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# Finding the right tech partner

Digital Competences for CSOs - blended online course, May 2019

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**Hello! My name is Tin.**

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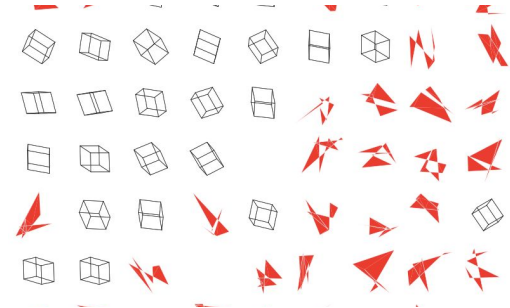
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# Tin's two hats

Social Innovation Specialist



Computational artist



@tingeber, tin.fyi

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# I worked with:



techsoup



INTERNATIONAL  
LAND  
COALITION



THE  
ENGINE  
ROOM



global witness



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# Two webinars

## Finding the right tech partner

1. Lost in translation
2. Define well
3. Do the homework
4. Write an amazing RFP  
(Request For Proposals)

## Working with tech service providers

- ...coming soon!
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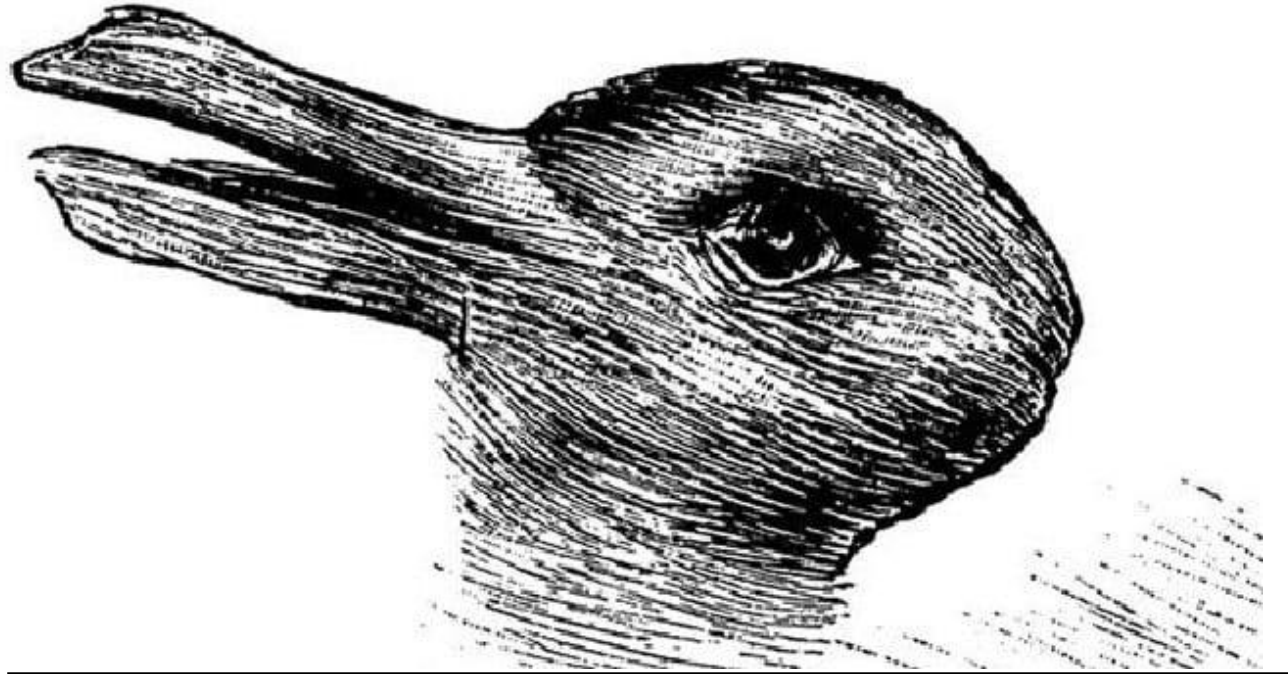
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# 1. Lost in Translation

