

2. Position in the iLRN Ecosystem (Garden–Tree–Searchlight)

2.1 The Knowledge Tree: Disciplinary Foundations

The Knowledge Tree provides the conceptual, scholarly, and disciplinary backbone of iLRN. It organizes the field across:

- Foundational roots and trunk disciplines
- Branches representing specialized areas of practice and research
- Shared vocabulary, competencies, and standards
- Scholarly outputs such as proceedings, research articles, and theoretical frameworks
- Communities of practice anchored in each branch

The Tree captures the **research identity** of the network: rigorous, cumulative, and grounded in peer-reviewed knowledge.

2.2 The Innovation Garden: Practice, Prototyping, and Applied Methods

The Innovation Garden is iLRN's **practice-based engine**—a space where practitioners develop immersive learning experiences, test design methods, refine workflows, and share their processes. While the Knowledge Tree emphasizes the theoretical and scholarly side of the field, the Garden emphasizes:

- Creative experimentation
- Hands-on prototyping
- Frugal innovation and reusable templates
- Cross-platform exploration
- Evidence-informed instructional design

- Peer-supported iteration and community learning

The Garden also serves as one of the primary entry points into iLRN for educators, designers, technologists, and creators who are interested in applied immersive learning practice.

2.3 The Searchlight / Lighthouse: Foresight and Global Horizon Scanning

The Searchlight (also referred to as the Lighthouse) is iLRN's **foresight function**, responsible for monitoring emerging signals across technologies, learning contexts, and global sociotechnical trends. It generates insights that:

- Identify new opportunities for immersive learning
- Track shifts in technologies, platforms, and modalities
- Surface global innovations and regional developments
- Support the annual Immersive Futures Report
- Guide experimental directions for Garden activities

The Searchlight enables iLRN to look ahead—to anticipate, rather than simply react to, changes in immersive learning ecosystems worldwide.

2.4 How These Components Reinforce One Another

These three components of iLRN form a **continuous cycle of knowledge and practice**:

Searchlight ? Garden

The Searchlight identifies emerging trends, future directions, and areas requiring exploration. These signals guide where the Garden focuses its creative and experimental efforts.

Garden ? Knowledge Tree

Outputs from the Garden—prototypes, design patterns, tutorials, exemplars, reflective case studies—become evidence-informed contributions. Once documented and refined, they strengthen the Knowledge Tree.

Knowledge Tree ? Searchlight

The scholarly insights of the Tree provide conceptual grounding for interpreting new signals and orienting long-horizon futures thinking within the Searchlight.

Through this interplay, iLRN maintains a dynamic balance between scholarly rigor, practical innovation, and strategic foresight.

2.5 The Role of the Innovation Garden in the Ecosystem

Within this integrated structure, the Innovation Garden plays a unique and essential role:

- It expands global capacity for immersive learning design.
- It provides a structured environment for practice-based innovation.
- It enables rapid experimentation in areas highlighted by the Searchlight.
- It creates accessible pathways into the network for new practitioners.
- It produces the “fruit” that nourishes the Knowledge Tree.
- It supports the development of design patterns and standards across the field.
- It contributes experiential content to iLRN’s hybrid conference programming.

In short, the Garden is the **creative engine** that connects emerging ideas, hands-on practice, and the evolving scholarship of immersive learning.

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