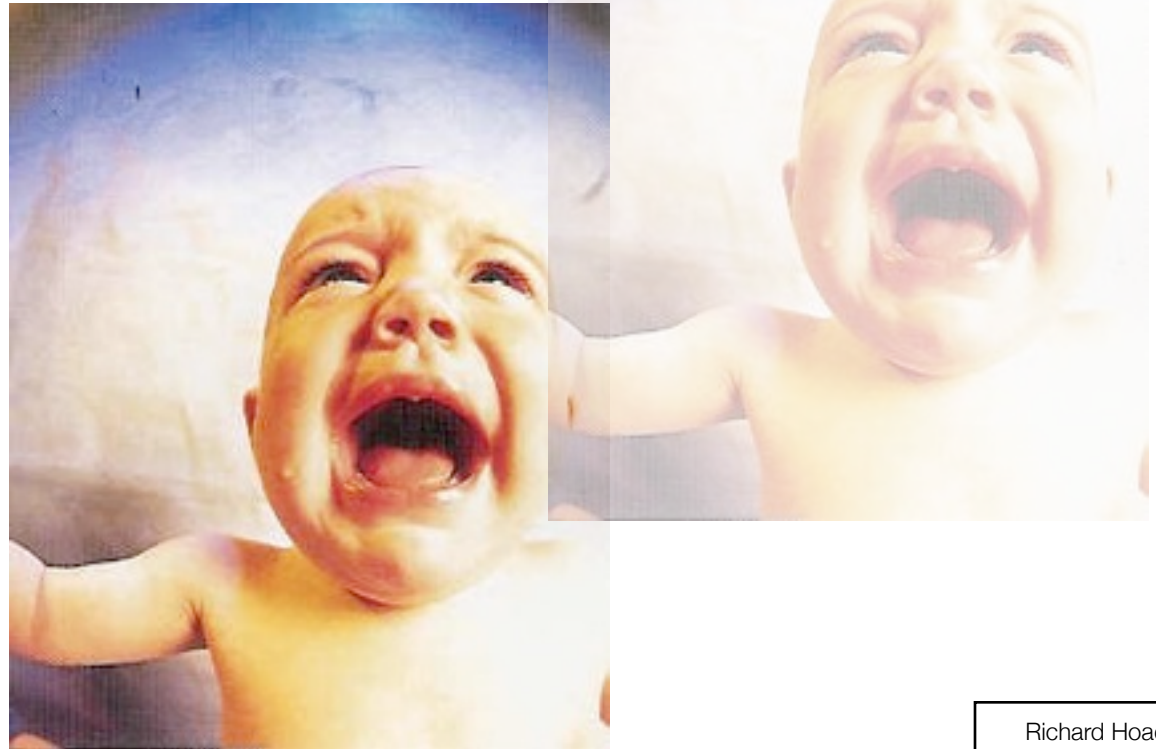


The **Early Learning Centre:**
Things that go wrong and frustrate you...



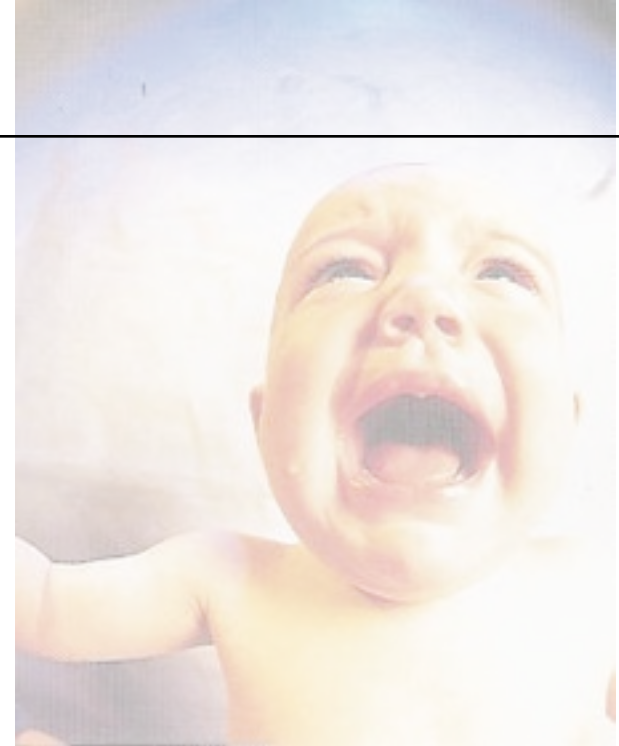
Richard Hoadley
2008-9
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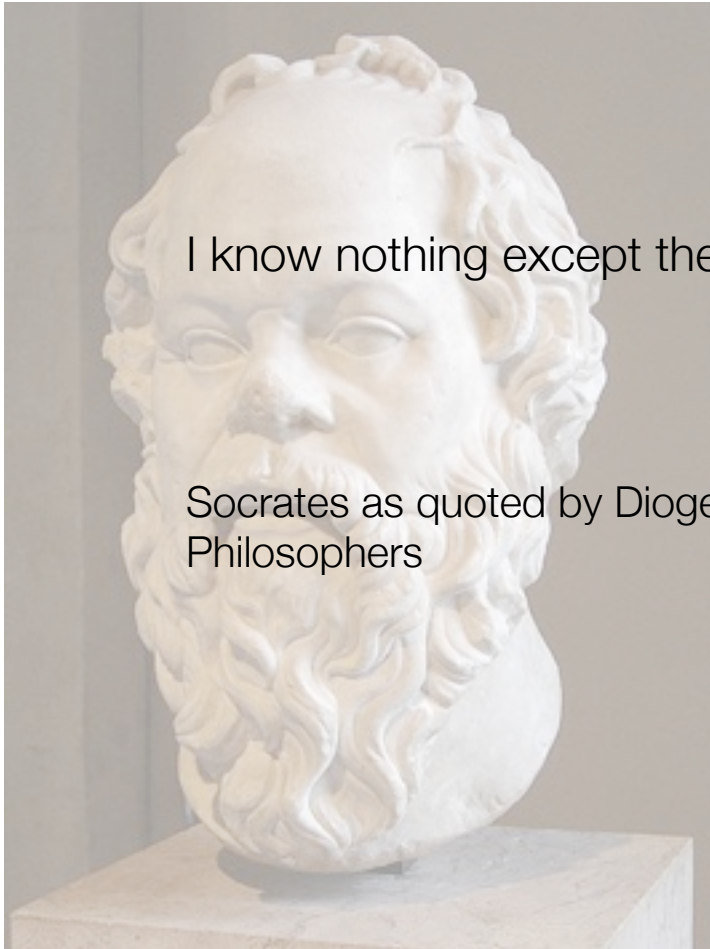
Note

