



Developing City Infrastructure Ontologies to Support Complex Decision Making

Vania Dimitrova

School of Computing, University of Leeds, UK

My Goal



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- Share experience
- Provide an alternative view
- Provoke thoughts

Urban Infrastructures and Complex Decision Making



Bias

Background

➤ Human-centred AI

Experience

➤ Stakeholder engagement, challenges

Relevant Projects

➤ Urban infrastructure decision support systems



Human-centred Artificial Intelligence



Building intelligent systems that help people do things better:
*take decisions in complex settings, preserve knowledge,
learn from experience, and change behaviour*



Human-centred Artificial Intelligence



Building intelligent systems that help people do things better:
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learn from experience, and change behaviour

**Modelling Human
Conceptual
Structures**

**Knowledge Models
(ontologies)**

**Intelligent Interactive
Systems**

**Personalisation
(nudges)**

**Modelling
Individuals or
Groups**

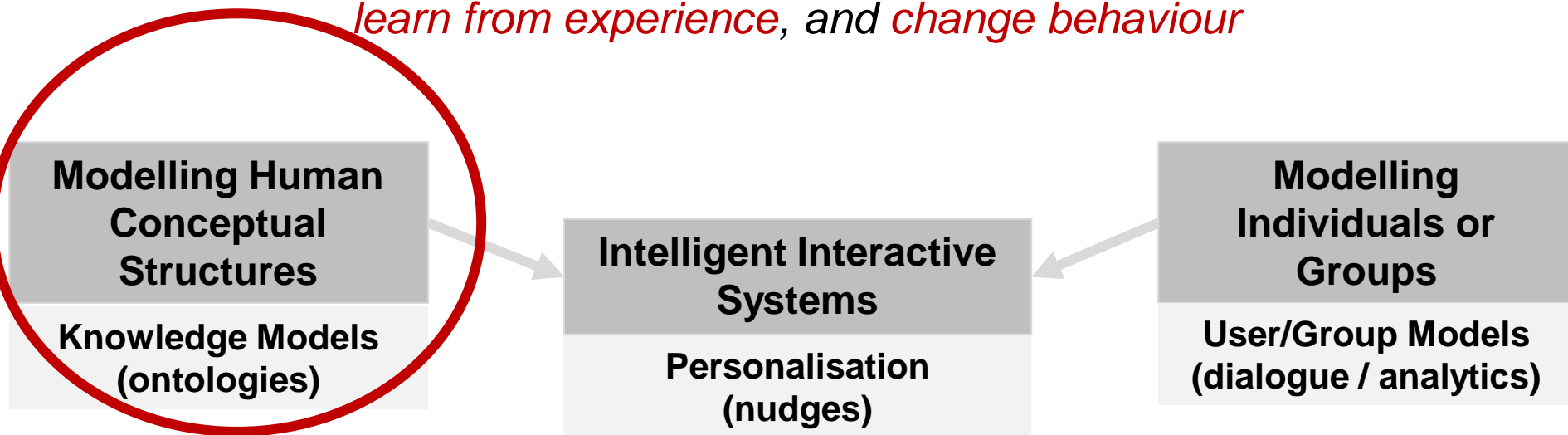
**User/Group Models
(dialogue / analytics)**



Human-centred Artificial Intelligence



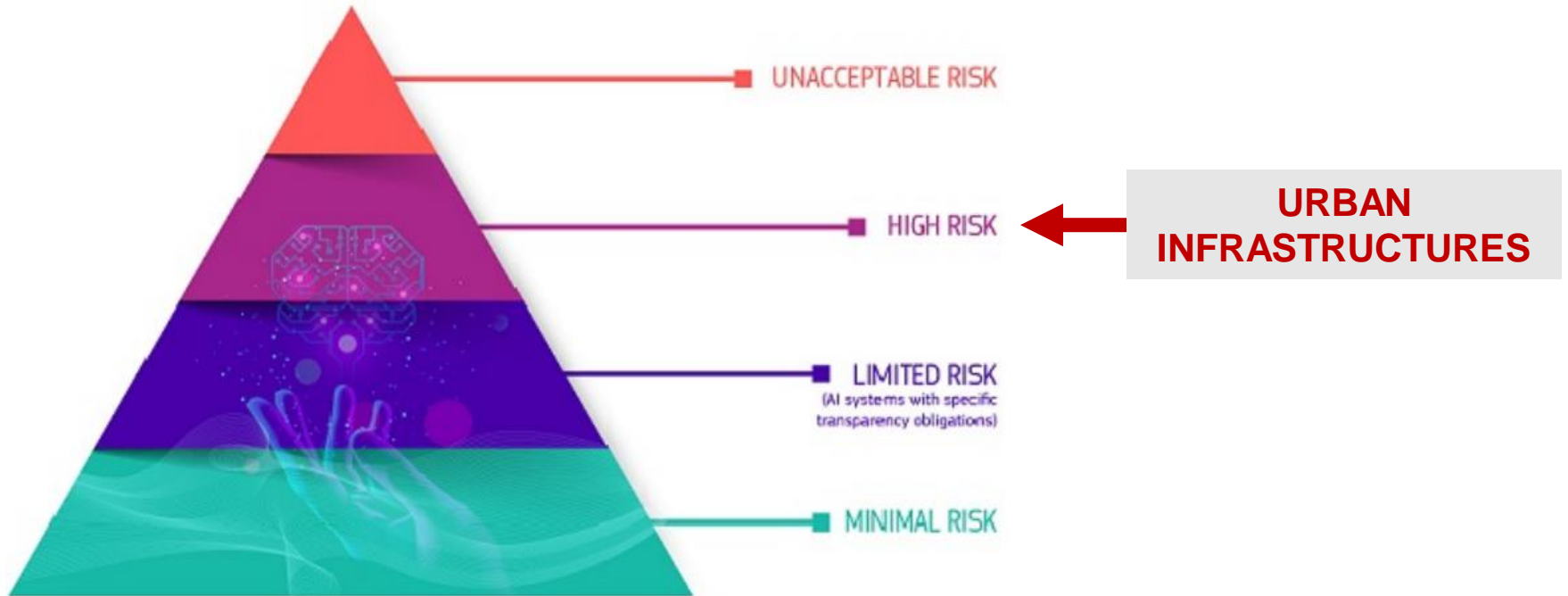
Building intelligent systems that help people do things better:
take decisions in complex settings, preserve knowledge,
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EU AI Act Regulation (EU) 2024/1689



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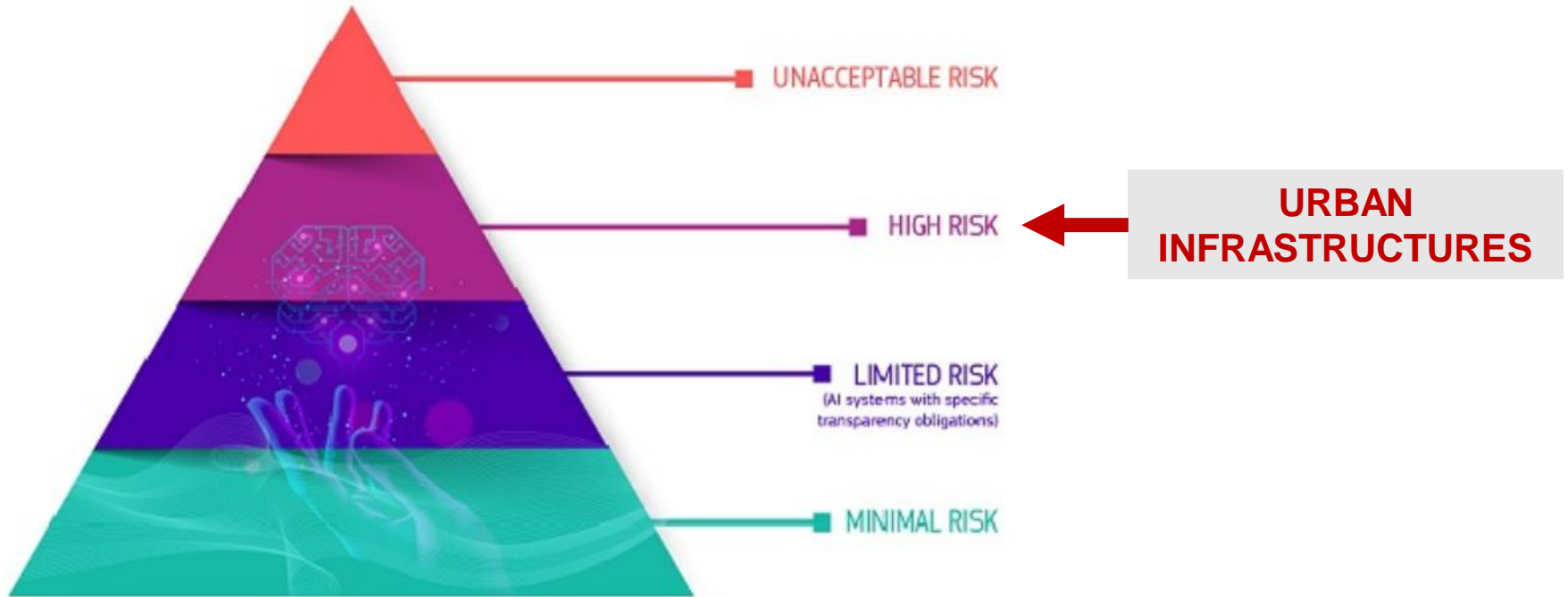


EU AI Act

Regulation (EU) 2024/1689



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- adequate risk assessment and mitigation
- appropriate human oversight
- traceability of results