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**What do you see?**



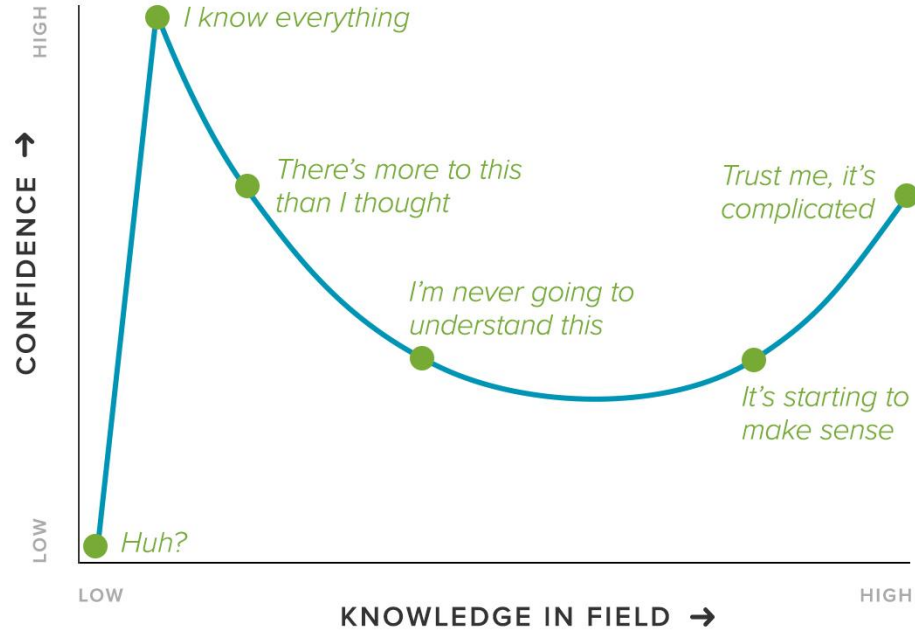
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# Our understanding is limited by:

- Our expertise
  - Our experience
  - Our bias (implicit or explicit)
  - Our expectations
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## The Dunning Kruger effect



WHEN A USER TAKES A PHOTO,  
THE APP SHOULD CHECK WHETHER  
THEY'RE IN A NATIONAL PARK...

SURE, EASY GIS LOOKUP.  
GIMME A FEW HOURS.

... AND CHECK WHETHER  
THE PHOTO IS OF A BIRD.

I'LL NEED A RESEARCH  
TEAM AND FIVE YEARS.



IN CS, IT CAN BE HARD TO EXPLAIN  
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EASY  
AND THE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE.

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# Story Time



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## 2. Define Well

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# Checklist

1. What's your main objective?
    - Short, concise, clear
  2. What do you want the tool to accomplish?
    - How will this contribute to your objective?
  3. Who will use the tool?
    - Why would they want to use your tool? Why not?
    - What would prevent them from using your tool?
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# Focus on needs, not tools

## Tools-based

“We need a website”

“We need a data dashboard”

“We need an app”

## Needs-based

A way for our partners to know about our work

An overview of our results

A way for the public to **monitor XY in real time**

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# List your assumptions

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# 3. Do the Homework

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# Checklist

1. Describe in detail what the tool should do
    - Features features features
    - Must have, nice to have, wishlist
  2. Research existing tools
    - Which apps or platforms do similar things?
  3. Ask around
    - Colleagues or partners that had similar projects: how did it go?
  4. What could go wrong?
    - What are the risks for you and your stakeholders in doing this project?
    - Unintended consequences?
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**Tech service providers**  
*will not know*  
**what is best for you**

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# Make a detailed features list

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# **“We need a database that includes basic information about our volunteers.”**

## **Essential:**

- The database should include fields for a person’s name, address, telephone number and job description.
- Users should be able to attach a PDF file to each person’s entry, for CVs and other information.
- Users should be able to search using any of these categories.

## **Desirable:**

- Users should be able to print information from any person’s entry in .csv format, without including the PDF document.
- Users should be able to search for information inside the attached PDF files as well as information in the database.

## **Nice to have:**

- Users should be able to attach multiple PDF files to each entry.
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# 4. Write an Amazing RFP

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# What even is an RFP?

1. Organizational background
  2. Short project description
  - 3. Project requirements and project objectives**
  4. Project budget
  5. Milestones and deadlines
  6. Questions and required information
  7. Contact information and deadline for submissions
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**Step 3:**  
**everything we did earlier**