This presentation is available in pdf format at rheadley.org/presentations

Further information is available at rheadley.org

Most of the audio and video examples are available separately on the WebCT implementation of this presentation:



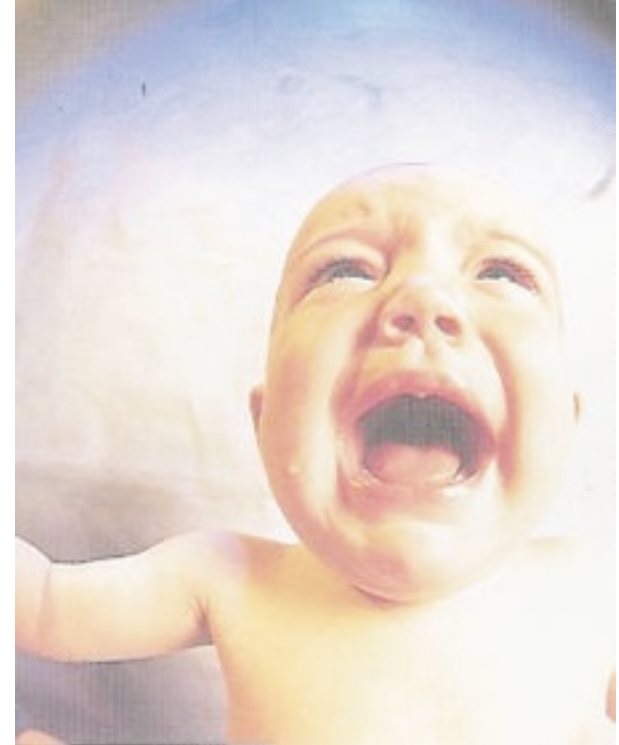


I know nothing except the fact of my ignorance.

Socrates as quoted by Diogenes Laertius in Lives of Eminent Philosophers



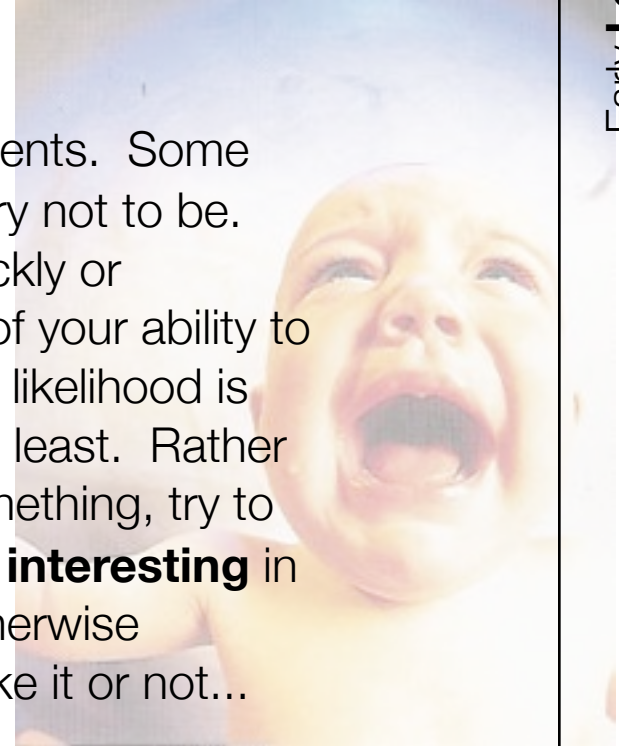
- Expectations
- It Takes a Long Time
- Time Saving Features
- Breaking Habits
- Learning to Love Errors
- Toolbox Solutions
- You'll Lose Out To Begin With
- Be Realistic
- Intuition and Common Sense
- Reinventing the Wheel



- Expectations can be both a **help** and **hindrance**.
- We must try to make any expectations we have as **realistic** as possible.
- Otherwise you're an **idiot**.
- Expect everything to take a lot of **time** and **effort**. Resign yourself to this. Allow **three times as long** as you think necessary to complete things. This is a very difficult lesson, but the sooner you deal with it the better!

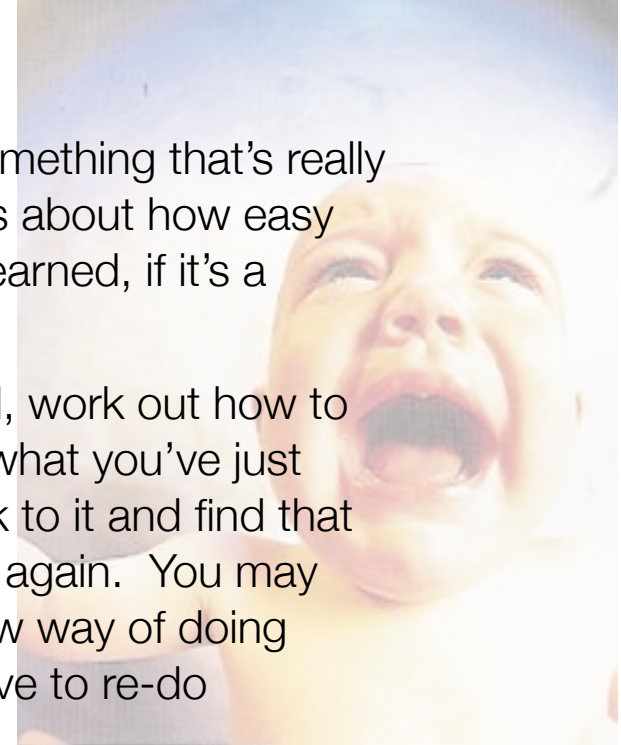


- **Avoid** immediate, hard and fast judgements. Some people are **addicted** to them, but you try not to be. You may think you know something quickly or immediately, maybe you're even proud of your ability to judge things and people quickly, but the likelihood is you're going to be wrong sometimes, at least. Rather than deciding that you like or dislike something, try to work out what **other people** might find **interesting** in it. Try to consider how interesting or otherwise something is, rather than whether you like it or not...