Street Works: Complex Decision Making



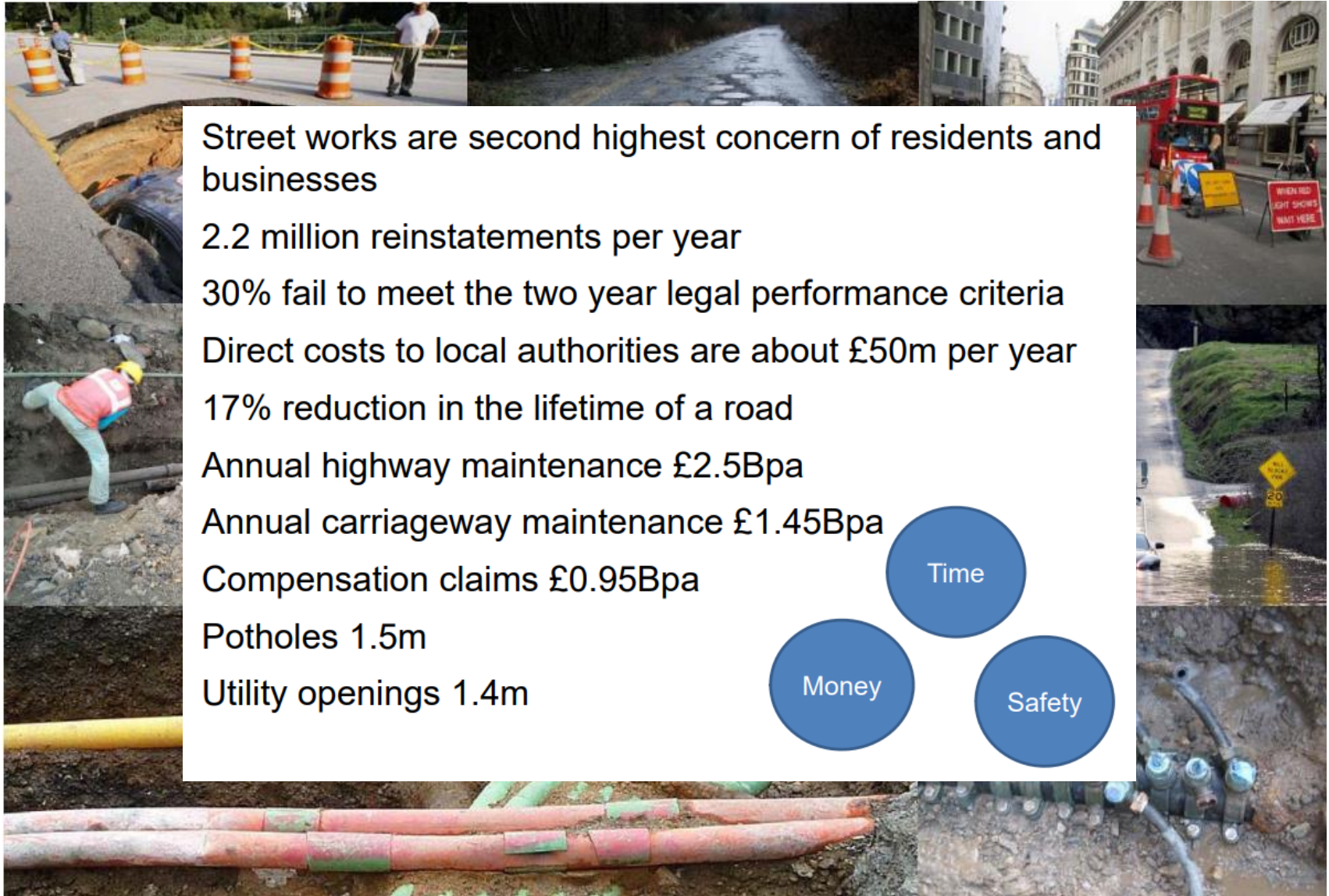
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Street Works: Complex Decision Making



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Street works are second highest concern of residents and businesses

2.2 million reinstatements per year

30% fail to meet the two year legal performance criteria

Direct costs to local authorities are about £50m per year

17% reduction in the lifetime of a road

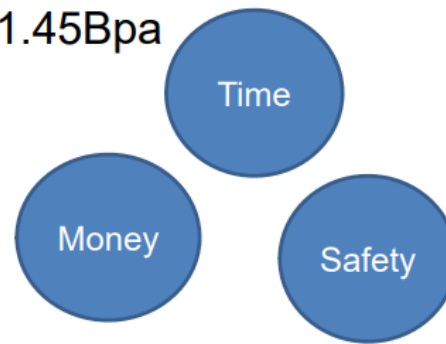
Annual highway maintenance £2.5Bpa

Annual carriageway maintenance £1.45Bpa

Compensation claims £0.95Bpa

Potholes 1.5m

Utility openings 1.4m



Street Works: Complex Decision Making



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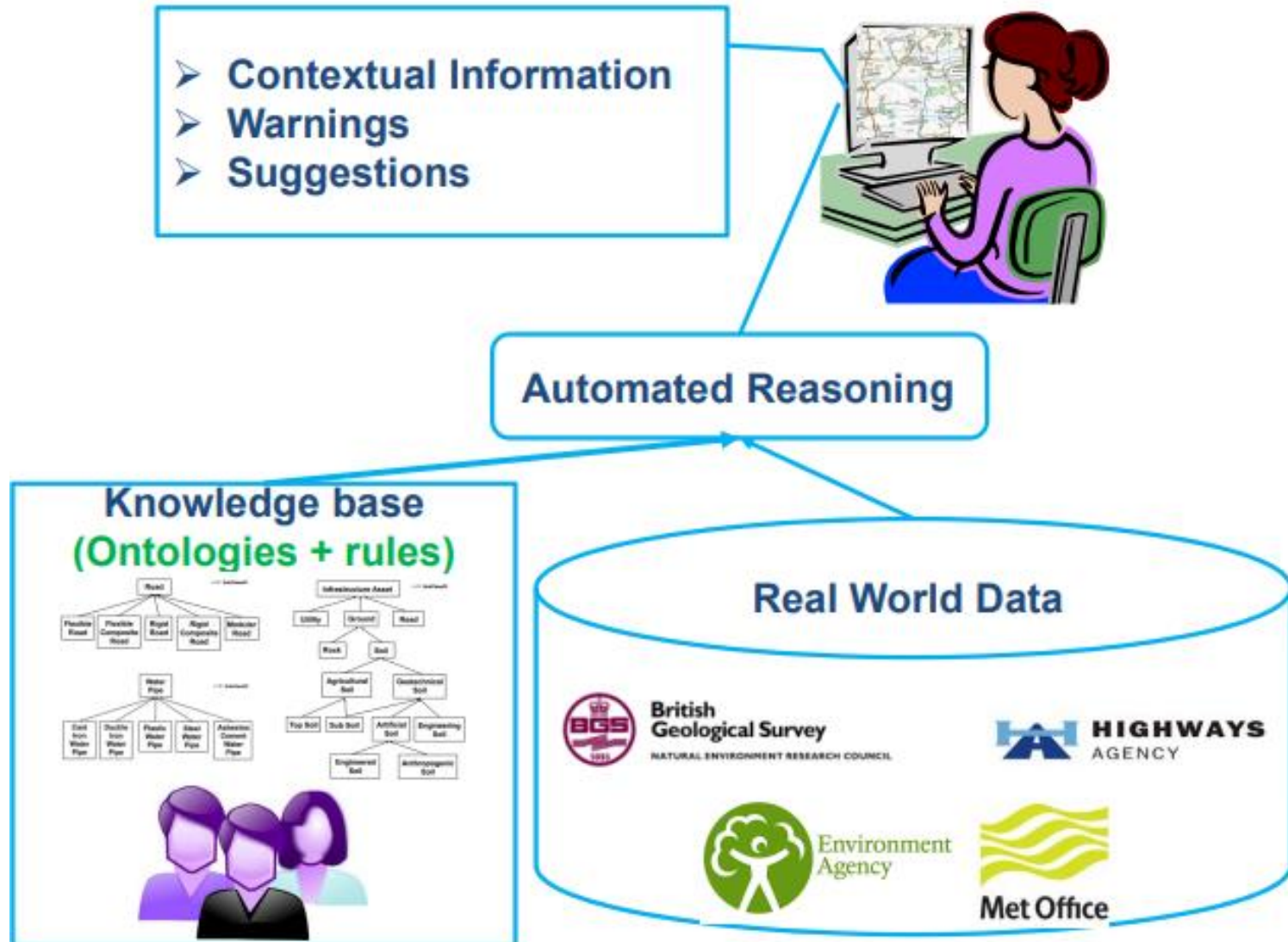
A Decision Support System
to Proactively Manage
Street works



System Architecture



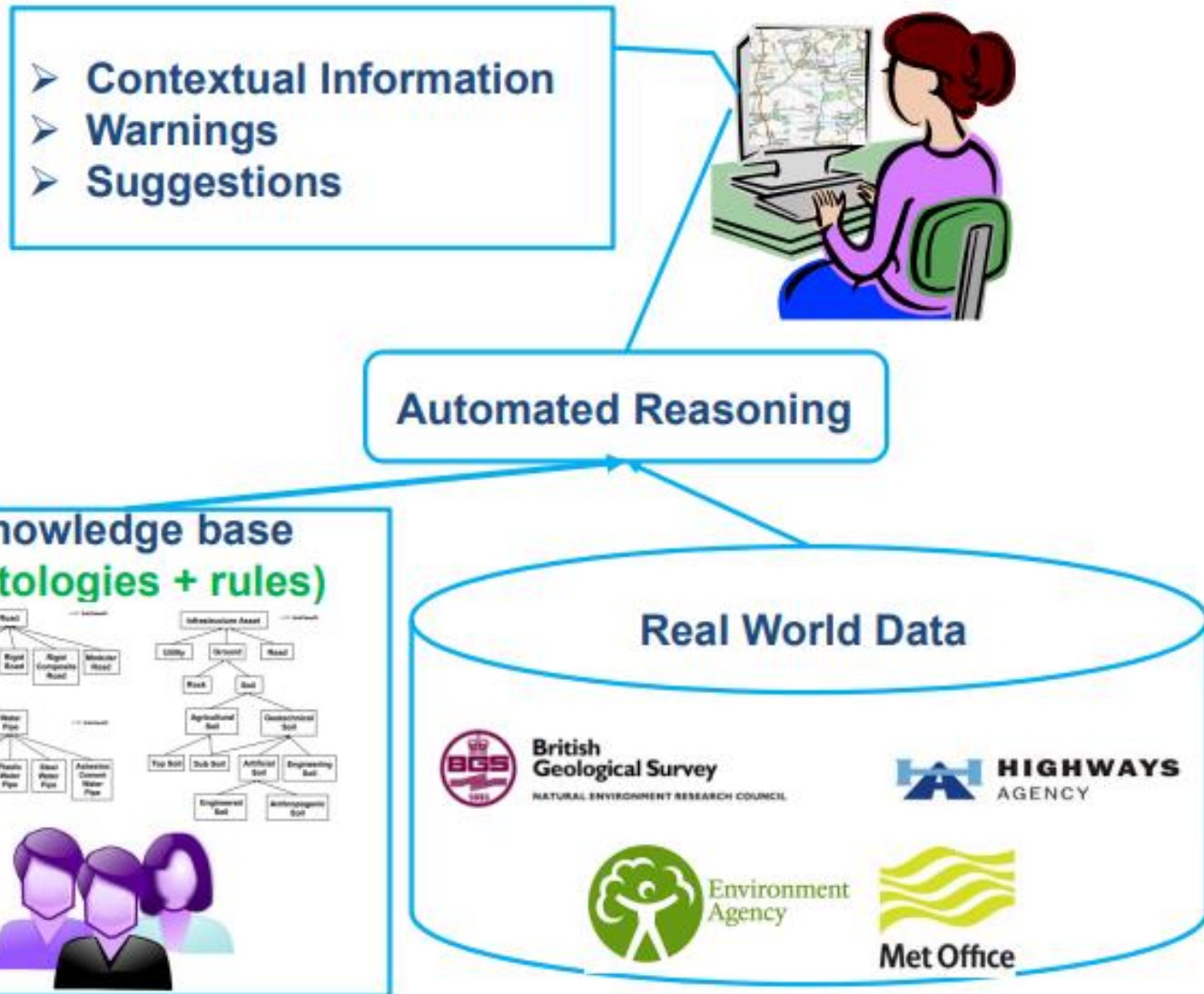
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System Architecture



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Stakeholder Engagement: Challenges



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System of Systems Knowledge-driven Approach

Lack of a unified decision approach – there is no one authority to plan and manage underground space, dependencies between assets are easily overlooked.

