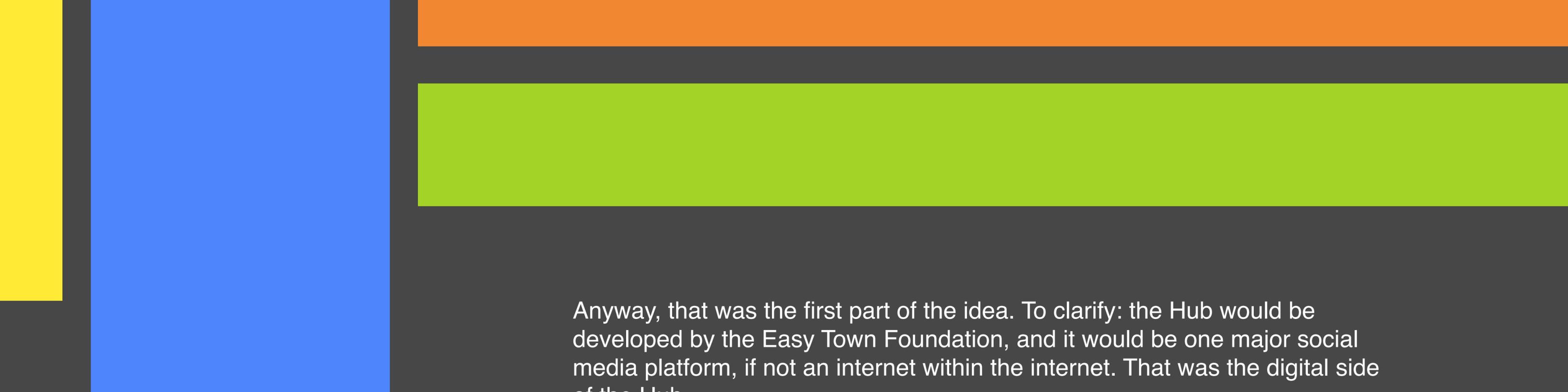
Anyway, that was the first part of the idea. To clarify: the Hub would be developed by the Easy Town Foundation, and it would be one major social media platform, if not an internet within the internet. That was the digital side of the Hub.

On the physical side of the Hub, a stable global network was needed. And several Hub hardware units, or Hub Stations, would have to be set up around the world. These hardware units could be maintained by local teams.

And then the intriguing part of the idea came up.

Since there would be Hub Stations, physical buildings with servers for the Hub, why not use these properties to support the local community? Why not turn a Hub Station into a physical Hub for local businesses, education, arts or medical services?

And this could be financed by some of the income the Hub generated.

It was a strange moment when the idea materialised before their eyes: physical Hub Stations where people could come together and set up businesses and services that were needed in that region. This way the Hub would be a platform that gave back to the community and didn't just suck it dry.

They all fell silent and looked at each other. And that was when Andy got up too hastily, declaring too excitedly that he had to find Alice.

Ridiculous.

Andy left the main building and strolled towards the footpath which led to the guest houses. It took him a moment to realise that one of the two people on the beach was Alice. She was slipping into her shoes, and next to her Jack Harris was tying his shoes.

Andy rolled his eyes.

Jack Harris.

What was he even doing on this project? Did he hope to clean up his reputation by pretending to do something useful? And why couldn't he leave Alice alone? Wasn't there a rumour that River had a crush on him and Polly and about ninety percent of all female team members and some male team members too?

But not Alice. She never made a fuss about him.

Andy hesitated, slowing down.

But then Jack straightened, said something to Alice and left in the direction of the guest houses.

Good riddance.

Andy took a breath and walked a little faster.

A bit of excitement trickled back in, and a bit more when Alice spotted him.

'Hi, Andy,' she called.

'Hiya, Alice. Do you have a minute?'

'Sure. Don't we have a meeting soon?' she asked when she reached him.

'We do. But there's something I wanted your opinion on.'

And then he told her about the Hub Stations while they walked back to the main house.

He was rewarded with a beaming Alice. 'That's a brilliant idea. And we should talk about the size of the Hub Stations.'

'What do you have in mind?'

'The Hub Stations offer an incredible opportunity to support local communities, and they add a new angle to the whole social media idea. To make it work, we need to distribute the Hub Stations in a way that makes sense. If a Hub Station is too small, the profit for the region will be insignificant. If a Hub Station is too big, one station will get all the fun.'

