

This slide left
intentionally blank

Simplicity is the glory
of expression.

Walt Whitman

Everything should
be made as simple
as possible,
but no simpler.

Albert Einstein

Nothing is true,
but that which is simple.

Goethe

Simplicity is the
ultimate sophistication.

Leonardo da Vinci

Less is more.

Mies van der Rohe

Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! Henry David Thoreau implored us.

But how?

The Complexity of Simplicity

Dan Saffer
@odannyboy



@davcron

dave cronin

Designers philosophizing about making things "simple" is like painters talking about making things "pretty."

13 Nov via [Twitter for iPhone](#) ★ [Unfavorite](#) ↻ [Retweet](#) ↩ [Reply](#)

Retweeted by [doriantaylor](#)



SIMPLICITY

COMPLEXITY



We tend to think of simplicity like this: as opposite complexity. A simple object is more usable, pleasing, and less complex. But this is really a false dichotomy. We don't really mind complexity.

SIMPLICITY

COMPLICATED



We mind UNNECESSARY complexity, and its byproduct: confusion.

Complicated products are characterized by

- ★ unclear starting place
- ★ muddled mental model of how the product works
- ★ interaction design that makes tasks overly difficult
- ★ visual or industrial design without recognizable patterns

SIMPLISTIC

COMPLICATED



But equally, we can also dislike products that are TOO SIMPLE, as to become simplistic. If people feel your product is simplistic, they won't buy it because they'll think it can't do the job (even if it can).

Simplistic products are characterized by

- ★ lack of control caused by too much automation
- ★ underpowered or too powerful

SIMPLISTIC

SIMPLICITY

COMPLICATED



Truly simple products are characterized by

- ★ being understandable
- ★ having an underlying structure
- ★ optimized for the most common being users and use cases
- ★ an understanding of the complexity of the activity, but not reflective of it

We're going to talk about how we achieve this and get to there throughout this talk.



Simplicity is
in the mind

One thing to be aware of is one person's simplicity is another person's complex mess. Often what designers and engineers think of as simple is not.

f_x

H

Best Performers

Hardware	\$	129,400.00
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Worst Performers

Office Supplies	\$ 108,633.33
-----------------	---------------

Mint.com > Transactions

https://www.mint.com/transaction.event

Mint Software Inc.

Google

Apple (136)AmazoneBayYahoo!News (641)

mint.com

Overview

Transactions

Trends

Fitness

Investments

Ways to Save

macdemo@mint.com

Your Profile

Your Accounts

Get Help

Log Out

TYPE

Cash & Credit

Investment

ACCOUNTS

All Accounts

Fifth Third

ING Direct - Ba...

ING Direct - Ba...

American Express

American Express

Capitalone

Chase Manhattan...

Decimal, Inc.

E*trade

Merrill Lynch

Merrill Lynch

Merrill Lynch

TAGS

Reimbursable

Tax Related

Vacation

All Cash & Credit Accounts

You have added 7 accounts

Add another

Total Cash

\$24,297.09

Total Debt

-\$3,060.29

Edit Multiple

Edit Rules

Search

Date	Description	Category	Amount
MAY 31	Monthly Interest Paid	Interest Income	\$35.26
MAY 31	Monthly Interest Paid	Interest Income	\$1.27
MAY 30	AT&T Wireless	Mobile Phone	-\$119.96
MAY 30	Hotel & Restaurant Temps	Business Services	-\$840.00
MAY 29	Mint Software In	Paycheck	\$3,547.86
MAY 26	ATM Withdrawal	Cash & ATM	-\$260.67
MAY 25	Servicios Aereos Nac	Uncategorized	-\$157.00
MAY 25	Le Petit Bistro	Restaurants	-\$8.33
MAY 24	ATM Withdrawal	Cash & ATM	-\$173.79
MAY 24	Foreign Charge Banco	Service Fee	-\$3.48
MAY 24	Cool Cafe	Restaurants	-\$8.75
MAY 24	Gyros House	Restaurants	-\$8.08
MAY 23	ATM Withdrawal	Cash & ATM	-\$1.50
MAY 23	ATM Withdrawal	Cash & ATM	-\$400.00
MAY 23	Super Shuttle	Auto & Transport	-\$31.50
MAY 23	American Airlines	Air Travel	-\$746.12
MAY 23	Delta	Air Travel	-\$2.40
MAY 23	Parking Citation Ser	Parking	-\$48.95
MAY 22	Netflix	Movies & DVDs	-\$18.56
MAY 22	Evvia	Uncategorized	-\$20.48
MAY 22	PayPal	Shopping	-\$2,180.00
MAY 22	Transfer to CREDIT CARD	Credit Card Paym...	-\$748.75
MAY 21	Transfer from PRIMARY CHE...	Credit Card Paym...	\$748.75
MAY 20	iTunes	Music	-\$5.10

Monthly Interest Paid

Account: ING DIRECT - Bank (unavailable m-f, 9am-6pm edt) - Orange Savings

Show all Monthly Interest Paid

Show all Interest Income

Display a menu for "https://www.mint.com/transaction.event?filterType=cash"

SIMPLE?

A person with short brown hair, wearing a black long-sleeved dress, is walking a tightrope. They are holding a long, thin black pole for balance. The background shows a dense city skyline with various skyscrapers under a hazy, overcast sky. The tightrope is stretched between two points, and the person is positioned in the middle of it. The overall scene conveys a sense of extreme balance and precision.

How do we find the right balance?

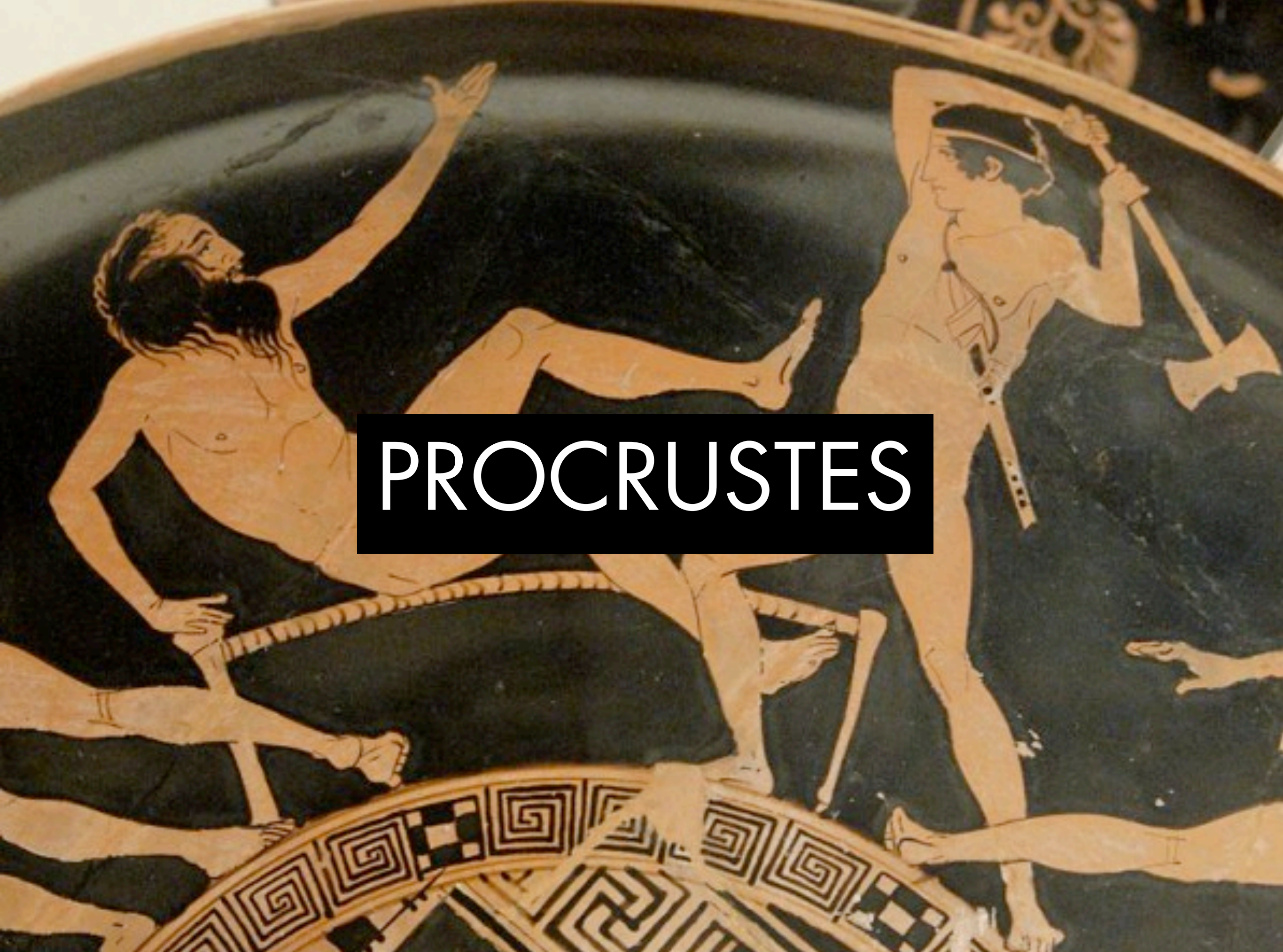
One thing that sets truly simple products apart is their ability to work under extreme conditions. To be simple, you have to aim for higher than just usable.

Time

Problem or Opportunity

Simple Product

How do we get from a problem or opportunity to a simple product? Strangely, the way is THROUGH complexity. But there are some traps for the unwary.



