



Kerrin Mitchell:

Welcome to the Untapped Philanthropy Podcast.

Tim Sarrantonio:

We're your hosts, Fluxx's Co-founder Kerrin Mitchell and Neon One's, Tim Sarrantonio. We've spent our career learning how to leverage technology and data in the social sector to better connect and serve our collective causes, constituents and communities.

Kerrin Mitchell:

In this podcast series, we profile leaders, public figures, philanthropists, and industry experts to explore the fascinating intersection of funding, technology, and policy. We're here to analyze the most formative topics and trends that shape the present and future of philanthropy.

Today on Untapped Philanthropy, we are thrilled to welcome Jesse Bourns. Jesse and I were hanging out in Good Tech Fest the other day, and they just had a huge announcement around DARO, his company that sort of helps leaders pulled together all their learning, their data, their technology into this idea of data assets as a public good. And I thought it would be super compelling to have him on here also because I think he's fabulous. But both Tim and I are big supporters of the crew over there at DARO and thought, Jesse, come join us. Hang out. Welcome, welcome. What's up?

Jesse Bourns:

Thank you for having me. I hate hanging out, but I will do it for you and Tim.

Kerrin Mitchell:

So tell us a little bit about your journey. I know we always like to start off talking with our guests about where did they find their inspiration, how did they get to where they are? Give us a little bit of background on you.

Jesse Bourns:

Sure. I was born on a cattle ranch in Western Canada.

Kerrin Mitchell:

Perfect. I love it.

Tim Sarrantonio:

On a dark stormy night.

Jesse Bourns:

I assume so. I don't really remember that part, but what other night could it have been? But no, I've actually worked in the nonprofit sector in some capacity for pretty much all of my adult life. So I started off as an RA for an evaluation firm. I did capital fundraising at a very junior level, and while I was doing that kind of stuff, I also founded some very, very, very, very, very, very tiny nonprofit organizations, which I think the only good thing I could say about my job there is that they're still alive, so that's nice, many years later or decades later. While I was doing all that stuff, I kept accidentally getting into tech stuff, which I didn't know I liked or was any good at.



They're all embarrassing stories the more you scratch at them. But while I was doing fundraising, I used Google sites in 2008 to make a donor management software or system for the nonprofit I was at. And at some point to pay the bills I took up with doing freelance web development on WordPress and did some contract sites, and that's how I learned more about programming and stuff like that. Somewhere in there I worked as a bicycle mechanic to pay for the bills that the not very successful freelance WordPress career didn't pay. But yeah, all of those things eventually led me to be like, oh, apparently the thing I'm good at isn't what I thought I was good at. It's actually these technologies, computer systemic things that I was having more fun with and better able to do. And then in 2010, I saw a Craigslist ad.

I applied to that Craigslist ad to go work part time for a startup that did something, something, something online fundraising, something, something, something, Canada. I don't quite remember. I sent in the application on a Friday night and some guy called me three hours later after I sent it in. This was like eight o'clock at night. And that was my business partner Michael, a couple of months after Aja had started, which is what DARO used to be called. And then shortly after we'd actually launched the project in 2011, I started leading our consulting work, which ended up eating the company and turning into the company at the expense of that initial product that we started off with. And over the years, it just kept confirming that I was more fascinated with the larger things with the systems themselves, not just which system do you implement inside of an organization or which piece of technology, but whether or not it actually works in all of the very complicated interactions that will make it work in the first place. That's what I've been doing ever since this DARO thing is my vehicle where I get to do the things I want to do and work on weirder systemic problems, have a lot of opinions, swear whatever I want, and no one gets mad. It's just the best.

Tim Sarrantonio:

Well, and would you say, is that the kind of the precipitation for the evolution of the brand toward DARO? The philosophy is something that I know more than even the names of the places, in all honesty that you've worked at Jesse, I've known Aja, I know DARO. But for you, what I love and am excited about is kind of that philosophy on the data sharing and the collaboration, but would love to hear about the intentional brand evolution toward that.

