

*"A very new & fresh take, in real-person-speak"*  
— Nancy Skaggs

*"I've learned things & laughed out loud"*  
— Tamara Bredemus

# The SharePoint Governance Manifesto

*Disruptive Governance thinking for the masses*

Ant Clay, Founder & CEO Soulsailor Consulting

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Disruptive Governance thinking for the  
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<https://twitter.com/search/#SPGovManifesto>

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## **Dedicated to...**

My wife Claire for always being here to “steer me” on the right path.

My awesome kids Rowan, Flynn and Erin for your sheer honesty, playful insights and constant support.

# Credits and Thanks

I really appreciate the immense positivity, help, support, feedback and inspiration from everyone I know on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and within the awesome global SharePoint community, for this my first, very tenuous step, into becoming an author.

I want to especially thank the tireless reviewers who shared with me their advice, experience and a real dose of pragmatism when I most needed it!

This book really wouldn't be what it is today without you guys: Andy Talbot (@SharePointAndy), Jim Anning (@JimAnning), Joe Capka (@JCapka), Jon Maunder (@Jon\_Maunder), Nancy Skaggs (@NanSkatoon), Paul Hunt (@Cimares), Richard Martin, Seb Matthews (@SebMatthews), Nigel Price (@Nigel\_Price) and John Timney (@JTimney).

And finally, sincere thanks to the '**Constant Doodler**' Shaun Cuff <http://www.theconstantdoodler.co.uk> for the simplicity and beauty of the cover image for this book; you have captured the very essence of Governance in that one single pen-stroke!

# **Foreword**

## Christian Buckley (Axceler), SharePoint MVP

Governance planning is a disruptive activity, primarily because not many people know what it is, or how to even begin addressing it in a meaningful way. Add a collaboration platform like SharePoint to the mix, and you have mass confusion. Most people get hung up on the definition. So, what is governance, really?

Governance does not equal administration. Governance is the plan, while administration is the action.

Most SharePoint “experts” abhor the term “best practices” because, practically speaking, what is a best practice for one organization may not be the best practice for others. What makes governance such a difficult topic to define and discuss in general terms is that it may mean different things to different organizations. Most consultants will bring to the table a perspective on governance that closely aligns with their backgrounds: someone with expertise in infrastructure planning and architecture will likely approach governance from an IT assurance perspective. Someone with a background in taxonomy development and business analysis will likely approach it from an information governance standpoint. And there’s nothing wrong with these approaches – if they fit the needs of the business. The problem is that few consultants, and the organizations they serve, approach governance holistically.

In his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey, 2000, <http://bit.ly/Coveys7Habits>), Stephen R. Covey identified a principle that has become one of the most oft-repeated phrases in management training: “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” As Covey points out, it is human nature to listen to people and interpret requirements autobiographically. We judge the things we hear and then quickly agree or disagree, we ask questions from our own frame of reference, we jump to solutions, and we assume the motives of others based on our own experiences.

Now apply these same biases to SharePoint governance planning, and you might have some insight into where your own planning efforts may have gone astray. Organizations need to slow down and take the time to talk to end users, managers, and administrators about how SharePoint is being used today (or, if it's a new SharePoint deployment, how current business workloads are being achieved) so that everyone has a shared understanding of what the current system looks like, and ONLY THEN begin the conversation about what the future system should look like. The future system that meets all of your information rights management policies, your regulatory and security requirements, your social connectivity goals, and your content lifecycle strategies.

The benefit of having a clear picture of the current system and an outline of the future system is that you'll have a baseline for conversations around how best to get from here to there.

And that's where governance comes in. Governance is about helping you move from the current view into the future view. It is the plan, the policies and guidelines, to help you cross that void, to fill that gap.

