

Visual Explorer: How We Got Here

The origins and history of Visual Explorer

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Lightly edited transcript of the webinar recording January 23, 2019

Recording posted at: <https://vimeo.com/319030056>

OUTLINE

- Intro Question: What experiences do you have of using imagery in your work? DH
- Leading Creatively / The Leader's Edge, Making Common Sense DH
- Looking at art, slowing looking down, dialogue, meaning making around complex challenges DH
- Mediated dialogue. Star Model. DH
- "We need tools for this work." CP
- Signe and Chris Schaefer, the Post Card Exercise / Burnside CP
- Chuck and Robert do a Northern Telecomm retreat for senior execs using post cards. Client request yields VE version 1.0 CP
- Make lots of copies of VE 1.0 CP
- Discover stock photography CP
- Viral spread in and outside of CCL. "There is a VE session somewhere in the world right now."
- Airlee Community DH
- Hands slapped for the website DH
- CCL Labs as a result DH
- Different sizes DH
- Digital trend, portable DH
- Only work? No. For all parts of life. DH
- VE in Africa CP
- VE around the world (various cool slides) CP
- The rise of competitors and collaborators. Do it yourself! DH
- Current state of Labs DH
- VE online via Curt DH
- VE Special Edition DH
- Final Question: What ideas are in your head right now? DH

START RECORDING

David: So, as we get going, I know it's not quite 10 o'clock now, but welcome everybody to this session. You're going to hear some storytelling from Chuck and myself, I'm David. And what we're going to do is take you through a story, to our animation story. We thought as people were coming in, we would like you to respond to the question that's about to appear on the screen. And what I suggest you do is put in the chat area, if you take the stars as image one, the girl on the bike is image two, the sunset is image three, and clockwork is image four.

Choose one of those images, and just kind of respond, you put one if you chose the first image. What experiences do you have of using imagery in your work? And if you can respond, and make it to everyone, you can respond in the chat area, to choose an image, and say what experiences you have with using imagery in the work that you do. So let's see some stuff in the chat area. One is the stars, two is the bike, three is the sunset, four is clockwork, and just type the number. And then experiences you have in using imagery in your work, just type something into the chat area, and post it to everyone.

Chuck: Or you could do it in your own mind. We always support ... Yeah. You don't have to listen to what David's telling you to do, by the way. I'm going to just try and play my familiar role-

David: And if you could-

Chuck: With David, which is a nagging skeptic.

David: And if you can do me a favor, please mute yourself. Mute your microphone, because I can hear somebody typing, and if you can just mute yourself, please.

Chuck: David, I think I can mute all.

David: Oh you can, that's good.

Chuck: And you might have to unmute ... So you might have to unmute yourself. So here I go.

David: I just unmuted myself.

Chuck: Okay.

David: So let's move to the ... and people can continue doing that for a minute, I'll give you one more minute, and then I'm going to move into the various slides. Let's see, we've got people from APAC with us, Chuck.

Chuck: Excellent, welcome.

David: And it'd be good late evening, I think, probably.

Chuck: Yeah, so looks like we have the 10 o'clock eastern time crowds about here David, so maybe we ought to get started.

David: Okay. So I'll leave it up for just a brief moment, you saw those images, and we've got some responses to the question. So what you're going to hear is the story. So as far as Chuck and myself know about who are the [crosstalk 00:03:44] ... somebody needs to be muted. I think it's-

David: So Chuck and I have been colleagues and very good friends for many years. And both storytellers, and we're going to try our best not to ramble too much, to have some precision in what we're going to be doing. And so we're going to present the story of ... it's an innovation story in its own right, how the innovation called visual explorer came about. And this follows the tradition of H. Smith Richardson, the founder of The Center for Creative Leadership. And here's an example of us taking a risk when nobody in the center, we hadn't got tools, other than psychometric instruments, and publications.

And Chuck and myself, supported by some great people, including our bosses, to actually come up with a product that would actually turn out to be a very useful product. And the CCL, and you'll hear stories about how it's used, and how it came about, and so on. So our next slide, Chuck. So it's origins are actually even before Leading Creatively. But this was like one of the major pivot points, that we created a program, Chuck was the lead researcher, and I was the lead subject matter expert, and program manager for Leading Creatively.

Which we started doing the research on that in 1994, and it was eventually released to the unsuspecting world through CCL channels in 1996. And this was a program that was ... you'll see it, we'll say it more often than not, very much an art making forum for teaching leadership. We basically were posing the question, what if leadership really is an art? So move forward, Chuck.

And part of this was also, and about the same time in 19 ... probably about the same time we were doing this research. Chuck and our good friend and colleague, Bill [Draff 00:05:56], were doing some research about thinking about leadership in a way that was a little different than others. And thinking of leadership as a social process. And that was built into the research that we were doing around Leading Creatively, and that led to various publications, including a book that you'll see in a moment. So move forward.

You know, leadership can be thought of as an individual, you know, person in white water. We wanted to think of that more of as a collective, so the next slide, Chuck. In

which we were using a working definition of making sheer sense of complexity as a working definition for our research, and for the basis of the Leading Creatively program, and you'll see here that everybody's scrambling to make sense of the direction we're going on, even one person pointing in a direction that's opposite to the flow of the water. So-

Chuck: Hey David, could you hear me okay?