Jesse Bourns:

Yeah, and that's exactly what it was. We started off this organization imagining we we're one thing back in 2010 and not really having much of a story other than we're going to do this technology stuff in this space with this data and it will be great. I will say this one last time about Aja for posterity. What does the name mean? Nothing. It literally means nothing. We chose a name at random that everyone hated the least. The domain name was available and it was neither French nor English, which really matters if you're in Canada. And so that's about all the intention that went into that. But over the years we evolved quite a bit, and especially over the last, I would say 5-ish, we were really articulating the thing that we wanted to make happen. And it is that we think that there's collective systemic approaches to improving the way that we do things in the sector. We think we have a good methodology and approach and vehicle that's some weird Frankenstein of startup stuff like complex systems thinking, good technology management, agile things. All of that applied into this space are kind of what's missing. And so when we were doing the rebranding, we finally got the chance to actually tell that story, which it's this weird feeling when you have a website that you don't hate for the first time ever in a long time.

Kerrin Mitchell:



So when you think about the whole reason you guys are bringing DARO forward and creating this idea of data assets as sort of a public good, you look at it and there's a bazillion challenges. People will talk you through and say, oh, well you can't do it because of this and you can't do because of this. How is what you are doing different in your mind, where were the fatal flaws before and how are you kind of solving for those?

Jesse Bourns:

Right. So there's a lot. This is where the opinions come in and all the swearing that I mentioned, but the main ones I think are that there's this fundamental pattern that the nonprofit sector likes to follow where someone will correctly identify a problem. They'll say, you know what? We don't know anything about equity information about the people that we're trying to help, or we should all know about each other's projects or some other thing. And they're absolutely right every time. And those problems keep on coming up again and again that these are challenges in the sector or challenges for specific organizations. But then the solution that keeps getting proposed is, and that's why I'm going to make a platform and if everybody uses it, the problem will go away, which is also not untrue. If everybody uses each of these solutions, the problem will go away. But that's not how every other space solves that. We're talking about collective issues that are affecting everybody. If you're starting premise is everybody will agree to use one thing, you're failing right out the door and you're just sort of dragging it out as time goes on.

So the word that somebody else gave me was that the sector is mono-focal in how it tries to solve these kinds of problems. And what we want to do is create the conditions for multiple organizations to be small or multiple entities, initiatives, whatever actors to be solving multiple components of those problems in a way where it doesn't require the mass participation of everybody all agreeing to do exactly the same thing. Another, we can go into that more into that in a second. But the other pattern that I see is this focus on needing everybody to agree before we do everything. And this happens at small scale coalitions and collaboratives, whether they're about data or not, but it's especially harmful when it's about data where 5, 6, 7, 10 groups will get together. Someone will say, it would be great if we could share this information. And they all start to focus on what the common value would be that gets created for everybody. And that's frankly even written down in some of the methodologies of how to build a coalition, figure out what the one thing is that you all agree you're trying to do. And that doesn't work either because by the time you get down to the common denominator, it means that you've zipped right past the top 4, 5, 6, 7 or more priorities that each of those individual actors has.

Tim Sarrantonio:

Well, and just to kind of pop in there, one of the things that makes that top of mind, I was just talking with one of our previous guests, Nathan Chappelle, and he had told me, coming out of some of the conversations on governance around AI, some of these very large entities in the world that might sit there and create standards for people, it's basically taken six years to come to one definition of what artificial intelligence even is. So when you start to have these types of larger coalition conversations, Jesse, how the hell do you wrangle them?

Jesse Bourns:

And that's exactly the approach that we try to take. Yeah, if you're starting premises first, we agree, you're like that first is going to take a while.

Tim Sarrantonio:



Well, I'm not going to do because of X, Y, and Z.

Kerrin Mitchell:

It's like that whole, how do you make a million dollars? Well, first you get a million dollars and then....

Jesse Bourns:

Yeah, yeah, start with two or whatever it was. So the same methodology that we use inside of individual institutions, shockingly enough, this is not special to collaboratives. Organizations are complex ecosystems themselves and they actually have these same problems, like the finest department doesn't like the comms department or whatever. So if you're doing a digital transformation project, you run into the same stuff. And the answer is not to say, alright, everybody agree, it's to actually really focus on the selfish and individual needs of those actors as features of the system that aren't going away that you can actually use to further the cause, which feels really counterintuitive when it's a coalition where we're all trying to come together to solve these problems. But the reason that those groups are in there is some selfish value is the more funnier way that we put it, but there's a specific reason that they're there that they're going to get something out of whatever this is.