Andy smiled. That's what he liked about Alice: she always added to the picture.

book 1, beginning, week 2

'Usually a Hub Station will serve between five to ten million users. And it will provide backup as well as fallbacks for up to three other stations. Within a country, we start with a single station. If a country gets more than ten million users, then the country qualifies for a second station. If there are close to twenty million users, then the country could qualify for four stations with about five million users per station and so on. But a country could also decide to have just one station in which case twenty million subscribers would be the maximum. While we will provide the initial staff if necessary, we will train locals so that a Hub Station can be run locally, eventually.'

'What about the other stations?' the intellectual asked.

'Ahm, the Hub Team seem to find people who side with them.'

'Nonsense. You only have to offer the right sum.'

'Ahm, no, Sir. It does work in some places, but there are always some who say they like the Hub. Ahm, you see, some argue that they too prefer using the internet without anyone collecting data about them.'

'NO, I DON'T SEE!' the prominent grey thundered, banging his hand on the table.

The secretary guy winced, but he continued nonetheless: 'Ahm, in fact, we've spent considerable sums on bribes. And with all due respect, it doesn't seem—'

'What about governments?' the intellectual cut in, drumming his skeletal fingers on the table. 'They are always easy to bribe.'

'Ahm, well, yes, but, ahm,' the secretary guy stammered. 'Ahm, they argue, Sir, that, ahm—'

'GET TO THE POINT, will you!' the prominent grey shouted.

'They say if they don't accept a Hub Station, then their neighbouring country will. And that means their neighbour will get all the incoming money. Ahm, they also ask whether we really want to pay them fifty-seven point six million a year per refused station. In which case they might be open to negotiations.'

'Fifty-seven point six million?' the fat man asked.

'A year?' the priest breathed.

'Per station?' the diplomat muttered.

'Ahm, that's the average amount of money that will be invested in a single Hub Station's region, assuming ten million subscribers are served by that station. The investment aims at financial independence, meaning the initial investment will create a ripple effect. And the income of a single Hub Station will be used for an ever growing area. Also, once a Hub Station is debt-free, it keeps eighty-one point six million a year, and it invests that money locally. And if a country qualifies for more than one Hub Station this effect is multiplied, with ripples overlapping. A country like China could qualify for about a hundred and forty Hub Stations which would add up to—'

'ENOUGH!' the prominent grey shouted.

Silence fell.

book 2/1, travelling, Buenos Aires

Hub Station

maintenance

customer services

coordination & admin

legal & finance

Hub Station extensions

recycling

water cycle

micro grid

gardens

healthcare

businesses

arts

farms

education

With the support we propose for the Hub Stations, we demonstrate early on that we mean what we say, that we are not out to exploit, that we work to create not to pump dry, and that every human will be treated with respect in our businesses.

Hub Station

maintenance
customer services
coordination & admin
legal & finance
Hub Station extensions