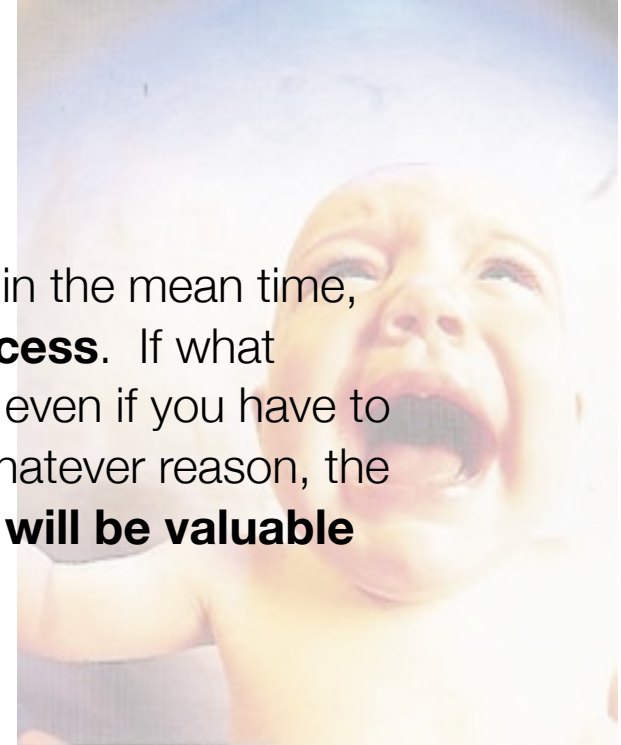
It takes a long time

- It can take a really **long** time to learn something that's really **worth** learning. Whatever anyone says about how easy something is, or how quickly it can be learned, if it's a complex subject, it'll take a long time.
- You'll probably learn a bit, get frustrated, work out how to do what you've just done better, re-do what you've just done, forget what you've done, go back to it and find that you need or want to do the whole thing again. You may come across someone with a whole new way of doing things meaning that you, apparently, have to re-do everything again.



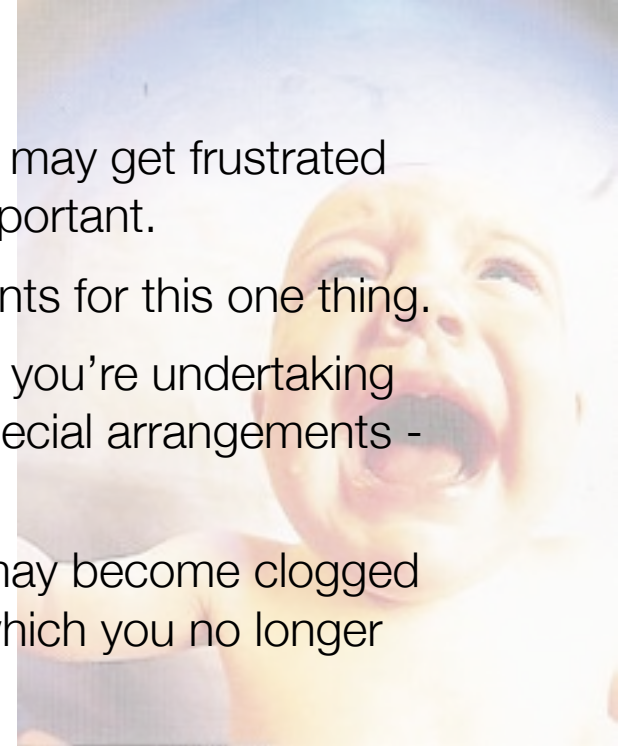
It takes a long time

- Things may well take a long time, but in the mean time, you're **learning throughout the process**. If what you're learning is useful enough, then even if you have to **stop** using what you've learned for whatever reason, the information, methods and experience **will be valuable** in other contexts.

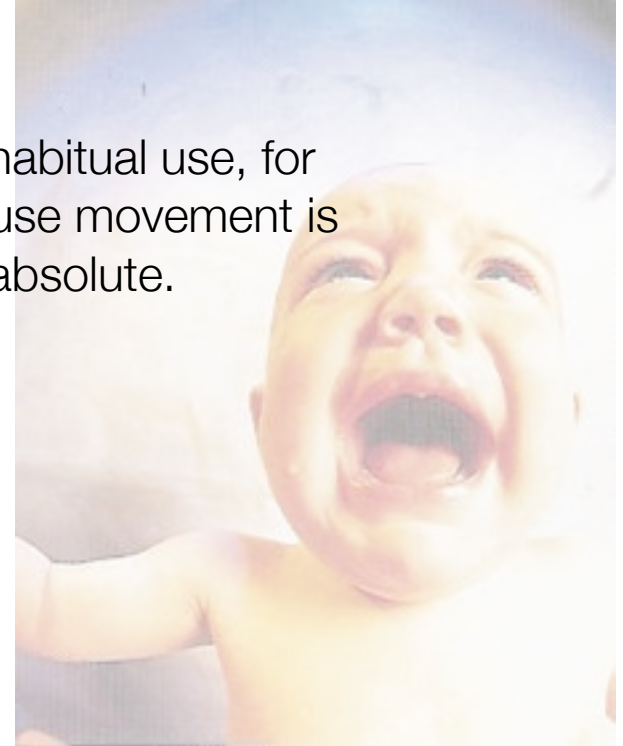


Time Saving Features

- When you're doing one thing, you may get frustrated and think that that thing is very important.
- You may make special arrangements for this one thing.
- After a little while, after the project you're undertaking has finished, you'll forget these special arrangements - even why you made them at all!
- If you're not careful your system may become clogged with such 'time-saving' features which you no longer use.

