

The *Rabbit Hole* Method

How to build a trust architecture that self-selects, teaches without lecturing, and compounds a network without a single cold ask.

Rick Astley didn't plan his comeback. He was a one hit wonder who became a stay at home dad and occasionally worked as a waiter. Someone embedded one of his old music videos in a hyperlink, called it something else, and the internet played along for years. Somewhere in there he became genuinely beloved again — not because he managed his reputation carefully, but because the joke was good and he was in on it. It got him on the Glastonbury stage thirty years later. A second chance nobody saw coming, least of all Rick.


Never gonna give you up.

STEP BY STEP

01

Audit the assumption you're replacing

Before you build anything, name what you're pushing back against. The operating premise underneath your current approach — the thing that feels like common sense but might be expiring. For the rabbit hole: "reputation requires continuous tending" and "explanation is how understanding transmits."

 Assumption-Ground Audit

02

Commit your architecture


Decide what's evergreen and what's alive. Most of it holds. You get 1-2 designated play spaces. The constraint is the design — it stops the compulsion to constantly iterate and forces you to be deliberate about where the energy actually goes.

 Evergreen + 2 play spots

03

Design the descent

Map the six depths. What lives at each level? What's the surface provocation? What's the thesis, and how far in does someone have to go before they reach it? The thesis doesn't belong at the top. Make them approach it.

 Depth 1-6 architecture

04

Add the rope on every page




Orientation at every depth. A depth counter. A "Keep going" button that makes the choice explicit each time. Nobody descends accidentally. Nobody gets lost. This isn't a UX feature — it's your thinking made structural. You don't let people be lost relative to an argument without knowing it.

• • • DEPTH X OF 6 • • •

05

Choose what's at the bottom — and whose work belongs there

The tools at depth 6 are a deliberate judgment call. Not what's popular. Not what you're affiliated with. What do you genuinely believe belongs in this specific conversation? Whose work has earned its place in the argument? This is the most important step — the integrity point of the whole method. Get it right and people feel found. Get it wrong and they feel misled. Those are very different experiences.

   Curated depth-6 tools

06

Set the window — give it a season

The rabbit hole is live for Easter. Then it's gone. Real scarcity changes the quality of attention it receives. A seasonal window also gives you a natural iteration cycle — each time it comes back, you can update who's in it, what tools you trust, what ideas you're currently testing.

 Seasonal • not permanent

07

Write the invitation — not the instruction


Tell people it exists. Don't direct them to it. "It's on my website. You just have to decide if you are that person." The announcement is the first filter. Most people, even with the map, won't go. That's data. The people who follow all the way down have demonstrated something no credentials could establish.

 Public invitation • self-selecting filter

08

Watch the window • archive the evidence • iterate

Who followed? Who responded publicly? Who found themselves inside it without being told? Take the screenshots — the Digital layer needs to survive the In Person window. Then iterate. Different tools, different people, different depths. The playground gets smarter every season because the lab produces feedback.

 In Person → Digital → AI Perpetuates

"Sometimes you'll get significant value. Sometimes you'll get Rick Astley."

"I once Rick Rolled two division presidents named Rick in a mass email. Nobody got it. Still worth it."

NOLA SIMON • ON THE RABBIT HOLE

BEFORE YOU BUILD

What assumption am I replacing by doing this?

Name it precisely. "Reputation requires continuous tending" is more useful than "I want to try something different."

BEFORE YOU BUILD

What would I put at depth 6 right now?

If you can't answer this immediately and specifically, you're not ready to build the descent yet.

DESIGNING THE ARCHITECTURE

What does someone do by the time they reach the bottom?

Not read. Not consume. Do. The teaching is in the doing — what skill, habit, or experience have they practiced without knowing it?

DESIGNING THE ARCHITECTURE

Whose work belongs here — and why specifically?

Not who you want to be associated with. Whose work genuinely belongs in this argument? The inclusion has to be honest or the whole thing collapses.

SETTING THE WINDOW

What's the seasonal logic?

Easter. A conference. A moment in the cultural calendar. The season should match the content — scarcity is only meaningful if it's coherent.

WRITING THE INVITATION

Does this tell people where to look, or does it tell them who they'd have to be to find it?

Instructions and invitations are different things. One navigates. One self-selects.

AFTER THE WINDOW

What did the self-selection return?

Who went all the way down? Who responded publicly? Who discovered themselves inside it? What does that tell you about your next iteration?



Hypothesis discipline

Testing an assumption about how networks and reputation actually build — without announcing you're running a test. Holding the frame open to see what the window returns.



Structural critique

The architecture is the argument. The depth counter, the consent mechanism, the thesis at depth 3 — none of it is decoration. It names a different way of thinking about credibility at the design level.



Earned wit

Anne Murray. Alice. An Easter egg on a website about trust and AI. The humor is doing work — it signals this is a person, not a platform, and that the ideas are alive, not filed.



Methodology embodied

The rabbit hole doesn't explain the Assumption-Ground Audit. It performs it on the reader — and by the time they realize what happened, they've already understood something they couldn't have been told.



Witnessed trust

The invitation was designed. The responses were not. The Strategic Linguist, Dr. Illingworth, the people who followed all the way down — they witnessed something real and responded on their own terms.



Lab thinking

Playground not monument. Each seasonal iteration produces data. Different tools, different people, different depths — the method stays consistent while the content evolves. Same as the podcast. Same intellectual DNA.