And if you get enough of those, if you get four out of those five groups that are saying, yeah, if I do this, my reporting is easier, if I do this, it means I can launch a new business. If I do this, whatever, then they'll stick around and they'll participate because they receive direct value through the participation. And that could be, in many cases in our projects, sharing data. It's really powerful in the end because no one wants it to go away and it didn't require any agreement. And so that's a really generic way or abstracted way to put it. But in practice, if you do that well, whether it's a governance project or a collaboration or whatever else, it works. It doesn't necessarily look like you thought it would look, but it moves forward and people start doing things together, which is I think the objective a little bit.

Tim Sarrantonio:

Well, what's a good example that you folks have helped seen come together? I think a lot of times these projects can seem so abstract, and I think especially for the listeners hearing a few examples, which I know you have obviously, what's a good example of this working? And then maybe what would be interesting to hear about something you've tried, names could be redacted, of course Jesse, that didn't work. And if you had an opportunity to do it again, what you would do differently.

Jesse Bourns:

Yeah, cool. Alright, so the first, I can give you two strong examples. So one at a fairly more global level and then a second at a more regional or smaller level, let's say local level. So the easiest one is this is actually the way that the Giving Tuesday Data Commons works and it's the one that you'd expect me to talk about because it is wildly successful in that sense. So if you don't know about the Giving Tuesday Data Commons, it is the a wildly successful data collaborative in the nonprofit sector where there are a hundred plus, I don't even know the number right now, different data providers that are pooling together a bunch of different kinds of detailed information data about their activities. A lot of it is like transactional giving stuff, but it goes beyond that into information about donors and different kinds of funds and a growing number of working groups, research groups, things like that, that all follow the same kind of model.

And it started off because there was a need just to measure Giving Tuesday itself, but that kind of ballooned and at no point did the Giving Tuesday team actually say, you know what? I want to convince you all that if you share all this data with us, then we'll be able to help understand individual giving and



generosity. They said, Hey, do you want to know what your market share is and to which all of the product teams working on those things enthusiastically said yes. And then they said, great. Give us your data and then we can know that. And that's the thing that our relationship with Giving Tuesday and the Data Commons goes back a really long way. We've been working with them since I think 2016 starting with their governance and then on helping to run different parts of that work. But that kind of a meeting of the minds, their approach and ours meshed so well that we've continued to work with them ever since.

But I think that has been the key to their success is that following that approach. My more local example is an unnamed community, small, very fairly small city, about 150,000 people or so, where we worked on putting together a coalition to gather information about the homelessness work issue and population inside of that community. And we had a little bit of outside funding to go and do it. And they initially said, so you're going to go build a data platform for them to gather data, right? We said, no, we are going to go and ask each of the individual stakeholders there what it is that they're trying to do in their daily job, what's going to make their caseworkers work or make their advocacy programs work. Then we are going to figure out something that can help deliver that selfish value to each of them. And we ended up creating mechanisms for them to actually track deaths in the homeless population, which they were not able to do before, and feed that back to public health, to the caseworkers themselves and to be at advocacy groups in different formats depending on their need.

And we were able to start doing pulse surveys, ongoing monitoring of the conditions in different homeless encampments that that group would get together and debate and design the next versions of and go out and redo new versions of those surveys with the population to gather that information. And the innovation there was each of those actors up until that point couldn't really work with the others. They'd have meetings, but then they'd say public health would say, I want to do research into public health. And the caseworkers would say, I don't need any of this. I just need to know stuff about my case load. And the city and the other people would want to know things about shelter management. Trying to focus on what they had in common was impossible, but trying to focus on what they each needed selfishly and designing something that could solve their needs specifically and individually meant that it was able to run. And it's still running to the point where now there's the good thing, people are jockeying over making sure that it's got enough attention and control so that it can continue to function, which just means that they've see enough value that they almost want to kick us out, which we left anyway.

Kerrin Mitchell:

What's interesting about that is, and I've seen this too with sort of grant making and structures and new process for engineering and ways of thinking, is sometimes people have to operate a little bit in silos and then see the common denominators themselves before they sort of migrate, like you said, to a state that is more ideal, but it is a multi-step process that sometimes folks like yourself and myself get stuck in the middle of. And it's exciting to see it happen, but it does. It's funny how it takes time, and I think the key part there is willingness, but very cool.