David: Yes I can.

Chuck: Can you hear me? Okay, I just wanted to interject a little bit about the leadership in permanent white water. That was interesting. Peter [Vail 00:07:02] wrote the book Leadership in Permanent White Water, and we love the book. We just had one little quibble that he was saying white water is just totally chaotic, and really it's almost impossible to make sense of it, but you have to do that anyway. But we were observing that hey, people working together make sense of white water all the time. So there's some human capacity, and Peter would agree with us, and did, and does, that there is a human capacity for making sense of complexity. And that we just needed to describe that.

David: And one of the things that came out of Leading Creatively, when people were sharing the challenges they were wrestling with, and the creations that they were using in the program, for example, collages, images selected in a sort. We use something called the star model, which was actually a process created by [inaudible 00:08:00], who was an expert on how you process dreams collectively. And actually dream making, and processing was actually part of the program.

Here's another way of representing this model for creating dialogue around a shared challenge. And it's the whole notion of putting something in the middle in order to be able to have a conversation. Here's an artistic representation of dialogue, right? There's people have got different parts on the elephant, and they're making sense of what's in the middle of the conversation. And this is of course, a piece of fine art from Japan.

It's not just about imagery in the middle, and this is actually part of the program was about musical improvisation. And so people here are being given the challenge to create something. And what they're creating is a short piece of music, and having a dialogue about it. Move to the next one, Chuck. There is where you can take over, some of the early origins of Visual Explorer.

Chuck: Yeah, so about the same time, we had a visitor, Chris [Shafer 00:09:11]. Who was a teacher/facilitator/trainer, a colleague and good friend of Robert Burnside. And he came to town and did a workshop for us. And it was about personal identity, and personal growth. And so a bunch of us went, and he used a tool that he called the post carte exercise. And Chris had a box of postcards, and he said, spread pictures around on a table, and he said, "I want you to pick an image that represents your personal identity five years ago. Okay, now find another one that represents your identity now. And then another one of what you aspire to five years in the future."

And you know, that model itself has stuck with us, we call it the from here to there model. But the postcards were so intriguing, and a number of us starting using them. And in fact, I was thrilled, because I had a box of postcards underneath my bed from when I was in college, and afterwards, that I thought I was done with. But oh yeah, I can use these. And so several of us started using them. Robert Burnside, and [Starlitus Chantus 00:10:18] were working in Leader Lab in similar ways.

And so Robert and I had the chance to do a program together for the first time. So it's kind of remarkable that this all happened for the first time that Robert and I got together. Invited me to do a senior leadership team training, and it was on creativity. And I'm thinking wow, I'm a young person, what do I have to tell a senior team about creativity? But of course, Robert was leading the charge, and I was right there with him, and we did the postcard exercise. And it was a big hit, and shockingly so almost, that this really stayed, the senior team there actually from Northern Telecom. Thank you out there.

And the human resource person said, "I want those postcards, because they represent the work of this team." And well we said, "You can't have them, they're ours." And she says, "Well please, make copies of them. And I want you to make copies of them at eight and a half by 11, so they're even more vivid." And I was thinking to myself, no, they're going to look terrible, but they looked great. And we think it's because of just the magic of photo processing, even back then.

And so we moved into copies of postcards, and started using those. And this is out of the very first gig we did using the postcards this way. We had them blown up, we started making copies. And I think we said at first, "Let's make 10 copies for CCL faculty, that ought to last them a long time." And those first 10 copies disappeared in a matter of hours, and we made another 10, and then another 10. And that's pretty much how leadership ... Visual Explorer was born. Was through that one client exercise, and of course, it was informed by all these other threads that came together. But in the moment, that's when it happened. It was just a really cool moment.

And then we moved into thinking more about different sizes of the cards, commercializing them, getting a little more serious in printing them. So remember, CCL really never created standalone tools before. This was unusual, and people have been asking, and Leading Creatively program, what about some tools? You know David, I can tell the story of when ... Well, let me tell David, you know, you were representing the sort of inner work that people were doing in the program of inner developments. And it's not so much about outward tools, it's about the inward experience.

And I said, "Yeah, and I'm an engineer, and so are you by the way, David. And we need some tools so people could do this kind of work." And so we got in the spirit of actually creating tools that exemplified the work of the Leading Creatively program with Visual Explorer being the first one to do that. So David, I think I can turn it back over to you at this point. About the community, I think this is where we talk about even the [inaudible 00:13:25] community, and all the different ways people started using Visual Explorer, including personally? Or are you on mute, David? Oh, we can't hear you, David.

David: Yeah, it's me, I'm back, yeah. I muted myself for a moment.

Chuck: Yeah, now you're back. Okay.

David: So one of the things that the people ask us, "Is this something that you can use outside the organization, outside the corporate work," and so on. Obviously, can be used in coaching, and that's one of the reasons why we developed the card deck side, it's a very important sort of version of the Visual Explorer. But lots of stories, here's a story I'll tell you ... Two, three quick stories. One of them was this, there's two old friends who haven't seen each other for a long time, and they met at a railway station. And one of them pulls out a deck of Visual Explorer. And they tell the story catching up, each other up using imagery as a way of doing that. Two old friends.