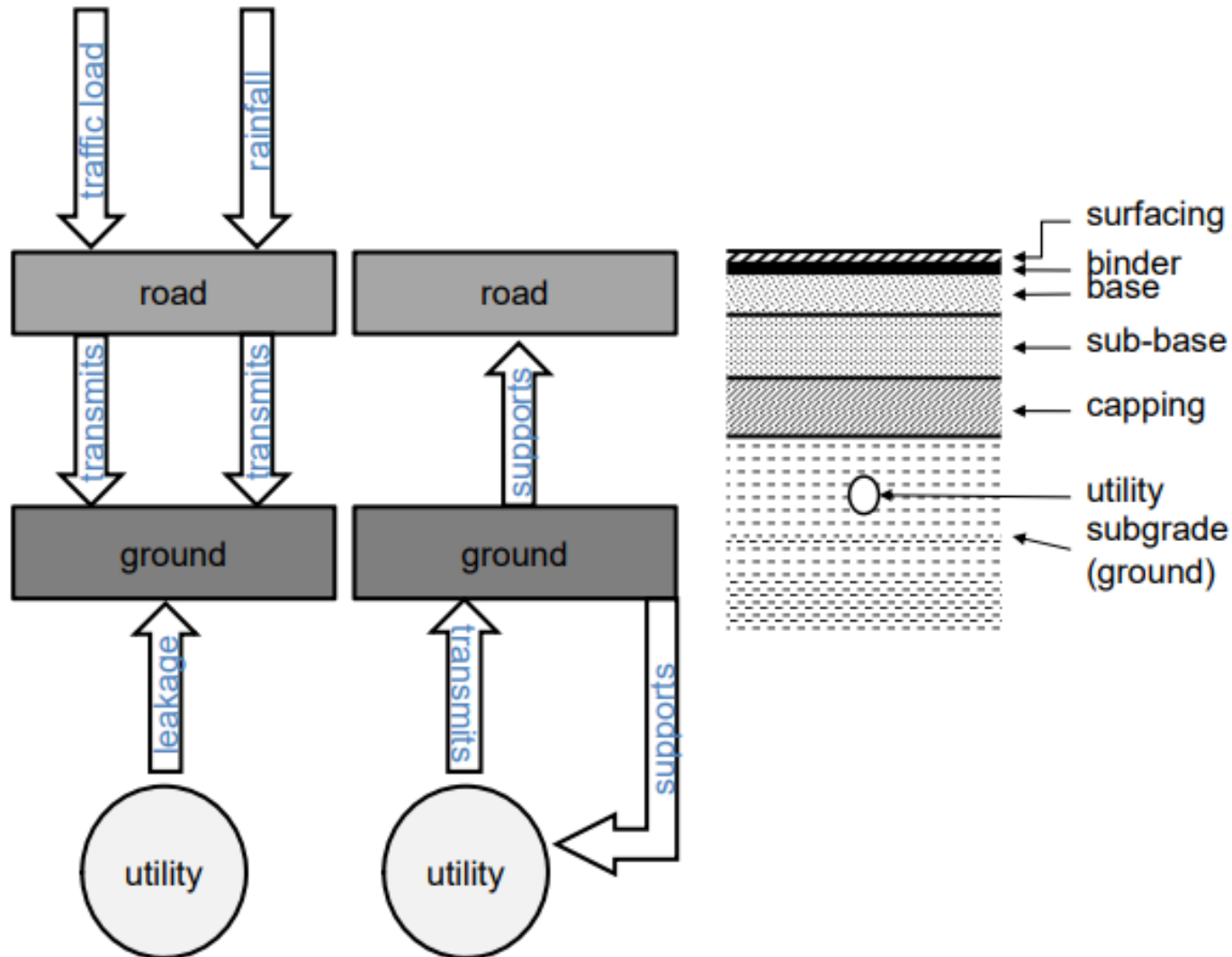
Lack and dispersion of knowledge about asset management – often in the form of ‘tacit knowledge’ developed with extensive experience, new approaches not embedded into routine practice.

Lack of a holistic costs analysis – impact on other assets, as well as economic, environmental and societal impact.

Stakeholder Engagement: Interdependencies



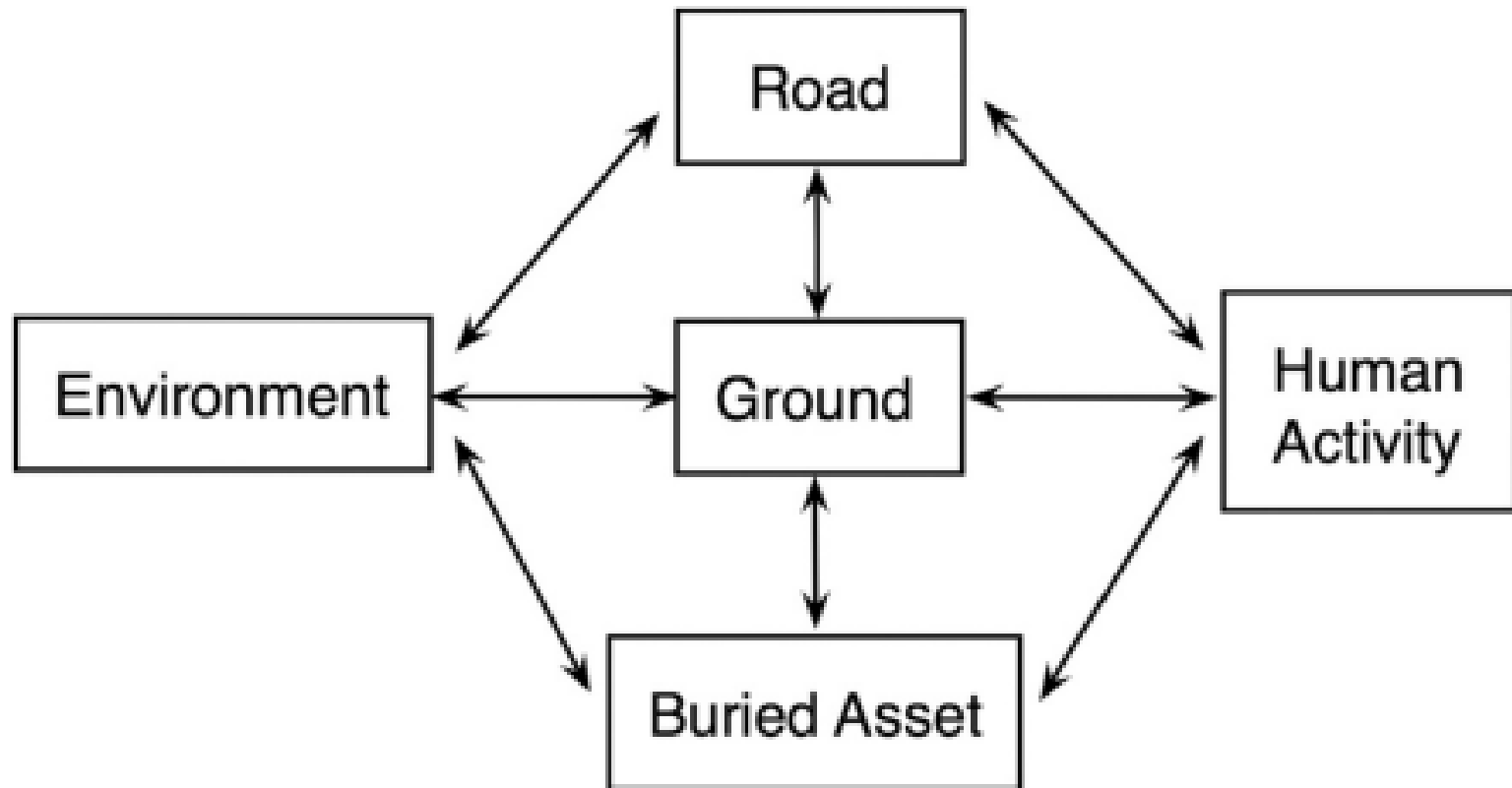
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Interdependencies between Ontologies