Jesse Bourns:

Yeah, those network effects, like those good things that are happening overall in the right way, blah, blah, blah, blah. Those are ancillary benefits actually. They're the benefits of doing it in the right way at the beginning, but they're not the motivator. They're not why they start up. And then once they do see it, then you've kind of solved that common action problem and that becomes a strong sustainer of the ongoing work. It just wasn't the reason to start in the first place.



Kerrin Mitchell:

Totally. I mean, looking forward now that again, some of these things are starting to find their own footing inside of organizations and this concept of data sharing is sort of losing a little bit of, I think the challenge that people have seen in the past. Those are starting to lessen a little bit. Take us to emerging trends, emerging innovations, things that you are excited about that you think are going to add fuel and momentum to this kind of movement.

Jesse Bourns:

Sure. So I think there's a world where people answer this kind of question with technological innovation or something. There's these new tools that are coming out, these new developments, and that's what's going to unblock all of this. And I reject that premise. I don't think there's any world where we're going to engineer our way out of what are actually just social engineering challenges, not computer engineering challenges. And the fact that they involve data and technology is just one characteristic, but they're not separate from or different from the structures within the sector or structures within any of these initiatives or organizations. That actually is the trend that I'm seeing more of the what used to be the initiatives that would follow that example I gave at the beginning of saying, Hey, here's a problem, use my platform. I'm seeing more of them take on the approach that we see in academia and other spaces that have good collective approaches to this stuff. Where they say, how will my tool or my standard or my approach to data sharing in this sector be interoperable with all of the others and how can I not be the singular answer for data sharing, but be the specific answer to the specific problem that works with all the other ones.

So that's pretty novel to me. Like we've been talking about this and at people, probably more accurately, for 15 years, and it's been within the last few where I've started to see more of that change. So that's the thing that I am most excited about is apparent progress towards doing things collectively. And that's the thing that we're starting to see momentum on and push more and set up in some of our ongoing initiatives. The only other thing I'll say is I probably should be expected to say something about AI or data standards because that's normally what comes up.

Tim Sarrantonio:

You don't feel the need to be forced into saying anything about it.

Jesse Bourns:

Oh, good. Thanks Tim. There it goes that pressure. I mean, not from Tim, but certainly in the world, data standards are a thing that work when everybody's already sharing data, they don't make data sharing happen. And AI is sometimes maybe all the time. No, no, not all the time. That's too much. But certainly sometimes often is used as a kind of an excuse to not do the hard work of creating good processes and good structures that will enable data sharing in the first place. You're like, ah, we don't have to tag anything. AI will figure it out. You're like, yes, as long as you have training data and a way of getting that information structured in the first place. So I believe that data standards and AI and other technologies are great. I think they can solve a bunch of problems, but they're not the solution to making data sharing work. So mostly the thing that matters is the willingness to do this in a collective way that is interoperable, which again, seeing a lot of.

Tim Sarrantonio:

Who is data sharing for, ideally?



Jesse Bourns:

Well, yeah, I'm stumbling over my words. I'm stumbling over my words because I'm rushing to say who it isn't for or ultimately isn't for. It seems like it should be for nonprofits or it should be for the funders, or it should be for whoever. I think people also get wrapped up in how will data sharing be used to help individual, whatever you want to call 'em, service users, clients, beneficiaries, people we're supposed to be helping. And I think that's simultaneously the most accurate thing. That is what this is for. And also a little bit of a lie, because it's harmful when it's presented as like, Hey, you use an employment service, how will you use data sharing? It's just a non-sequitur, but it usually gets talked about that way you need to prove to us that before we do data sharing, this specific data point that gets shared is going to be of direct use to somebody accessing services, which is not going to work.

Somebody using a service isn't going to be dealing with their data. They're going to be just receiving the service. That said, the reason we're setting up, we want to set up this infrastructure. The reason these systems are being put in place is, yeah, I think the nonprofit sector isn't doing the job it should be doing in serving these people, and this is part of making it work better. Possibly one of the more important parts, the most important parts, the lever that we haven't pulled yet of having more integrated referrals and integrated services and stuff like that. So that's a long-winded way of saying it's the service users, it's them or it's for them, and I think that the user or not.

