CODING FAST AND SLOW

Applying Kahneman's Insights to Improve Development Practices and Efficiency

PROF. DANIEL KAHNEMAN

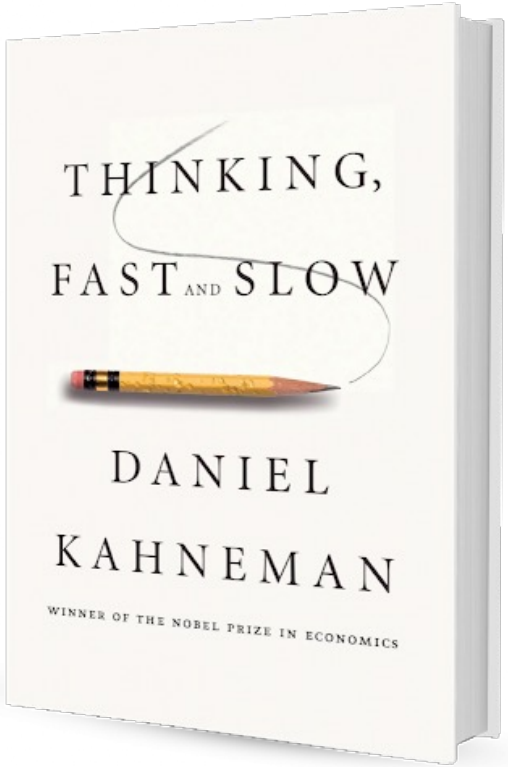
Mar 5, 1934 – Mar 27, 2024

2002 NOBEL PRIZE LAURATE IN ECONOMICS!

"FOR HAVING INTEGRATED INSIGHTS FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH INTO ECONOMIC SCIENCE, ESPECIALLY CONCERNING HUMAN JUDGMENT AND DECISION-MAKING UNDER UNCERTAINTY"

ECONOMICS?

- ECON101: People are rational; that's why markets work.
- – Nope, they aren't; here's 50 years of study.
- – Oh, wow, they really aren't. It probably has a profound effect on economics! Here's a Nobel Prize for ya!
- ECON101: People are rational; that's why markets work.


THINKING,
FAST AND SLOW
DANIEL
KAHNEMAN
WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

A BAT AND A BALL COST $1.10 IN TOTAL.

THE BAT COSTS $1 MORE THAN THE BALL.

HOW MUCH DOES THE BALL COST?

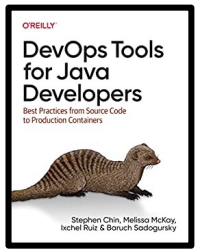
HOW MUCH DOES THE BALL COST?

0.10 + (1.00+0.10) = 1.20

0.05 + (1.00+0.05) = 1.10

Baruch Sadogursky - @jbaruch

- Head of DevRel at TuxCare (I am hiring!)
- Developer Productivity Nerd
- Development -> DevOps -> #DevProd



SHOWNOTES

- speaking.jbaru.ch
- Slides
- Video
- All the links!

Two Systems

System One	x Fast x Intuitive x Automatic x Emotional x Cheap and eager
System Two	x Slow x Analytical x Controlled x Logical x Expensive and lazy

Wait, let's think about that!
SYSTEM 2
I recognize this pattern!
SYSTEM 1
@JBARUCH
@GEECON
SPEAKING.JBARU.CH

```
class UniqueWords {
    public static void main(String[] args) throws IOException {
        if (args.length != 1) {
            throw new IllegalArgumentException("Invalid argument");
        }
        Set<String> words = new HashSet<>();
        for (String line : Files.readAllLines(Path.of(args[0]))) {
            // Ignore commented lines
            if (!line.startsWith("#") || !line.startsWith("//")) {
                Collections.addAll(words, line.split("\\W+"));
            }
        }
        System.out.println(”Count of unique words: " + words.size());
    }
}
```

RED

GREEN

@JBARUCH @GEECON SPEAKING.JBARU.CH

YELLOW

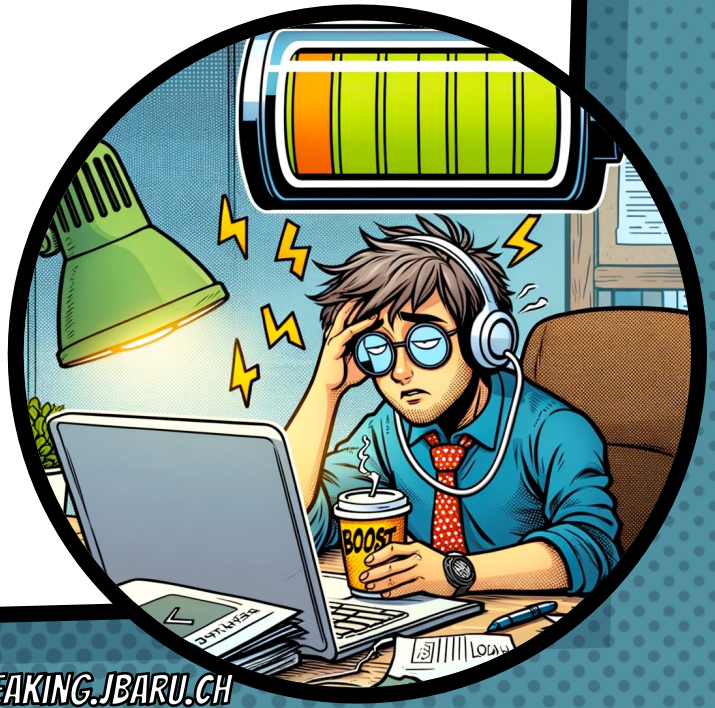
BROWN

@JBARUCH @GEECON SPEAKING.JBARU.CH

ORANGE

@JBARUCH @GEECON SPEAKING.JBARU.CH

YOU HAVE "MENTAL FUEL"