And we've other stories, one of my favorite stories is of one of my colleagues. Who his daughter was going through a rough patch, she was just graduated from college, and she was trying to figure out her life, and all of those things. And the relationship between the two of them wasn't doing too well. And at one point when they were started to try and have a conversation, he rushed out to his car, pulled out a box of ... Or a pack of the postcard size Visual Explorer, throw them out on the floor, and asked her to tell the story of what was going on with them. What she was thinking about, what her issues were, through the imagery. It was a several hour conversation, which actually both helped her, and indeed, helped her relationship get to a really good place.

So it was like here was a personal story. And there's all sorts of other personal stories we've got, where people have used individually to help deal with crises in their lives, and so on. So it's not just about using it for solving organizational challenges, and work challenges of various kinds. Move forward, Chuck. One of the things that Visual Explorer did, there's lots of intricate stories about what we had to do inside CCL to get this to take off. You heard Chuck talking about where we had people wanting to copy this, and we actually ... The Leading Creatively program had a ... Whoever that was needs to mute.

Chuck: I'm going to mute all, David.

David: Thank you. So we had a community that would meet every March of alumni from the program, and this is one of the forums we used for actually testing out Visual Explorer. Giving them a version of Visual Explorer, asking them to use it, give us feedback on the images, and how they used it, and all of that sort of thing. And Visual Explorer actually became the first product that we actually emerged out of CCL Labs. CCL Labs is something we've been talking about for a while.

One of our former colleagues, Barbara [Demeris 00:16:39] was somebody who was interested in us creating some kind of lab space where we put beta products out, and let people play with them, and give us feedback on them, and help take whatever products to the next stage. Visual Explorer was the first of those products, and then we had things like leadership metaphor explorer. Values explorer, experience explorer, a

number of products have come out of this. And we created a website where we would actually capture those stories, it's a blog, basically. That [crosstalk 00:17:12]-

Chuck: David, remember the story. The first-

David: Go on.

Chuck: Website we created like this?

David: Oh, yeah. Yeah, Chuck, we remember this now fondly. When we first tried to do something to stay in touch with alumni of the Leading Creatively program, to track them, to let them know the latest thinking that was going on, and so on. We created a website, we thought we were doing the right thing, but it was a little premature for our organization. And Chuck and I, we didn't completely derail our careers in the organization, but we did get our wrists slapped for stepping out a little too far, and pushing the boundaries a little too far. That's come full circle, and it's very much ... CCL Labs is very much supported by CCL as a valid place to experiment with potential new tools.

Here's another tool that came out of ... This is a product that supported the work of [Chris Earns 00:18:11] and others around boundary expanding leadership. This was a deck called boundary explorer. I've already mentioned leadership metaphor explorer, you'll see some other ones. Move forward, Chuck.

Chuck: So I just wanted to mention here, notice the imagery. So not only were we creating tools, we're also exploring this visual realm, tactile realm. And so there was this work called boundary expanding leadership, really good work, solid research, great stories. And a little bit tricky to talk about in a classroom, and to explain to people. A lot of moving parts. Different ideas nested within other ideas. And so this idea was that we could create simplicity out of complexity, with a tool like this, that's tactile.

Now we often refer to that as an essential. So we're [essentializing 00:19:05] the ideas. And it was just very attractive to use ... to find and use imagery that stood for the various concepts. So the idea of buffering, there you can see in the upper left, the idea of a wall resident right now is the notion of buffering. And then transforming at the whole other end of butterflies. So just this notion that sometimes we use too many words and not enough images in the work we do.

David: Move forward, Chuck. Yeah, this is another of the products that's come out of Visual Explorer, which is the latest version of this is authored by our colleague Aaron White, which is a future trends cards, where we're asking people to reflect on things that are going on, emerging trends that are impacting them individually and corporately.

This is another one that's called the early leadership toolkit, which actually is a mixture of several explorer decks. And this whole notion of explorer came out of Visual Explorer, and that was applied as a metaphor, a way of thinking about other ways of having

dialogue, and making sense of challenges that people are working on individually or collectively.

So this, Visual Explorer, is obviously one of the things that was happening a lot after the first couple of years of running. People were saying, "We're running webinars now, and we're doing a lot of work online, and we want to use imagery." And we were up for the challenge, but it was a difficult one to wrestle with. And you'll see, and I'll tell a bit more about it later, that we had to figure a way of getting images that weren't actually owned by some large giant who controlled and owned the images, and wouldn't allow those to be used digitally, only in print form.

So we had to come up with ways of actually exploring that. One of the things that we did was to experiment with an app, this was an Apple app, Visual Explorer, we tried it out as a way of doing Visual Explorer. It mimicked some of the processes, including the star model. Turned out to be an experiment that we learned a lot from. It was withdrawn-

Chuck: And I think we sold too-

David: And that we ... Yeah, we did, yeah. And I wasn't one of the buyers.

Chuck: I think I got one free, so I don't know who the poor soul was that bought one.

David: Yeah.