Tim Sarrantonio:

And that's kind of the hard part in some ways too, depending on the money and the business side, because a lot of the individual nonprofits who may be part of a data sharing collaborative like Giving Tuesday, they might not even be aware that they are. And at the end of the day, I think what's really interesting is continuing to focus on the transparency and the privacy elements alongside those benefits, which I know you folks do very well. So how do you balance also that need for transparency with also intellectual privacy concerns?

Jesse Bourns:

So this could be probably its own entire podcast episode, but fundamentally this comes down to reducing or eliminating harm through design, which you can do. There's a whole bunch of practices about it. Giving Tuesday, we have huge robust programs for it, for example. It's still a question we grapple in each one of these coalitions. What's the specific use of this information? How are we going to make sure it's scrubbed and not usable for to do a de-identify? There's no silver bullet, but you're going to do all the "right things" to make sure that that happens. But one piece that doesn't get talked about enough, I don't think, I'm starting to see it happen more and more, is the balancing between the need for consent or the need for privacy with social license. And I think that's the thing that I like to focus on the most is social license.

I think the question, the balance is are we doing more harm by collecting this information, which could potentially have harms through lack of privacy or lack of consent, or are we doing more harm by not collecting it at all and not improving our systems? And in a lot of cases, if you use that kind of litmus test, the answer becomes really clear and the social license you're constructing is by making sure you're doing it with the representatives of those communities that you're working with and that there's sufficient voice and agency and transparency, to your point, Tim, to construct that social license. But I don't believe that saying, you know what? I think it would be harmful for us to know whether or not there are homeless people dying or open wounds in an encampment. So therefore it's better that we just don't know. And that's somehow the better action. You know what I mean? That's obviously a really, really easy example because it's pretty obvious. But that's kind of the philosophical approach that



I think we have to take is are we doing harm or are we doing good and have we done all the right things to make sure that we can construct the right social license?

Kerrin Mitchell:

So looking at the world ahead of us, all the change, the chaos, the excitement, the evolution of AI, everything that you can kind of lump in and this idea of data sharing, also gaining momentum as a collective thought. How do you see this all evolving together in this sector? Do you have a vision for that? And then where does DARO sort of strategic plan lay into that just so we have a good sense of where you're taking this for all of us?

Jesse Bourns:

So I see that the future that we want to work towards is probably going to involve multiple levels of change, but at a sectoral level, what we want to do is create the conditions for many projects that are focused on infrastructure to be properly resourced and properly incorporated into roadmaps as the kind of collective output of the people working in that space. So all the weirdos that are planning like, oh, what should this standard be or this technology be? Or I want to be able to get this information out about the sector, that they actually have a community of practice, that they're not random weirdos like we were 14 years ago, yelling at different conferences. So that we're making shared roadmaps, that we've set up good funding vehicles for it. And the sum total of that being that we're no longer asking philanthropic funders to pick who the winner is when it comes to infrastructure and utility or utilities because that doesn't make sense.

It's a little bit like saying which climate change project or which climate change initiative is going to fix the climate. You're like, that's not the thing. That's really not it. And part of what we've identified is that without that community of practice though, that vehicle, that's the default behavior and we keep feeding into the incentives that the funders create in that space. So that's the big change. That's what we want to have is where there are repeatable things that look like their analogs in the for-profit or tech space is really every other industry to fund and focus and research and learn from this work in coordinated and collective ways, and that'll mean more that interoperability.

Tim Sarrantonio:

It's interesting because everything you talk about Jesse and Kerrin, maybe this is blasphemy if we're even allowed to mention another podcast on here, but it does remind me of another podcast that my wife got me kind of hot on, which is about the big dig in Boston. And everything that we're talking about kind of reminds me of the conversations that were happening there because it's ultimately like are we trying to build highways or sewers and utilities and all these different things? And when they were even going in and drilling down and trying to undo all this weird stuff, there's 400 years of garbage underneath the streets of Boston.

Kerrin Mitchell:

I've completely forgotten about the big dig. That sounds fascinating actually.