PROCRUSTES

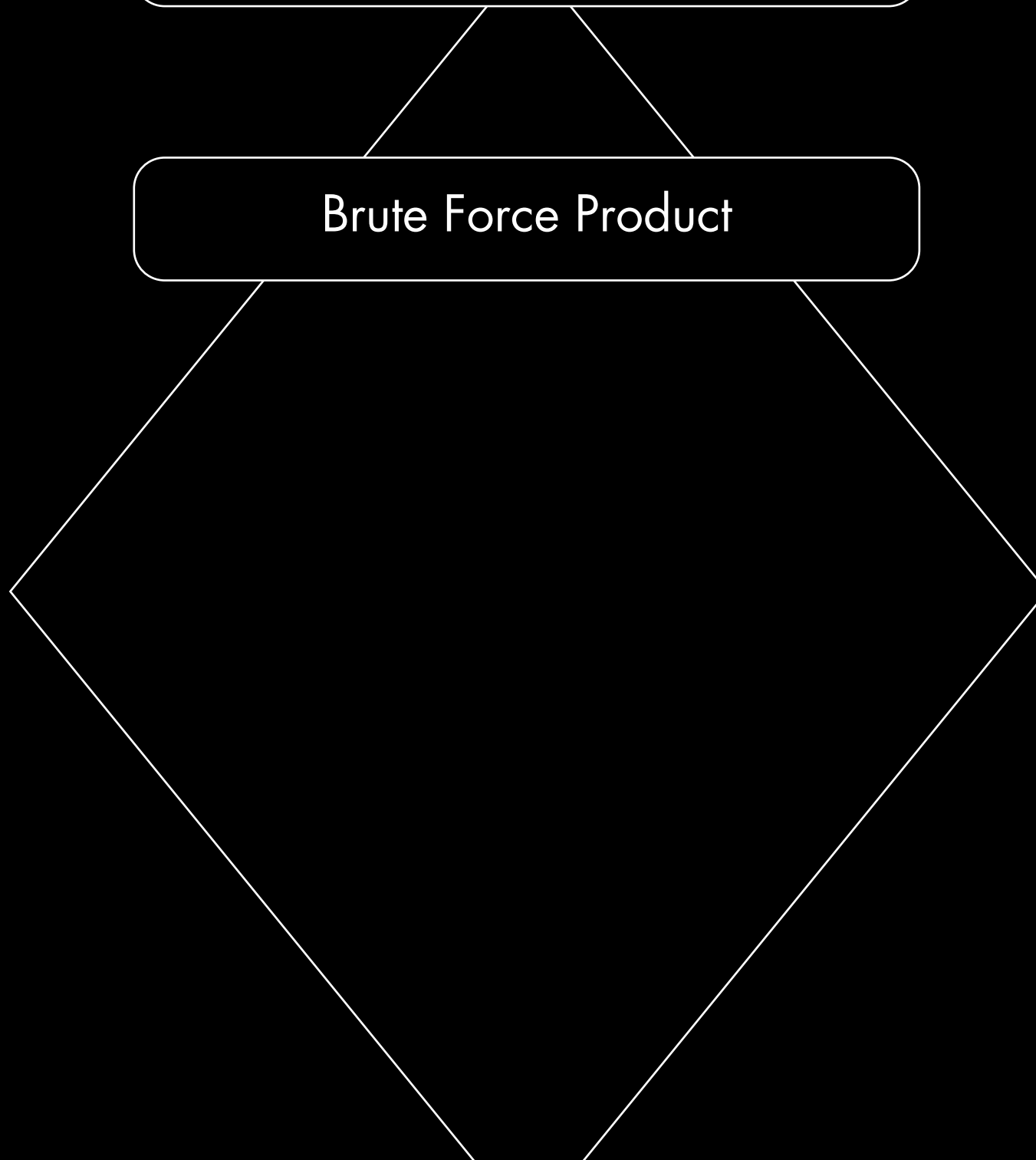
Trust me when I say you can thank me for the placement of the title here. Procrustes was a son of Poseidon who had an iron bed in which he invited every passer-by to spend the night, and where he set to work on them with his smith's hammer, to stretch them to fit. Or if the guest proved too tall, Procrustes would amputate the excess length. Procrustes continued his reign of terror until he was captured by Theseus, traveling to Athens along the sacred way, who "fitted" Procrustes to his own bed.

Time

Problem or Opportunity

Brute Force Product

Simple Product



Sender	Subject	Date	Size
Heather Reeds	Privacy Policy Coming Soon	08/10/2007 02:59 PM	18K
Ted Amado	Re: RSS URLs for Our Catalogs Now Working	08/08/2007 02:57 PM	3K
Dennis Michaels	Upcoming Enablement	08/05/2007 02:59 PM	482K
renovations	Your place, renovations, has been created	08/04/2007 03:03 PM	1K
Rita Ferrar	Re: Fw: URGENT, Opportunity at Conference	08/04/2007 03:02 PM	13K
Ron Espinosa	Flash Demo	08/04/2007 03:01 PM	2K
Minh Li	RSS URLs for Our Catalogs Now Working	08/04/2007 03:01 PM	3K
Simone Dray			
Betty Zechman			
Betty Zechman			
Betty Zechman			

Lotus Notes



Re: RSS URLs for Our Catalogs Now Working

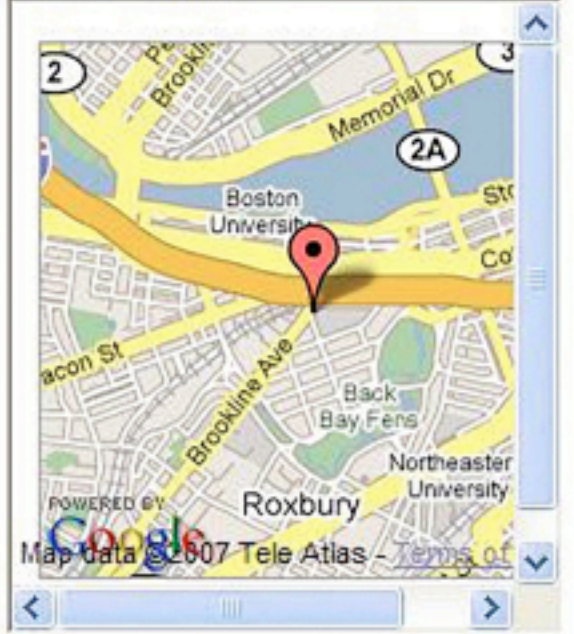
Ted Amado to: MinhLi 08/08/2007 02:57 PM
Cc: Dan Misawa, Gardner Raynes, Frank Adams
Custom expiration date: 08/08/2008 [Show Details](#)

Minh,
Great work making this happen. Is there any way we can track the number of reads?

Ted
4 Yawkey Way
Boston, MA 02215

- Sametime Contacts
- Activities
- Day-At-A-Glance
- Feeds
- Lotus Quickr
- SideKick!

Get Directions...
4 Yawkey Way
Boston, MA 02215



New Notices

Open	Remove
On	Fro
08/01	Sar
08/01	Bet

Navigation

- [Inbox](#)
- [Active](#)
- [All](#)
- [By Me](#)
- [History](#)
- [Spam](#)
- [Settings](#)
- [Trash](#)

SEARCHES

+ Add

- [To Do's](#)
- [Triathlon](#)

FOLDERS

+ Add

- [Apartment](#)

Contacts

Anna-Christina
drinkin' coffee

Search...

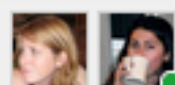
- Gregory
- Alec Fluffy, destroyer.
- Andrew M hello world
- Ben
- Casey

Inbox 1 - 14 of 21

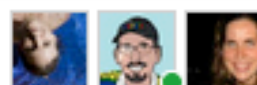
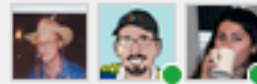
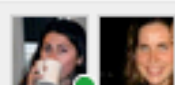
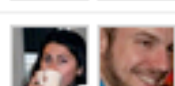
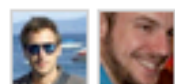
New Wave

in:inbox

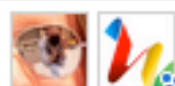
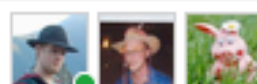
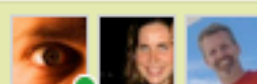
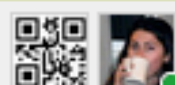
Archive Mute Read Unread Folder



Chess times = fun times – It's on!

**Dinner and board games** – Who's up for dinner and board games next week?**Snapshots!** – ... They make me want

tomorrow? We can met by the palm

**See what turned up on my front lawn yesterday!** – It's fairly late in**It's Movie Time!!!!** – ... what about "Confessions of a Shopaholic"? that**Pics from a walk in Sydney...** – Just from walking around in Kirribilli /

Gallery opening this Thursday – Hey everyone, my show is finall going up and

**Any tips for combating jet-lag?** – Please share! For the first day, stay up

Say, here are some photos from the

Add participants

dan



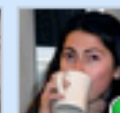
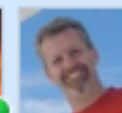
Daniel Danilatos



Dan Peterson

Google Wave

Pics from a walk in Sydney...



+ Add

k

Archive

Mute

Unread

n Sydney...

ound in Kirribilli / Milsons Point, na Park is. It was a lovely day!



sun in the grass



IMG_0713



Save search

Day:



Week:



Tags: +

Images



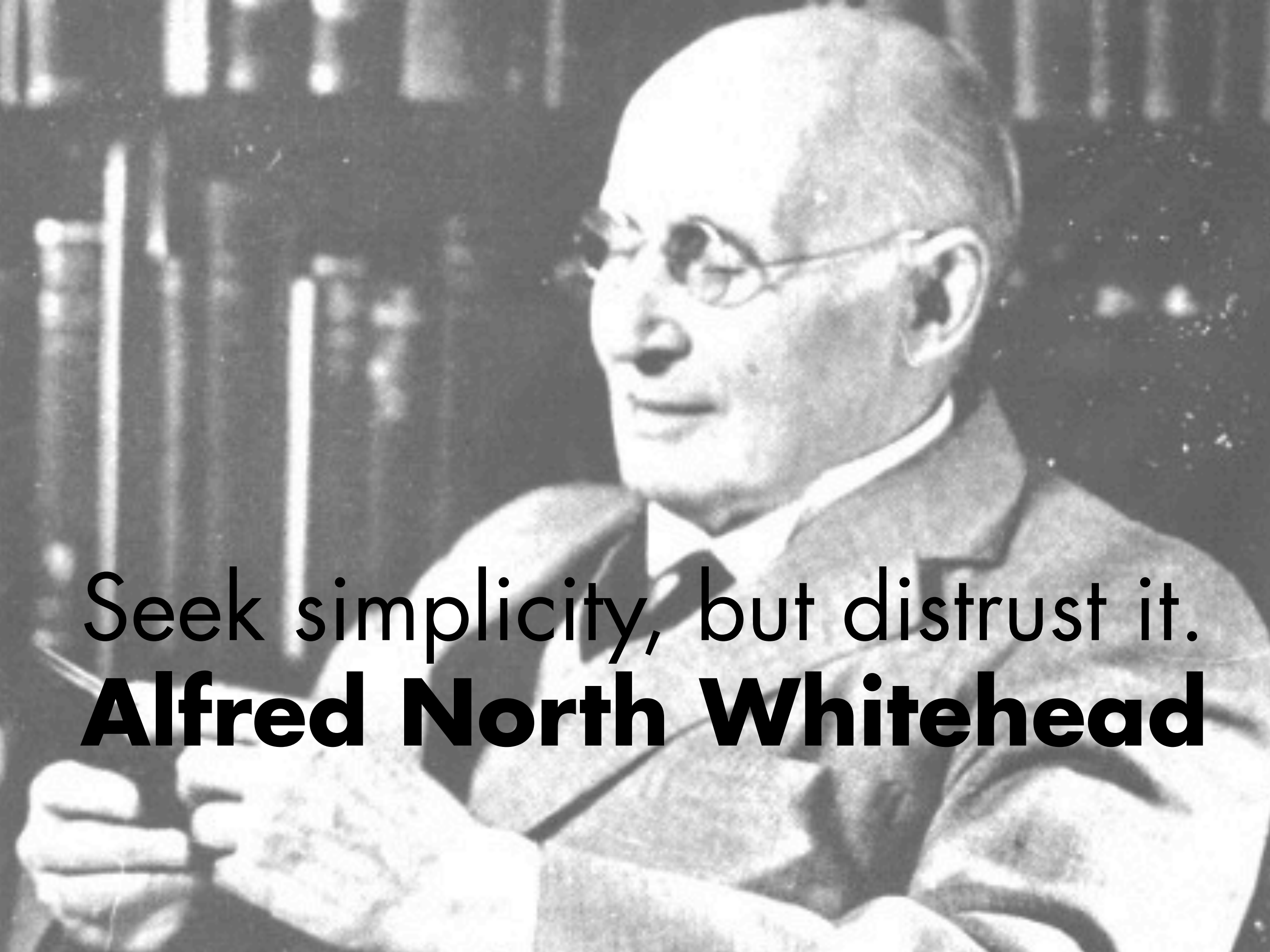
Segway

A black and white photograph of H.L. Mencken. He is an older man with a serious expression, wearing a light-colored shirt, a patterned tie, and suspenders. He is standing in front of a background of stacked lumber or logs.

There is always an easy
solution to every problem—
neat, plausible, and wrong.
H.L. Mencken

Brute force products are characterized by

- ★ lack of nuance
- ★ incorrect problem framing
- ★ conformity of the user to its way of doing the activity, not the other way around
- ★ socially tone-deaf



Seek simplicity, but distrust it.
Alfred North Whitehead

WHAT MAKES PRODUCTS COMPLICATED?

No one wants to make a difficult product. No one starts out saying, you know what? Let's make this son of bitch as confusing as possible.

Time

Problem or Opportunity

Features

Versions

Context

Brute Force Product

Multiple User Groups

Stakeholders

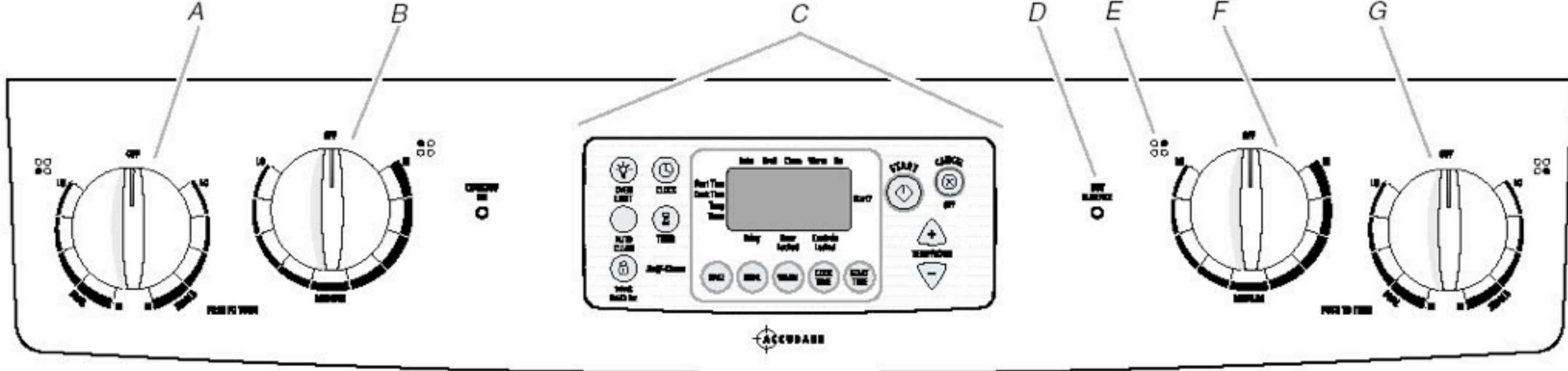
Activity Complexity

Constraints

Edge Cases

Complicated Product

Simple Product



A. Left front control knob
B. Left rear control knob
C. Electronic oven control

D. Hot surface indicator light
E. Surface cooking area locator

F. Right rear control knob
G. Right front control knob

FEATURES

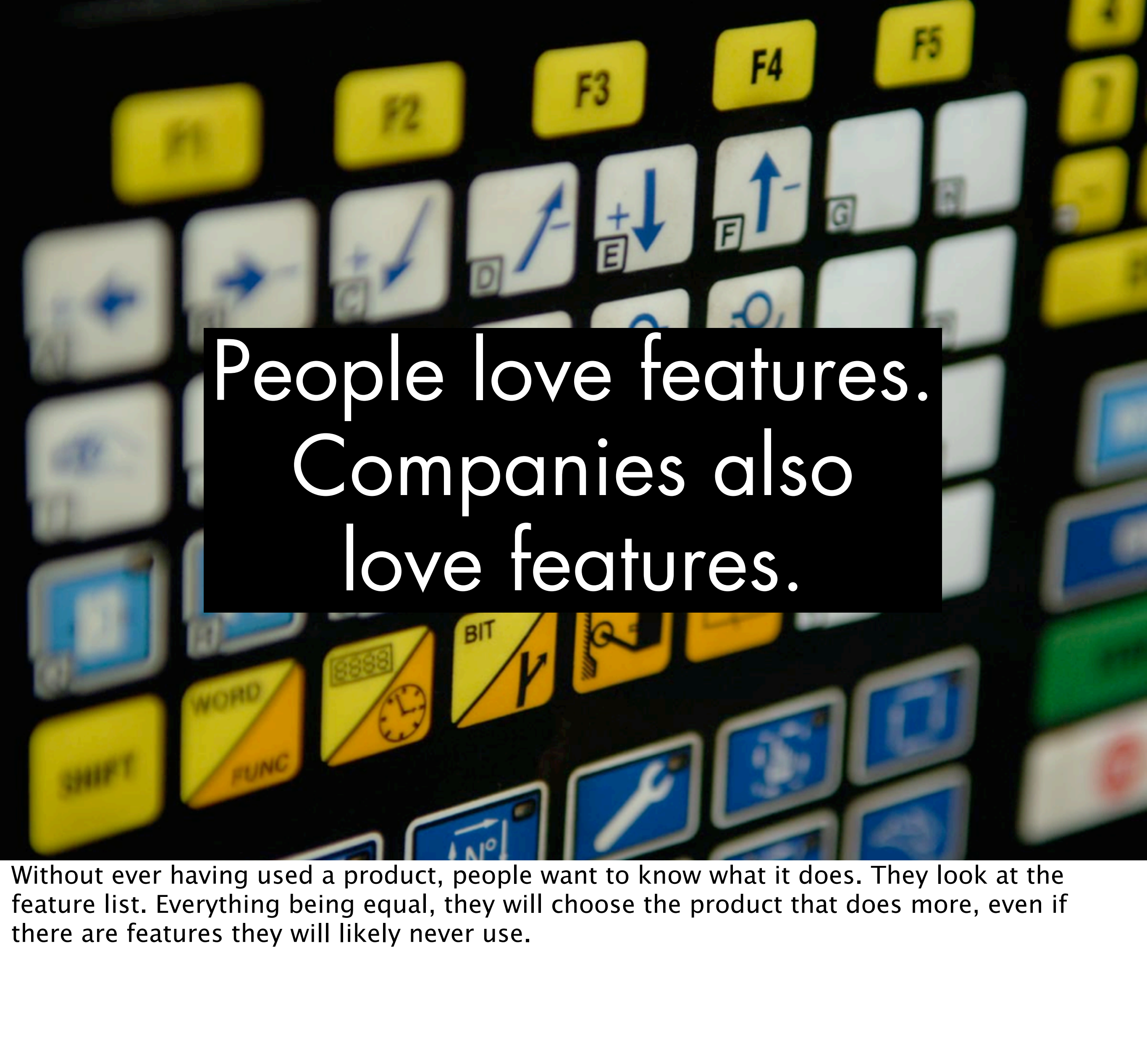


A. Left front control knob
B. Left rear control knob
C. Electronic oven control

D. Hot surface indicator light
E. Surface cooking area locator

F. Right rear control knob
G. Right front control knob

More features means more controls, need for a menu or a fuller menu, more complexity simply because there's more stuff.



People love features.
Companies also
love features.

Without ever having used a product, people want to know what it does. They look at the feature list. Everything being equal, they will choose the product that does more, even if there are features they will likely never use.