Chuck: So David, I'll let you continue, but I'll maybe just interject here a little bit. It's been really interesting, sort of given the prior story of the almost explosive growth of the print version, right? And then subsequently, the growing pains of further attempts to grow and expand, and use the tool. And it seemed obvious from near the very beginning that a digital version was just the way to go. You know, the world's going digital, and people have devices, and in fact, one of the early devices was something called iTouch leader ... what'd we call it? Leader Touch or something. And it had a Visual Explorer on it, and we learned pretty quickly that people don't really like to pull out their phones and use Visual Explorer.

And so the direction its gone has been more of a blended kind of environment. Where yeah, the digital versions are available, but guess what? You can also take pictures of the images, and that's a digital version. A-ha, that's actually pretty profound. And so there's all kinds of ways in which, especially with things like Facebook, and posting your imagery, of taking photographs of this kind of work, and reusing it, and recycling it for future use. Just kind of a way of an intro there, David.

David: We ran a webinar using Second Life, where people were avatars. And this avatar standing right in the front of you is actually Chuck's avatar. Where we've got a wall with visual imagery on, and people were selecting images based on challenge they might be wrestling with. And having conversations with each other in Second Life around those images. So-

Chuck: And I got to have a tail.

David: [crosstalk 00:23:27].

Chuck: A striped tail in Second Life.

David: Just move it forward, Chuck, that's another example of the Second Life. Also using it, talk to this one, Chuck. This is one of the ones that you had a lot, a big hand in.

Chuck: Yeah, so our dear friend AI [Selvin 00:23:45] from Verizon. First time I met AI, he walked into my office, he had been developing some software for dialogue around complex challenges. And I said, "Boy, that sounds awfully familiar, we do dialogue around complex challenges, and it's fascinating you have software, and you're using it in Verizon, actually solving complex technical challenges in this environment. Show me."

He pulls it out, and he says, "Well, this is the textual version. And oh by the way, you see these nodes? They could be anything. They could be images, videos, any media." And I said, "Really? And so here's our Visual Explorer folder, see if you could import those." And he pretty much put it on his computer and imported it, and voila. The Compendium Visual Explorer mashup was invented in about 20 minutes. And another one of these moments where it's almost an explosive idea or innovation, and then things recrystallize around it. And so combining the images with mind mapping is just a great thing. And so there's an example. And so here David, you could pick it up here.

David: Yeah, so mind mapping is something that I've enjoyed for many years. It's one of those crossovers between the verbal and the visual. And here you see at that magnified in many ways, where somebody is basically creating a collective mind map. This was actually a group of people, and they're using their images to convey the ideas about what their purpose is. Chuck, you talk to this one, because ... And this on the next one, because it's kind of an interesting one.

Chuck: Yeah.

David: This is a visual verbal thing that we do, which where we've got basically a PowerPoint show, and we've collected the images into the PowerPoint show for some event, or other. Go Chuck.

Chuck: Yes, and we collected the things that people would say. So we learned how to get written notes from people, or sometimes an email, we'd get notes from people. And then take the poetic compression we used to call it, I think that was a term we enjoyed, poetic compression of ... people would write something rather long. And we, given the limits of the slide, we would take the essence of it, and post it. And then feed it back to people. So the idea is that this becomes something ... We take the input from them, we create a PowerPoint show. We even put these things to music, and make a video out of them, and give it back to people as a discussion tool.

And so again, reusing and recycling, which is something we got from Compendium as well. This one here is interesting, and I think I won't get into too much trouble by saying who the client is here. The clue is in the upper right first text box there. What large corporation out there right now has that description? And to my Google friends out there, you know who you are, and you know why you said this. And the fact is that they were wrestling with the fact that their growth is just explosive.

And then in the same vein, how do we continue the spirit, the original spirit of Google? We need a virtual [Florence 00:27:10]. Human triumphs that last a long time. So just remarkable the way the tool would just help people express themselves. And then help them reflect on their reflection. So it's interesting, there's layers to this, reflecting on reflection. Maybe I should just pick this one up, David.

David: Yeah, sure.

Chuck: So one of our great partners in work has been Catholic Healthcare Partners. Client, and research colleagues. And they ran a series of programs for their leadership academy. And at the conclusion of the academy was a year long cohort. They would have people choose Visual Explorer images that summed up how they had grown. And they would create a quilt out of those images. And the way they would do that, is they would take the digital images, which we provided, print them onto cloth, and then stitch the prints into a quilt. So that's actually something like an eight by eight quilt hanging on the wall there, just beautiful. So David's going to just show you some more beautiful things people make.

David: Yeah, you can see where this was made. I think this was probably Clemson or somebody like that using Visual Explorer-

Chuck: [crosstalk 00:28:33], yep.

David: And so one of the things, here's a little question that comes in sometimes, by the way, to be aware of. That sometimes when we're using Visual Explorer in certain cultures, we have to actually remove certain images, because they're not going to go down too well. And I remember hearing the story about one of the images being ... One particular image being removed from the deck for use in this culture, I've experienced that using it in Dubai a few years ago. I was using Visual Explorer where I had to take out about 10 images that were probably ones that wouldn't go down too well in that culture. So move forward, Chuck. That's probably-

Chuck: You know, so it's interesting David. There's been ... I guess I can say this. A certain amount of nudity over the years in Visual Explorer. And Lady Godiva is one, and of course it's very tasteful, it's a classic print, but still. And then there's the woman in the waterfall, and then we use fine art images. And oh by the way, they'll be a bit of classic nudity. And I say that not to snicker, but just to say, "Interesting."