Tim Sarrantonio:

It's very fascinating, but I think it's very, very, and it's done by their local media. Oh, cool. I think it's even called The Big Dig as a podcast, and it's really cool. But they also talk about, it was the last big infrastructure project that we did in the United States that we're just going to pull everything together and every day something went wrong, but ultimately they had this vision and what they were supposed



to be selling people wasn't on how much it cost. It went way over budget. They should have focused on the benefits. What is the transformative power? It doesn't matter how much money we're going to spend, it doesn't matter how much hardship we're going to do. When we talk about things like climate change, when we talk about things like infrastructure, when we talk about all of these things, they also have to translate into the data world that you're talking about. It's going to be hard, but the benefits are going to be so big. That's why it's even interesting about some of the visuals that you folks were leaning toward with your rebrand, right? You have a sewer element there, right?

Jesse Bourns:

Oh yeah. We're sewer people. Absolutely. I'm not supposed to say that. Actually they told me not to.

Kerrin Mitchell:

Oh yeah. Really? Because I think favorite part of your, Civilization of DARO's story.

Jesse Bourns:

I just love saying sewer people. I don't mean the sewer part. I don't mean the sewer part. I mean calling us sewer people.

Tim Sarrantonio:

Sewer people, it's not part of the brand.

Jesse Bourns:

It's a little different.

Kerrin Mitchell:

See, your PR people might be like, you know what? You need to rebrand that ever so slightly.

Tim Sarrantonio:

Jesse is the Rat King. Yeah. Okay.

Jesse Bourns:

There's not rats in iconography.

Tim Sarrantonio:

So kind of reigning it back in though, is why did you go with that image? And it's almost like why that compared to all the things that we're talking about here. I think it gets us to the heart of what you're trying to solve here for.

Jesse Bourns:

Yeah, we paid a lot of attention to, and we do this, this is our own fund, so I'm going to listen to that podcast or read about the big dig. That's one I haven't heard yet heard about yet. But we pay a lot of attention to physical infrastructure to what big building projects looked like, where collective systems were built. And so our name DARO we're named after an ancient ancient city, the oldest one we found so far in the world that has a collective sewer system. And that we think is the perfect metaphor for



what this work is. Everybody wants to live in a city. Everyone wants those benefits. We all love restaurants presumably, but you don't really think about it when you're walking around that you need a fairly good system of pipes to deal with all the shit. And that's what we think our actual job is, is worrying about those underlying systems and all of the important but mundane details of is this pipe the right diameter or not? Otherwise it's not going to work. But then the other part about that story is that the way that sewer systems are constructed is, yeah, they're massive public works projects, but they're also perpetual public works projects.

I don't know enough about the big dig, but an example about that failure is that you tried to build it all at once rather than building it as needs evolve and planning for the future and building it with principles so that it's extensible, which is more like the principles of how the web was first constructed. And there's this wonderful phrase that we use internally, "small pieces loosely joined" is how we like to think about this stuff. And it's what the parallel data infrastructures that we see, or technology infrastructures that we see in academia look like. There's a bunch of pieces that they do one thing well, and they're designed to work with the other things. And if one of them fails, that's okay because it wasn't all reliant on that one thing. And there could be different versions of that thing that don't break the rest of the system, which is, again, easy to say, takes a lot of effort and ongoing learning to do, but it's making sure that those principles are part of how that collective work takes shape.

Kerrin Mitchell:

I actually did do a little bit of reading on the DARO civilization prior to our chat because I was thoroughly, thoroughly excited by when we talked about this last time. I can say I'm a little bit smarter, but I'm still feeling like I'm like, all right, but I love this. I love the concept, the visual, the sewer system. I'm with y'all.

Jesse Bourns:

Again, I like my website not just for what it says, but I think it's pretty too. So that's nice to have.

Kerrin Mitchell:

Yeah, it's pretty.

Tim Sarrantonio:

So Jesse, these are very big questions and I know that they can always seem very overwhelming to people when you don't step back and look at the whole picture. If we're kind of zeroing in on those individual pieces, that could freak people out. But it helps to paint that vision. If we are going to zoom out and it's 15 years from now, what could this concretely look like for the typical small nonprofit? Let's actually kind of take these really big macro systems that people might be interacting with. And I go and I fire up whatever device that we are using in 15 years, whether it's implanted in our faces or not, and I'm going to work. What does that look like because of the work that DARO has been able to put in place?

