

Why Things Spread

Communications & Media

The properties shared by content that travels, and the survivorship trap.

What correlates with spread, and what the studies cannot show.

Correlates with spread

High-arousal emotion: awe, anger, delight

Social currency: sharing says something

Practical value worth passing on

A narrative rather than a claim

Low effort to understand and forward

Cautions

Most successful cases are studied backwards

Seeding and network position matter hugely

Base rate of spread is extremely low

Copying a hit rarely reproduces it

Virality is a heavy-tailed outcome. Planning for it is planning to win a lottery; designing for shareability is not the same thing.