When you get into this world of art, it's just a more human and larger world, and it can contain things like sensitivities. And people have worried, "Oh, should I be sensitive

about the Visual Explorer images?" And the answer is always, "Hey, if you don't like those images, take them out, and use it anyway." And that's always been the correct answer, and it's always worked it seems. Which is very satisfying to think that. Because a lot of our other work doesn't really work that way.

Well it's hard to course correct it somehow. This is at the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. We were visiting there, and walked in, and were just excited to see that they had been using Visual Explorer to talk about their new culture, and just soliciting stuff from people. Another example-

David: This is probably-

Chuck: Yeah.

David: This is probably-

Chuck: Of an artifact.

David: This is probably our colleague Alice Kay, using it in an organizational setting. Working with senior leadership team, and talking about their team and so on. So they're all kinds of ways of representing, these were the actual hard copy images, which have been posted on a wall. And then a nice picture taken of that for use later on. Jack and I, one of the first ones we ever did, we actually had people creating a collage. Actually, we used it do something we called a movie making. In which they told the story of where they are, where they want to be, and where they want to be ... And the transition from where they are now to where they want to be.

And what we did was to get people to ... They created this movie making thing, with the images. And then told the story, which we recorded. And then when they'd done it, the next day they were actually working on, they were a new part in the organization. They posted the whole thing on a window, so they can see it, and it became a representation of where they wanted to be, and helped the conversation they were having in a much more business oriented way the following day. So it was something that was held there for as long as they needed to, to help make sense of the work they were doing together. Next one.

Chuck: David, this is the part where we have to pick up the pace a little bit-

David: All right, okay.

Chuck: And I just wanted to say going forward that a lot of the images are included just because they're beautiful, and cool. There's always [crosstalk 00:32:28] elements that the collages and mash ups become works of art themselves. So we're going to go a little faster, right David?

David: Yeah, sure, yeah.

Chuck: I'll try to fast forward through some of the things I was going to say. Because we wanted to actually spend some time at the end hearing some questions from people.

David: And this is Bruce Fly's work. Keep going. David [Hearse 00:32:53] work, crisis and renewal. Using polarity, polarity thinking session. And you can see where that was happening. The use of it when we're using the classic way of thinking about leadership in terms of its outcomes of direction alignment and commitment, and that's often a process that's used. From here to there, this is ... Chuck mentioned this earlier on. It's kind of a derivation of what we were calling movie making. Here we are now, that's where we want to be, and where we are right now. Where we were, where we want to be, how do we get there?

Chuck: Okay, I'll pick this up, and try to be concise. Because it's a big topic, actually. So a good story has been the success of Visual Explorer in Africa. And we didn't know if it would be useful in Africa, because we had all kinds of questions about the cultural context, and the images we chose, and our approach to leadership development and all kinds of questions. But a team of ours went into Addis Ababa, and created something called leadership essentials. And so Visual Explorer's basically been part of the leadership essentials toolkit.

And so is the DAC model, so one thing that worked really well was for that mashup of DAC and Visual Explorer to introduce the work in Africa. And so the photos we'll go through now, just kind of illustrate some of that. There's our wonderful team in Addis, they're always visiting. I'm so happy to be there in the back row. There's Stedman Harrison back row. There's Aaron White, if you're listening out there, Aaron was sick today. And Sam Ray, and I'll just say it's been great, because the evolution of that cast of characters. That was about five years ago.

Now the entire staff is I think almost 100% native Ethiopian. Mostly under 30, mostly women that have come through our women's programs there. We've, by the way, been part of the change handbook for a few years. The third edition will also include the story of Visual Explorer in Africa, so that's part of the reason we were collecting some of this stuff. There's the Explorer closet in Addis Ababa full of Explorer tools.

This is a page out of the leadership essentials. This is how we train people to talk about what is effective leadership using Visual Explorer? And so that's part of the training guide. There's our good friend Stedman, who has really been a key part of a lot of this work, and remains really heavily invested in the work, doing it around the world. There again, is the DAC model up on the wall. Stedman now runs his own company, but we get all kinds of social media from him around the world. There's from Rwanda. This is some work we did at the African Union.

It was very exciting, because they're doing culture change, and they wanted to do a discovery process. And so once again, Visual Explorer was very helpful for the group, meaning the entire African union, or the ones we worked with anyway, to talk about their issues, and get them on the table in the middle, as it were. So they could have a leadership strategy for changing the culture, so that's ongoing work. This one is included just because I think it's beautiful, because this is on Safari some place in Africa, and

that's a picture of white water in a raft, however there's a fire in the photo, and that's the reflection of the campfire that he's standing in front of, which just I find just so cool. And then here's a series of photos, we're going to show a bunch of photos, and fast forward through a bunch of them too, that are just people using Visual Explorer, and they're beautiful, and they're having a good time. So these remaining ones are from Africa-

David: Yeah, Chuck-

Chuck: Yeah.