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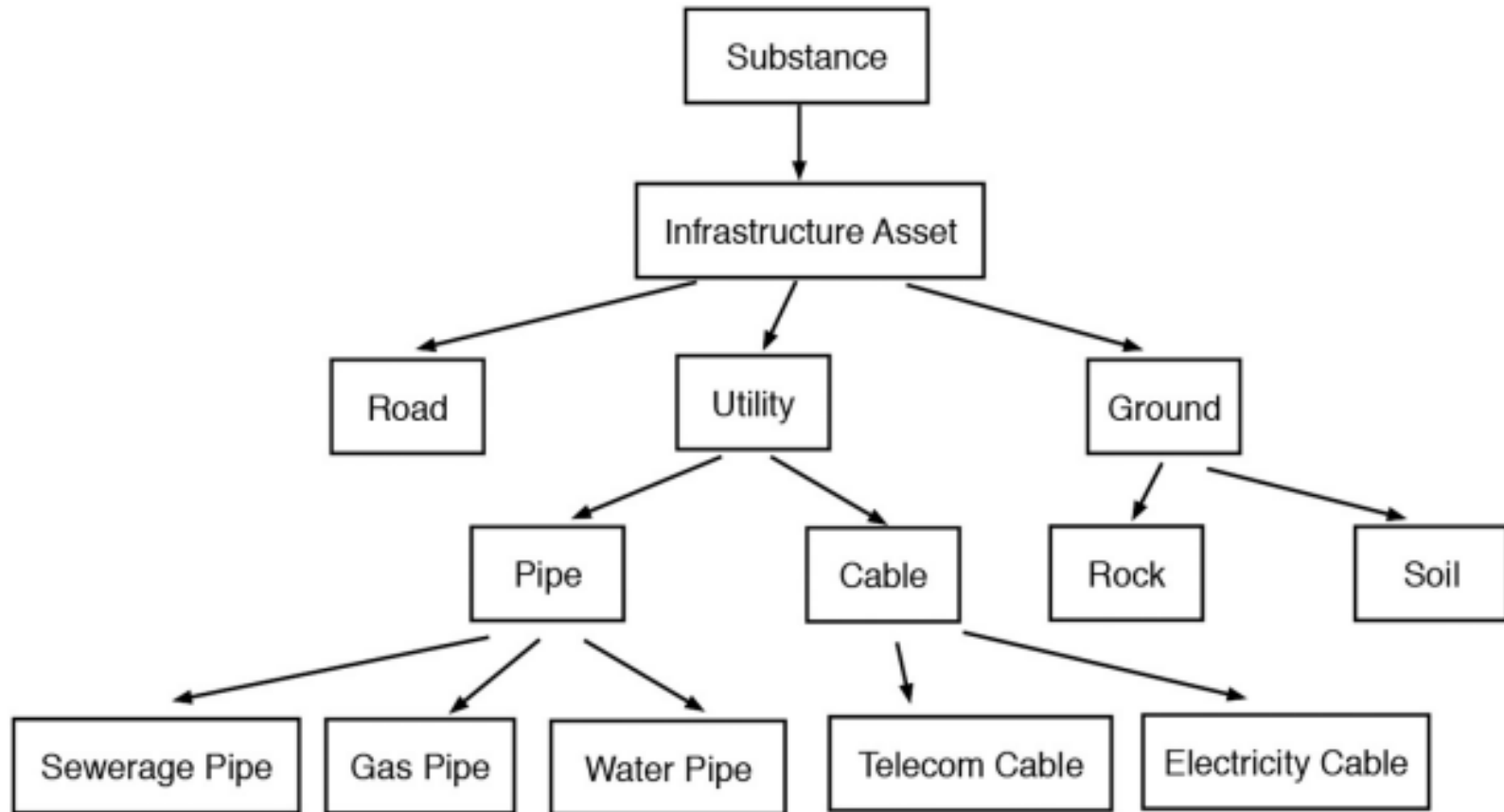


Conceptual Model



1. The model should provide a vocabulary covering various properties and processes of different infrastructure assets (e.g., the ground, roads and water pipes), as well as some terminologies for describing the natural environment and human activities which have close relationships with infrastructure assets.
2. For an individual infrastructure asset, the model should represent relationships between its properties and processes. For example, soil water content affects soil strength.
3. The model should represent relationships between properties and processes of different infrastructure assets. For example, pipe cracking is affected by soil deformation.
4. The model should represent how properties and processes of infrastructure assets affect and are affected by the natural environment and human activities. For example, soil water content is affected by evapotranspiration, and traffic affects soil deformation.

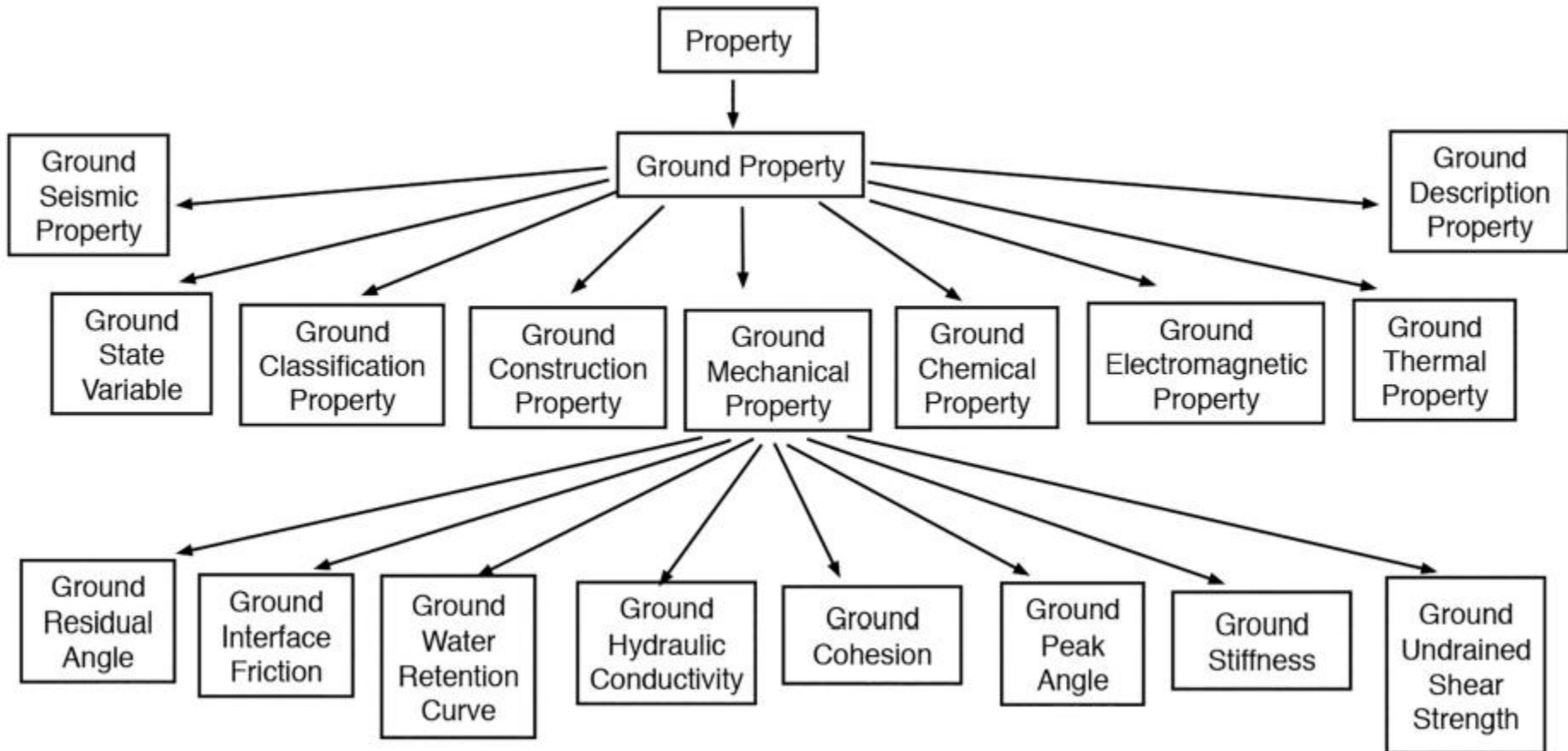
Infrastructure Assets



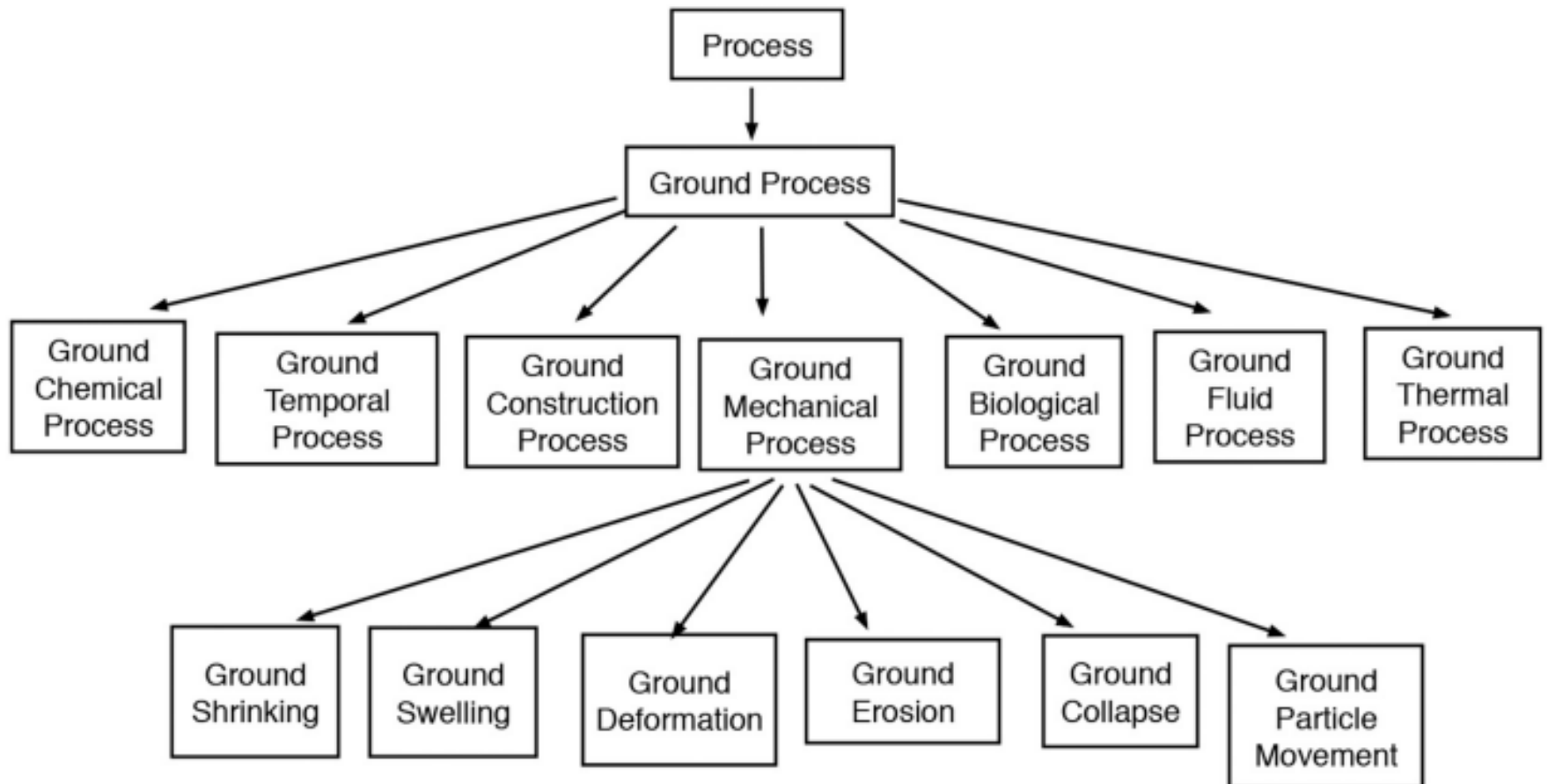
Properties and Processes



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Properties and Processes



Defining Properties



Categories and priorities of ground properties. The letters *P, C, M, K* stand for *Physical, Compositional, Mechanical, Chemical*, respectively, referring to the corresponding categories defined in the concept hierarchy of *GroundProperty*. Properties with lower numbers in the column 'Priority' have higher priorities, e. g., 1 means the highest priority.

