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# SENSORY FRIENDLY MONITORING

Keeping the noise down

 QuintessenceAnx

 PagerDuty

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# When we try to know everything...

The image is a collage of various system notifications and a central cartoon illustration. The notifications include:

- Slack #gcp channel:** A series of bot messages reporting logins and bucket operations. The channel header shows "June 26th".
- JIRA Cloud:** A notification that "Helen transitioned a Story from To Do to Done" with a link to "TIS-18: Update the documentation on the launch sequence".
- Confluence:** A notification that a page "Project Milestone Overview" was created in "Space Company" by "Eve".
- Trello:** A notification that "@brian created Taco Drone Deliveries" with options to "Join", "Subscribe", "Due Date", "Labels", and "Attach Conversation".
- Lunch Train:** Two notifications stating "You've started a lunch train" at 4:20 PM and 4:21 PM, with a mention of "@mathowie started a..." and "@lima, @anna, @evie".
- System Alerts:** A notification about a "Partial System Outage" and a "Management Portal" status table.

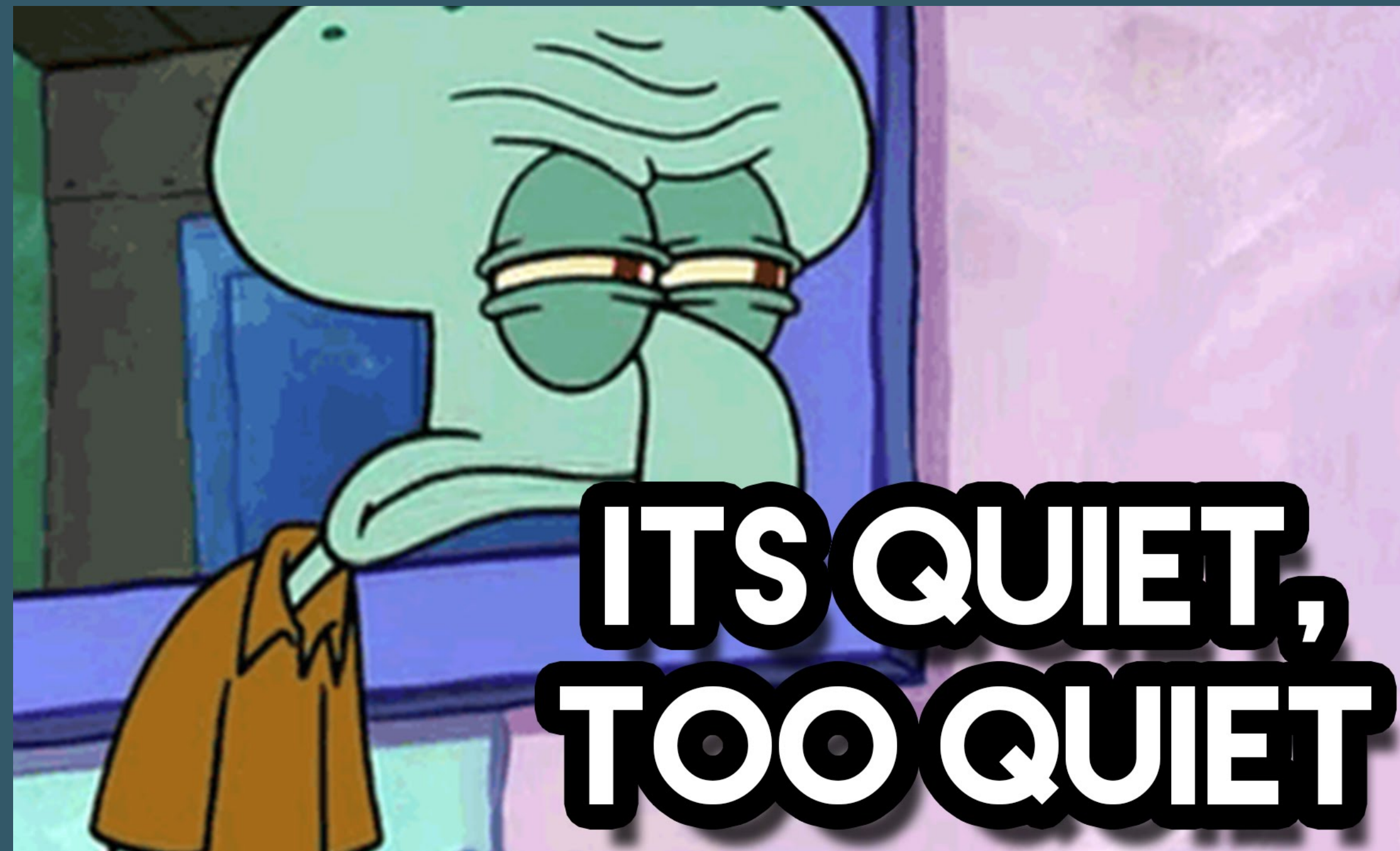
The central cartoon depicts a woman with long brown hair, a mustache, and a blue top, looking extremely stressed with wide, frantic eyes and a large open mouth. A speech bubble above her contains the text "ACK! ACK!!! ACK! AAACK!". The background of the cartoon is pink with white teardrop shapes.