What I love about the book that Ant has compiled here is that it aligns perfectly with this philosophy. His approach, influenced by the work he did with Andrew Woodward at 21apps, and industry experts such as Paul Culmsee and others, begins with the idea that you cannot move forward successfully without having a "shared vision" for what your SharePoint platform wants to be when it grows up. All of the other governance "best practices" stem from this one point, whether it be the creation of a governance Centre of Excellence, implementation of detailed SharePoint change management protocols, or the inclusion of a detailed end user training plan, including mentoring program (all of which I highly recommend). All good things, but all reliant on that shared vision – at least if you want them to meaningful and long-lasting.

This book will help you to think more about your own approach to

solving the SharePoint governance challenge, and to figure out what will work best for your own organization. Take what makes sense, and is applicable, and make it your own. Ask questions. Reach out to Ant and others within the community for answers. You have a great support system already in place, no matter where you are in the world. Good luck!

# **Prelude**

## User Guide

If you thought from the cover image that it was about sailing, then sorry it's not, although it does get a mention.

This book is about the challenges, impact and approaches to implementing SharePoint Governance in your organisation.

When I say SharePoint what do I really mean? SharePoint, hosted SharePoint and SharePoint Online for sure. The reality is that, although the basis of this book is Microsoft SharePoint, it is actually also relevant to any other social or collaborative platform (Yammer, IBM Lotus Connections, Jive, Huddle, etc.) that you and your organisation may be using.

Actually, there's a lot you can take from this book and apply to the Governance of pretty much anything!

I wrote this Manifesto to be three things for you:

1. **Disruptive** because the status quo really isn't delivering
2. **Thought provoking** because none of this is easy
3. **Informative** for both you and your organisation.

The disruption comes from the early chapters where we will "Poke the Box" as Seth Godin would say (Godin, 2011 <http://bit.ly/PokeSeth>) and highlight our challenges with Governance itself.

The mid-section of this book is more visual and questioning. It illustrates key points, both positive and negative, about our perceptions and the future of SharePoint Governance.

Finally, in the last section, we focus on being informative in a positively disruptive way. We will explore how you can apply my '**7 Waves of Governance**' in your organisation and projects. An approach to Governance which has been developed over the last 4 years and successfully implemented with a range of clients

from SME to global organisations, as well as within a number of Microsoft partners. We will consider in detail how this approach works and the significant benefits of implementing and embedding SharePoint Governance within your organisation. The combination of these insights and approaches will, I hope, be informative, engaging and offer practical advice that will help you deliver organisational value by positively disrupting your technology projects.

## **State of the community**

When I asked the SharePoint Twitter community what they perceived as SharePoint Governance, this is a sample of what people told me:

“I think governance starts when some [one] with a lot of pull says, Man! This is crazy!”  
- Stacy Draper (@StacyDraper)

“abused term defined differently depending on who you ask”  
- Andrew Clark (@SharePointAC)

“Good SharePoint governance starts with an IM strategy”  
\*\*- Alan Pelze-Sharpe (@AlanPelzeSharpe) \*\*

“gov = organizational & management environment defining accountability & responsibility 4 return on SP investment”  
- Symon Garfield (@Symon\_Garfield)

“The G word that Allows, Controls, Denies, Defines, Dictates, Enables, Governs, Innovates, Promotes, Promises and Delivers :)”

- **Dave Heron (@Davipops)**

“Governance = Rules to tell us what we should or should not do outside the ways the technology itself limits us”

- **Marc Anderson (@SympMarc)**

“The thing you’re not doing, that you know you should be doing. :( :)”

- **Art Ho (Art\_Ho)**

“Governance is about taking action to help your organisation organise, optimise and manage your systems and resource”

- **James Fowell (@JFowell)**

“Guidelines that provide useful insights into the value that can be delivered to support the business’s aspirational state”

- **Jon Maunder (@Jon\_Maunder)**

“SP Governance is like parenting - give them enough rules to keep them safe, & enough flexibility to be creative and grow”

- **Linnea Lewis (@linthecity)**

“SharePoint Governance is a guideline of rules within your organisation, including what, why, when, where and how”

- **Andy Talbot (@SharePointAndy)**

“Governance is not a software or technology problem, it’s a people problem”

- **Seb Matthews (@SebMatthews)**

A remarkably divergent set of thoughts and ideas about what is perceived by the community as SharePoint Governance, and on face value a rather confusing set of responses.

