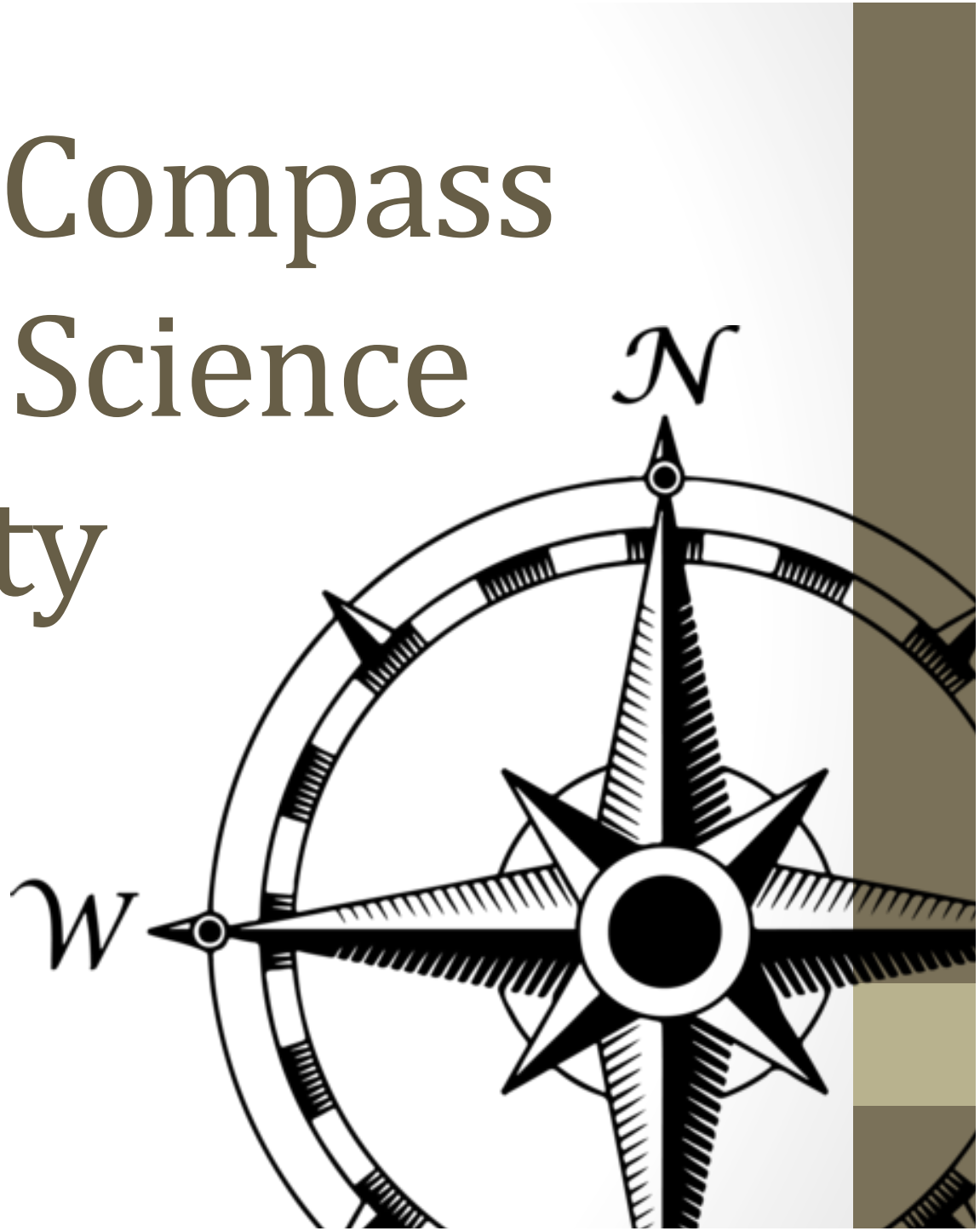
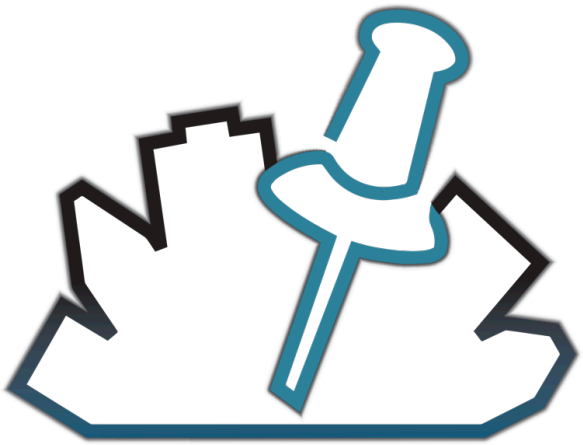
# A Moral Compass for Data Science in the City