Component	Status
Management Portal	Operational
API	Major Outage

# Too much noise can...

- ...bury important / high severity alerts in a sea of low priority notices
- ...causing engineering teams to start muting alarms or whole alarm sources
- ...which in turn means the people who need to be notified, won't be.

Meanwhile, when we  
turn the dial too far...



**Let's find a happy medium.**

**Consider:  
the cost of noise**

# Your brain on alerts



**Time cost?**

**~25 minutes**



# Quality cost



# Cost of multitasking



**So how to reduce the noise?**

# Be aware, not overwhelmed

- Determine the sources of noise
- Categorize the types of noise
- Channel the noise into a productive workflow
- Create a routine to clear the clutter

# Sources of noise



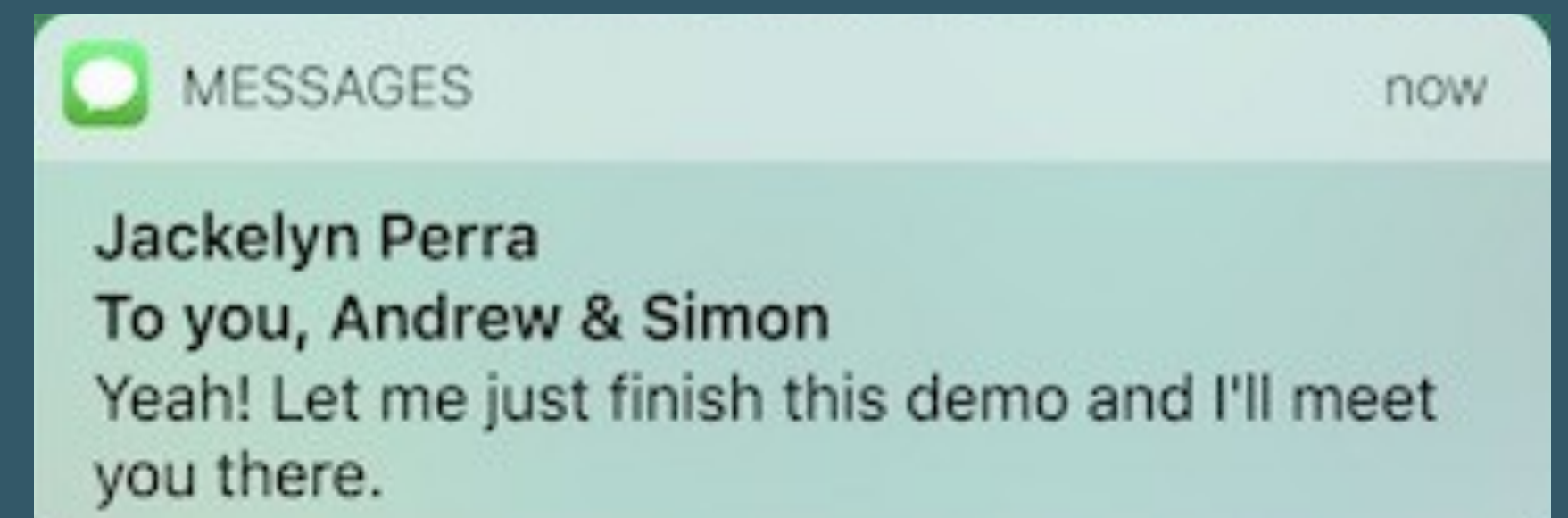
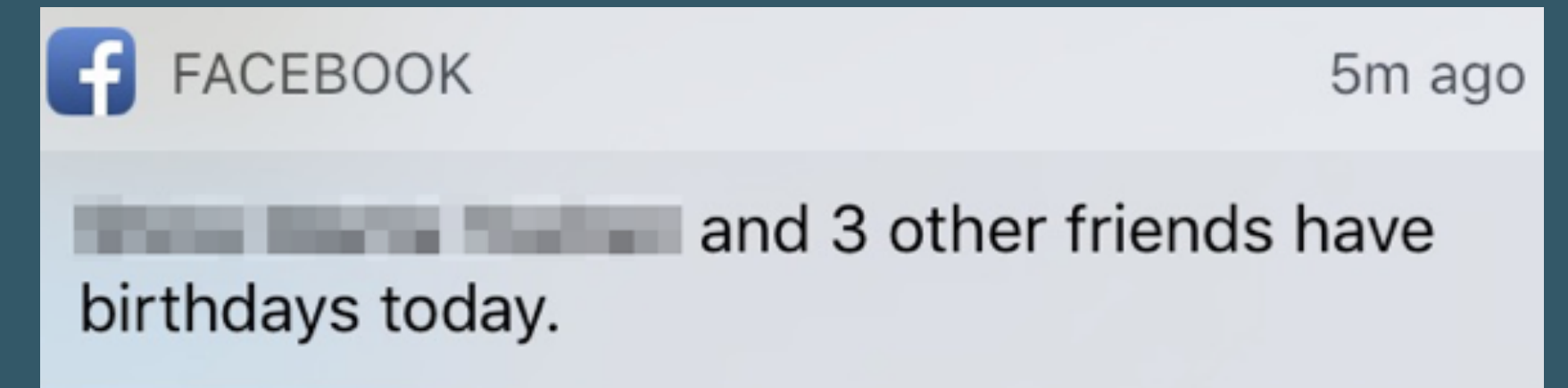
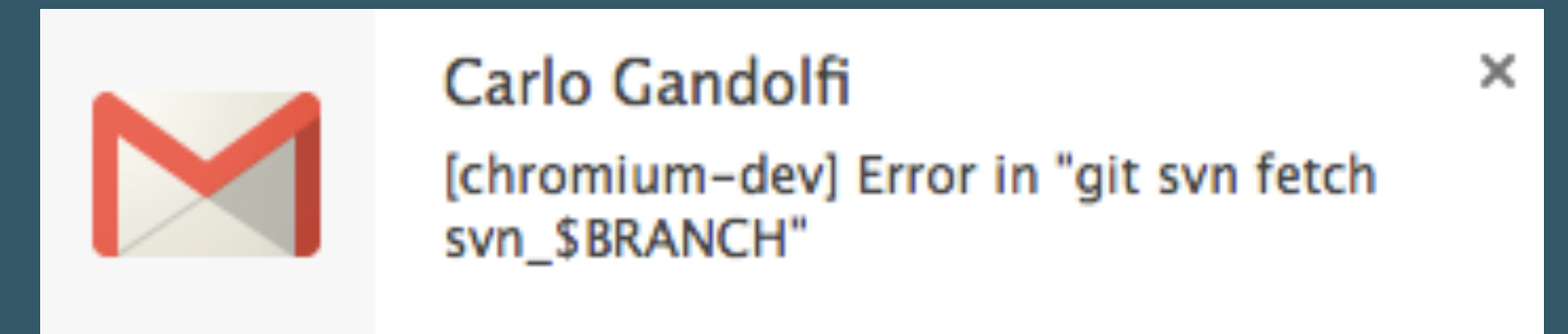
**Wait, I need to be aware of  
myself?**

**Absolutely.**

**All alerts are fictional.**

# How often do you...

- ...check your email?
- ...check your social media?
- ...check your text messages?
- ...check your Apple / Google messages?
- ... the list goes on.