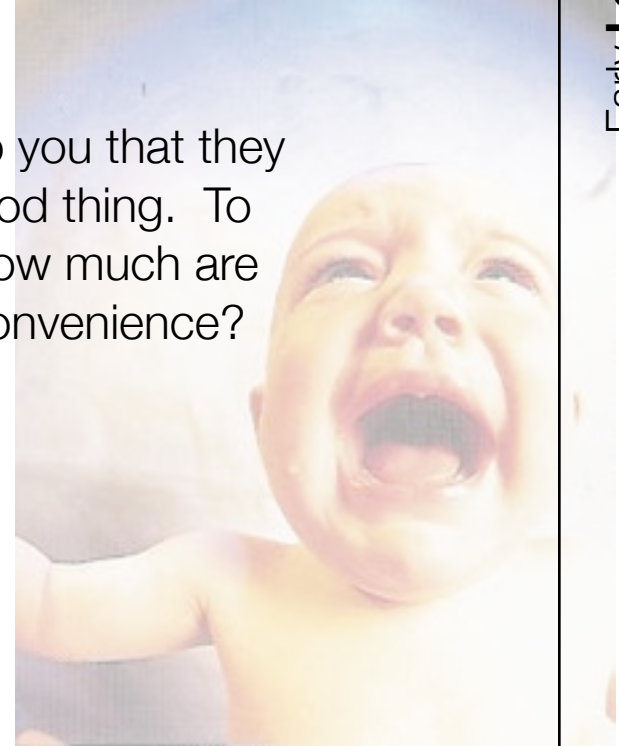


- Use the bamboo to demonstrate habitual use, for instance of the mouse, where mouse movement is relative, whereas with a tablet it's absolute.



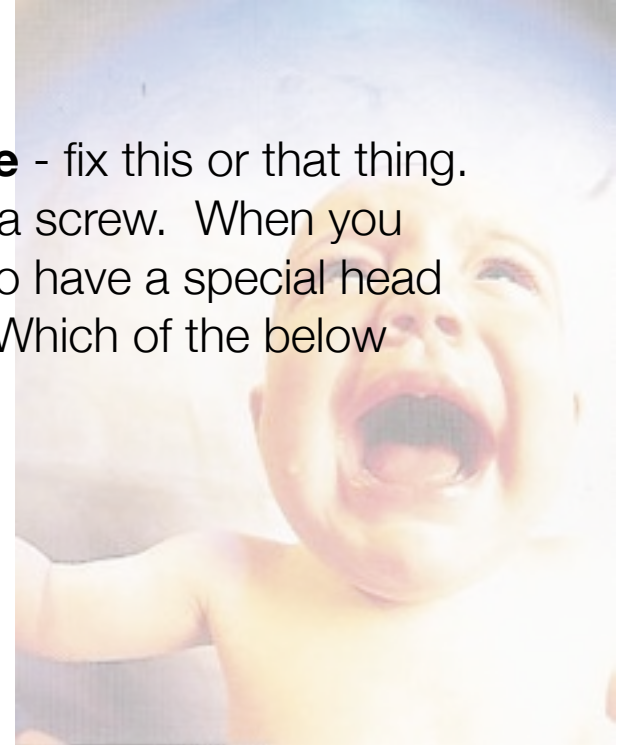
Errors are a **good thing**: Learn to **love** them

- Modern software has a way of implying to you that they are really easy to use and that this is a good thing. To some extent, of course, this is true, but how much are you giving up so that you can have this convenience?



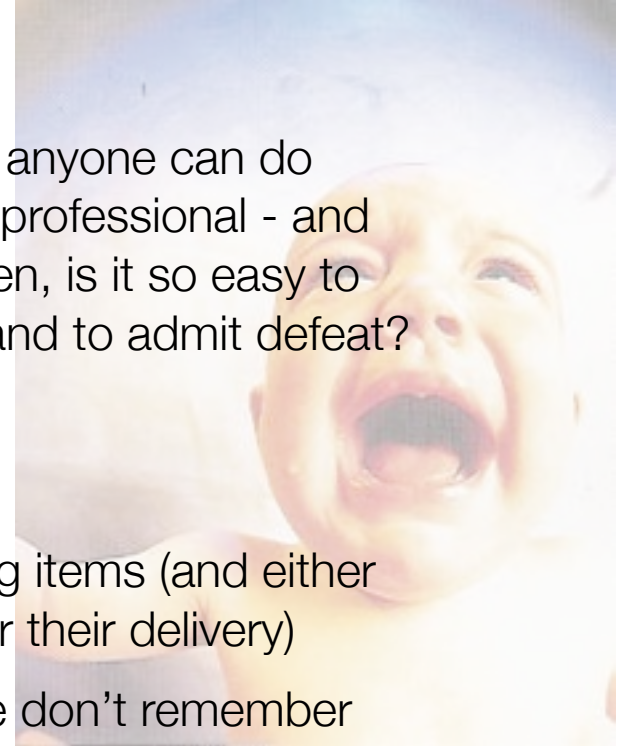
Toolbox Solutions

- You're presented with a **challenge** - fix this or that thing. In order to fix it you need to undo a screw. When you investigate the screw it turns out to have a special head which you've never seen before. Which of the below solutions is best?
- Buy a single screwdriver
- Buy a set of screwdrivers
- Make the screwdrivers
- Make/replace...