@re_sieber

McGill

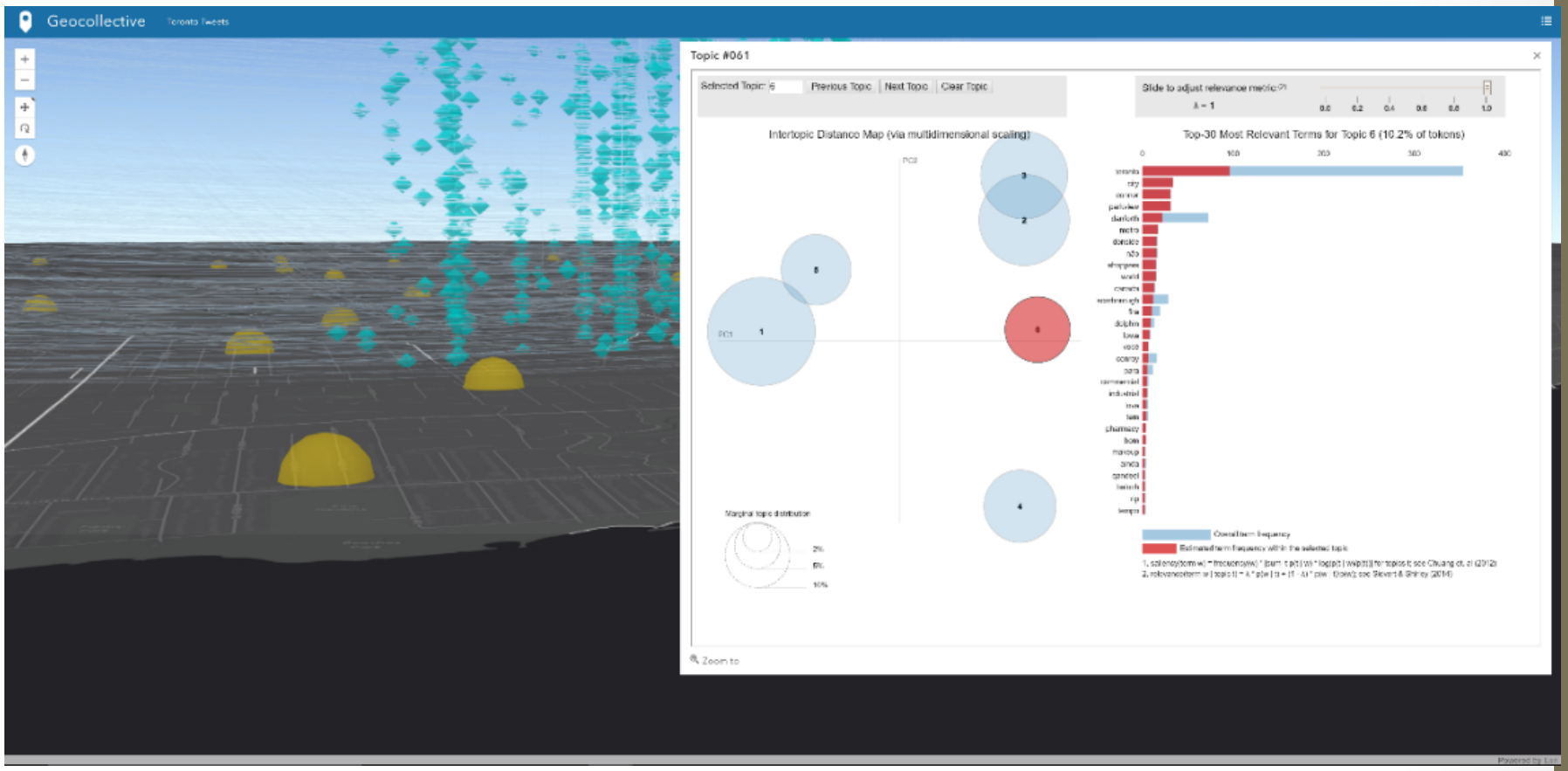
Canada





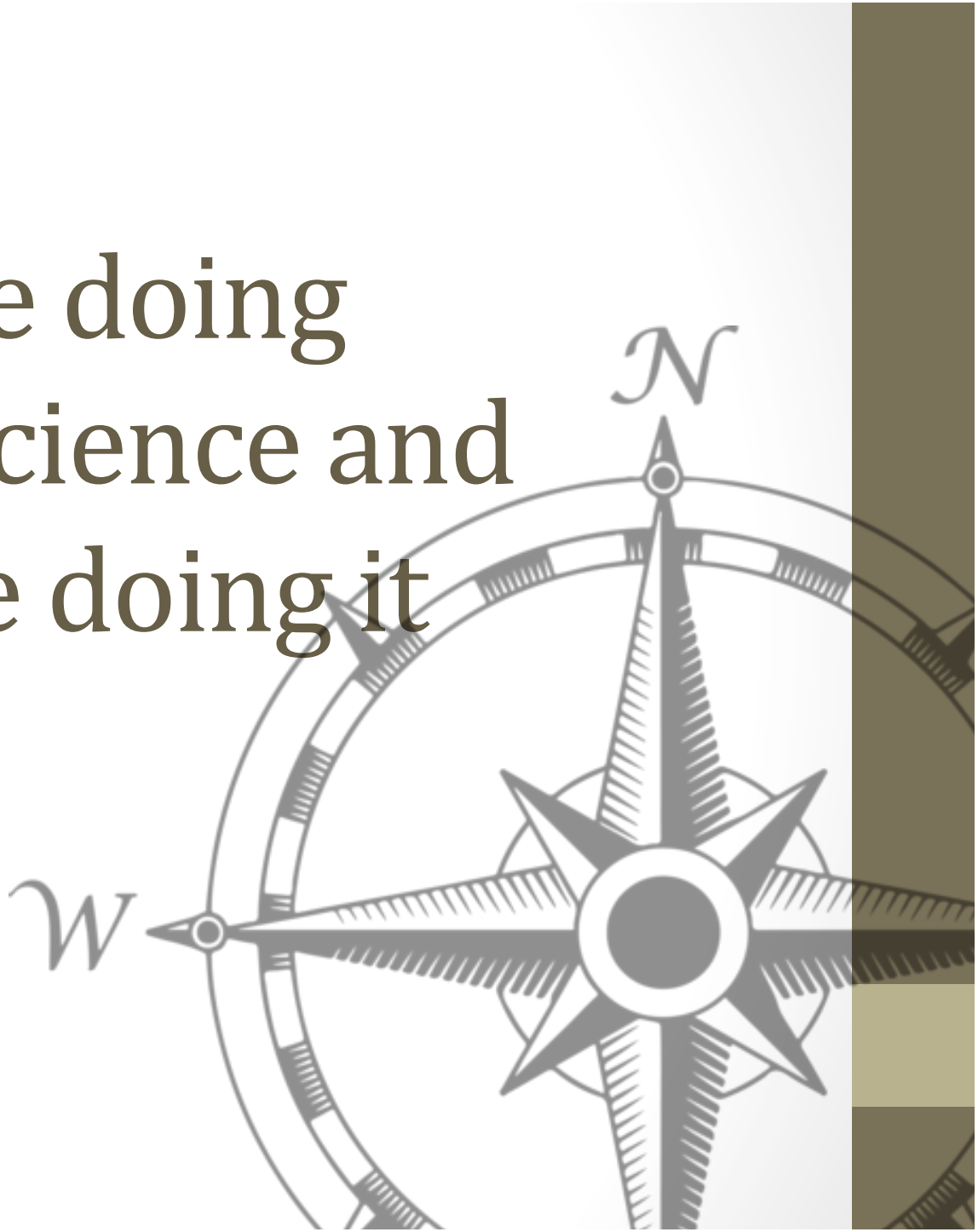
# Geothink

**www.geothink.ca**




Geothink does some data science. From Matthew Tenney's PhD research (McGill, in collaboration with ESRI Canada) on Crowdsourcing Geotopics

# Why are we doing civic data science and who are we doing it for?



# Waterfront Toronto

## DATA AND DATA GOVERNANCE

**Who will own/control/have access to the data that is captured by the sensors deployed in this project?**

**Under what terms will that data be shared? For whom and for what purposes?**

**Who controls the Sidewalk Labs platform? Is it the residents? City Hall? Sidewalk Labs?**

**Does Sidewalk Labs have the ability to access and build upon personas from Alphabet's data stores?**

**How vertically integrated with Alphabet products will this new smart city be?**

**What privacy protection process will be followed to ensure data collected is anonymous, beyond commitments to Privacy by Design?**

