

# Your platform is not an ecosystem | Crooked Timber

By Maria Farrell

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Another day, another exhortation to join an “ecosystem” that’s anything but. I could pick a hundred examples, but one that recently caught my eye was an ad placed in the Financial Times by the Singapore stock exchange, SGX Group, promising “multiple growth avenues, one trusted ecosystem”. SGX wants companies to list on its exchange rather than, say, the Hong Kong one which has more or less the same exclusive offer. SGX promises “access (to) Asia through our trusted ecosystem anchored in Singapore.” Ecosystems can be a lot of things. ‘Trusted’, by which they mean centrally policed to achieve defined, lower-risk outcomes, is not one of them. Calling built environments ‘ecosystems’ is common everywhere from financial services to supply chains to – quite a stretch, here – a retirement living complex. But it’s most often used in the tech world to describe the relations between software, services and hardware typically owned by a single company. For example, it’s how Google [describes](#) everything that hangs off the Android operating system. These kinds of proprietary and deterministic architectures are called ecosystems so often that we’ve stopped noticing. And that’s kind of the point. We need to start seeing this metaphor again, and what it’s hiding in plain sight. But first, a reminder of what an ecosystem actually is.

Source: [Your platform is not an ecosystem | Crooked Timber](#)