This book will shed some light, deliver some clarity and be a comfort to all of you out there wrestling with what SharePoint Governance is, but more importantly is will outline why it matters and how to implement it in your organisation.

## **Governance versionality**

I accept that's not quite a real word, but *versionality* in the context of this manifesto is the state whereby Microsoft (or any other vendor) delivers an exciting new piece of technology, just as you get your head around the current version and have started to focus on the business not the technology.

At the time of writing, SharePoint 2010 is the prevalent version and the next incarnation, SharePoint 2013 has just been released. I've witnessed over the preceding year and a half that the technology community had just started changing the way they work. I was heartened by the fact that it felt like, as a community, we were moving at a quickening pace towards a more business led perspective on SharePoint projects.

But you suddenly changed!

Now, with the water-cooler chats, tweets and blog posts all looking forward to the next version of SharePoint, I fear and I'm already seeing the signs that a large proportion of you SharePoint people have had your heads turned. The shiny new version [it does look good!] is beckoning you with its new features and you have started to veer off-course and back to being SharePoint tech, not business focussed.

You may think that's bad news for me and this manifesto, but no...

Take note SharePoint 2007, 2010, 2013 or vNext++, or any other damn collaboration platform vendors out there.

Yes I mean you Yammer, Huddle, IBM, DropBox and SAP!

You all need Governance, this manifesto is timeless, or at least I hope it will be and I'll be waiting for the SharePoint vNext excitement to die down and a new business focussed normality to return.

Governance lasts forever...

I hope you'll join me on this kick-ass road-trip disrupting Governance thinking...

**Why?**

## Why did I write this book?

I'm sure you can't have helped but notice the huge amount of Governance content out there? There are blogs, videos, slides, tweets, status updates and water-cooler conversations to name just a few common sources. It's an absolute minefield for anyone new, trying to fathom out what the hell SharePoint Governance is, what it means to them and what the dire consequences are if they don't do anything about it soon.

Why would I want to write this manifesto about SharePoint Governance?

Why would I think it was a good idea to deliver "Disruptive Governance thinking for the masses"?

One reason is that I want to put a very clear stake into the ground about what Governance really is. My personal perspective is based on many years of using and implementing collaborative technology platforms across a range of sectors. Just like you, I have been stumbling through the Governance challenges that most, if not all organisations have with this type of solution. I really wanted to distil and articulate how you can practically deliver a holistic Governance approach within your organisation.

Lastly, I want to make a difference.

I want to make a disruptive, bold, emotional, arse-kicking, blinding-light kind of difference...

Whether that's even possible with a subject like SharePoint Governance I don't know, time will tell, but that is very much my 'big hairy audacious goal' (Collins & Jerry, 1994, <http://bit.ly/BigHairyAudaciousGoal>).

Simply put, I want to enable you all to deliver value to your organisations. I propose to do this by disrupting your SharePoint projects with the words, experiences, analogies, tools and techniques that are contained within this manifesto...

I hope that this book will cut through all the existing SharePoint Governance crap that is out there and steer you on a path to SharePoint awesomeness.

## What is this crazy thing called Governance?

Well at a very simple level, it's all about putting things, but not necessarily just large documents and overbearing rules, in place that help your project achieve its vision or goal. Put another way, Governance helps to ensure that your project can actually start to deliver the difference it should make to your business.

The word *Governance*, as stated in Wikipedia, is said to have been derived from the Greek verb Kubernáo, used for the first time in a metaphorical sense by Plato.

In Latin, the term Governance means 'To Steer' and this is my seminal definition, first imparted to me by the famed Australian SharePoint and collaboration sensemaker, Paul Culmsee (<http://bit.ly/Culmsee>).

It was this insight that brought clarity to my already business-focussed perspective of Governance. It's also pretty convenient for me that Governance can be grounded in the nautical steer theme, as I am an avid sailor!

Take a look at the statements below, are these concepts that you can see within your organisation?