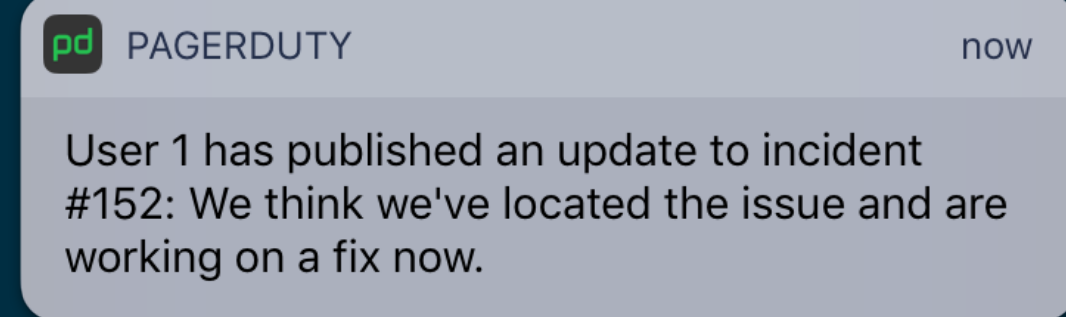


All alerts are fictional.

# Communication & Boundaries

- Plan for set times to focus on your work and mute non-critical alerts
- This includes messages from friends & family
- When setting boundaries make sure your friends, family, and co-workers know what you consider to be relevant emergencies
- Set reasonable expectations for yourself and others





# But what about external sources of noise?

All alerts are fictional.

# Start categorizing your noise



- False positives
- False negatives
- Fragility
- Frequency (just fix it)

# Save time: create your noise flow



- What needs to be known
- Who needs to know it
- How soon should they know
- How should they be notified