	Ground Property	Priority	Category
1	GroundWaterContent	1	P
2	GroundPorosity	1	P
3	GroundClayMineralogy	1	C
...
40	GroundFabric	2	C
41	GroundOrganicMatterContent	2	C
42	GroundThermalConductivity	2	M
...
56	GroundAirContent	3	C
57	GroundOxygenConcentration	3	K
58	GroundBufferingCapacity	3	K
...

Defining All Assets



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Using Asset Property and Asset Process,
we defined all Assets:

- Ground
- Road
- Buried asset (restricted to water pipes only)

Defining Human Activity and Environment



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➤ Utilised concepts from SWEET

Semantic Web for Earth and Environment Technology Ontology

Last updated: July 14, 2022

Summary

Classes

Properties

Notes

Mappings

Widgets

Details

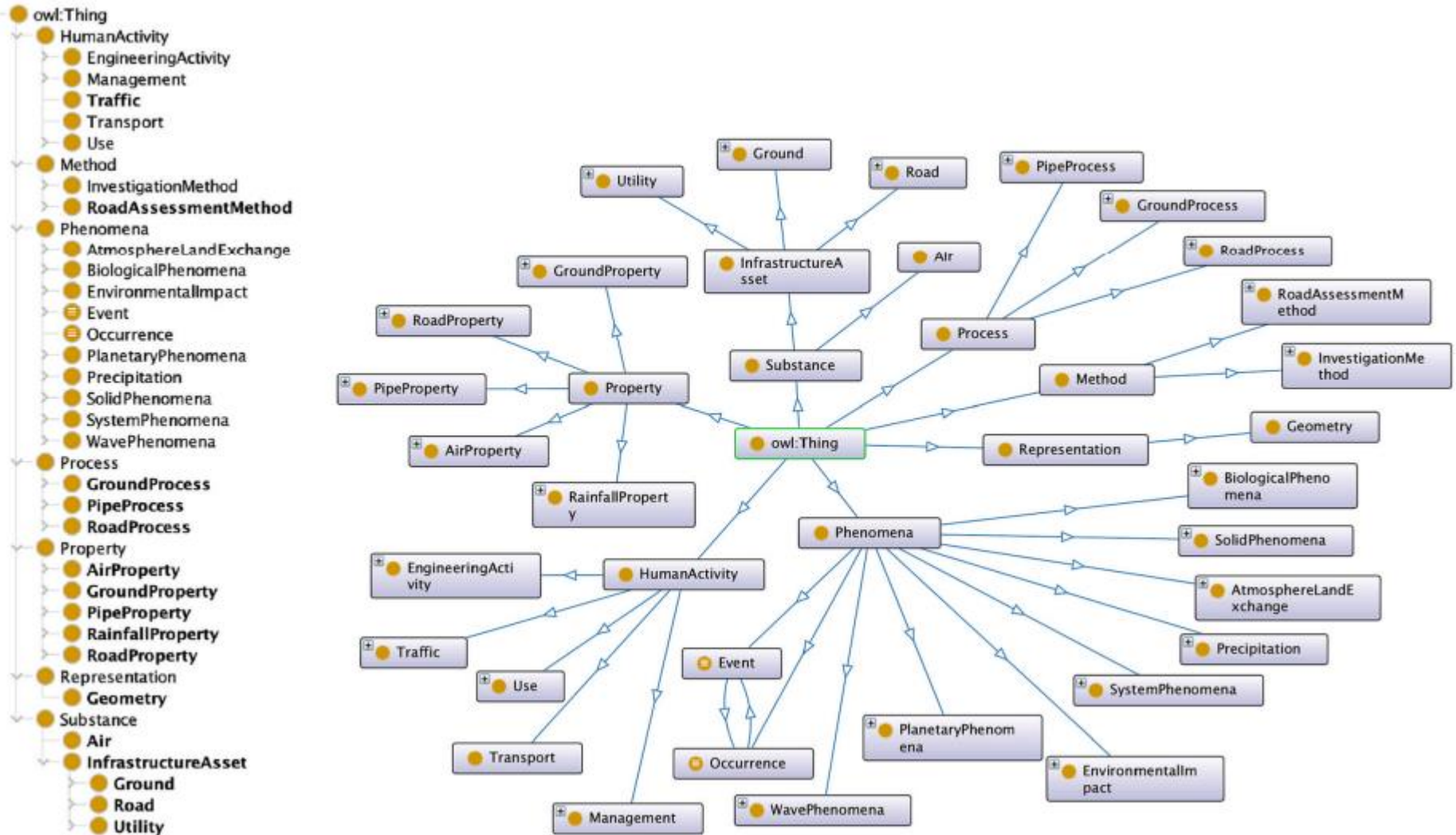
Acronym	SWEET
Visibility	Public
Description	The Semantic Web for Earth and Environmental Terminology is a mature foundational ontology that contains over 6000 concepts organized in 200 ontologies represented in OWL. Top level concepts include Representation (math, space, science, time, data), Realm (Ocean, Land Surface, Terrestrial Hydrosphere, Atmosphere, etc.), Phenomena (macro-scale ecological and physical), Processes (micro-scale physical, biological, chemical, and mathematical), Human Activities (Decision, Commerce, Jurisdiction, Environmental, Research). Originally developed by NASA Jet Propulsion Labs under Rob Raskin, SWEET is now officially under the governance of the ESIP foundation.
Status	Production
Format	OWL
Contact	ESIP Semantic Team, esip-semanticweb@lists.esipfed.org .

Du et al, City infrastructure ontologies, [Computers, Environment and Urban Systems](#), 2023

Overview of the ATU Ontology



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Overview of the ATU Ontology



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	Classes	Axioms
Ground Ontology	110	3,337
Road Ontology	110	4,545
Water Pipe Ontology	66	894
Human Activity Ontology	55	140
Method Ontology	78	269
Investigation Ontology	45	183
Phenomena Ontology	178	382
ATU Ontology	620	10,117

Lessons Learnt from Ontology Development



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Stakeholders (engineers in our case) bring a wealth of domain knowledge – **tacit knowledge**

Keep it simple and agree on the core concepts – e.g. **properties and processes**

Spreadsheets seen as a 'natural' way to define concepts and dependencies – **iterative approach**



Lessons Learnt from Ontology Development



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Keep it simple and agree on the core concepts – e.g. **properties and processes**

Spreadsheets seen as a 'natural' way to define concepts and dependencies – **iterative approach**

Expert availability – **think broadly and creatively**

Extendibility is crucial – **embed in design**

Slow process, experts often lost in detail or changing their opinions – **patience**

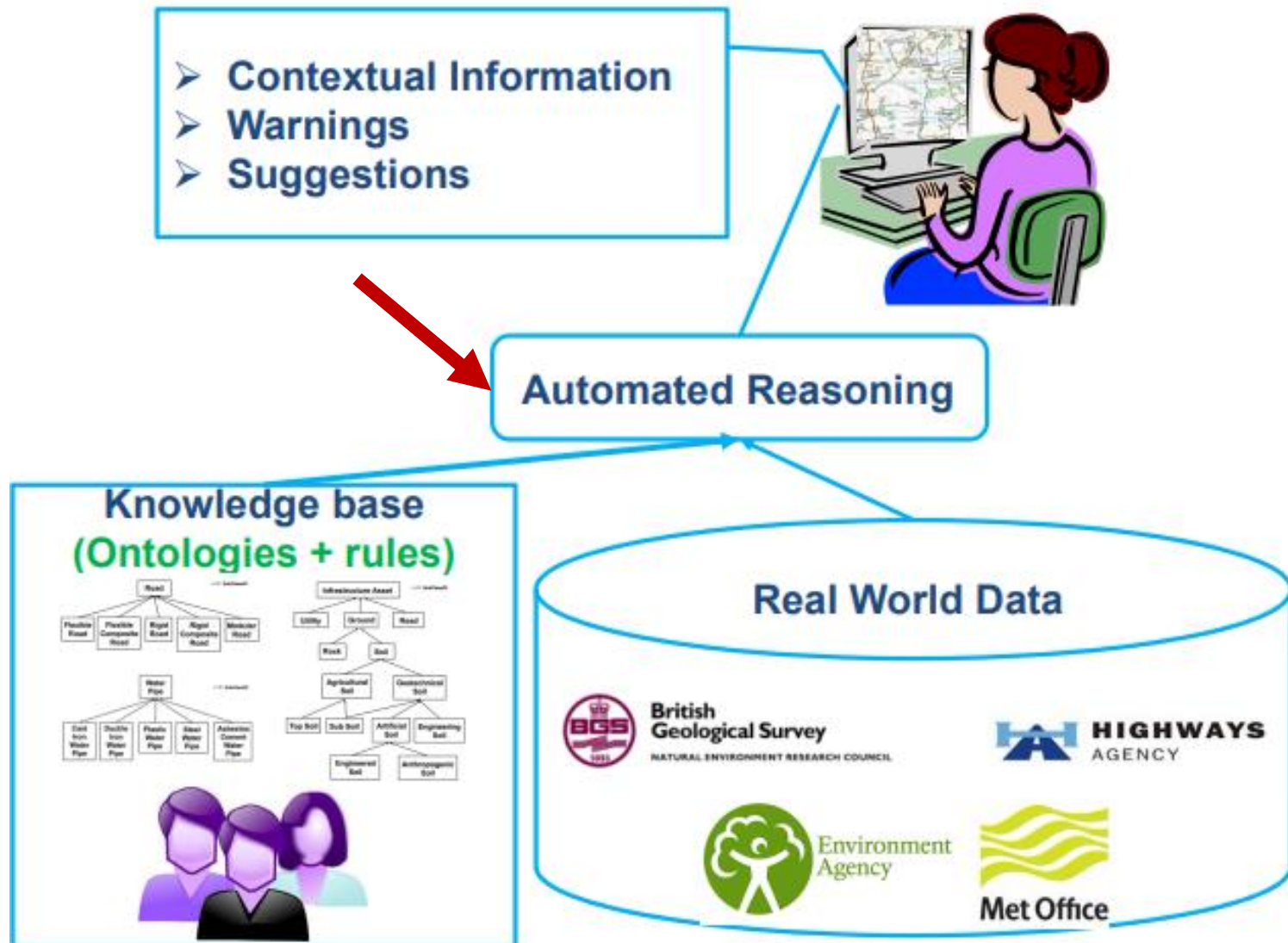
Tacit knowledge is hard to articulate – **link to data**