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# Resources

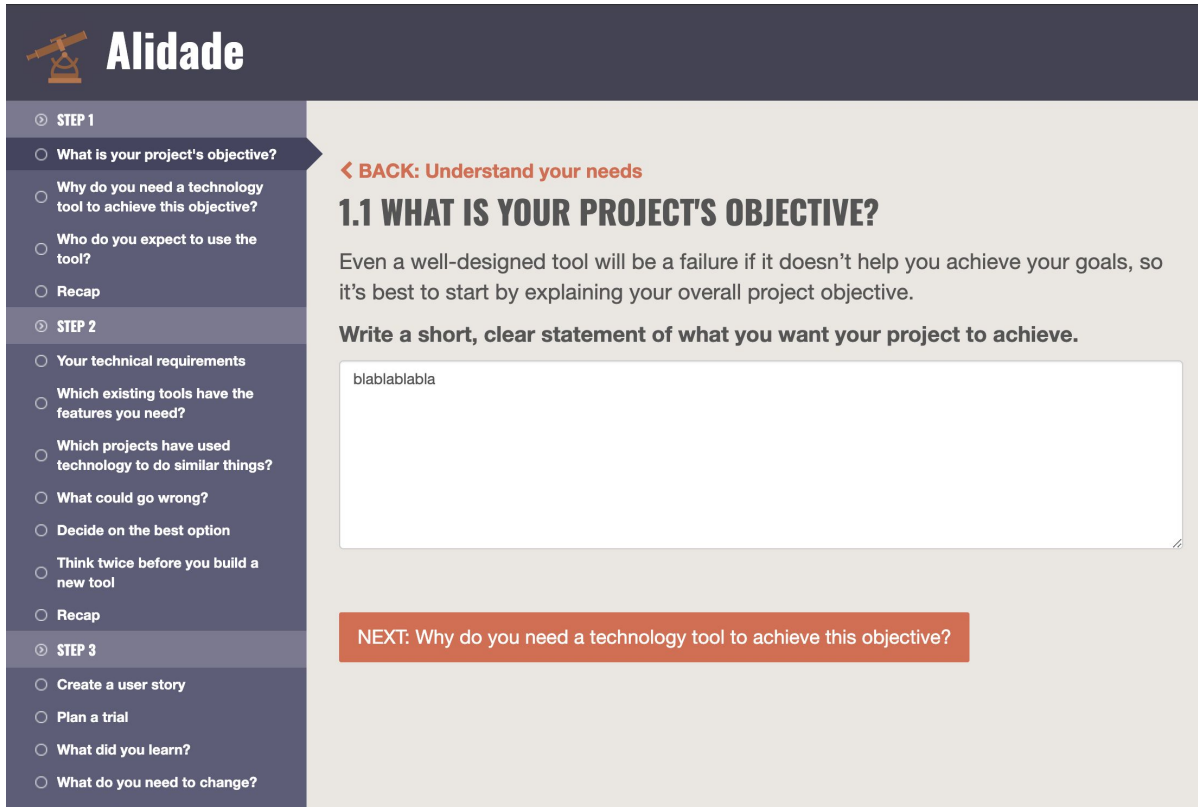
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# Alidade

[www.alidade.tech](http://www.alidade.tech)

- Interactive tool
- Helps create a plan for finding technology tools that suit your social change project
- Built on in-depth research in Kenya and South Africa
- Designed for activists and social change organisations



**Alidade**

② STEP 1

- What is your project's objective?
- Why do you need a technology tool to achieve this objective?
- Who do you expect to use the tool?
- Recap

② STEP 2

- Your technical requirements
- Which existing tools have the features you need?
- Which projects have used technology to do similar things?
- What could go wrong?
- Decide on the best option
- Think twice before you build a new tool
- Recap

② STEP 3

- Create a user story
- Plan a trial
- What did you learn?
- What do you need to change?

**< BACK: Understand your needs**

## 1.1 WHAT IS YOUR PROJECT'S OBJECTIVE?

Even a well-designed tool will be a failure if it doesn't help you achieve your goals, so it's best to start by explaining your overall project objective.

**Write a short, clear statement of what you want your project to achieve.**

blablabla

**NEXT: Why do you need a technology tool to achieve this objective?**

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# TechSoup RFP Library

<https://www.techsoup.org/support/articles-and-how-tos/rfp-library>

- Great overview
- Lots of templates and guides
- TechSoup has decades of experience supporting NGOs with technology



# The CAST playbook

<https://playbook.wearecast.org.uk/>

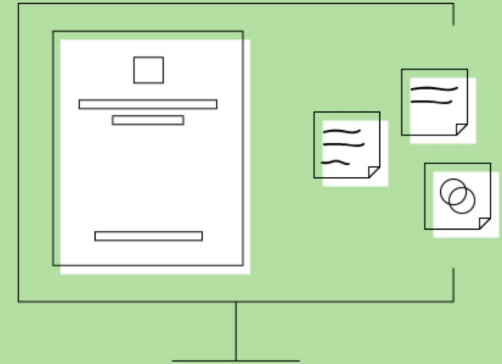
- A slightly different approach
- Closer to “design thinking”
- Helps understand the process a tech service provider goes through

## PLAYBOOK

1. Mindset 2. Discover 3. Define 4. Develop

**The CAST Playbook captures the stages and processes of how we work with charities to create and deliver better digital products and services.**

We've worked with many small and larger charities who've found this way of working helpful. There's no one right way, but we hope our approach helps you.



# Homework

By 05.06.2019

- Go to [alidade.tech](http://alidade.tech)
  - Complete Step 1 and Step 2
  - Download PDF with results and send it to us
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