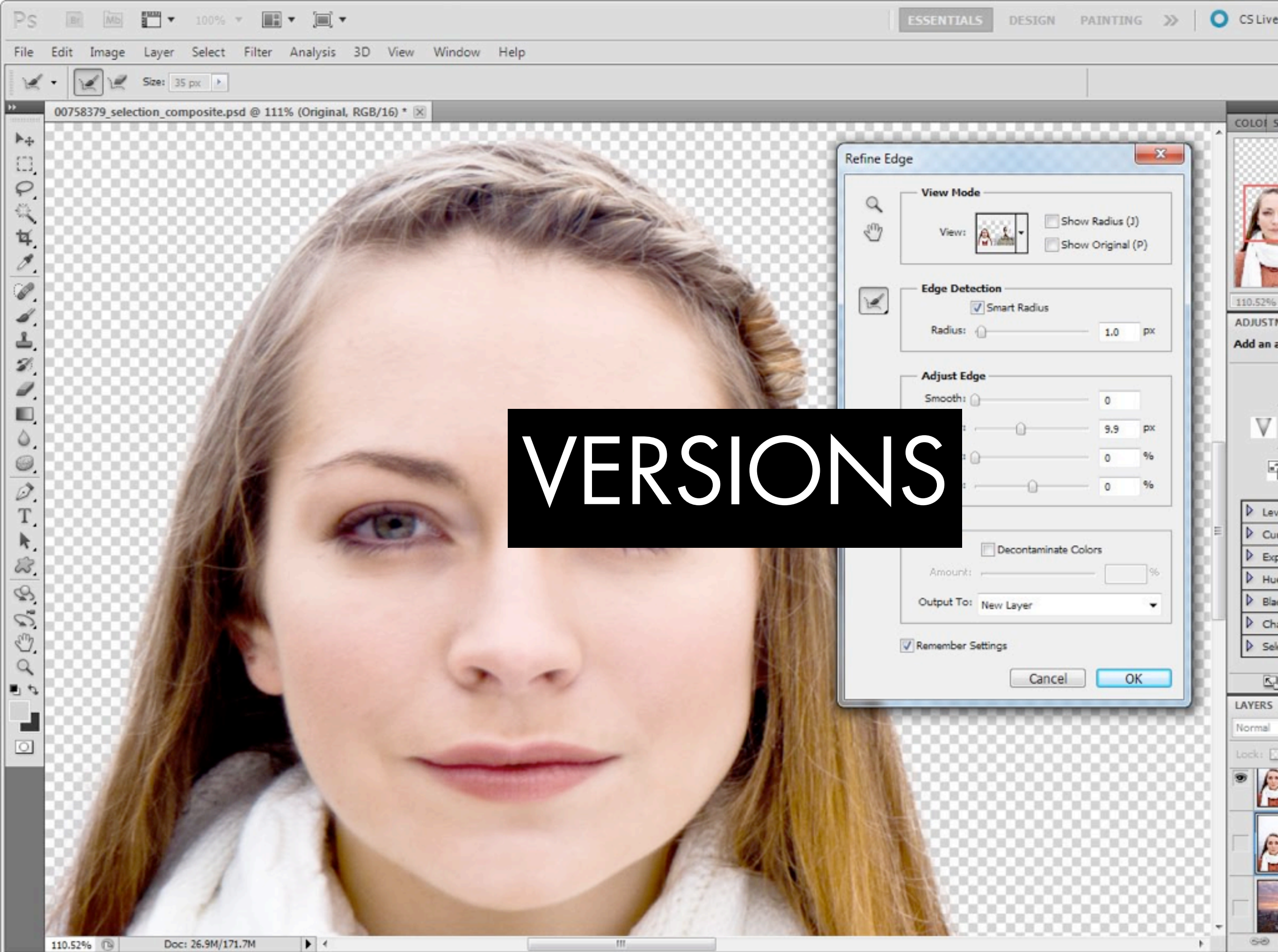


The Sport Utility Principle

David Pogue 2006. People like to surround themselves with unnecessary power. Research has shown that feature lists matter UNTIL users use the product, after which they matter much less than the usability of the product. The idea of a feature can be more appealing than its

How to fight “featuritis”

- ★ tell a story
- ★ be beautiful
- ★ seem luxurious
- ★ focus on differentiators other than features
 - ★ targeted users
 - ★ transitions
 - ★ unique interactions



New versions = more features. If you have to put out a new version (and I know you do) focus on improving the core functionality, not on “value-add” extras.

CONTEXT

Courtesy Siddharth Muthyala

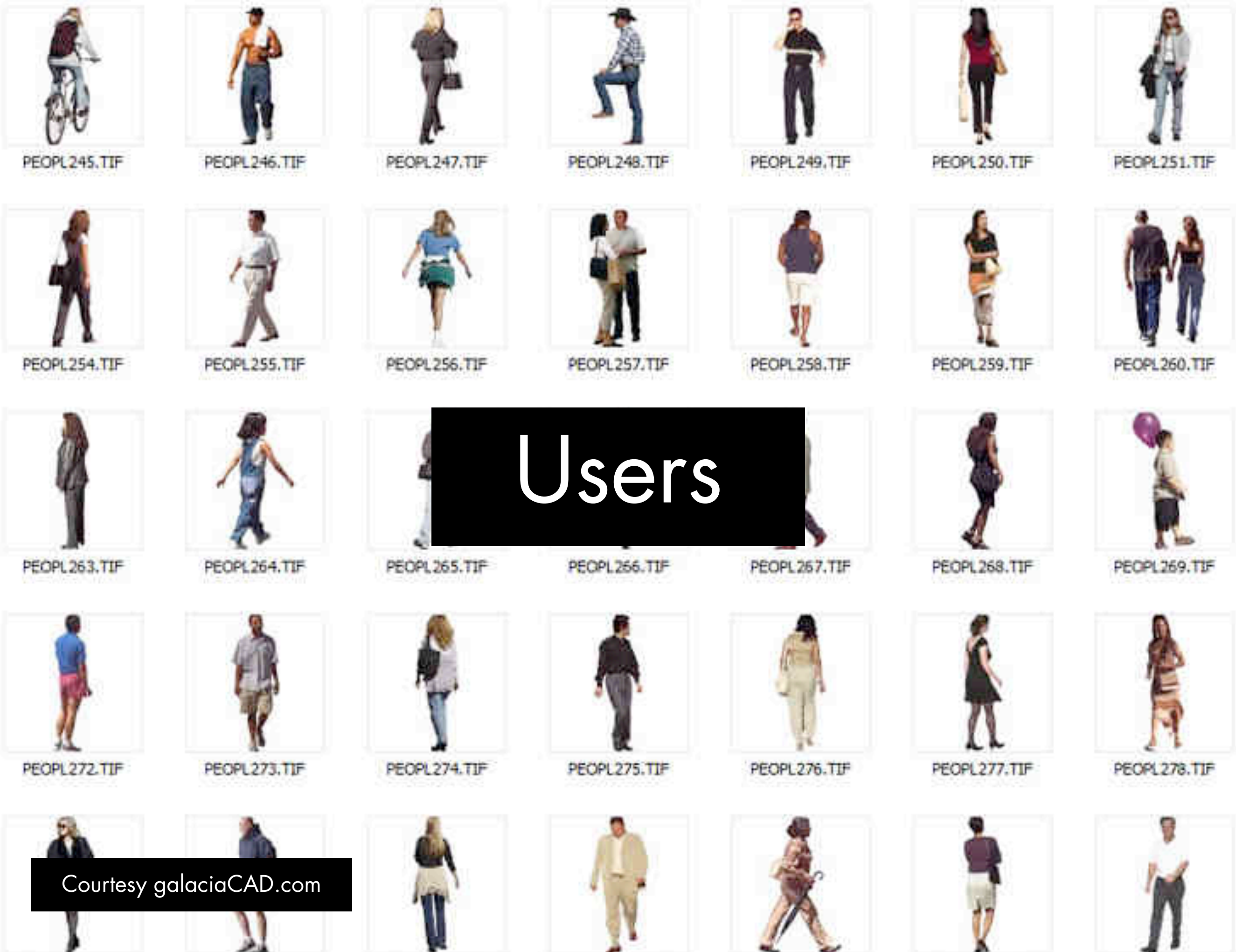
Courtesy Siddharth Muthyala

And lest we think the blame always lies elsewhere, our own user-centered design methods can sometimes cause complexity as well. The more we understand the context of the problem, the more the problem space seems bigger than just the issue we want to solve.

How many designers
does it take to change
a lightbulb?
Can we change
the lightbulb?
Can we change
the lightbulb?

How many designers does it take to change a lightbulb?

Does it have to be a lightbulb?



Namely, multiple user groups. When you have a diverse group of people, with their own general needs, wants, and feature requests, the product is bound to get more complicated because you have to design more areas, new ways into the site, etc.



Welcome to the USDA Farm Service Agency **Hay Net** website.

FSA has developed this website for producers to list information concerning the need for hay or the availability of hay. Please select the appropriate link below:

[Need Hay](#)

[Have Hay](#)

One of the simplest homepages online ever, and even so, it had to break the site into need and have hay.



AGE: 28-55

“Most of my time is spent figuring out if they have enough funds to run the file.”

Alex has a ritual every morning—go through email and look for messages from finance about his regular clients he needs to process for that day. Then he signs into BMC, goes to the AJL, and starts working through his clients’ files one-by-one. This is a process he repeats pretty much all day long.

As the day continues, more files from clients come in. In any given day, he might process 20-30 files. The system “works,” but there are definitely areas Alex would like to see improved. For example, each file is typically a funding order, or a new card order, but those details are never available on the AJL—he has to click a link every time to see them.

Fortunately, he knows what to expect from his regular clients, but that still leaves him clicking a “detail” link about 10-15 times a day. And the AJL never shows whether or not funds are available. Instead, he has to go to into his email, look for an email from Finance Plains, which takes FOREVER to load, then back into the AJL find the job number, he can’t process more than one file checking back.

ent windows. The ideal system for they system tell BMC which jobs have funds and are ready to run. Also, it should just his clients and take him right to the AJL.

Personas

Key Characteristics

- Finding his files and processing them.
- Primarily works in Active Job List.
- Some work in Submitted Job List.
- Manages multiple clients at once.
- Serve as secondary contact with client.
- Determine if client has funds available to run their files.
- Learn their clients’ schedules over time.
- Balances taking care of high-profile clients with lower-profile clients with immediate needs.