micro grid

gardens

flats

shops

farms

gardens

businesses

healthcare

arts

farms

training

education

security

recycling

library

farms

gardens
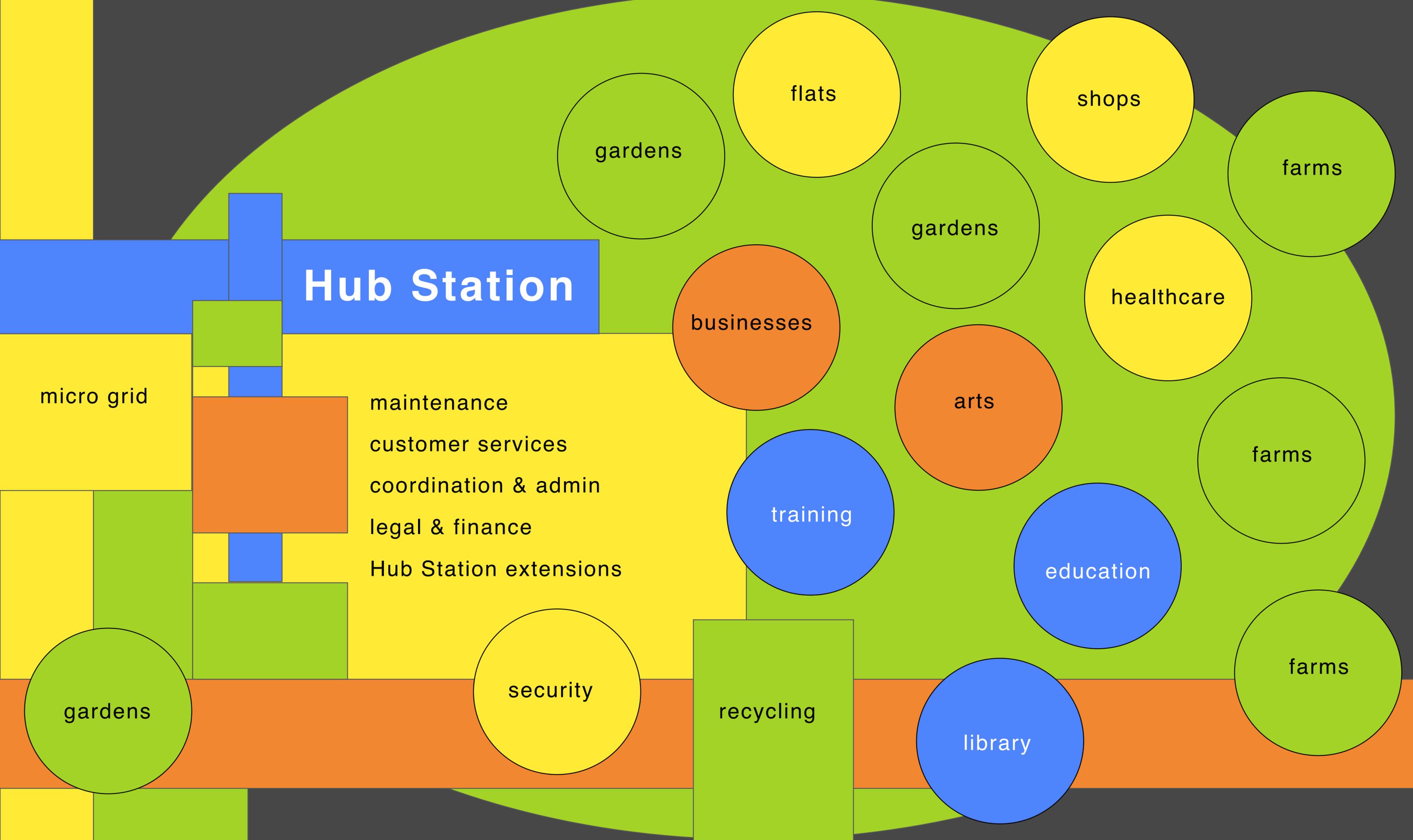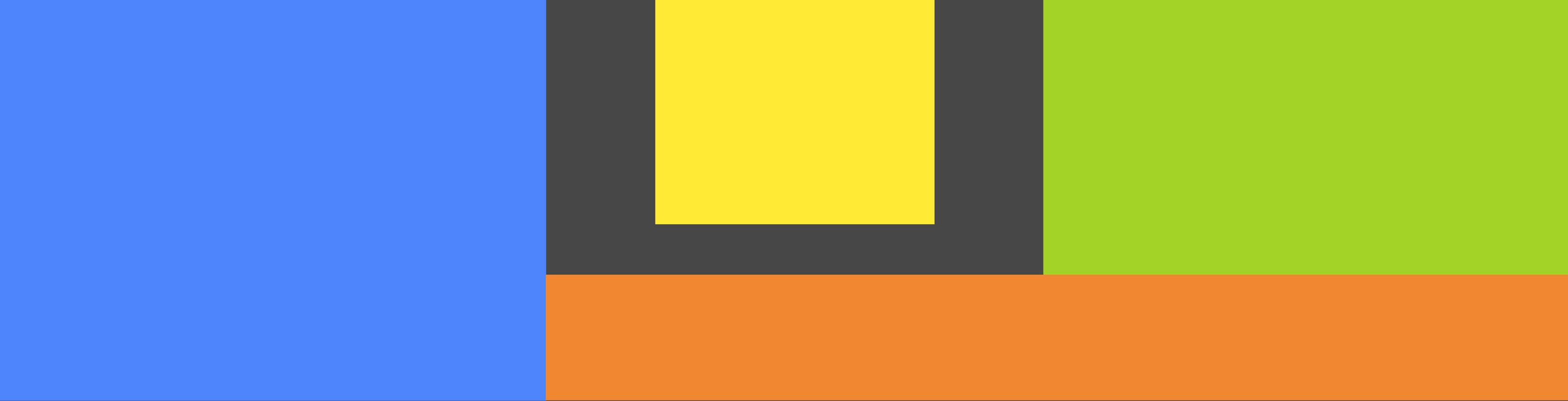
Perspectives, principles
and business approaches

dot.international

dot.international

dot.international is another business idea which was first developed in the easy town story.

What is dot.international?

dot.international is an idea for a global fashion company which empowers creatives & small businesses.

The core of this idea is to create locally, offer globally, and produce locally. For that dot.international will provide the framework for millions of small businesses around the world to partake on the global market.

