



Rich Picture Analysis – A Brief Overview

Rich Picture Analysis

Remember the old adage, a picture speaks a thousand words?

Rich pictures are awesome!

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What are they?

As the name suggests rich pictures are simply a pictorial representation of a problem domain. They are a ‘visual communication tool’ used in various fields, including systems thinking, business analysis, and problem-solving.

Rich pictures are graphical representations that capture complex ideas, concepts, and relationships in a simplified and holistic manner. Rich pictures are typically hand-drawn or created using simple drawing software and include various symbols, images, and annotations to convey information.

Rich pictures are a versatile tool for gaining insights, facilitating discussions, and making sense of complex situations. They are particularly valuable in situations where textual descriptions alone may not fully convey the richness and depth of a problem or system.



What can you use them for?

Simplifying Complexity

Rich pictures allow you to represent complex systems or situations in a way that is easy to understand. They simplify intricate relationships and make it easier for stakeholders to grasp the big picture.

Holistic View

They provide a holistic view of a problem or situation by including multiple perspectives, factors, and variables. This helps in identifying interdependencies and seeing how different elements relate to each other.

Communication

Rich pictures are excellent communication tools. They enable effective communication among team members, stakeholders, and decision-makers by presenting information in a visually engaging and intuitive format.

Engagement

Creating and discussing rich pictures can be a collaborative process that engages participants and encourages them to share their insights and perspectives. It fosters a shared understanding among team members.

Problem Solving

Rich pictures can be used as problem-solving tools. They help identify issues, root causes, and potential solutions by visualizing the problem space and its components.

Documentation



Rich pictures serve as documentation of a particular situation or system. They capture the current state, which can be useful for future reference, analysis, or comparison.

Creativity

Drawing rich pictures encourages creative thinking. It allows individuals to express their ideas and thoughts in a more freeform manner than traditional text-based documents.

Strategic Planning

Rich pictures can be used in strategic planning exercises to map out an organisation's goals, challenges, and strategies. They help in aligning teams and resources toward common objectives.

Stakeholder Engagement

When dealing with multiple stakeholders, rich pictures can facilitate discussions and negotiations by providing a visual representation of everyone's interests and concerns.

Education and Training

Rich pictures can be used as educational tools to teach complex topics or systems to others. They can make learning more engaging and accessible.

How do you create a rich picture?

You don't need to be an artist. You can simply use word art, or you can draw them freehand. The simple example below illustrates some of the key environmental influences that an information management strategy needs to consider for a local council.

Environmental influences on IM Strategy