Goals

- Be able to see just their client files.
- Quickly respond to client issues.
- Better integration with finance to show funds are available.
- Possibly auto process files with available funds.
- Spend less time doing grunt work, things that could be automated and auto-populated from the system
- Balancing taking care of high profile clients with low profile clients that have an immediate need .

Questions

- Who are my clients?
- Are there funds available?
- What files are in my queue?
- Can the file be processed now?

Influencers

- Mandated.
- Availability of necessary information (e.g. financial schedule).

Applications

- BMC (AJL, SJL)
- Email
- Great Plains
- Report Generator
- CSA
- Mantis

Courtesy Todd Zaki Warfel

The way to combat the spread of users is to use the old tried and true method of personas. This will also keep people from saying, “Well, the user wants...” because you can say, “Which user?” Just be sure to keep the number of personas small: less than 3 is optimal, more than 7 is overkill.



A photograph of a diverse group of business professionals sitting at a long wooden table in a meeting room. They are all looking towards the left side of the frame, presumably towards a speaker or a presentation. The woman in the foreground is holding a pencil over a notepad. The background is a solid orange wall. A black rectangular box with the word 'STAKEHOLDERS' in white capital letters is superimposed over the center of the image.

STAKEHOLDERS

Likewise, the number of stakeholders who want their pet feature or idea featured in the product, often simply so they can say they affected the product. Beware the “value add.”

Principles

A friendly, social world of learning. Welcoming and approachable, smart.fm is full of life and full of people. It leverages the power of the crowd to make learning easier for everyone. People are invested in learning with and from each other.

The more it's used, the better it gets. Adaptive, serendipitous and surprising, smart.fm evolves to fit me. It gets to know me, adapts to my train of thought and surprises me with stuff that's interesting and meaningful to what and how I want to learn.

Reveals and celebrates progress. With smart.fm, I know where I'm going. I feel rewarded and inspired to do more.

Invites play. Like pick-up basketball, it's easy to jump in and play with my life. I can just "jump right in."

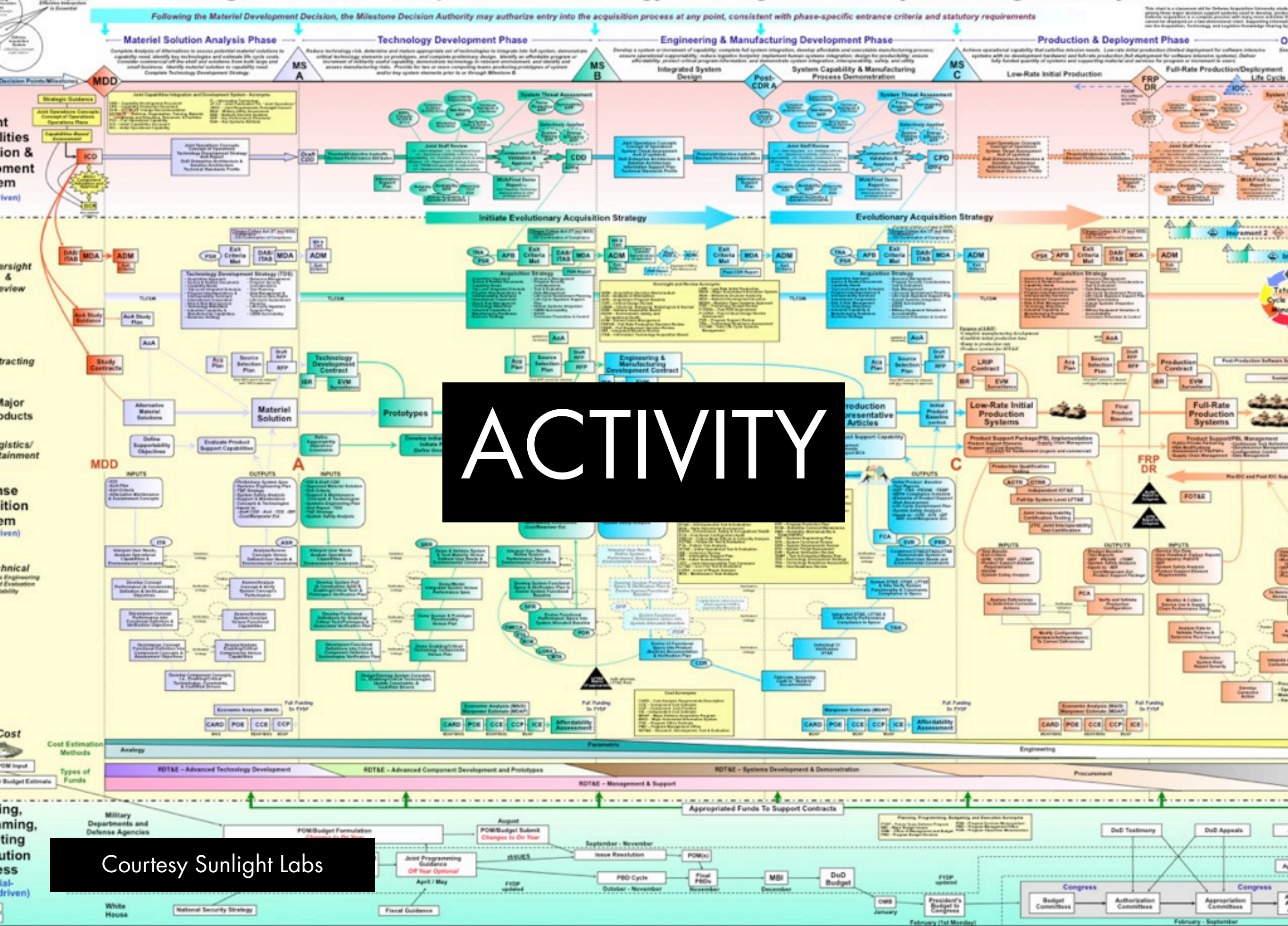
Meaningful mastery with ease. Speaks its power with every click. Using smart.fm feels powerful and trustworthy, yet simple. In a short time I can say "I get this!" Smart.fm makes me feel confident, smart, and in control.

Remixable and travels well. Each little piece can be used to make new pieces, like Legos, only smarter. I can engage however and wherever I want... online (my blog, social networks, other sites) or in the cloud (web, desktop, mobile.)

Courtesy Adaptive Path

One way to avoid or at least argue effectively against stakeholders jamming in new features is by establishing design principles near the beginning of the product. Design principles state the design objectives in clear, memorable language. If you can get people to agree to those at the beginning of the project, you'll have ammunition to use later in the project to prevent the product from being pulled in various directions.

Integrated Defense Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Life Cycle Management System



ACTIVITY

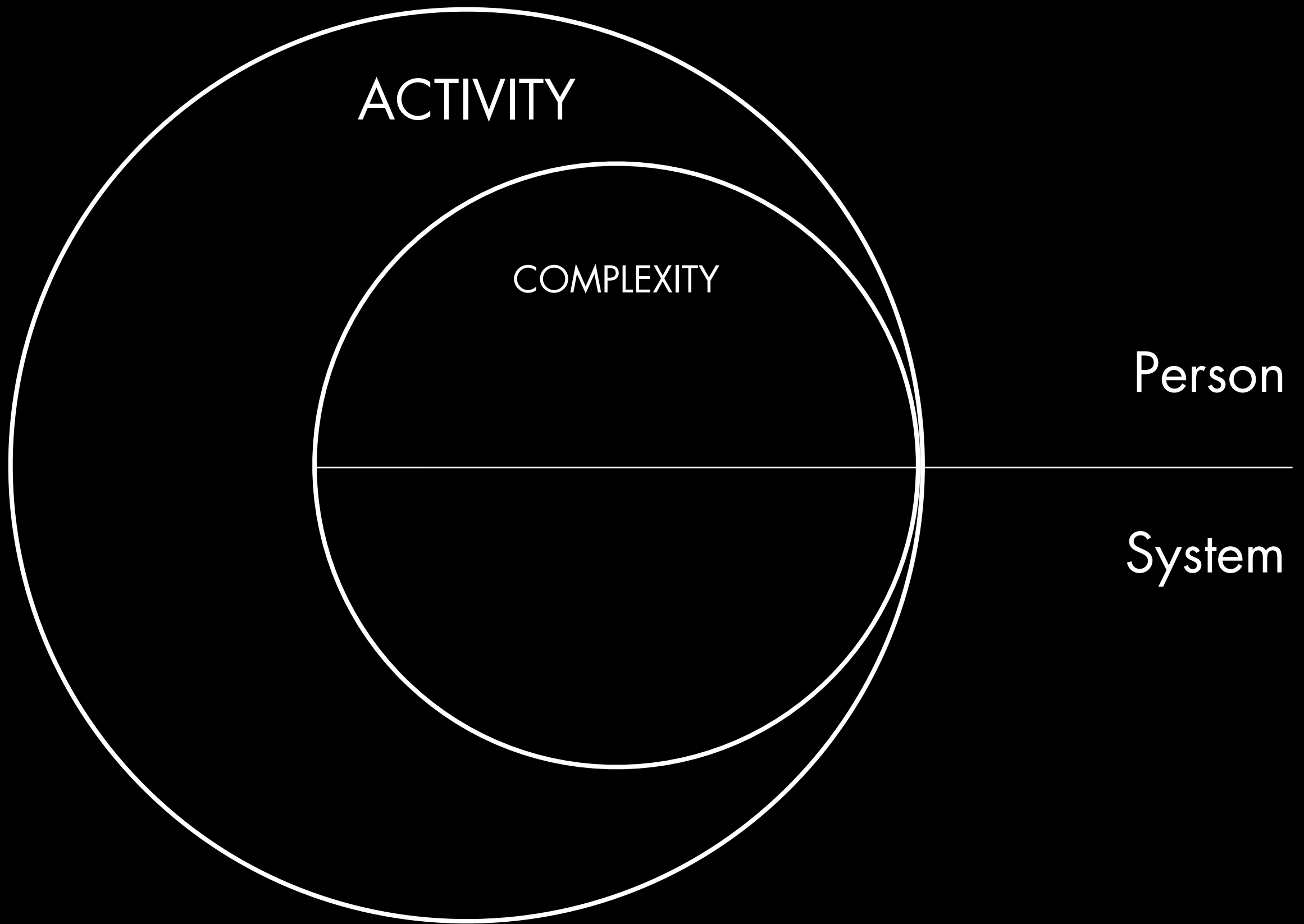
Courtesy Sunlight Labs

All activities have some complexity. Some activities are very complex. Some things can never be made simple. We need to keep Tesler's Law in mind.