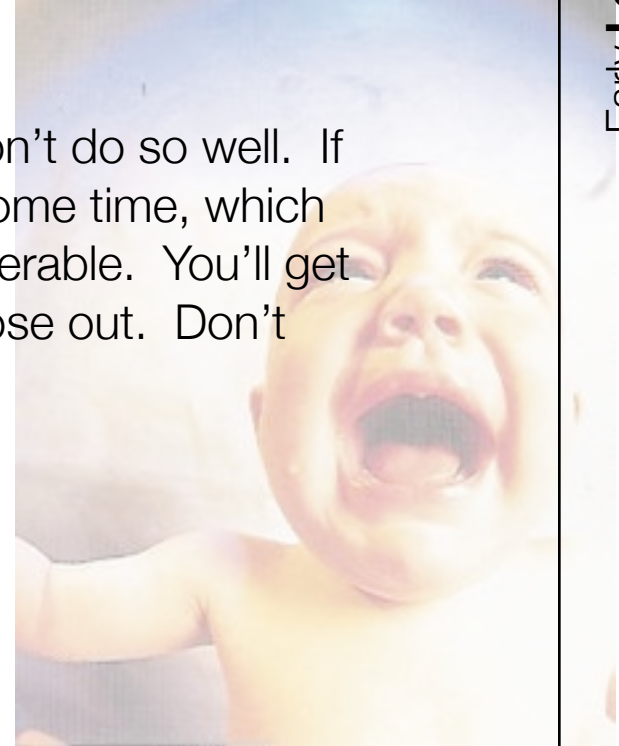
Toolbox Solutions

- DIY shows on tv: - they imply that anyone can do anything - you don't need to be a professional - and they're probably right, but why, then, is it so easy to mess things up, to lose patience and to admit defeat?
- Lack of correct tools
- Expense
- Inconvenience of constantly buying items (and either going to collect them or waiting for their delivery)
- Lack of experience means that we don't remember important items, meaning we become even more frustrated.



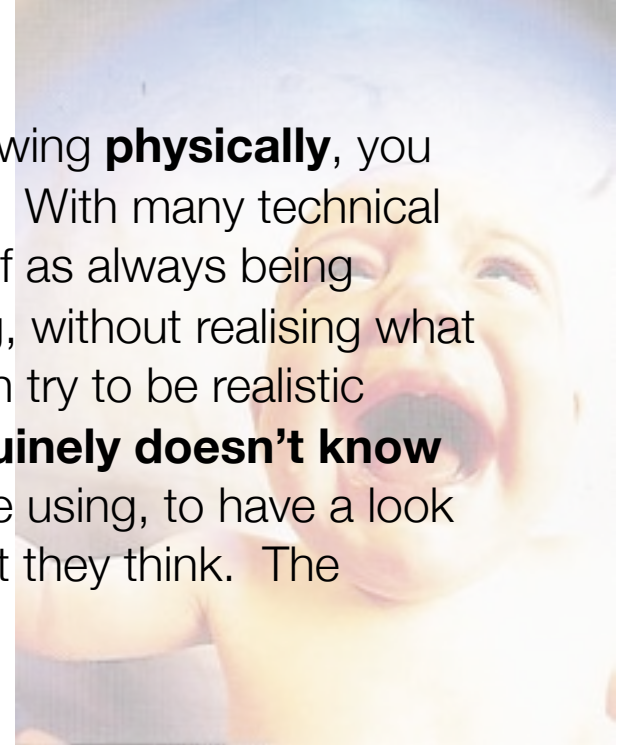
You'll lose out to begin with

- **Accept it**, that **to begin with** you won't do so well. If it's worth learning, it probably takes some time, which means that as you learn you'll be vulnerable. You'll get things wrong and to an extent you'll lose out. Don't worry, but **be careful...**



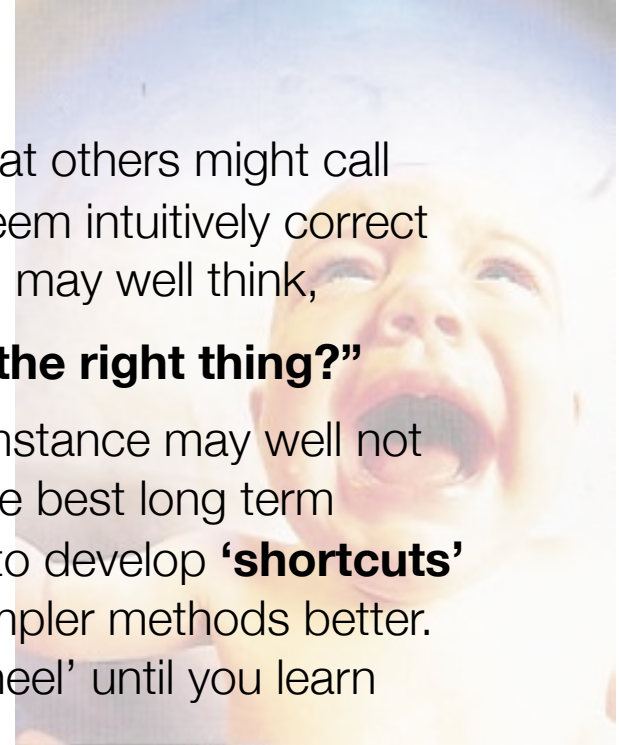
Be Realistic

- Just as you don't see yourself growing **physically**, you don't **perceive** yourself **learning**. With many technical things, it's easy to perceive oneself as always being **'behind'** and **not understanding**, without realising what you do know. Every now and then try to be realistic about this. Ask a friend who **genuinely doesn't know** anything about the software you're using, to have a look at what you're doing and say what they think. The chances are you'll be surprised!



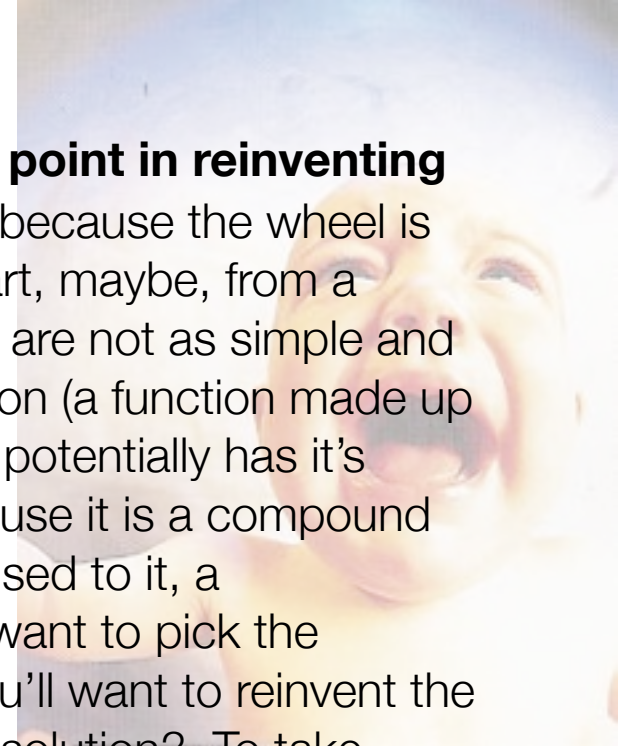
Beware of Intuition

- Always **beware** of **intuition** or what others might call **common sense**. Things might seem intuitively correct in one instance, but in another you may well think,
“why did I ever think this was the right thing?”
- What seems obvious in one circumstance may well not seem obvious in another. Often the best long term solution to technical issues is **not** to develop **‘shortcuts’** but to learn how to use generic simpler methods better. This may mean ‘reinventing the wheel’ until you learn how to do it better!