Jesse Bourns:

And I would like to say that the work that DARO puts in place will be a small part, but hopefully that we can help bring a bunch of other people along with that. We can help the people who are smarter than us be able to do their work. But the benefits, the outcome that I would want to see is like, yeah, that person doesn't, for one, they don't know that there's a whole system behind it, just like the sewers is probably a good sign. I would like more of them to care, but I'm not relying on them to care. But when they go and fire up their tools, one, the tools will work better. We are constrained. You, both of you



have built products. This you're constrained by what you have and what you have available. And if you could get your hands on some more data or make it easier to get data about a client or from a client to help with their work, you would do it.

So the products will be better in unknown ways as a result of this. And it's the point is that we can't predict it. The other part is that it'll be more portable. Interoperability means that we are going to get, hopefully this will be one of the ways out of being locked in to any one specific system or vendor or ecosystem or something like that. These things will help with that. And increased portability will then also mean increased pressure to have better and better features and better and better tools as you compete for more market share in a purely capitalistic sense. So those are all the things I would hope for from the day-to-day. But then the other part is I think from a strategic perspective, small nonprofits funding, we're going to start to have at our disposal the information that we can use to do a better job of helping service users, helping the people that we're trying to help, because we will know more about them, we'll know more about their issues, we'll have more evidence about all of that stuff as a result of starting to pull all this stuff together.

And that is a world that I'd want to build for. But the other way that I do think that they will start to, that smaller nonprofits or more local organizations will start to fall into this. They don't necessarily need to be part of the big community of practice around putting together big sectoral wide systems. I think there's other pathways that exist as well that will need to happen, like regional and topical based collaboratives. I think there will be tables that are set up in different cities to work on homelessness in my example, and to gather that information in a way that is more locally relevant and driven by the local priorities with some amount of interaction between them. And so regional, municipal by topic, whatever it is, I think nonprofit organizations, individuals in that sector, it'll become more normal for them to participate in those kinds of things if we're able to successfully go down this pathway.

So there will be more hubs and intermediaries that exist to understand the spaces, which will help those organizations do their work and do their services. So the last one, and I think this is a little bit harder to grapple with, the solutions that we design in this sector and that are intuitive, are really linear from the problem to the solution. So they go from, oh, we need to have more DEI information, more demographic information about organizations. People would use that by querying for that information. So let's go ask them to fill out our final dataset that contains that information. And then that doesn't work very well. Google Maps shows you restaurant opening hours when you click on a restaurant. They did not do that. They did not ask restaurants to fill out a form about all of their opening hours. That information existed and existed in that ecosystem, and they were able to construct a bunch of different kinds of tactics for getting it out.

So I think that's going to be the answer, is that there's going to be multiple ways to try to get that information out into the world accessible by different machines. It'll be messier, but it will exist, which is the main difference. And if it exists, we can use the tech to go and get it, and we can go and structure it ourselves. But it means that, yeah, ironically, the ideal future looks messier than we give it credit for. It's just that it'll be messy and then enable a lot of use and new practices that aren't possible right now.

Kerrin Mitchell:

Yeah, I mean, I think realistically, like you said, that first step of getting it in somewhere that it can be digested and then reacted to that alone is the huge one. So I'm excited to see where all this goes. And I think we're just at the precipice of so much of it. And I think the cool part, and Tim will probably agree with me, is I think people are finally understand the concept of that, especially in the economy we're in. There's just so much we can do with collaboration. So I'm excited to see where you guys take this. I know we're going to be having you back at FluxxCon in the fall, so I'll be very, very keen to kind of hear



progress over six months. But I know you guys just launched, and we want to make sure we welcomed you to this fabulous world. Even though I existed before, DARO is a new entity looking, but your work is very appreciated. So thank you. Thanks so much!

Jesse Bourns:

Can I do one last call out to whoever's listening? If you have a weird problem, you should probably call me. I will have a good time, and also I'll help you with your problem, but mostly it's I'll have a good time.

Kerrin Mitchell:

You want to be specific on what types of problems people should be?

Jesse Bourns:

No, not really. But, yeah, you're trying to make a system work, and I mean that in the broadest sense.

Kerrin Mitchell:

It's other problems we can talk about. We'll do that later.

Jesse Bourns:

Yes. And I'll take your weird problems at home too. It's all fine.

Kerrin Mitchell:

We'll, going to drink and talk about that too. Okay. Well, let's wrap this up by dear. Thank you so much for joining us.