Tesler's Law

This is Larry Tesler, the guy who created cut and paste, among other UI conventions.



All processes have a core of complexity. It's just who or what handles that complexity. [Email example]


```
febooti Command line email

d:\Program Files\febooti Command line email>febootimail.exe -? | more
febooti Command line email v1.3 *** UNREGISTERED ***
Copyright (c) 2003 - 2005 febooti software. All rights reserved

command      description
-----
-SMTP         -- specifies SMTP server IP address or name, if not specified
-SERVER       localhost is used

-PORT         -- specifies SMTP server port number, if not specified
              default (25) is used

-TO           -- destination e-mail address or list of addresses separated
              by ',' or ';'

-CC           -- Carbon Copy e-mail address or list of addresses separated
              by ',' or ';'

-BCC          -- Blind Carbon Copy e-mail address or list of addresses
              separated by ',' or ';'

-MSG          -- message body/text, if -HTMLFILE used, specifies alternative
-BODY         text for non HTML mail programs
-TEXT

-- More --
```

This is what a complicated (to most people) email client would be like. It's pushed a lot of the complexity onto the user, including remember the email addresses of where to send email.



This is what the Simplistic email client would be like. You never have to fill out anything, not even the message or to whom it's addressed.



who |

who **dat**

who **won dancing with the stars 2010**

who **do i look like**

who **is**

who **won american idol 2010**

who **wins the bachelor 2010**

who **won celebrity apprentice 2010**

who **is my doppelganger**

who **wants to be a millionaire online game**

who **is my celebrity look a like**

Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

[Advanced Search](#)
[Language Tools](#)

Autofill is a great example of the system taking on some of the complexity itself.

Your mom and I are going to divorce next month

what??? why! call me please?

I wrote Disney and this phone changed it. We are going to Disney.

DAMN YOU AUTOCORRECT.COM

Of course, auto-correct can go too far...



A diagram illustrating the seven constraints of project management. The word "CONSTRAINTS" is centered in a large, bold, white font. Surrounding it are seven white circles, each containing a constraint name. The circles are arranged in two rows: three in the top row and four in the bottom row. The constraints are Schedule, Budget, Cost, Risk, Team, Business Processes, and Technology.

Schedule

Budget

Cost

CONSTRAINTS

Risk

Team

Business
Processes

Technology

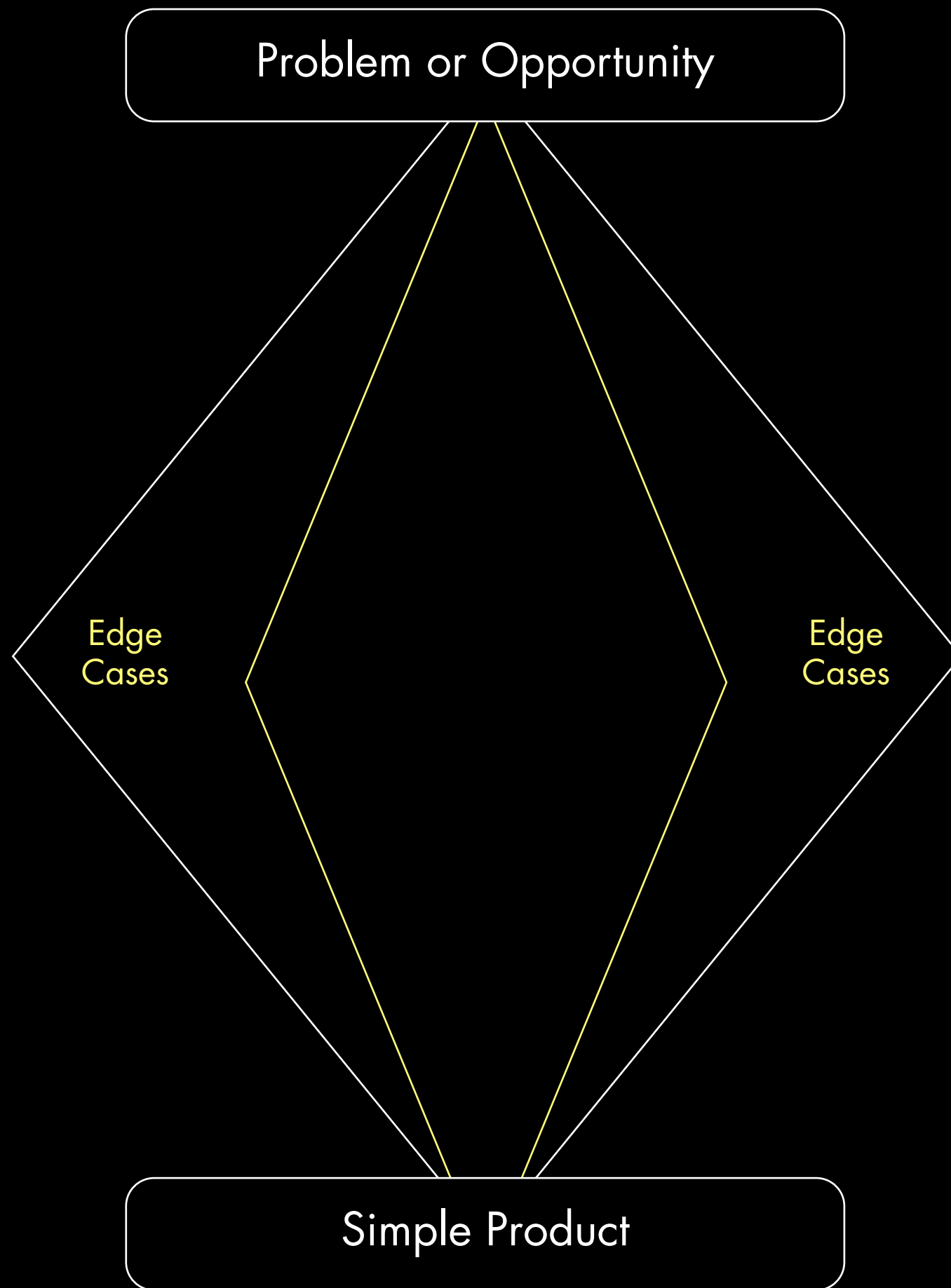
A classical oil painting portrait of Thomas Jefferson. He is shown from the chest up, facing slightly to the left but looking towards the viewer. He has long, wavy, light-colored hair and a serious expression. He is wearing a dark coat with a large, light-colored fur collar and a red cravat. The background is a soft, neutral tone.

Had I but more time,
I would have written less.
Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson's quip here rings true for design as well. If you have enough time, you can come up with simpler, tighter solutions.

EDGE CASES

“But what if the user does...”



Edge cases.

How not to get bogged down with edge cases

- ★ focus on core experience first. Sell it.
- ★ set priorities and establish frequencies
 - ★ low chance=less priority, prominence
 - ★ almost no chance=a bug
- ★ prevention, not support when possible

Time

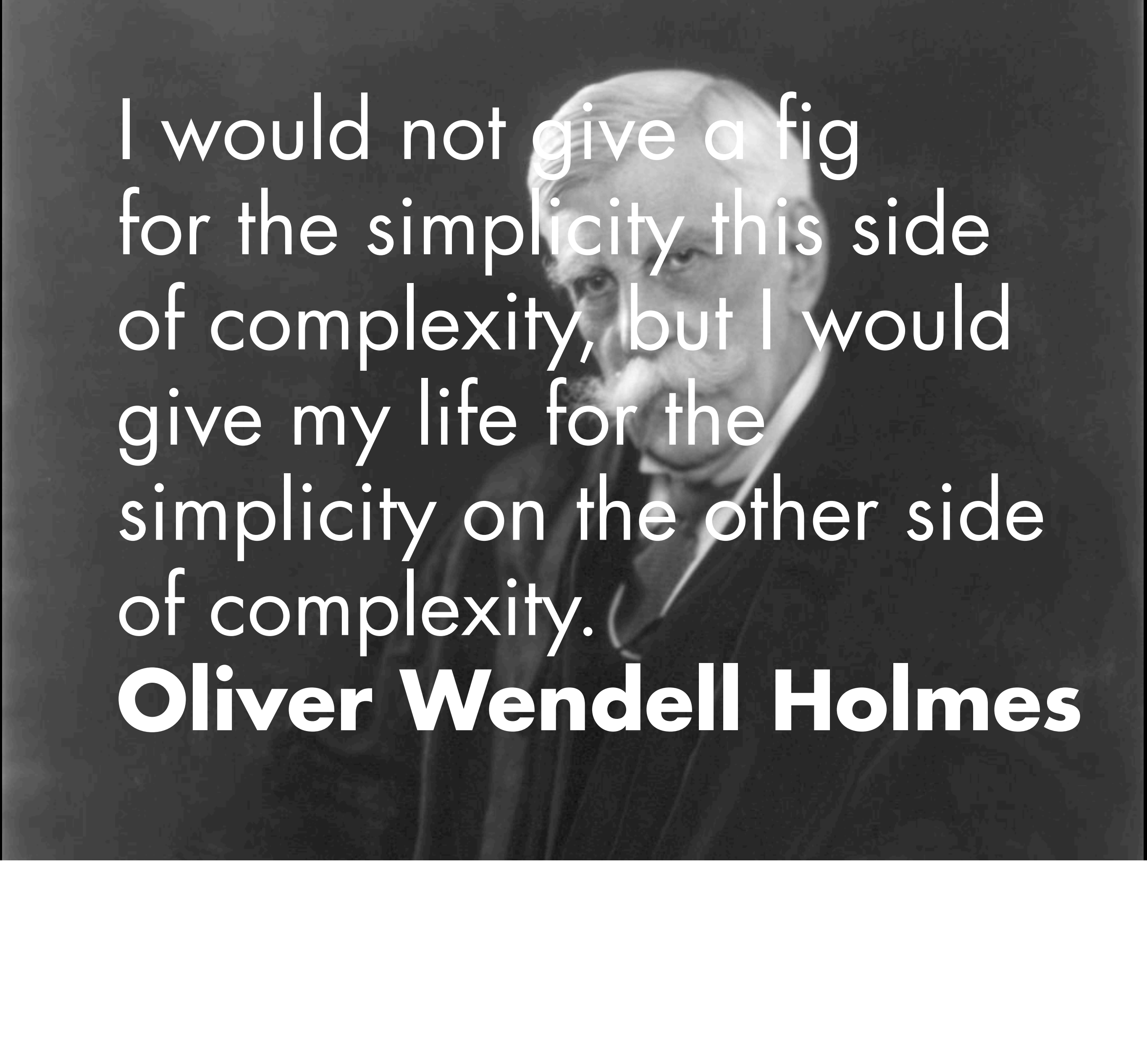
Problem or Opportunity

Features
Versions
Context
Multiple User Groups
Stakeholders
Activity Complexity
Constraints
Edge Cases

Complicated Product

Simple Product





I would not give a fig
for the simplicity this side
of complexity, but I would
give my life for the
simplicity on the other side
of complexity.