David: Yeah, I was just going to say when we were using in Asia, it was one of the things that I'll just keep kind of forward. That Linda was working with a group of people, and they were in a noisy part of the town. And they were looking for a space where people could have a conversation without being distracted. And the only place they could find with a telephone booth, that's where they had their dialogue, were their images and their challenges. Anywhere you can have these conversations, it doesn't just have to be in a classroom. Keep going, Chuck.

Chuck: This is our partner, the Geneva Center for Security Policy in Geneva, Switzerland, and they find Visual Explorer useful. These are just some more wonderful photos. This is somehow one of my favorite ... Just the view from above, it's angelic or something. Yeah, interesting. There's a whole story about the diversity of our photos, including content diversity, as well as human diversity. And we've learned over the years that we really must be balanced male/female in representation of the images.

There's no excuse not to be. Although let us say that when we were first working with stock photography, that was nearly impossible to do. Because there was so much male/female stereotypical bias built into stock photography, that we literally cannot find pictures of women doing things. And so these women are actually found two of the pictures of more powerful female representation, which is great.

David: One of the more popular images here, Chuck.

Chuck: Yep. In this image, I just love, there's just something captivating about again, the reflection upon the reflection. And this little girl just looking back out of the Visual Explorer session, straight into the camera.

David: And you notice what they're doing, they're doing social identity work on that one.

Chuck: Oh, yeah. Oh, cool, yep.

David: Yeah.

Chuck: Another combination. [crosstalk 00:39:37] ... Visual Explorer, this has always been cool. Yep.

David: That's one of the stories that Chuck you know, we stumble, we say that somewhere, someone somewhere is using Visual Explorer. And there's a story of you actually stumbling across somebody using Visual Explorer that wasn't you. Do you remember that? In the hotel?

Chuck: Oh yeah, and this was back in the early days, when actually it was not true. That there was somebody doing Visual Explorer 24/7 around the clock, because it was just too early in the process. But I was facilitating a group, working with a group in Florida. We were on like the 10th floor of a hotel in Tampa, of all places. And we had just done Visual Explorer, I'd led the session. We were just off a long hallway. We had spread all of our images in this long hallway. They were the eight and a half by 11's, they're just really beautiful in the long hallway. But people really had to sort of crowd in to view them all.

And then after it was done, we picked them all up and put them away, and we finished our debrief. And then about a half an hour later, we take a break, and I walk out. And the hallway is lined with Visual Explorer images, and they're all neat. They're all linear, and like when we put ours down, they were all chaotic. So somehow, the hallway repopulated itself with the Visual Explorer images that were neatly placed. And it just was a mind blowing moment, like what is going on? Is this the Twilight Zone or something? Well it turned out that Crate & Barrel were across the hallway with like an incredible coincidence. And they were a power user, and still are as far as I know, of Visual Explorer. And they just happened to ... We were sharing the same hallway doing Visual Explorer. Wonderful moment, and just here's some more wonderful imagery. So let's wrap it up, David. I'll lead us through this last section here, where we update on some new things we've been doing.

David: Yeah, this is an experiment we got in the CCL Labs, where the phenomenon, and I know my wife loves to be coloring books and so on. So there's lots of adult coloring books out there. And we thought what if we took some of the classic images out of Visual Explorer, and rendered them in a way that the people can actually do the coloring of them. And so here's one of the classic images that's in the Visual Explorer deck. And then this is the actual images taken from ... but what we've been doing is getting people to color those in, and have conversations about this.

So one of the things about a coloring book, it's a way of doing some reflection. You know how you get into that space when you're doodling or coloring a book, that it can get you into an interesting reflective space. So it helps people have conversations about something they've created through doing the coloring book. That's one that one's about. Keep going.

This is one of the latest things that's an experiment that's going on right now. Where we're taking the next step in using this in our social advancement work. Using Visual Explorer as a digital tool that can be used for doing things like what does team work look like for you? And allowing people to select from their images, and then write the comments about why they've chosen those. And then using those in a conversation with each other. So creating a collage, or a poster of the images. So this is actually an experiment that is about to hit the world beyond just CCL. Next one, Chuck.

One of the reasons why we created this Visual Explorer special edition, I've already told you. We needed to get more diversity, and we needed to have as many rights as we could possibly have in order to be able to allow people to have a digital version of this they could put in slide shows and so on. And so that's one of the things that when you actually purchase a special edition, we give you the whatever you need to actually access the digital version that you can then use in online ways, or put them in PowerPoint shows and so on. Move on, Chuck.

Chuck: So well, so just a bit on this. It reminds me of a couple topics we had discussed, David. One of which is something like the ubiquity of images in the world. And how you don't necessarily need to use Visual Explorer to use images. That would be crazy. So people have found all sorts of ways to use their own imagery. They also use stock photography, we have a lot of competitors in the world, and we think that that's mostly a good thing. Because we're happy to have spawned this methodology, and prophecy in the world. Sometimes we wish we would get more credit from the competitors. But we don't really mind as long as it's doing good in the world. We have done things that you can too, you can create your own Visual Explorer. We like to tell people that you're not obligated to buy our product. You can create your own. You can use your own photographs.