- A SharePoint Vision
- Stories about SharePoint making a difference
- A SharePoint Business Case
- SharePoint Return on Investment
- Measurable SharePoint Business Outcomes.

**Ask yourself this:**

**Do you really deliver these things to your stakeholders and users?**

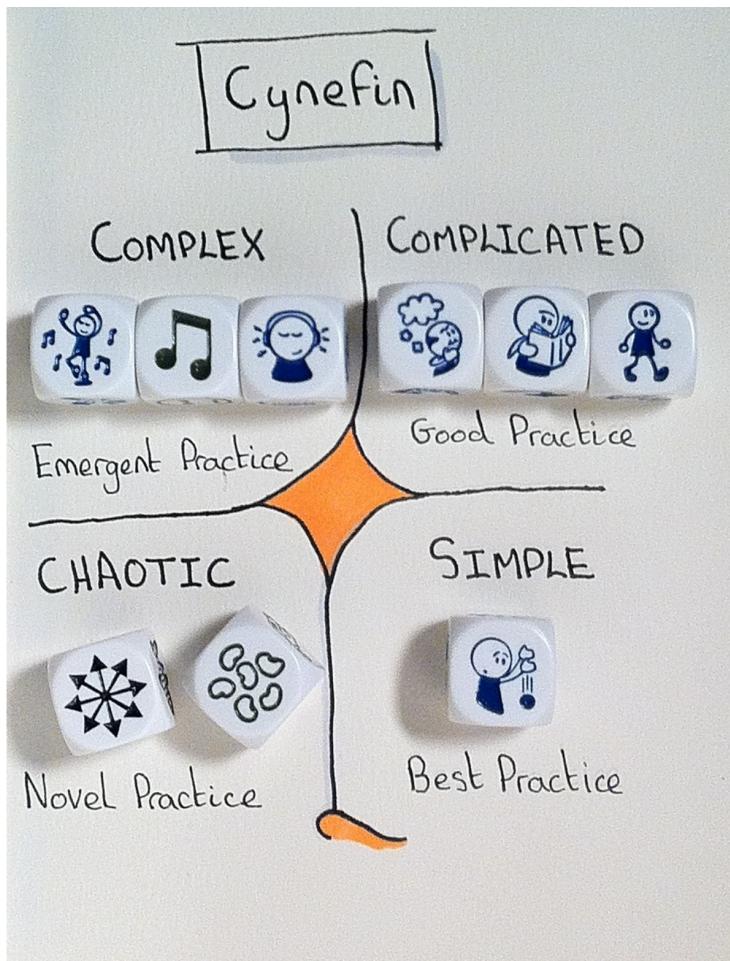
**Do you think perhaps Governance could be part of the answer?**

**I Do.**

## Why are SharePoint projects so complex?

My experience, over the last decade is that in way too many instances, SharePoint projects fail to deliver true business value. They're delivered as though they are just another Microsoft Office productivity solution, implemented as a technology project with a huge and catastrophic assumption that "If you build it, they will come" (Field of Dreams, 1989).

Dave Snowden's 'Cynefin Framework' (Snowden, 2012 <http://bit.ly/Cynefin>) is immensely useful in sensemaking the complexity of delivering collaborative and social solutions, such as SharePoint, to my clients. I apply the Cynefin Framework to demonstrate why we can't just assume that a technology solution on its own will deliver value and solve our organisations business problems.



Cynefin Framework sketch

Originally developed in the context of knowledge management and organisational strategy, ‘*Cynefin*’, a welsh word, literally translated to mean ‘*habitat, or place of multiple belongings*’, is now applied in many diverse ways, including complex adaptive systems, decision-making, cultural change, organisational strategy and community dynamics.

As you can see in the previous sketch, we have a typical four quadrant diagram, with each quadrant sensemaking particular scenarios, one of which I feel is most appropriate to SharePoint and collaborative or knowledge management projects.

In the **Simple quadrant**, life is very much cause and effect. As you can see by the character, every time they drop the ball it falls to the ground, that action is infinitely repeatable with the same predictable effect.