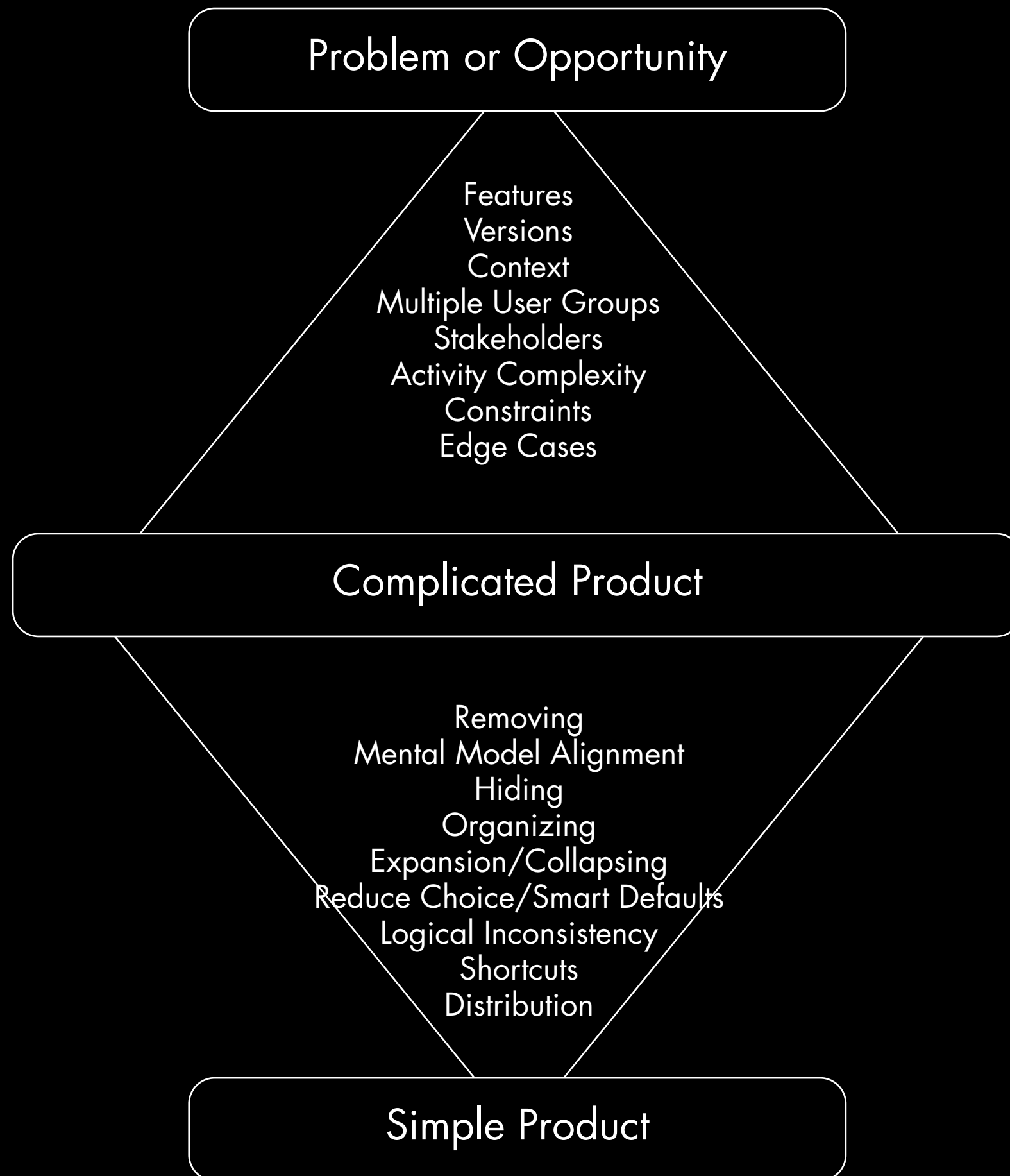
Oliver Wendell Holmes



The far side
of complexity

When you start looking at a problem, and it seems really simple with all these simple solutions, you don't really understand the complexity of the problem. And your solutions are way too simplified and they don't work. Then you get into the problem and you see it's really complicated. And you come up with all these convoluted solutions. That's sort of the middle, and it's where most people stop, and the solutions tend to work for a while. But the really great person will keep on going and find, sort of, the key underlying principle of the problem. And come up with a beautiful elegant solution that works.

Steve Jobs



So how do we make things simpler?

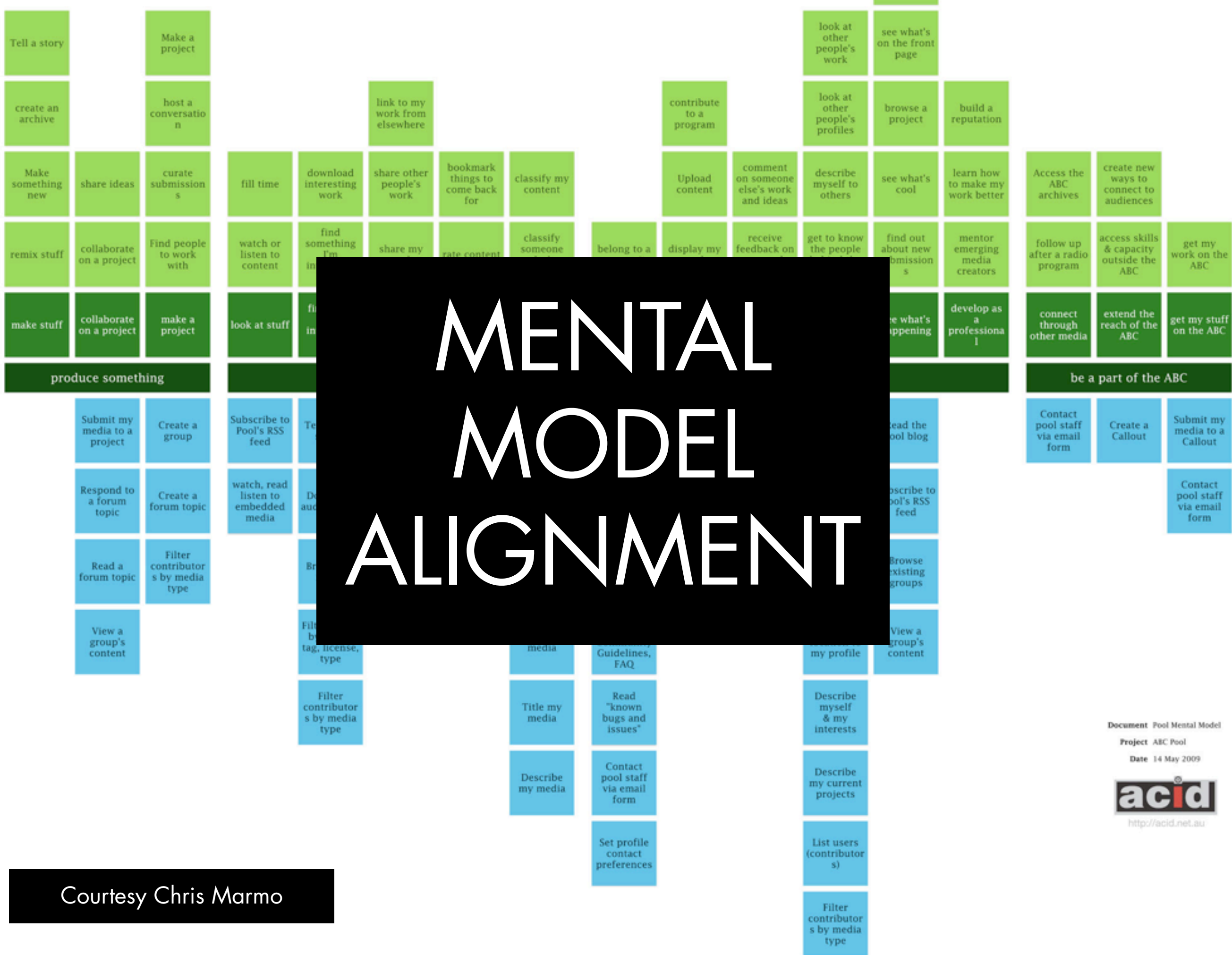


Most obvious way to simplify a product is to remove features, especially unnecessary features. When in doubt whether something should be there, consider getting rid of it.

How to choose what features to remove

- ★ prioritize based on user goals
- ★ doesn't fit the design principles
- ★ difficult to implement and low usage
- ★ poorly-implemented features
- ★ "nice to haves" (that no one will miss)
- ★ multiple ways of performing the same task
- ★ unnecessary options and preferences

The question you should always ask isn't Why should we get rid of this? Instead it should be Why should we keep this?



A mental model represents a person’s thought process for how something works, based on incomplete facts, past experiences, and even intuitive perceptions. They help shape actions and behavior, influence what people pay attention to in complicated situations, and define how people approach and solve problems.