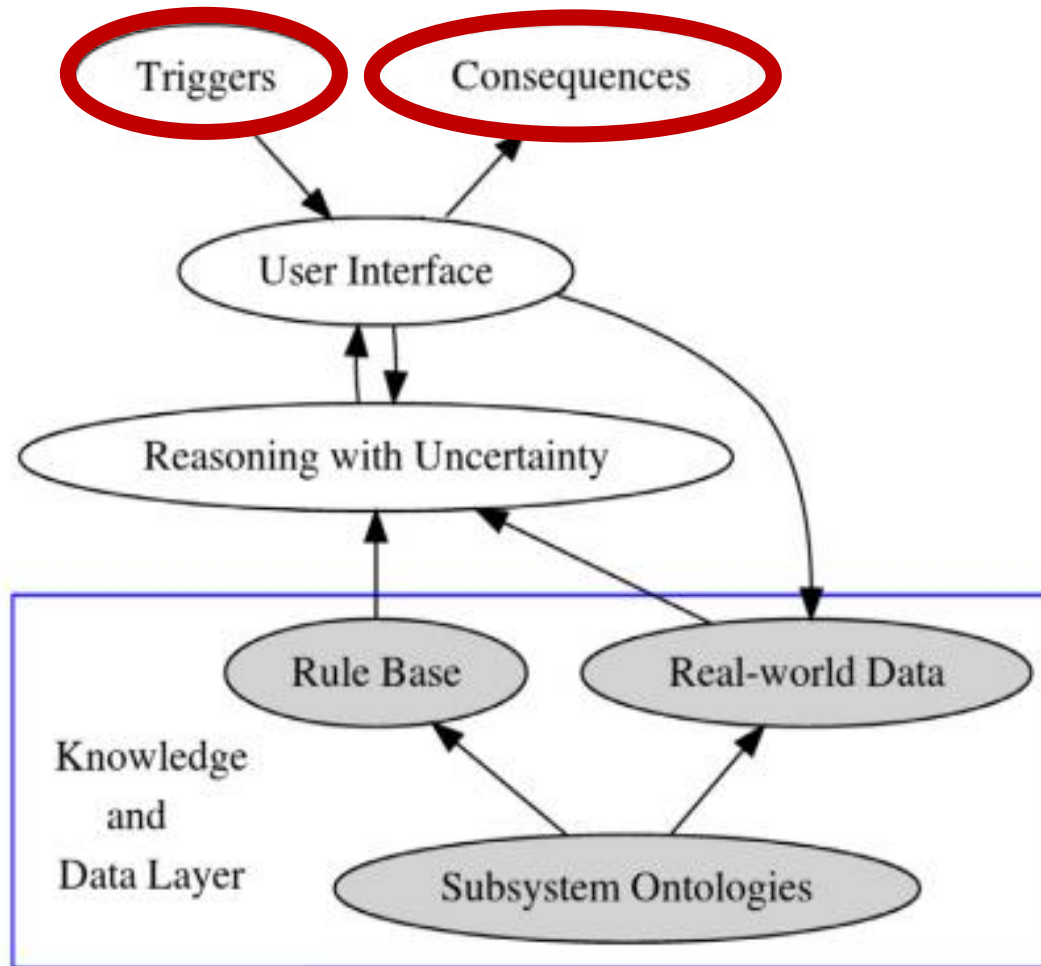
System Architecture



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Starting from Triggers and Deriving Consequences

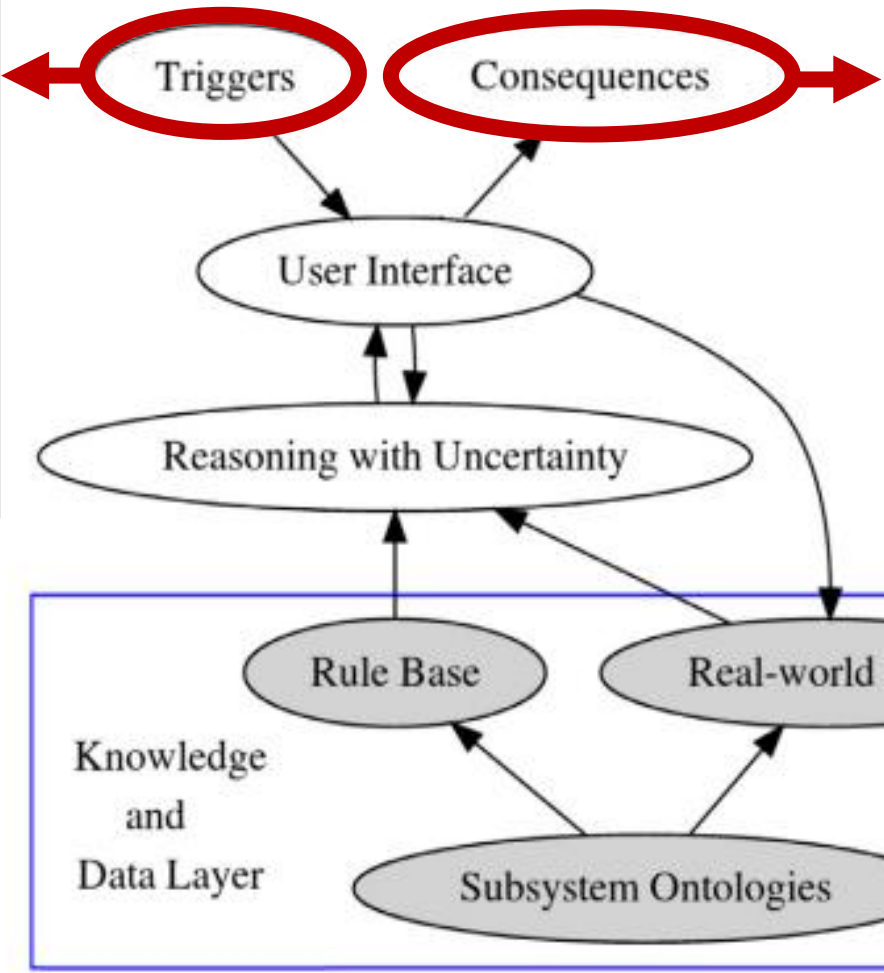


Starting from Triggers and Deriving Consequences



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- Human Activity
 - Traffic
 - Roadworks
 -
- Phenomena
 - Flood
 - Drought
 -

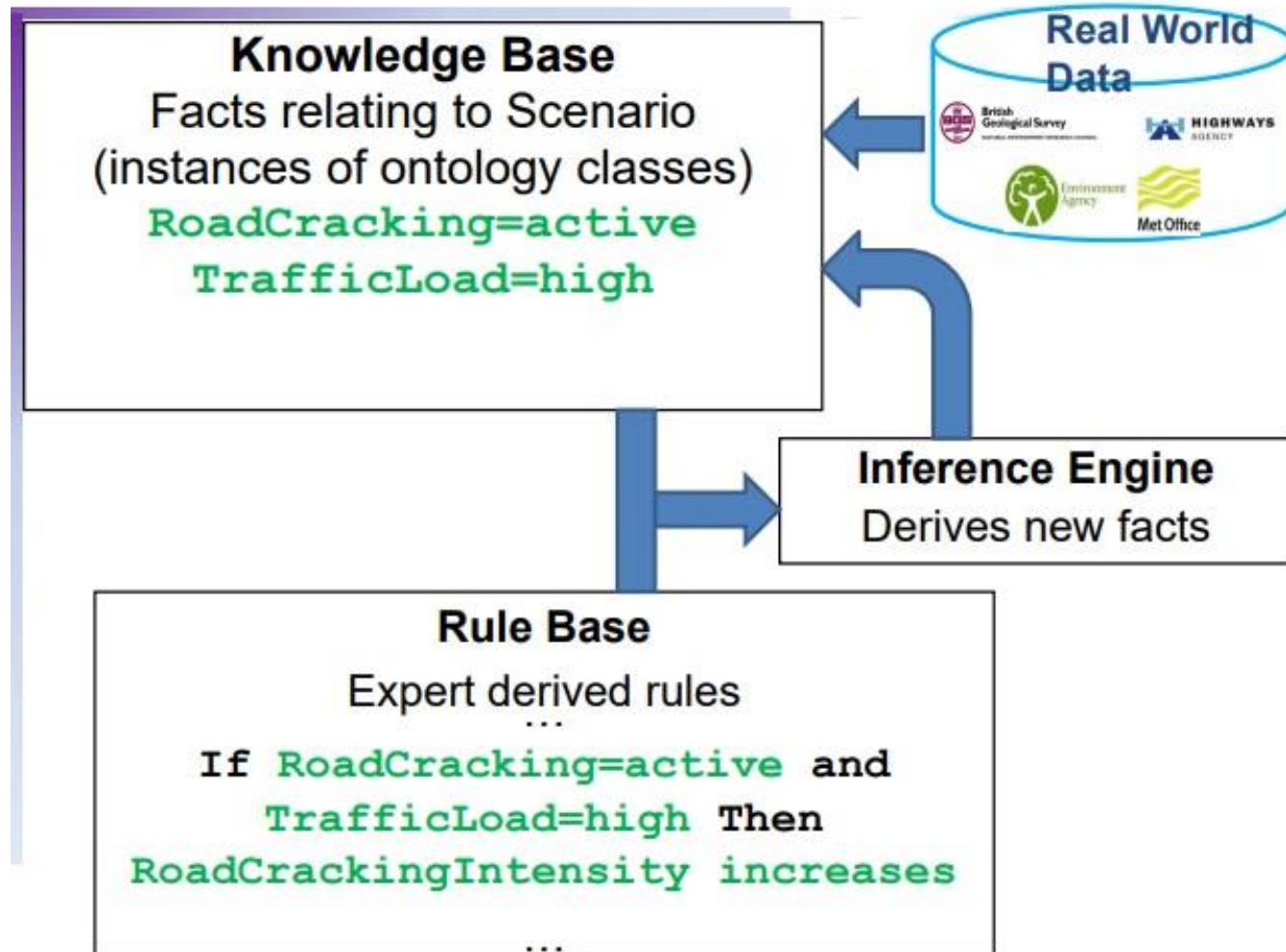


- Human Consequences
 - Injury, Cost, ...
- Asset Consequences
 - Burst, collapse, ...
- Legal, social, economical
 - Traffic disruption, ...
- Environmental Consequences
 - Water pollution, ...