Have you ever implemented a SharePoint solution that you could repeat in any team, company, or sector that would always have the same repeatable and predictable cause and effect?

Nope, I didn’t think so!

So SharePoint, collaboration and knowledge management solutions don’t live here in this quadrant.

**You know all the focus in SharePoint land on ‘Best Practice’?**

**It’s an oxymoron.**

**Think about that for a second...**

Moving up to the **Complicated quadrant**, this is where the previously simple and repeatable relationship between cause and effect requires investigation, analysis or the application of expert knowledge in order to be effective. Here we can see from our characters that an expert is analysing the situation, the consultant character

is reading about that knowledge and implementing a solution influenced by that thinking. The result being the end user character is walking away happily. Now we may see this kind of behaviour in more infrastructure based projects such as Microsoft Exchange, but not for collaboration, knowledge management and SharePoint scenarios. True, most technology projects are implemented as ‘good practice’ or even worse perhaps using ‘best practice’, but if we analyse those projects we will see that the projects are deemed failures because they do not deliver the outcomes required by the business.

What I have found, in my experience, is that projects delivered with the assumption that the business problem they are solving is in the ‘Complicated’ or ‘Simple’ domain, although outwardly they do fail, they do make some positive steps towards the goal. The challenge is that the implementers, very often do not see things with a perspective of learning and continuous improvement and therefore the one-shot project cannot hope to capitalise on the value that has already been delivered.

Now things get interesting in the **Complex quadrant**. As you can see from the characters, we have music playing in the background and we have two emergent behaviours:

1. The first person is dancing
2. The second person is listening intently.

Both characters are happy and are deriving value from the music in different ways, perhaps ways we had not imagined or expected. From a Cynefin perspective the relationship between cause and effect is only perceived in retrospect, never in advance. For our characters, that implies that depending on whom they are, what they are doing and even their mood, different behaviours will emerge from the same music playing.

In terms of our work around SharePoint Governance, this fits nicely with what we experience every day. We implement a solution based

on what the business stakeholders state their requirements are, they use it for some period of time and then we start to hear about the users' unrest:

- It doesn't quite work right
- A particular team "doesn't work like that"
- When I said I wanted this I meant that
- Can you move the search box over there?
- But in this situation, we want it to work like this...

### Familiar?

#### Is that what tends to happen to your SharePoint projects?

What we are seeing are emergent requirements, emergent behaviours and emergent use-cases. Implementing the solution based on what *they* think they want helps the user community to further evolve their understanding of the problem or goal. It is through continuous improvement that we can work with them to evolve the solution to meet their goals.

Finally, for completeness, although a little out of the remit for this book, is the **Chaotic quadrant**. There is no relationship here between cause and effect at a systems level, so behaviour is unpredictable and although at times that may feel true of our SharePoint user community it isn't the reality!

So let us remember, SharePoint projects are people projects and people projects are emergent and therefore they are most definitely not a one shot solution.

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All the links within this book can be found in the following bit.ly bundle: [http://bit.ly/LinkBundle\\_SPGovManifesto](http://bit.ly/LinkBundle_SPGovManifesto)

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# Who are Soulsailor Consulting?

Soulsailor Consulting Ltd (<http://www.SoulsailorConsulting.com>) is a micro-consultancy, established early in 2012 by Ant Clay (<http://uk.linkedin.com/in/antonyclay>). We are focussed on enabling organisational value by positively disrupting your technology projects.

We work extensively with our clients and partner organisations to align their people and technology investments to organisational outcomes, whilst changing the way that they work through facilitation, visualisation, collaborative play and organisational storytelling.

We regularly deliver consultancy, coaching, training, workshops and speaks on a range of technology and organisational change topics including:

- Governance
- Requirements facilitation
- Workshop and meeting facilitation
- Collaboration projects (SharePoint, Yammer, Office365 etc.)
- Gamification strategy
- Social business
- Change management.

Feel free to get in touch (<http://bit.ly/TalkToSoulsailor>) if you think your technology projects need positively disrupting!