**How are people's movements tracked in space time? Especially marginalized community members, including homeless people?**

**Passive harvesting of people's movement in space time as an indicator of intent doesn't constitute engagement. What constitutes democratic participation in smart city design?**

Wylie et al. nd https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mD-jG5j3XWNoxiC1ZW6W7pcI5Pl71HVbqzfTg2H67eQ/edit

The problem with emphasizing Volunteered Geographic Information. Boaty McBoatface was actually Reddit trolling

# What is this urban (gov, crowdsourced) data of which we speak?

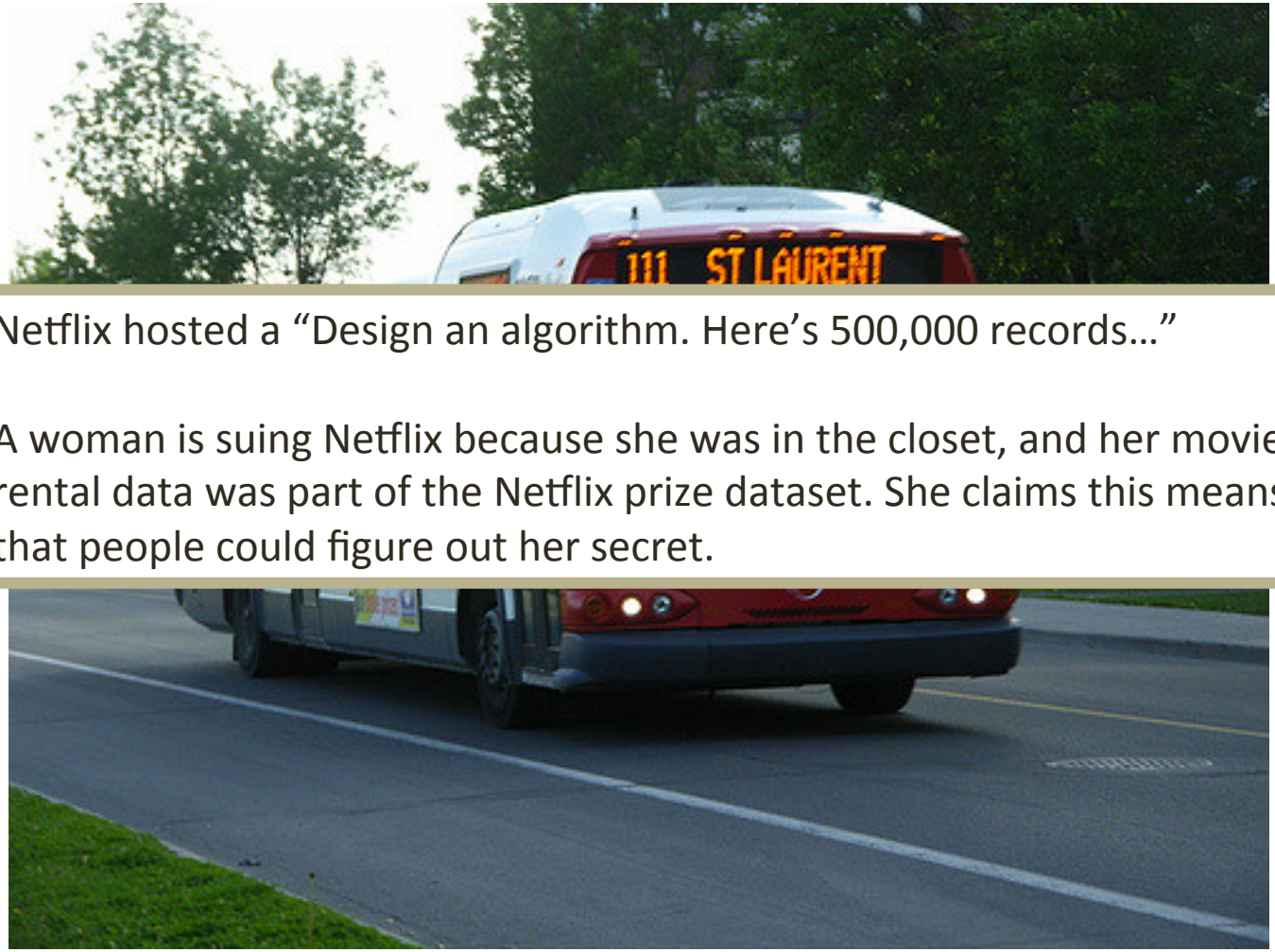
**From**

Opaque → Transparent

**To**

Opaque → Transparent → Opaque/Proprietary

# Privatization, privacy & IP




Netflix hosted a “Design an algorithm. Here’s 500,000 records…”