Reinventing the Wheel

- We're always told that **there's no point in reinventing the wheel**, which is fine and true because the wheel is the simplest machine there is (apart, maybe, from a lever?). However, other machines are not as simple and in any case, any compound function (a function made up of a number of simpler functions), potentially has its functionality limited precisely because it is a compound function! As soon as you've got used to it, a circumstance will arise and you'll want to pick the function apart. In other words, you'll want to reinvent the wheel - or at least try. What's the solution? To take advantages of shortcuts, but not at the expense of understanding.



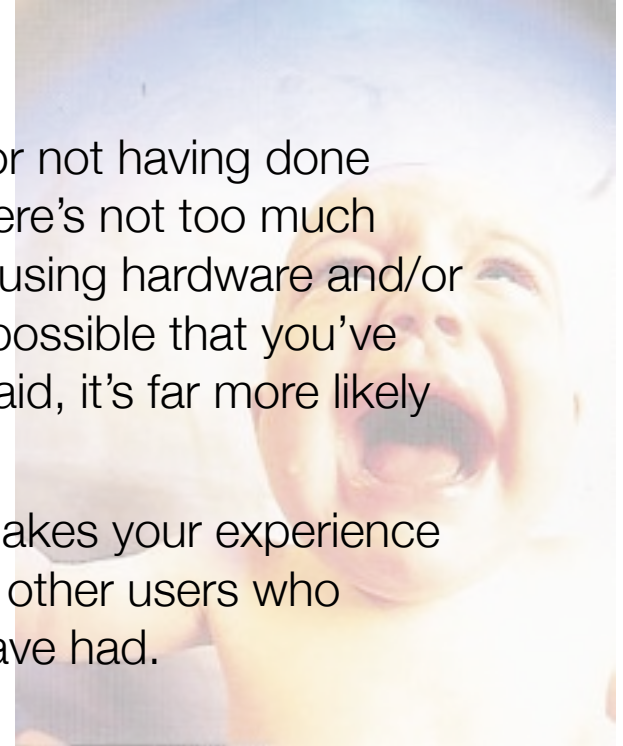
Scary Breaky Things

- What happens if I break this scary breaky thing?



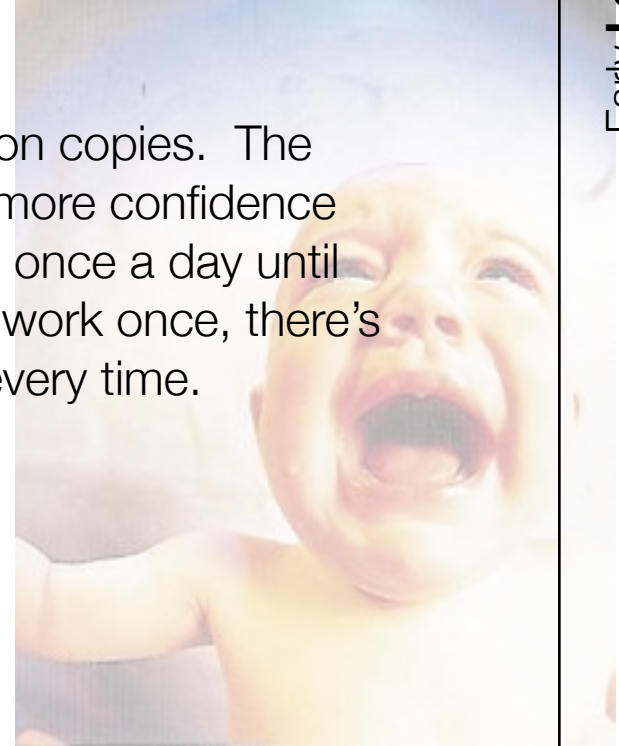
It Doesn't Work....

- If you're using this as an excuse for not having done what you've been asked to do, there's not too much mileage here, particularly if you're using hardware and/or software that's fairly mature. It is possible that you've found a fault or a bug, but, I'm afraid, it's far more likely that you've made a mistake!
- Rather, consider what you think makes your experience so different from the thousands of other users who haven't had the experience you have had.



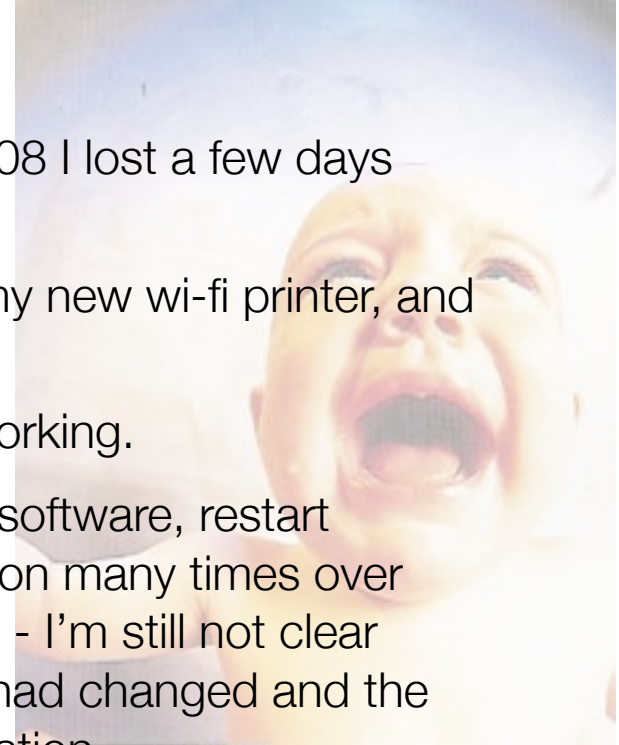
It DOES work!

