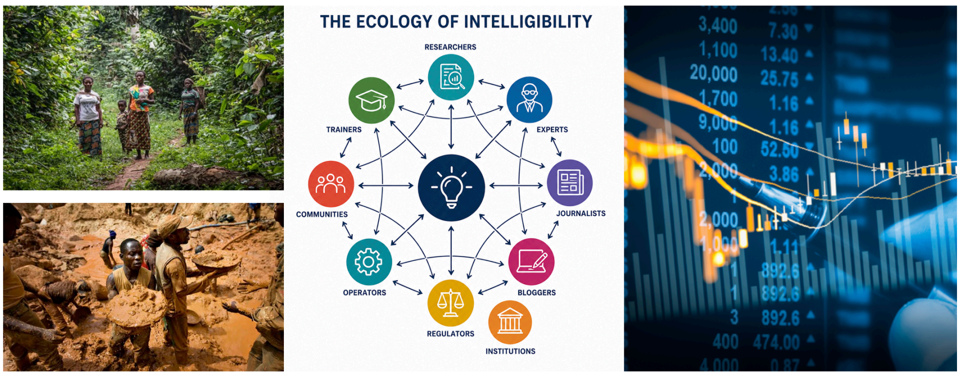
The misunderstanding of excessive communication (4)

The case of digital finance ecosystems



Blog post

A question that remains unanswered

The first three articles in this series led to a simple conclusion: complex innovations need to be explained. Networks thrive on translation. And digital finance systems rely on an invisible infrastructure of intelligibility as important as their technical infrastructure.

One question remains, however: Who actually produces this intelligibility? Who builds the bridges between languages? Who enables very different stakeholders to understand the same project?

No actor possesses the complete vision

Digital finance ecosystems share a unique characteristic: they simultaneously combine complex technologies, financial mechanisms, legal regulations, public policies, and local realities.

However, no single actor naturally masters all of these dimensions. The developer understands the code. The investor understands the business models. The regulator understands the legal constraints. Local communities understand the realities on the ground. Each sees a part of the system. No one sees it in its entirety.

The developers create the infrastructure

At the heart of these systems are developers, software architects, and digital infrastructure specialists. They design the mechanisms that enable the flow of data, assets, and evidence. Their world is one of code, protocols, and architectures.

But this expertise has its limits. It often remains difficult to access for those who don't share the same technical background. The technology must therefore be translated before it can be understood.

The operators connect the theory to the field

Between digital infrastructure and its daily use, operators emerge. Their role is to transform a theoretical architecture into concrete practices. They organize procedures. They adapt systems to local realities. They resolve unforeseen difficulties. In other words, they continually translate the logic of the system into the language of action.

Public institutions translate towards the general interest

Government agencies and regulators operate with a different logic. They are not solely interested in technical performance. They also consider the economic, social, and institutional consequences of innovations. Their role is to connect the opportunities offered by technologies to the collective objectives pursued by public policies. They translate innovation into the language of the public interest.

Investors translate into value

Investors look at the same devices from a different angle. They seek to understand the risks. The opportunities. Value creation mechanisms. Development prospects. A blockchain then becomes less of a technical architecture than a potential economic infrastructure. The translation continues but changes language.

Local communities translate into experience

In projects related to natural resources, the environment, or territorial development, local communities play a vital role. For them, the issues are rarely expressed in terms of tokenization, distributed ledgers, or digital protocols. They concern employment, income, infrastructure, rights, and local development. An innovation only truly acquires meaning when it can be linked to these concrete realities.

The media as collective translators

The media finally play a role that is often underestimated. They do more than simply transmit information. They construct narratives. They select topics. They make certain innovations visible. They reformulate complex concepts for wider audiences. In highly technological fields, this function becomes particularly important. Visibility often depends on intelligibility.

The real challenge: languages

This diversity of stakeholders is accompanied by a diversity of language. The developer speaks of protocols. The investor speaks of valuation. The lawyer speaks of compliance. The public official speaks of sovereignty or development. The citizen speaks of employment or trust. They all sometimes refer to the same project.

But they are not necessarily talking about the same thing. The main challenge, therefore, does not lie in the flow of information. It lies in the flow of meaning.

Translate the translations

In complex networks, the difficulty often goes beyond simple technical popularization. It is also necessary to translate the translations themselves. The representations produced by engineers must be understood by financiers. Territorial expectations must be intelligible to administrations. Political objectives must be linked to operational realities. Translation then becomes a continuous process of consistency.

A second infrastructure

When observing a digital finance system, attention is usually focused on the visible infrastructure: the blockchain, the platforms, the validation mechanisms, the traceability systems. Yet, behind this technical architecture lies another infrastructure.

A much less visible but equally essential infrastructure. An infrastructure made up of documents, analyses, training, meetings, exchanges, articles, and discussions. Its objective n'est pas de faire fonctionner le système. Son objectif est de le rendre compréhensible.

The chains of intelligibility

This infrastructure functions like a chain. Developers explain the mechanisms to operators. Operators present them to policymakers. Policymakers integrate them into public policies. The media make them accessible to wider audiences. Each actor, in turn, reformulates what they have understood. Intelligibility thus circulates through a continuous succession of interpretations.

Why do social networks forget?

When a system functions correctly, this infrastructure becomes almost invisible. The stakeholders see the results. They see less of the translation operations that make them possible. The acquired knowledge then appears natural. Explanations seem repetitive. Publications sometimes seem excessive.

Yet, networks are constantly evolving. New players arrive. Technologies change. Regulations transform. Understanding must be continually rebuilt..

Another interpretation of the communication

This is probably where the real misunderstanding lies. Strategic notes, analyses, briefing notes, articles, and blog posts can be perceived as just another accumulation of information.

But they can also be understood as cognitive maintenance operations designed to preserve the coherence of a complex network. The difference is fundamental. In one case, communication appears as a cost. In the other, it becomes an infrastructure.

The risk is not in doing too much

The work of Herbert Simon, Everett Rogers, Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, John Law, and Susan Leigh Star ultimately leads to a shared conclusion. Complex networks rarely suffer from an excess of translation. They suffer much more often from a deficit of intelligibility.

Innovations do not spread on their own. Complex objects do not speak for themselves. Networks do not maintain themselves spontaneously. In each case, actors ensure the continuous work of reformulation, mediation, and harmonization.

The real question, therefore, is not whether two or three articles per week devoted to digital finance constitute an excess of communication. The question is whether the chains of intelligibility that allow actors to understand, cooperate, and act together continue to be maintained.

Because in a socio-technical network, translation is not an additional communication tool. It constitutes one of the conditions for the very existence of the network.