Integrating in the Decision Support System



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Defining Rules



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Conclusions of many rules are only (very) likely rather than definite.

```
If      Pipe Leak is small
then [Very Likely]
      Soil Wetting increased
```

How to represent likelihoods?

- Unable to obtain quantitative probabilities (e.g. 0.9)
- Preferred linguistic terms:

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Confidence level	Definition
<i>Definite (D)</i>	100% sure that E will happen
<i>Very likely (V)</i>	not 100% but only rarely will E not happen
<i>Likely (L)</i>	E happens more than 50% of the time but it is not surprising if E does not happen
<i>Unlikely (U)</i>	E happens less than 50% of the time but it is not surprising if E happens
<i>Very unlikely (VU)</i>	not 0% chance of E happening but it will happen rarely
<i>Impossible (I)</i>	E never happens

Defining Rules

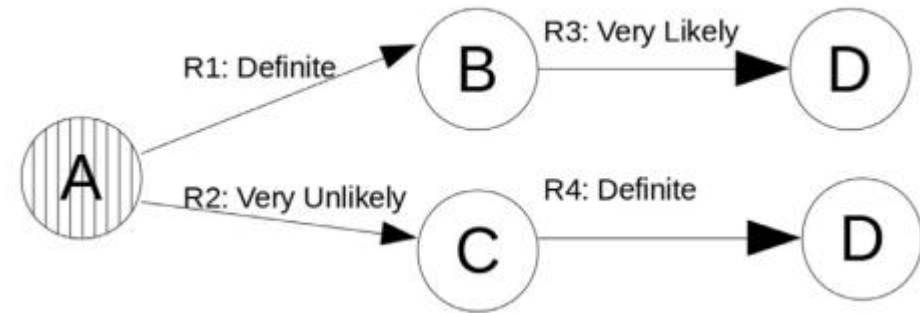


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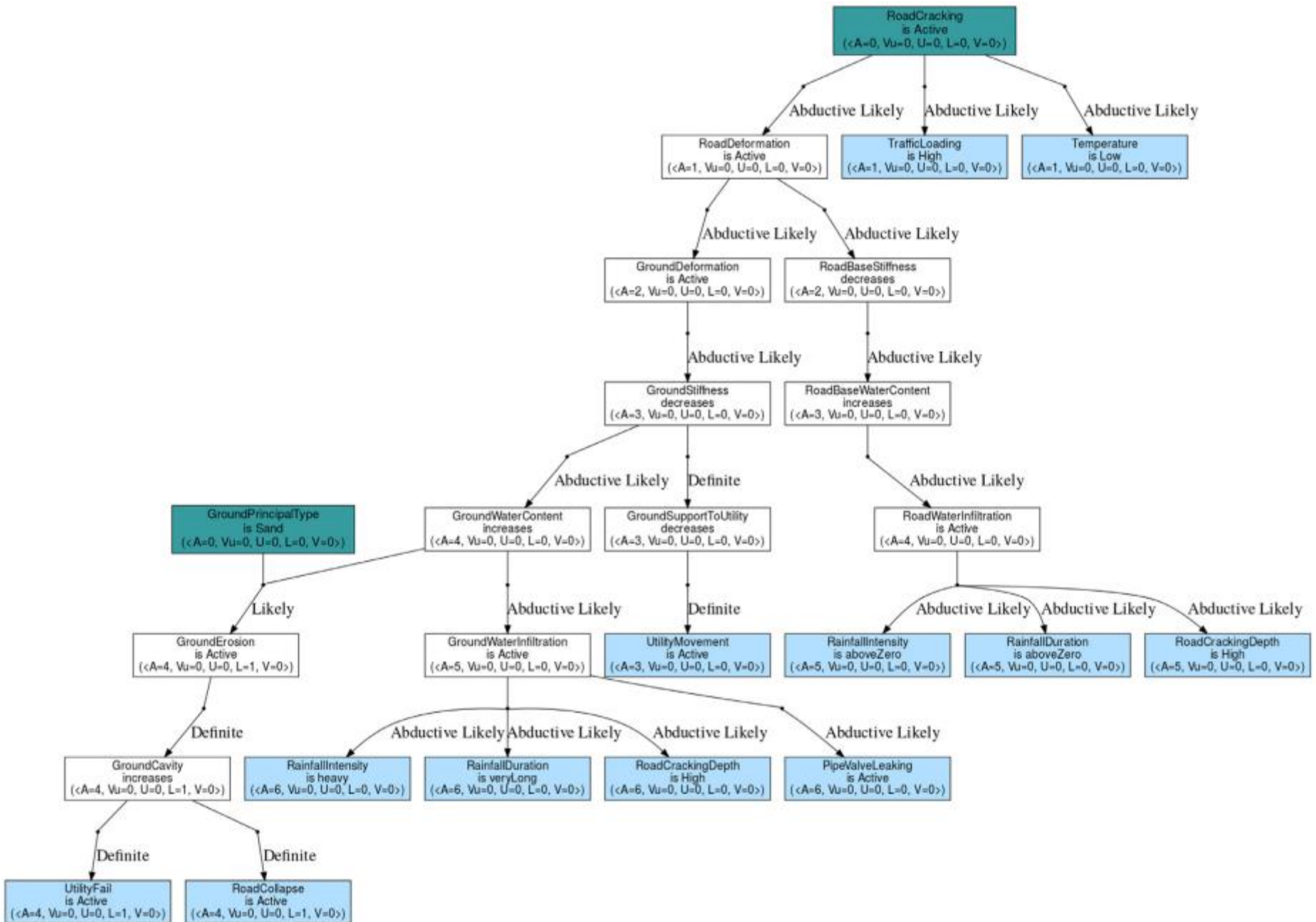


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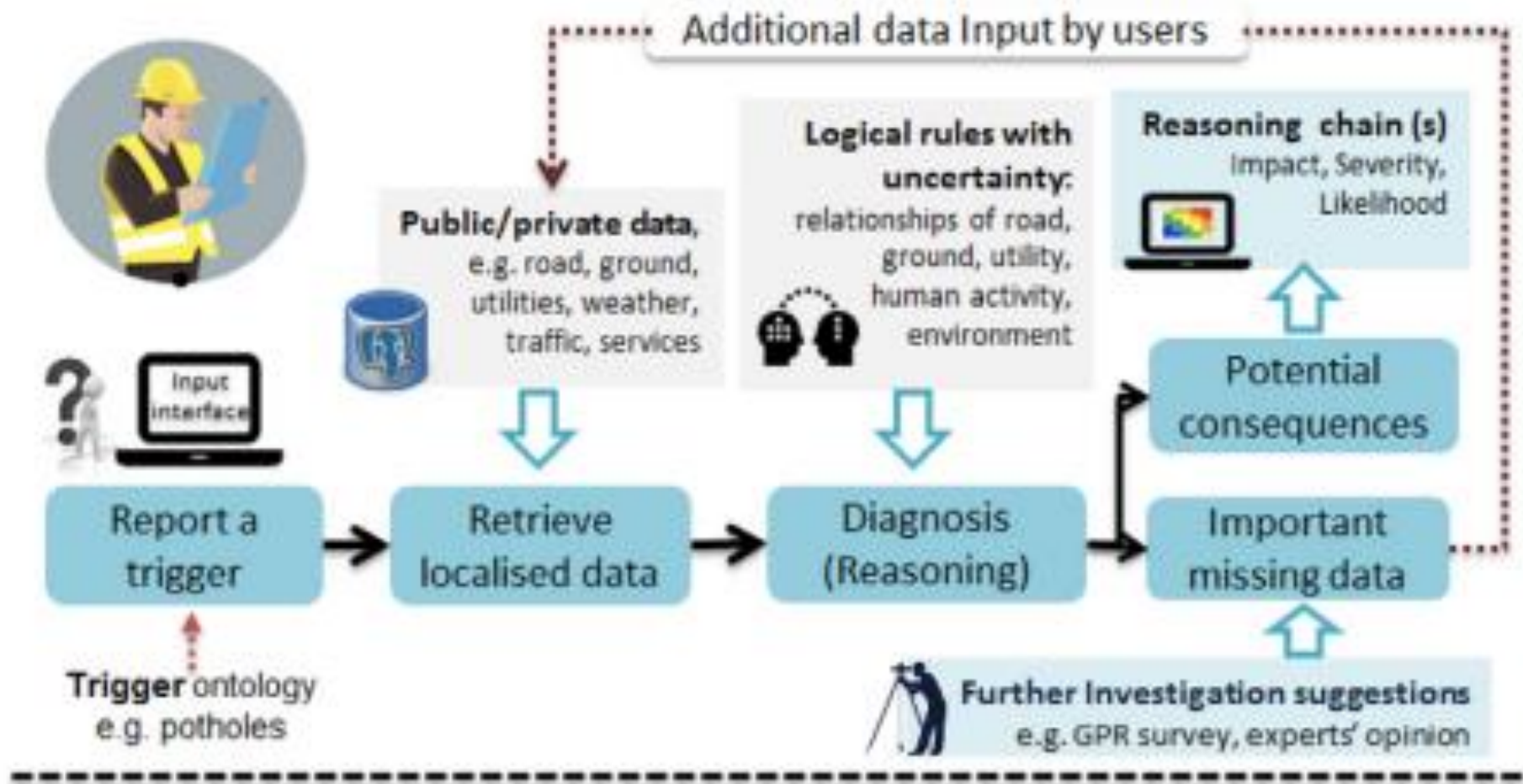
Example: Inferred Consequences



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Putting it all Together: ATU Decision Support System



ATU Decision Support System: The User Reports a Trigger



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ATU Decision Support System: Reporting Triggers

Please click on map to select trigger location or type in
Postcode: (Longitude = -2.5549, Latitude = 53.5078)