# Re-Evaluate Redundancy

Know How to Add a Little  
Complexity to Stop a Vacuum

a.k.a. A bad day in ChatOps

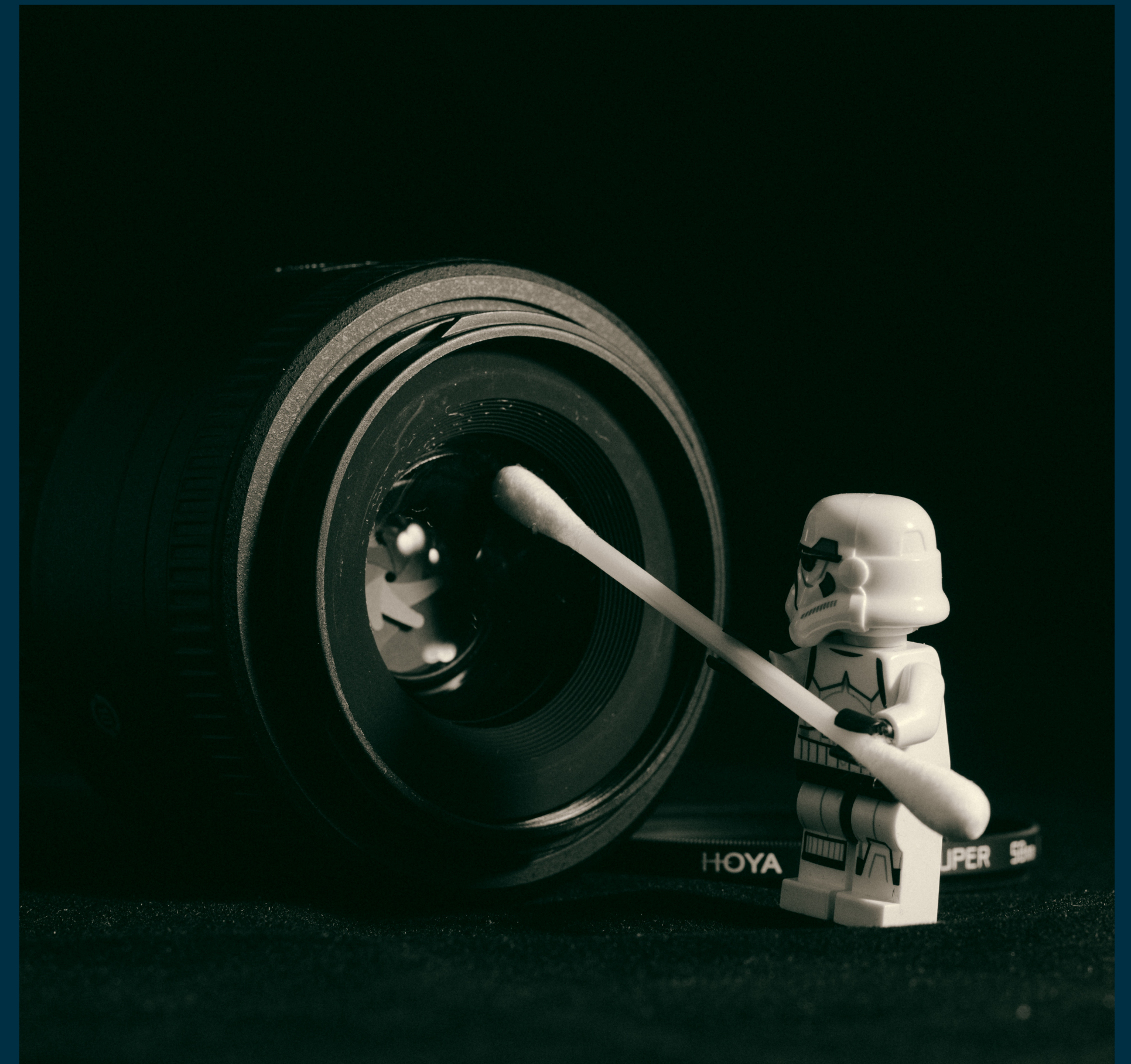
# Resilient noise builds trust

- How reliable are your tools and services?
- How much notification duplication is needed?
- Do you have the ability to switch alert endpoints in the event of a service outage?
- Do you regularly evaluate the reliability of your services (external and internal)?

# Keep alerts relevant: Sprint Cleaning

For every alert triggered, ask:

- Was the notification needed?
- How was the incident resolved?
- Can the solution be automated?
- Is the solution permanent?
- How urgently was a solution needed?



# Slides & Additional Resources Available on Notist

<https://noti.st/quintessence>

# Thank you!



 QuintessenceAnx

Developer Advocate 🥑

@

PagerDuty

 <https://noti.st/quintessence>



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**FIN.**

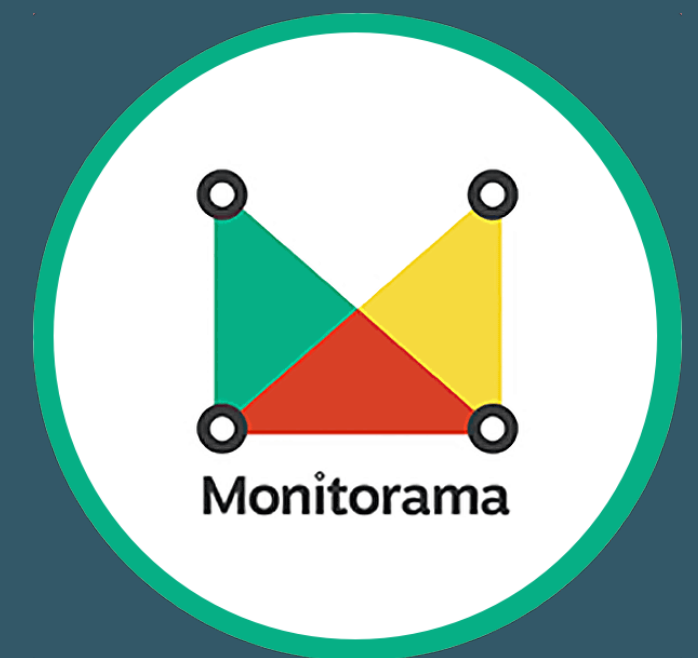
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# Re-Evaluate Redundancy

Know How to Add a Little  
Complexity to Stop a Vacuum

a.k.a. A bad day in SlackOps

(Sorry Slack.)

The screenshot shows a Slack status page for an outage. At the top, the Slack logo and the word "Status" are visible. Below that, the date "Wednesday June 27, 2018" is displayed. A red minus sign icon is followed by the word "Outage" and the title "Connectivity issues affecting all workspaces". A vertical timeline of updates follows, each starting with a green checkmark icon. The updates describe the progress of the investigation and the impact on users. On the right side of the page, there is a summary box with the following information:

Services affected
Connections

Status
Resolved

# Additional Reading

- "The Cost of Interrupted Work: More Speed and Stress" -- Gloria Mark, dept of Informatics @ UC Irvine  
<https://www.ics.uci.edu/~gmark/chi08-mark.pdf>
- "Are digital distractions harming labour productivity?" -- The Economist  
<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2017/12/07/are-digital-distractions-harming-labour-productivity>
- "Brief Interruptions Spawn Errors" -- Michigan State University  
<https://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2013/brief-interruptions-spawn-errors/>
- "Tenets of SRE" -- Stephen Thorne, Sr Google SRE  
<https://medium.com/@jerub/tenets-of-sre-8af6238ae8a8>