- If it does work, then save it and work on copies. The more times you try and succeed, the more confidence you'll have, so try to do things at least once a day until you feel confident. If you can make it work once, there's no real reason why it shouldn't work every time.



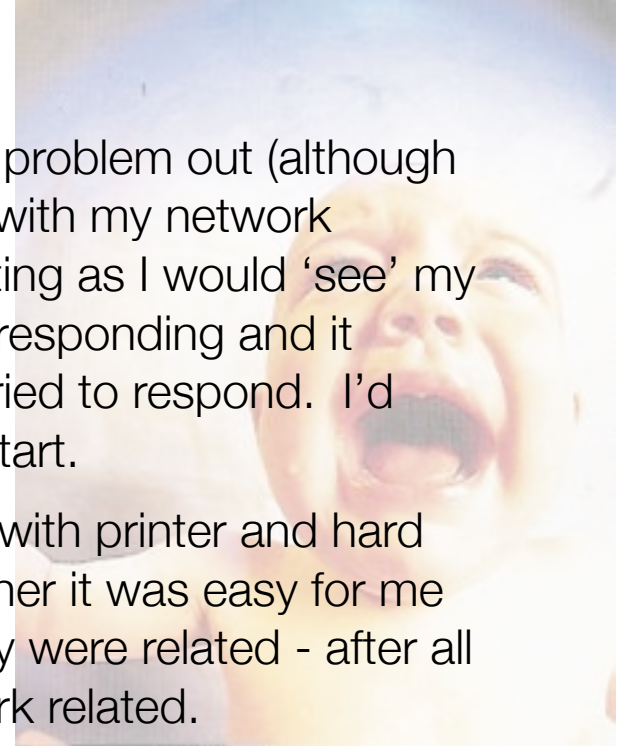
It Doesn't Work: Be very careful

- A story. During the summer of 2008 I lost a few days work because:
- 1) I seemed to lose contact with my new wi-fi printer, and then
- 2) My network storage stopped working.
- It took me a **few days** to reinstall software, restart machines and search for information many times over before I discovered that somehow - I'm still not clear how, my laptop's firewall settings had changed and the firewall was preventing communication.



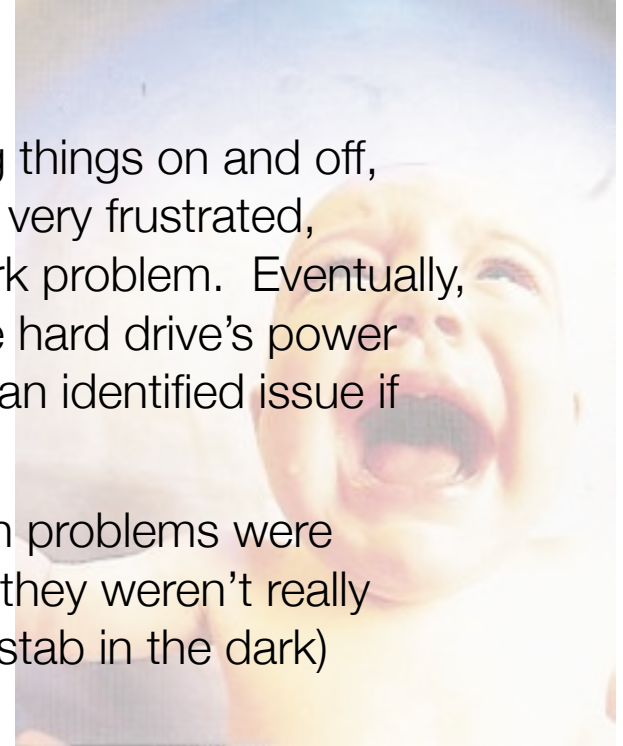
It Doesn't Work: Be very careful 2

- Then, as I thought I'd worked this problem out (although I hadn't fixed it yet), I lost contact with my network storage. This was especially irritating as I would 'see' my hard drive, but then it would stop responding and it would occupy my laptop while it tried to respond. I'd have to restart and restart and restart.
- As the two events - the problems with printer and hard drive - happened very close together it was easy for me to jump to the conclusion that they were related - after all they were each, apparently network related.



It Doesn't Work: Be very careful 3

- Again, I spent several days turning things on and off, restarting other things and getting very frustrated, assuming there was a wi-fi/network problem. Eventually, I discovered the real problem - the hard drive's power supply was faulty (again, this was an identified issue if one chose to look for it).
- So, after a lot of wasted time, both problems were solved - they weren't related, and they weren't really much to do with my own original (stab in the dark) diagnosis.



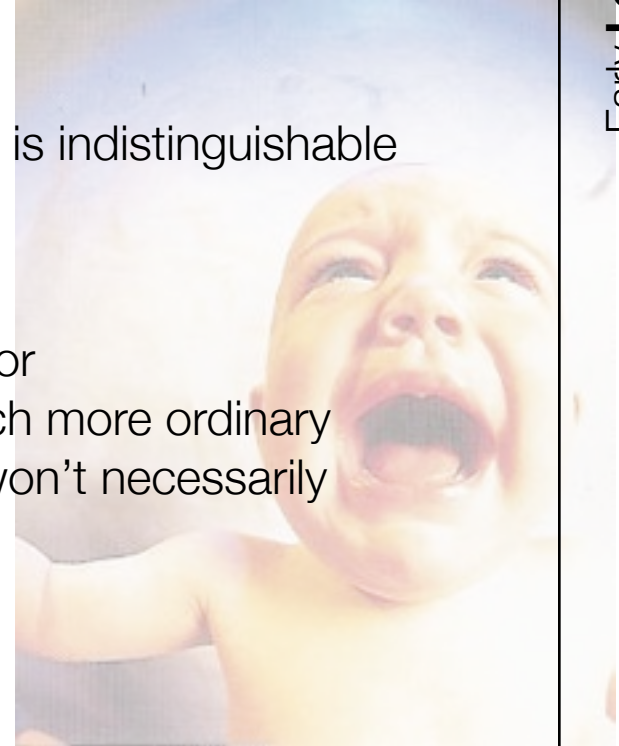
Numbers

- We aren't designed to understand numbers larger than about 10-20, which is why we're so gullible as far as gambling is concerned.