David: Let me just tell you something about this. What Chuck and I, we consider ourselves pretty creative people, right? And doing things like this and so on. But there's a warning that comes with creating something like Visual Explorer. It took us a year to select the images for the version that we've got, this special edition version. Because we were being very meticulous about what the content of the images were. And the nature of the images, whether they were actually high enough quality, all kinds of things.

So it took us a long time to find the images. Part of our process was actually we found some people who had got some really good images, and we came to an agreement with them about the use of images. They still own the images, but they allowed us to be able to do what we liked with the images. And we had an agreement with those people. Various methods. We're just selecting the images to be of the right nature. The overall criteria for selecting images is interest. Interesting us.

Chuck: Yes.

David: Provocativeness, and all kinds of things that tells a story that you can see something in the image, beyond the first impression. There's always a story in the images of some kind that's beyond your first impression of looking at the images. Not just symbolic. It has a story to tell.

Chuck: Yeah.

David: Keep going, Chuck.

Chuck: Well, since we're not totally crunched on time, just I feel like one more thing is necessary to say. So I want actually people to know that there exists, and I have a copy, as many people at CCL do, a guide to selecting Visual Explorer images. And we've shared

that with some people. And David, you know, along the lines of what you were just saying, it is actually hard to get the right mix of images. We often see the competitors versions, and we say, "No, they're missing a lot of what we're using as our criteria." And so we hope some day that what we've learned about selecting the images can be used and reused by people that are trying to create dialogue with imagery.

David, it was kind of shocking actually, how hard it was to gather those images. One thing we learned that was we were soliciting images from people's portfolios. And okay, number one, like let's face it, the average human being doesn't take very good images, pictures. They might take good pictures, but getting just excellent images is really hard to do. And we would look at somebody's entire collection and only find one, just because of the way our criteria fall out. So that was just an interesting lesson. In some ways, the easiest version to build was that first one based in stock photography. But then the glitch was we didn't own the images. Okay? So that brings us David, to the end.

David: Right. Not quite the end. I know people about ... I know [Charita 00:47:58] for example, has been commenting in the chat area. What I'd like you to do is to take ... You don't have to necessarily pick an image, you can see the order I would do in the bridge, San Francisco, the Golden Gate would be one. Skateboard two, mountain climbing three, guitarist four. And if you want to pick one of those images, and just sort of convey what ideas do you have about the use of visual imagery in your work? What kind of ideas, what sort of things can we do to expand and think about very different ways of using it beyond what you've seen here? Or if you just want to ask a question in chat, by all means do that. We've got another 15 minutes, so we're quite happy to answer any questions you've got. Yes. Thanks, Kim. If you want to unmute yourself very briefly Kim, you can say something about that if you want.

Kim: Hi, I hope you can hear me, I had some trouble getting in, and I'm assuming it's working fine?

David: Yep.

Chuck: Yeah.

Kim: Okay, good, good. So yes, we are now on Instagram, which of course would be the obvious direction to go with something based around visual imagery. And I feel like it was very interesting Chuck, when you were mentioning that there is a process to selecting the images, and how difficult it can be, and certain restrictions you may have, depending on where you're presenting the project. So of course, curating the account, I am ... there's only just a few posts up.

But you know, I am finding that it's difficult to find something that is aesthetic, makes people want to stop and look, but likewise, can spark a conversation which my most recent post, which just went up a few minutes ago, so I'll put in the chat box what the Instagram handle is. But people will look at it, and it's a very obvious reference to current events. But likewise, you want to ask a question that could be relevant at any time. So the question in the caption is something that current events can strike up a

conversation in a certain way. It can be positive or negative, but usually the hope is just that people are willing to express themselves. And you did mention that people may not always want to use Visual Explorer on their phones. But of course, we know they have no issue using Instagram on their phones. So hopefully, this will help it transition into a different way to have a conversation.

David: Thanks Kim.

Chuck: Cool.

David: So anybody with questions-

Chuck: [crosstalk 00:50:38].

David: Or ideas they want to share on chat.

Chuck: So one thing I'll add-

David: We've got a question from [Sarita 00:50:48], Chuck.

Chuck: Oh, the star model, I'll put up the star model again. So Visual Explorer special edition is available. It's 100 images. The digital images come with it. Oops, how could I go ... And sorry for doing this in front of you like this. I don't otherwise know how to navigate that. So I think we're going to send that out via email to the same list that you'll have the opportunity for a discount version of Visual Explorer special edition, how's that? So here's the star model. And this is in its earlier, more textually complex version. And so I think the essential version might be a little clearer. Basically, the idea is you have a group of people that put one image in the middle at a time. The whole group talks about it, and then the images return to the original person. And they get to own the meaning again. So it's a way of shared meaning making.

David: Yeah, Kim's asking a question about one of the images we showed was around purpose. I think it was the one that was a mind mapping thing, and she just wondered if we've got any more information about using it to help a group, or a team, or an organization develop purpose.