While dot. works with a different business model, both dot. and the Hub share similar perspectives and principles.

dot.international

dot.perspectives, exampels

The customer
The customer is a human being, not a purse.

dot.international
dot.international aims at a system that allows a maximum number of people to profit from a single product, not at a system that generates a maximum profit for a single person.

dot.principles, exampels

• dot. bases decisions on research

• dot.innovations are sustainable by design

• dot. empowers the individual

" ‘I love a mess of a place, chaos and all. I simply reject exploitation, inequality and discrimination. And I have a special dislike for jerks. They always get my fists twitchy.’

dot.stations

" A creative hub embedded in nature where creative potentials are unearthed and the community strives while celebrating style and arts and living. That's a big part of what makes a dot.station.

www.dot-international.net
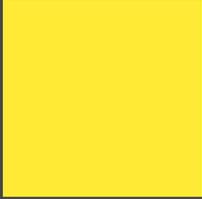
'On the flight here, I thought I might be happy with a single rule. If we can make it work.'

Lida raised her eyebrows critically, and Alice said a little archly: 'Three simple words: Do no harm. Do No Harm, and all is well for your body, your mind, your fellow humans, the place you live in, and the world at large. It's so simple, I want to cry.'

book 2/2, travelling, Romania
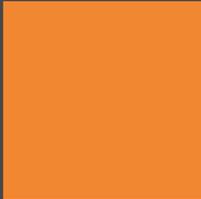
Hub principles, exampels

- Do no harm
- Jerk-free zone
- Mistakes are a chance
- Take responsibility for your work and actions
- Create with the independence of the user in mind
- Create with simplicity and durability in mind
- Work with nature, coexist

www.hub-international.org

What does it take?

It won't take that much to build the Hub.

If we think big.

If we build a global network from the start.

If we include the whole world this time around, both in terms of developing the Hub and in terms of setting up the physical network.

And if we find the balances we need to stop screwing ourselves, our fellow humans and our planet.

For all of this we will need courageous people, creatives, thinkers, developers, users, visionaries, adventurers, nurturers, makers, builders, and more.

In order to avoid investors, the initial budget for the Hub can be generated by selling Hub vouchers and space options.

Selling 24 million Hub vouchers for €24 each provides €576 million for the initial budget. This can be doubled by selling 2 million space options for €288 each to businesses who want to sell their products via the Hub shopping mall, or to film companies who want to offer their movies in the Hub cinema, and the like.

Those voucher sales add up to an initial budget of more than a billion euros, which should be enough to start building the Hub, and to set up the initial Hub Stations network, plus the teams for the Hub International.

Once the Hub is running, it will earn money, money which won't be wasted in space exploration.

It will be used to build:

• communities
• Hub spaces for towns & cities
• the natural world
• businesses which test new business approaches
• and part of the income will be used to improve the Hub.

What's going to happen
with the old internet?

'So, what's going to happen with the old internet?'
'Oh, it's going to be a blast. You know like it's always fun to look at the follies of the previous decades /:-)'

