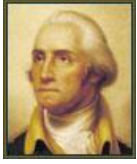


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TYPES OF SYSTEMS AND MODELS OF THEM

Russell L. Ackoff

Systems are grouped into four exclusive and exhaustive classes: deterministic, animate (organismic), social, and ecological. The same is done with models of them. This yields a 4x4 matrix. It is possible to apply each type of model to each type of system. The application of the wrong type of model to the right type of system is dysfunctional, particularly where social systems are involved. Nevertheless, it is commonplace for animate models, in particular, to be applied to social systems. This significantly limits the amount of improvement in the functioning of social systems that can be obtained.

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