- [\(* Select a file\)](#)
- Trigger type (*):**

Observation_RoadObservation_Cracks

• Road Cracking Width (mm): <input type="text"/>	• Road Cracking Depth (mm): <input type="text"/>
• Road Cracking Length (mm): <input type="text"/>	• Road Cracking Angle (degree): <input type="text"/>

• Trigger value (*):

• Reference:

• Reporter(*):

• Location: from map

• Time (*):
2017-12-13 12:10:41

• Duration: start time (optional):

• Duration: end time (optional):

• Reporter source: expertise:

• Reporter source: phone:

• Description:

• Photo:
 No file chosen

- Trigger type (*):
- HumanActivity_ConstructionWorks
 - HumanActivity_TrafficFlow
 - NaturalPhenomena_Drought
 - NaturalPhenomena_Earthquake
 - NaturalPhenomena_ExtremeTemperatures
 - NaturalPhenomena_Freezing
 - NaturalPhenomena_Rainfall
 - Observation_CableObservation
 - Observation_GroundObservation_ManMadeHazard_MineCollapse
 - Observation_GroundObservation_ManMadeHazard_SewerCollapse
 - Observation_GroundObservation_ManMadeHazard_TunnelCollapse
 - Observation_GroundObservation_NaturalGeoHazard_GroundMovement
 - Observation_GroundObservation_NaturalGeoHazard_SurfaceErosion
 - Observation_RoadObservation_Cracks
 - Observation_RoadObservation_Potholes
 - Observation_RoadObservation_RoadDeformation
 - Observation_RoadObservation_RoadFretting
 - Observation_RoadObservation_Rutting
 - Observation_RoadObservation_StandingWater
 - Observation_SewerObservation_LossOfWater
 - Observation_SewerObservation_SignsOfCollapse
 - Observation_WaterPipeObservation_ChangeInChemistry
 - Observation_WaterPipeObservation_DiscolouredWater
 - Observation_WaterPipeObservation_LossOfPressure
 - Observation_WaterPipeObservation_NetworkCapacity
 - Observation_WaterPipeObservation_SurfaceWater
 - PeriodicReview_AnnualMaintenance
 - PeriodicReview_EndOfLifeReplacement
 - PeriodicReview_UpdateReplacement
 - Policy_InternalPolicyChanges
 - Policy_RegulationPolicyChanges

ATU Decision Support System: Underground Utilities Detected



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Id	Utility_type	Sub_Type	State	Date_Installed	Owner	Material	Voltage / Pressure	Depth (Mm)	Source	Size (mm)
203	water pipe	Distribution Main - PressurisedMain	operation	1997	united utilities	Polyethylene	—	—	desktop-survey	900
192	water pipe	Distribution Main - PressurisedMain	operation	1932	united utilities	cast iron	—	—	desktop-survey	101.6

Wei et al, A decision support system for urban infrastructure inter-asset management employing domain ontologies and qualitative uncertainty-based reasoning, *Expert Systems With Applications*, 2020

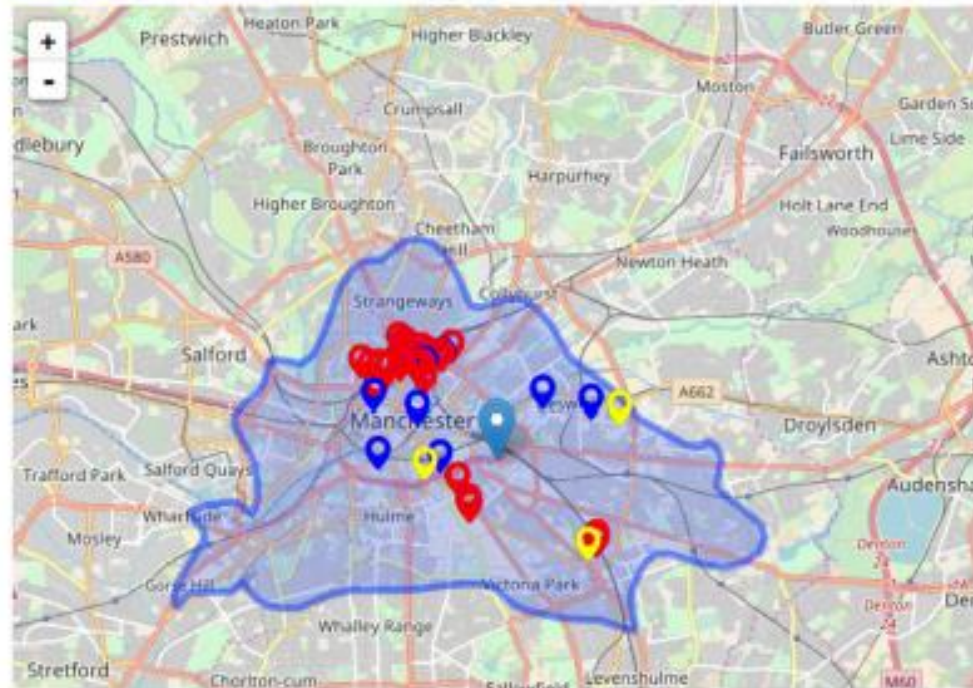
ATU Decision Support System: Nearby Services Detected



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> Nearby services:

The blue region indicates the area which can be accessed in 10 minutes by driving from the trigger. The nearby services within 2km are displayed by coloured marks. **Red marks: bank; Yellow marks: hospital; Blue marks: schools.**



> There are **32** banks around the trigger, the area is **close to city center**.

- Direct distance: as the crow flies (straight line between two points);
- Routing distance: the shortest routing distance along road by driving.

ID	Service	Name	Direct Distance (Km)	Routing Distance (Km)
10639	university	Manchester Business School	1.254	2.0916
10675	university	MMU 70 Oxford Street	1.6293	2.2092
10677	university	University of Law	1.59	2.2074
10652	school	—	1.2393	2.5913
10661	school	Instituto Cervantes	2.6441	3.2483
10649	school	Berlitz Language Centre	1.3161	1.9325
10651	school	—	2.3197	3.2785
10660	kindergarten	—	2.5618	2.9568
10641	hospital	Cornerstone Centre	2.9858	3.9
10638	hospital	Boundary Medical Centre	1.5953	2.0113

ATU Decision Support System: Potential Consequences



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localhost:8000/triggerowl/3/consequencelist/?sort=likelihood

You're looking at the Potential Consequence List view!

Q_PipeDepth: Deep Shallow | Q_RoadSlope: High Medium Slight | Q_Subgrade: Clay Sand SolubleRock | Q_TrafficLoad: Active | Q_PipeLeaking: Active | Q_PipeLeakingRate: Severe | Q_RoadType: A |

Version	Consequence	Confidence Vector	Severity	Likelihood	missingFacts	Given Missing Facts	Type
1	SolubleRockCavitiesFormation	<VU=00, U=00, L=00, V=00>	Critical	definite	1	['PipeLeaking Active', 'PipeLeakingRate Severe', 'Subgrade SolubleRock']	Ground
1	RoadCracking	<VU=00, U=00, L=01, V=02>	Critical	likely	1	['PipeLeaking Active', 'PipeLeakingRate Severe', 'TrafficLoad Active', 'Subgrade Sand']	Road
1	DamageToProperty	<VU=00, U=00, L=08, V=02>	Critical	likely	1	['PipeLeaking Active', 'PipeLeakingRate Severe', 'TrafficLoad Active', 'RoadType A', 'Subgrade SolubleRock']	Social/Economic
1	SuddenRoadCollapse	<VU=00, U=00, L=07, V=02>	Catastrophic	likely	1	['PipeLeaking Active', 'PipeLeakingRate Severe', 'TrafficLoad Active', 'Subgrade SolubleRock']	Road
1	LossOfUtilityService	<VU=00, U=00, L=01, V=03>	Critical	likely	1	['PipeLeaking Active', 'PipeLeakingRate Severe', 'TrafficLoad Active', 'Subgrade SolubleRock']	Social/Economic

Wei et al, A decision support system for urban infrastructure inter-asset management employing domain ontologies and qualitative uncertainty-based reasoning, Expert Systems With Applications, 2020

ATU Decision Support System: Consequences and Impact



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localhost:8000/triggerow/3/consequences/

ATU Decision Support System: Potential Consequences

PipeLeaking was observed at Manchester on road A635 with value High at Aug. 14, 2015, 6:33 p.m.. There are the following potential consequences: Automated Reasoning

		Impact			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Definite			SolubleRockCavitiesFormation ¹	
	Very Likely				
	Likely		UtilitySupport ¹	DamageToProperty ¹ LossOfAccess ¹ TrafficDisruption ¹ [PipeLeaking Active', 'PipeLeakingRate Severe', 'TrafficLoad Active', 'Subgrade SolubleRock'] LossOfUtilityService ¹	LossOfLife ¹ SuddenRoadCollapse ¹ SuddenUtilityFail ¹
	Unlikely		TrafficDisruption LossOfUtilityService		
	Very Unlikely			Injury	LossOfLife
	Impossible				

"Risk": Low Medium Serious High

• ¹ means the number of pieces of missing facts (with assumed values), please click for more details.
Reasoning chain

Consequence List View

Please select assumptions of missing facts (green: given facts)!

Q_PipeDepth
 Deep Shallow

Q_RoadSlope
 High Medium Slight

Q_Subgrade
 Clay Sand SolubleRock

Q_PipeLeaking
 Active

Q_PipeLeakingRate
 Severe

Q_RoadType
 A

Q_TrafficLoad
 Active

Filter the data to be displayed by category!
 • Select type of consequences:

• Select display mode for repeating consequences:

Lessons Learnt from ATU System Development



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Scenarios illustrate
Functionality and enable
engagement –
prototype early

Uncertainty is inevitable and
stakeholders should
understand –
intuitive approach

There is plenty of available
data – **location links data**



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Uncertainty is inevitable and
stakeholders should
understand –
intuitive approach

There is plenty of available
data – **location links data**

Uncertainty validation
by humans is hard –
data-driven approach

Understand what decisions
are being made –
flexible / 'open-minded'

Many data would be
unavailable – **creative ways
to exploit 'missing data'**



Take Home Message:

Human-in-the-loop



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EU AI Act

- adequate risk assessment and mitigation
- appropriate human oversight
- traceability of results



Stakeholder engagement from the start

Holistic models – link knowledge and data

Use data to validate/tune knowledge models

Acknowledgements



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Engineering and
Physical Sciences
Research Council

Assessing the Underworld Project (£6M)

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Dr. Lijun Wei

Dr. Derek Magee

Prof. Tony Cohn

Engineers:

University of Leeds

University of Birmingham

British Geological Survey

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