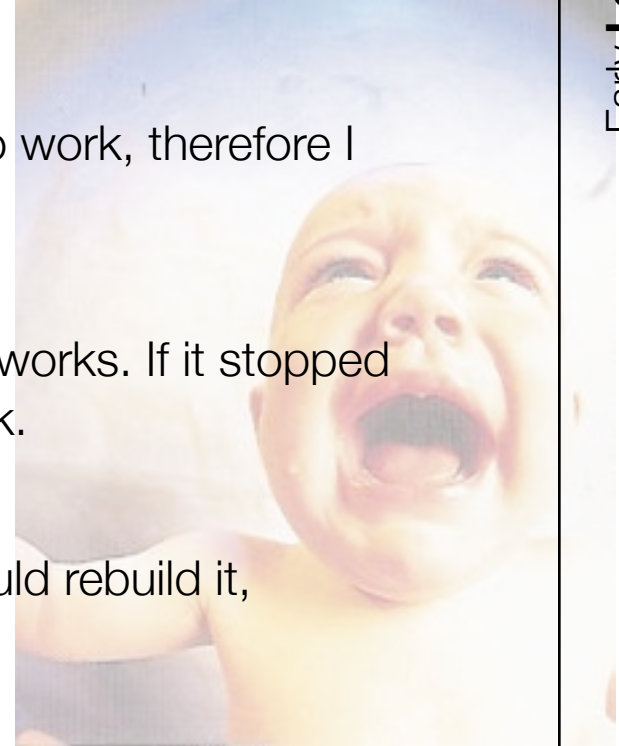
Familiarity breeds contempt, and understanding

- “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”
- Things that seem difficult, impossible or incomprehensible will start to feel much more ordinary after a little usage. (Incidentally, you won't necessarily notice this process particularly.)



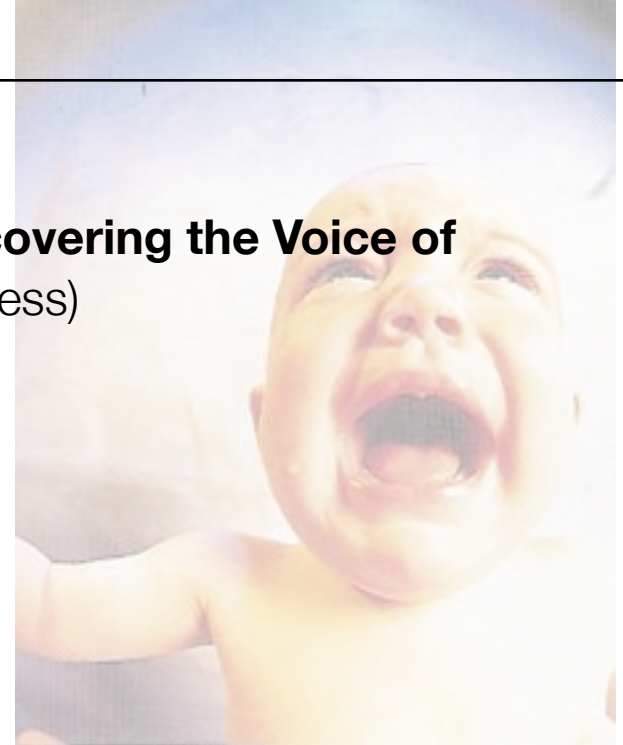
Different **levels** of **learning** and **understanding**

- 1) I have this device which I can get to work, therefore I understand it.
- 2) I have this device and know how it works. If it stopped working I'd know how to get it to work.
- 3) I have this device and if I lost it I could rebuild it, probably better.



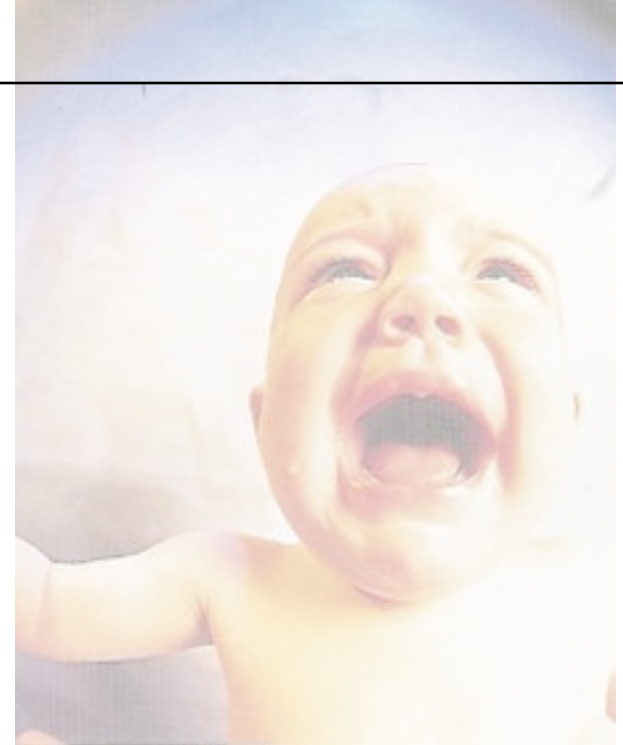
Bibliography and References

- Krause, B., 2002, **Wild Soundscapes: Discovering the Voice of the Natural World**, (Berkeley, Wilderness Press)
- Like the above....



Other Presentations

- ACMP
- Algorithms and Generative Music
- Bioacoustics
- Chance
- CMP
- Early Learning
- Graphic Abstraction
- Installation Art
- Interface Design
- Judge Proulx's Ruling
- Live
- Make Your Own
- Metaform and Metaforming
- Notation as Art
- Painting Music
- pTech
- Sonic Art
- Sonic Art Examples
- Sonification
- sTech
- Synaesthesia



end