A woman is suing Netflix because she was in the closet, and her movie-rental data was part of the Netflix prize dataset. She claims this means that people could figure out her secret.

https://www.wired.com/2009/12/netflix-privacy-lawsuit/

# How to engage the public?

Apps
Infomediaries
Hackathons

# A Call for a Moral Compass

Know your data; know your algorithm
Determine the signal in the noise
Hire a critical data studies,
critical GIS researcher
Acknowledge our own culpability

# Thanks

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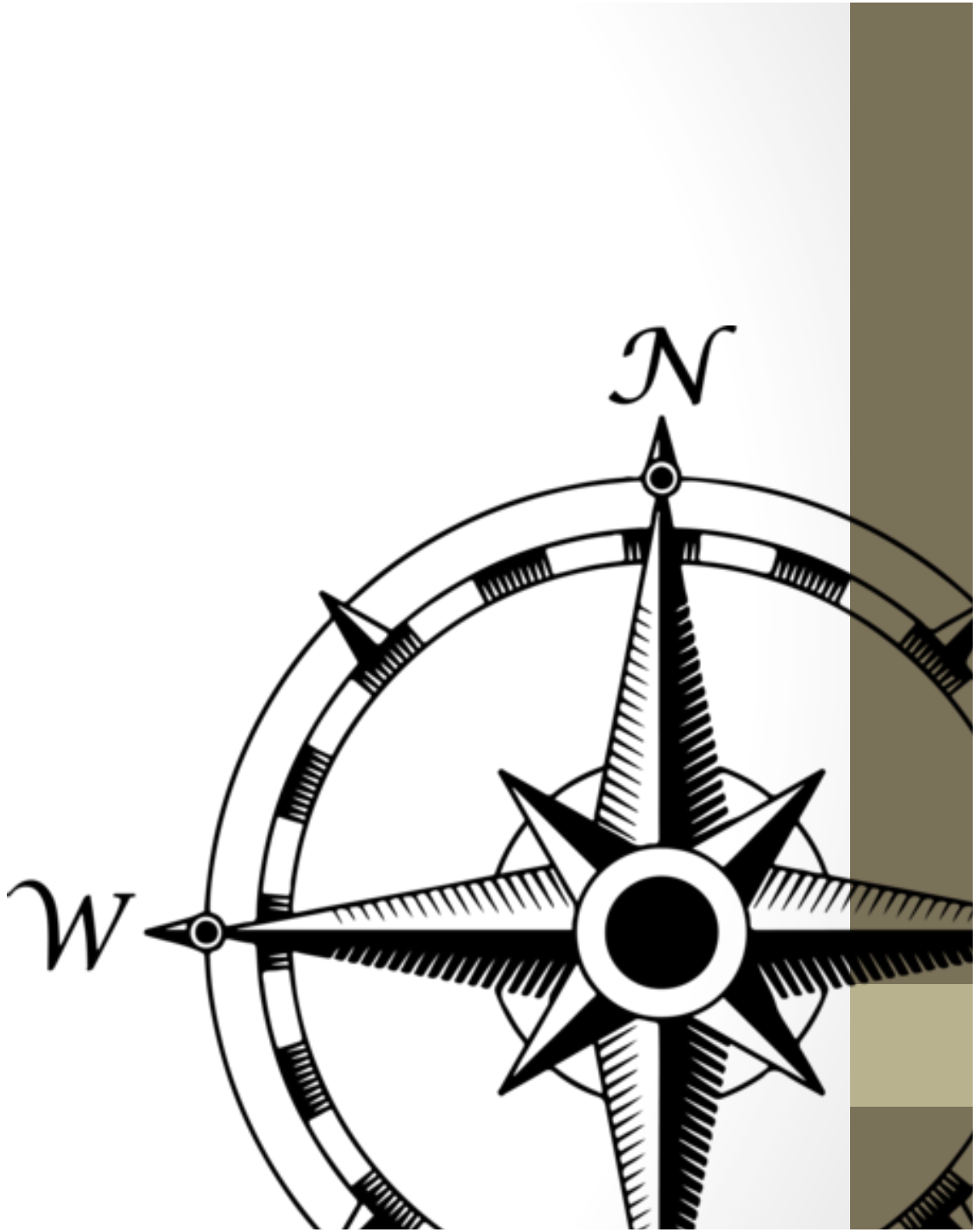
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