The Hub, the book
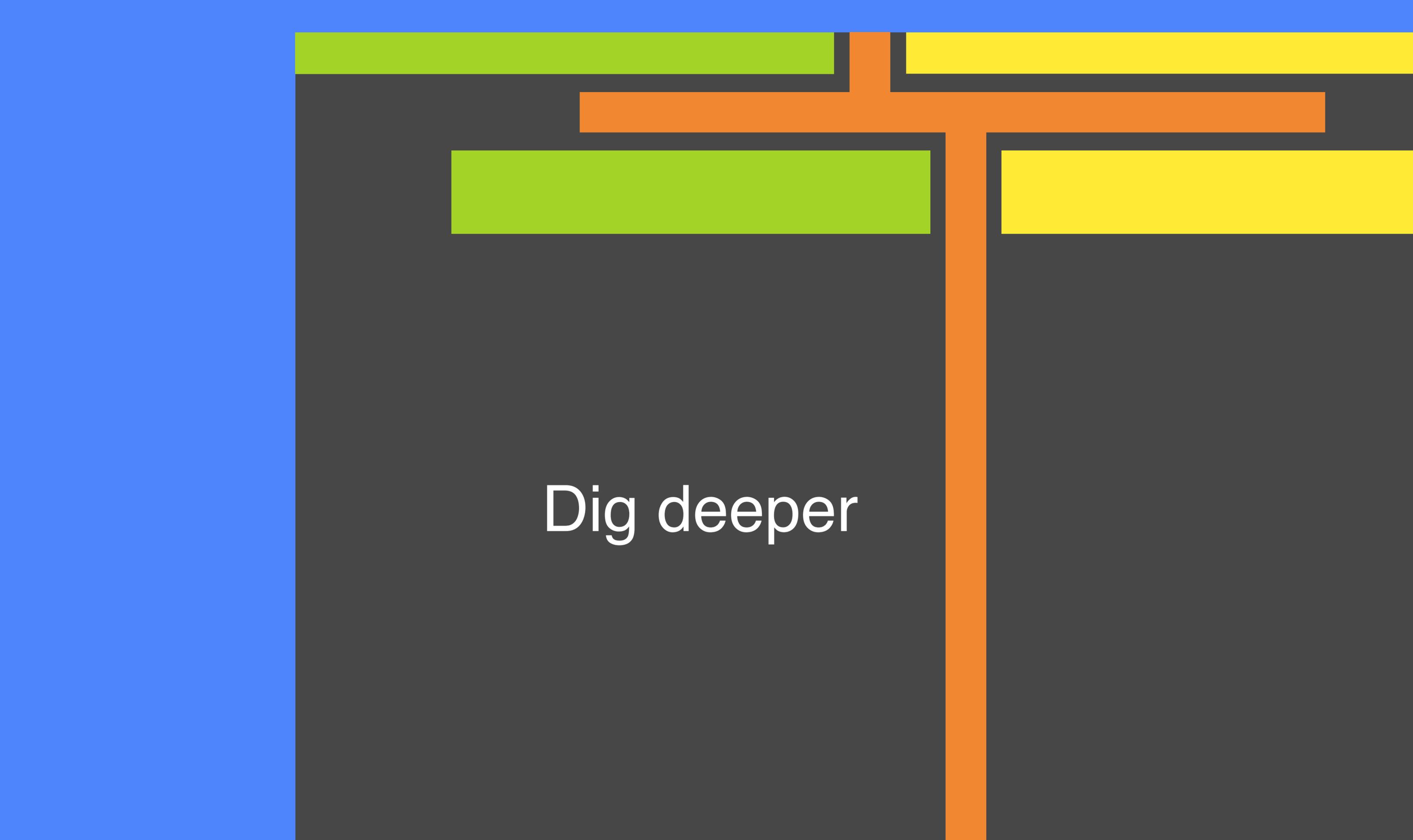
Dig deeper

The Hub & town admin
example: Rivermouth

The Hub & town education
example: Coexhill

The Hub & job shaking
example: Gardens Springs

The Hub & town research
example: Lulu Shore

The Hub & town artists
example: Sound City

The Hub & town patients
example: Cancer Sucks Lake

The Hub & town businesses
example: Original Craftsdom

The Hub & town tourists
example: dot.city

A town for the Hub
Hub Gate

Towns specials

Presenting ideas for thriving and inspiring towns is another easy town project.

The Hub can be adjusted to support towns and cities in their tasks and services. And the town specials offer a look at some of the town ideas, and at how the Hub can be used in and by those towns.

You can find the town specials on the Hub website:
www.hub-international.org/towns-specials-for-the-hub

And you can find out more about the town ideas on the easy town projects website:
www.towns-and-cities-international.org

CHARLIE ALICE RAYA

THE HUB

Let's build the Hub
and be done with the TECH GIANTS

easy town books

You can buy this e-book on the Hub website:
www.hub-international.org

The ideas for the Hub address a wide range of issues: rethinking business practices in general, rethinking online business practices, rethinking the internet including social media, rethinking communication, arts, entertainment and shopping, rethinking the digitalisation of services regarding health, town or city administrations, and tourist administrations, rethinking global business dominance, rethinking how to deal with profits, rethinking how to take past and present injustices into account, and some other points.

In short, the Hub has grown into a complex idea with a lot of potential input for how we might decide to deal with each other in the future.

This collection contains scenes and dialogues from book 1, beginning and from book 2, travelling.

In book 1 the idea for the Hub is developed, the teams are set up, and a first Hub version is launched at the Easy Town conference, causing panic among tech giants, and leading to a memorable meeting with one of them.

In book 2 some of the Hub Stations are visited, more people get nervous about the Hub, and the Hub prepares the launch of additional features.

easy town books

The Hub Tour
with scenes & quotes from book 1, beginning & book 2, travelling

Published in Berlin, 2022 by Charlie Alice Raya
Copyright © 2022 Charlie Alice Raya

Graphics, content, composition & layout © Charlie Alice Raya 2022

THE
HUB

www.hub-international.org