How to align mental models with the product's conceptual model

- ★ match expected task activities with what is shown on screen
- ★ map decisions to specific controls or to a multi-purpose control
- ★ figure out what the system can handle
- ★ break up complex tasks into understandable pieces...
- ★ ...but don't break the task flow



A way to reduce the choices of your product is by hiding them. Users don't get distracted or overwhelmed by choices.

How to hide features

- ★ staged disclosure: functionality on a “need to use” basis
- ★ limit the “rocks,” but hide well
- ★ progressive disclosure: hide precision tools for expert users
- ★ things that are rarely updated like account details, one-time settings
- ★ beware of automatic hiding of things like menu items



ORGANIZING

Courtesy Bart Piotrowski

Organization helps many seem like few...as long as the group are less than the number of items to organize.

How to organize a product

- ★ make it modular: cluster similar things
 - ★ make each module easy to learn
 - ★ label in understandable ways
- ★ look for framing metaphors from existing products users might know
- ★ remove visual clutter
- ★ keep emphasis on one or two items
- ★ remove introductions and unnecessary instructions

An aerial photograph capturing the dramatic moment of a building's implosion. A massive, billowing cloud of white dust and debris erupts from the base of a structure, partially obscuring the lower portion of the image. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a grey, overcast sky. Notable buildings include a tall, modern glass skyscraper on the left, a historic building with a prominent green-tiled dome in the center, and several other commercial buildings to the right. Construction cranes are visible in the distance, indicating an active urban environment. The overall scene conveys a sense of powerful transformation and urban expansion.

EXPAND/COLLAPSE

Courtesy FindTarget.com

Operational Simplicity vs. Perceived Simplicity

Perceived simplicity = fewer controls, less visible options

Operational simplicity = one control per action, everything expanded

Shut Down Windows



Windows Vista Home Premium

© 2006 Microsoft Corporation



What do you want the computer to do?

Shut Down

Closes all open programs, shuts down Windows, and then turns off your computer.

OK

Cancel

Help

Turn off computer



Stand By



Turn Off



Restart

Cancel

Audience Participation: Mute, Volume Down, Volume Up

- ★ three controls
- ★ two controls
- ★ one control
- ★ more than three controls?
(seriously?)

UI tools for collapsing

- ★ menus/drop-down menus
- ★ panels
- ★ tabs
- ★ scrolling
- ★ list boxes
- ★ icons
- ★ popups/overlays/right-click menus

UI tools for expanding

- ★ buttons
- ★ sliders
- ★ checkboxes
- ★ radio buttons
- ★ dials



REDUCE CHOICE/ SMART DEFAULTS

Courtesy Gary Isaac

Giving choices gives people a sense of control. But as Barry Schwartz points out in Paradox of Choice, too many choices becomes a cognitive burden. Users are happier with limited choices. It's the responsibility of the designers to help with that. This is why preferences can be so bad: they abdicate responsibility.

How to reduce choice and make smart defaults

- ★ best defaults are those that suit the most users most of the time
- ★ visual signals
 - ★ emphasis of the next likely step
 - ★ desire lines: show shortcuts
- ★ how alternatives are visually presented affects the choice
- ★ strive for no error messages
- ★ don't forget the almighty return key

“The natural world functions quite well without error messages.” Don Norman



Sometimes people need help getting started. Good design in some ways relies on the ability to instill instant familiarity. Make the suggested choice the default choice or the ONLY choice.



LOGICAL INCONSISTENCY

When you have a choice between being consistent or being logical, it sometimes makes sense to be inconsistent.

**boku**
How it works

Please select your country

Select only the country of your mobile phone service. Roaming not supported.

Country:

- Select country: ▼
- Select country:
- Australia
 - Austria
 - Canada
 - Czech Republic
 - Denmark
 - Eire (Ireland)
 - Finland
 - Germany
 - Italy
 - Norway
 - Philippines
 - Poland
 - Singapore
 - Sweden
 - Switzerland
 - Turkey
 - United Kingdom
 - United States of America

CONFIRM

Charges will be made on your mobile
us. By clicking "CONTINUE", you con
purchases and agree to the [Terms](#).

nt. Mobile network fees may apply. Customer support: [contact](#)
mer or have authorization from the account owner to make

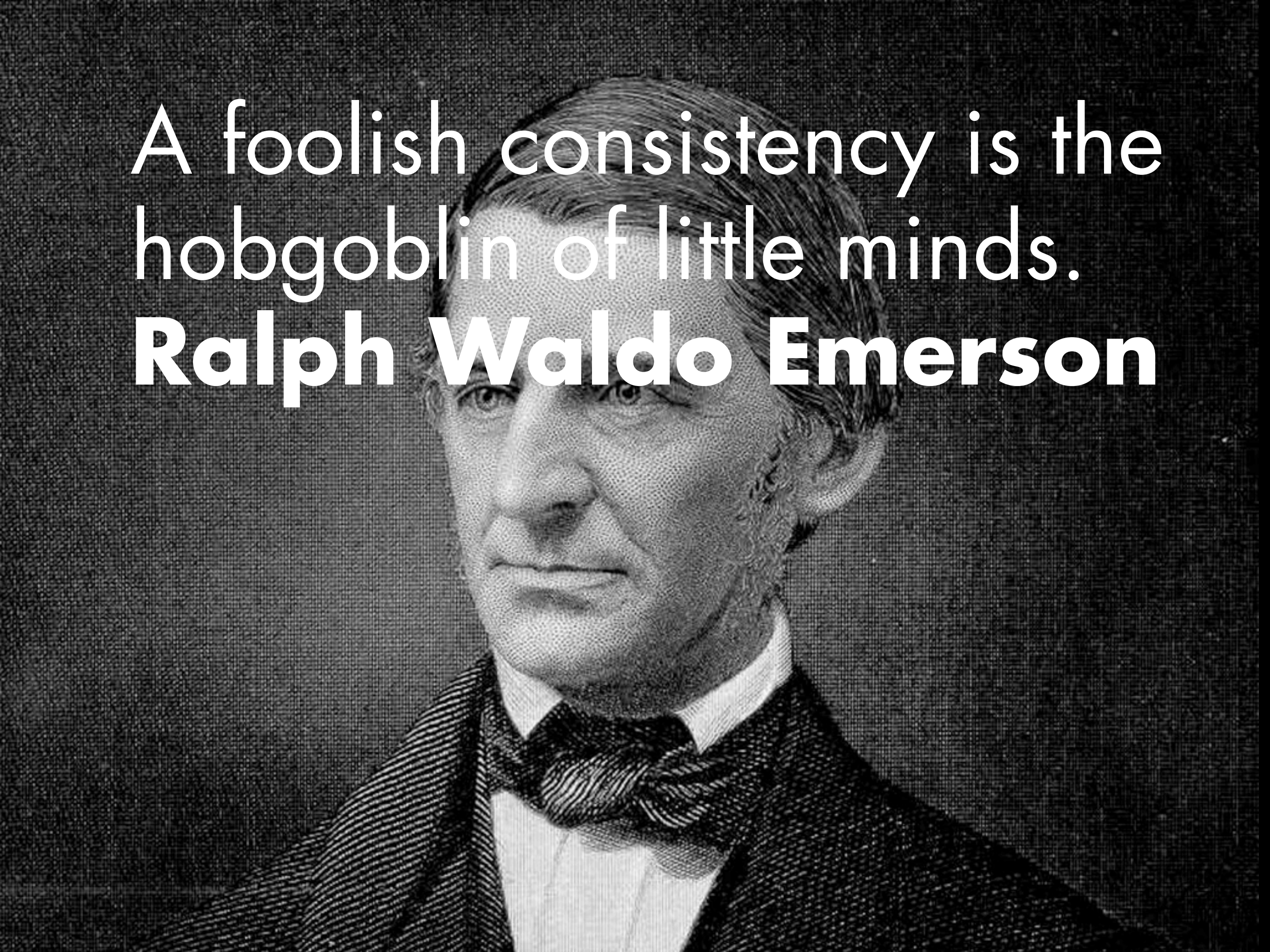
SECURE™
16-OCT

When to be logically inconsistent

- ★ optimize for common use, not an arbitrary scheme
- ★ make it easy to get to the last thing(s) the user was working on, even if it means putting them in a special place or pulling out of a hierarchy

A foolish consistency is the
hobgoblin of little minds.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



A photograph of a paved road that curves through a dense, green forest. The road is dark asphalt with some lighter, gravelly patches in the center. The trees are tall and leafy, creating a canopy overhead. A black rectangular box is superimposed over the middle of the image, containing the word "SHORTCUTS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

SHORTCUTS

Make it easy to access/get to

- ★ the last thing engaged with
 - ★ document, media, file, etc.
 - ★ step in a process
- ★ the last changed setting
- ★ the next actions users often perform immediately following
- ★ hidden functionality for expert users
- ★ invitations to explore (e.g. tool tips)

DISTRIBUTION

The last method is distribution of features. If you can't rid of features, one way is to distribute them across platforms.

How to distribute functionality

- ★ pick the right platform for the task
- ★ perform a “functional cartography”

	Desktop	Web	Mobile
Feature		X	
Feature	X		
Feature			X

What's hard on one platform can be easy on another.

Time

Problem or Opportunity

Features

Versions

Context

Brute Force Product

Multiple User Groups

Stakeholders

Activity Complexity

Constraints

Edge Cases

Complicated Product

Removing

Mental Model Alignment

Hiding

Organizing

Expansion/Collapsing

Reduce Choice/Smart Defaults

Logical Inconsistency

Shortcuts

Distribution

Simple Product

A man with short brown hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and dark trousers, is speaking at a podium. He is gesturing with his hands as he speaks. The background is a blurred stage setting with a large screen displaying the word "EQIP" in red and blue letters.

Most companies are looking to “wow” with their products, when in reality what they should be looking for is an “of course” reaction.

Christian Lindholm

I think this gets at the heart of simplicity. Of course it works like that. Of course that feature would be here, not there. It's this comfort of understanding combined with a feeling of mastery that is at the heart of simplicity.

Thanks.

dan@odannyboy.com
@odannyboy on Twitter

Go now, to the far side of complexity, and simplify your products. Thank you very much.