Chuck: You know, we had that organization that Al Selvin had been connected to. U-G-A-R-C, I think. And they were a not for profit that worked with handicapped people. And they used to thread their whole organization to help find purpose. And it was an organizational initiative, I think it was a few hundred people, so it wasn't a mammoth organization. A lot of personal contact, and they just loved, loved, loved getting together, picking images, having a really robust dialogue, and then capturing what they had talked about. And then somebody would ... So then capturing it, and writing it up, and feeding it back again with the imagery and the words again was crucial, but they were able to find purpose. So anybody that wants to unmute yourself, and ask a question? You're welcome to. David, anything in that list that we had prepared that we didn't cover?

David: Can't think of anything. There's some finer details around that we didn't go through, in the early days of Visual Explorer, and how in terms of innovation process, how we actually ... How we took off internally in CCL, we haven't spoken about that. But we've written about it-

Chuck: Yeah.

David: But we didn't go through that, I don't think we need to go through that now. I'm just putting a link in Chuck, because this might help, and I'll put it in the chat area. This might help Sarita, because one of the things that people don't necessarily know about, and making it available now, is that we keep a blog on all the explorer tools. And I've just put a link into where basically we're telling the stories. Or people are telling their stories about how they're using Visual Explorer. That's how the knowledge is being shared. I don't know if the purpose one has got a story in there. But basically, the way ... The guide itself is a facilitator's guide itself, helps with a lot of that. But then we're keeping stories, ongoing stories about people using the Explorer tools. And this is one of the places to find that. So I hope that helps everybody, and in particular, Sarita.

Chuck: Yeah.

Peter: Hey David and Chuck, can you hear me? This is Peter.

David: Hi, Peter.

Peter: [crosstalk 00:55:11]. Hey. Thanks for sharing all this. You know, I'm just chiming in primarily as a fan, and user. Completely addicted, I suppose. And I think one of the things that makes this process so effective, is one, it allows trainers, or coaches, to just invent. You know? Yeah. For example, here's a shot of me over in Doha, working with multiple cultures, and yeah, you might pull a couple of pictures. But other than that, images are so universal. The other thing is this whole idea of putting something in the middle describes an archetype of working with people that is just tremendously effective.

The question I have is this last week at CCL, I was a coach, and it was great that they did Visual Explorer, because then when I sat down with my person, I had them bring their image. It allowed them to move right into a session with a lot more robustness than if they hadn't brought the image. At the end of the program, I said to them, "You should take this with you, and have it on your desk." And they said, "Well, yeah, but the trainers want to keep the decks in tact."

Chuck: Yep.

Peter: And I'm thinking, they've just spent \$10,000, and they can't take the [crosstalk 00:57:00].

David: It's actually one of the reasons we created Visual Explorer, was because with the postcards, people would take the postcards away. So we said, "If we make copies of the

postcards, then we've always got a set." But we actually created Visual Explorer so that people could take the cards away.

Peter: Oh yeah.

David: It was a primary directive, and I ... Whenever I can, and we can do it again, we say, "Look, this is a low cost item for CCL. Let people keep the images." For goodness sake.

Peter: Yeah.

David: We want them to take it away, because it's going to help them remember their experience. It's a metaphor that they can come back to time and time again. We know if I walk around lots of places within my own campus here, I know a lot of CCL people have got their favorite Visual Explorer image posted up in front of them. And it's like we really do encourage people to-

Peter: Yeah.

David: Keep those images. At the very least-

Peter: I know, and I'm partly teasing-

David: Yep. Yeah.

Peter: But here's a ... I did think when you came out with the electronic version, I thought that was beautiful, because there was the possibility of having an image in hard copy that you could then take electronically, and you might even be able to make it a screen saver on your phone, or your laptop.

David: Yep. Yep.

Peter: So you'd have this daily reminder of the symbolism.

Chuck: Yes. Yeah. Yes.

Peter: Yeah. And as you know-

Chuck: [crosstalk 00:58:41] People could take their own pictures of the cards, and if you're careful with an iPhone, you can get just a perfect reproduction.

David: Chuck-

Chuck: And maybe that's-

David: Chuck, Chuck.

Chuck: Satisfying.

David: Chuck.

Chuck: Yeah? Go ahead.

David: Chuck, can we ... Just in case anybody else has got a question, and we have two minutes left.

Chuck: Oh, good, okay.

David: Any thoughts or questions from anybody who is on this webinar? You can either post it in the chat, or unmute yourself and ask away. [crosstalk 00:59:20]. Oh, Sarita, that's a good question, I'll have to answer that offline. She's asking me, "Can you speak to the distinction among the metaphor, and life experience, and original VE version. So those three products, how, the different ways we use them."

Chuck: Yeah.

David: I think that's a longer conversation that we've actually got, we've got a way of talking about that. I may just have a slide that talks of those differences. But yeah, that's a good question. I'll get back in touch with her about that, Sarita.

Chuck: Great folks.

David: Any, right, folks. Thanks for coming to this webinar. And thanks for your questions, and insights. If you have any other further ones, you know how to get a hold of us, or you can respond in the invite that you got from CCL Labs. Do anything you want to, observation, talk questions you might have, about Visual Explorer.

Chuck: Beautiful, we'll be in touch.

David: Thanks everybody.

Peter: Thanks guys. Very nice.

David: Thank you, bye-bye now.