The Journal of Neuroscience, August 26, 2020 • 40(35):6801–6811 • 6801

Behavioral/Cognitive

Attention and Capacity Limits in Perception: A Cellular Metabolism Account

Merit Bruckmaier,[1] Ilias Tachtsidis,[2] Phong Phan,[2] and Nilli Lavie[1]
[1]Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, University College London, London WC1N 3AZ, United Kingdom, and [2]Department of Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering, University College London, London WC1E 7JE, United Kingdom

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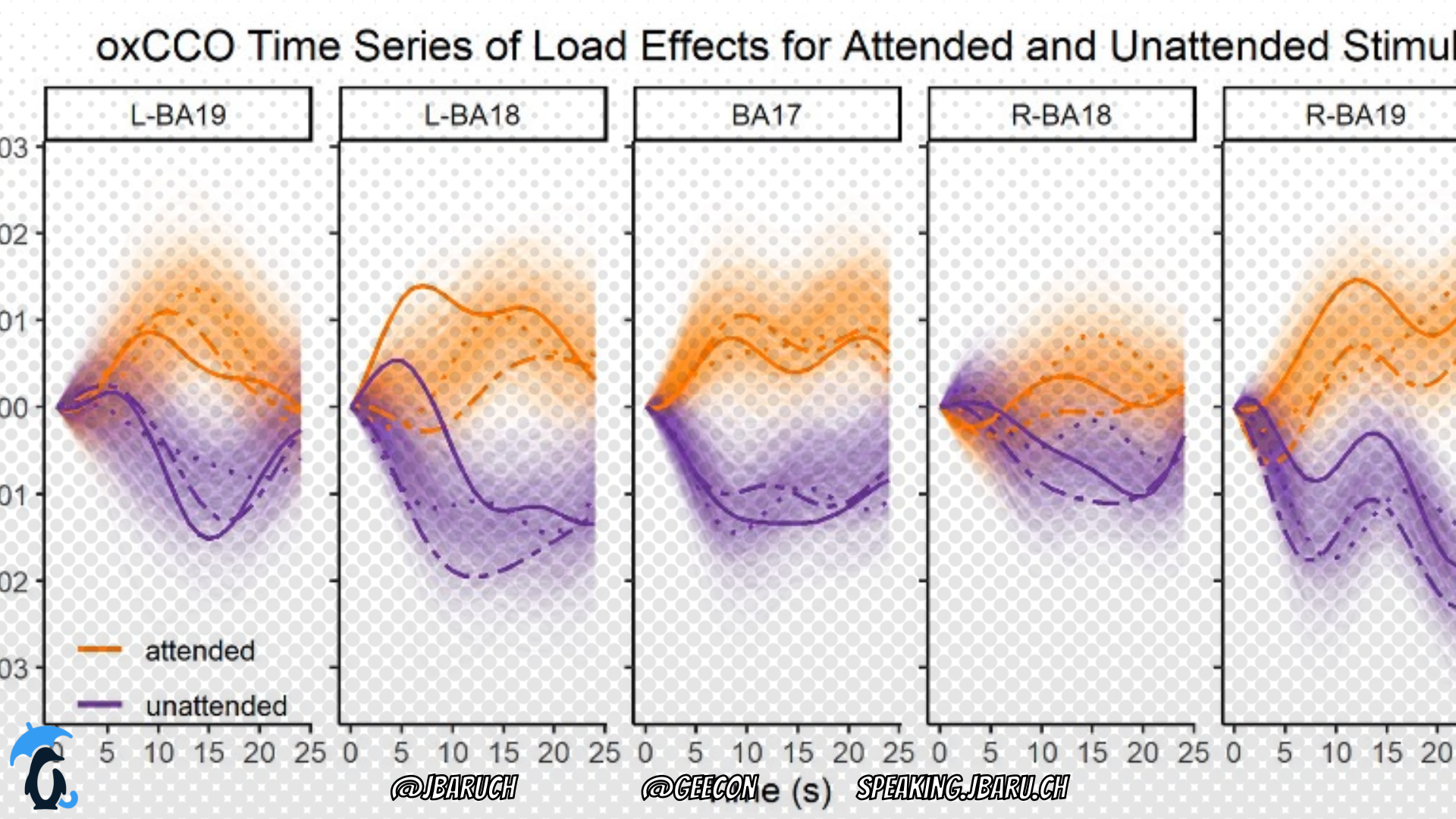

oxCCO Time Series of Load Effects for Attended and Unattended Stimul
L-BA19
L-BA18
BA17
R-BA18
R-BA19
attended
unattended
0 5 10 15 20 25
@JBARUCH
@GEECON
SPEAKING.JBARU.CH

Explain the paper "Attention and Capacity Limits in Perception: A Cellular Metabolism Account" to me Barney-style in one paragraph or less.

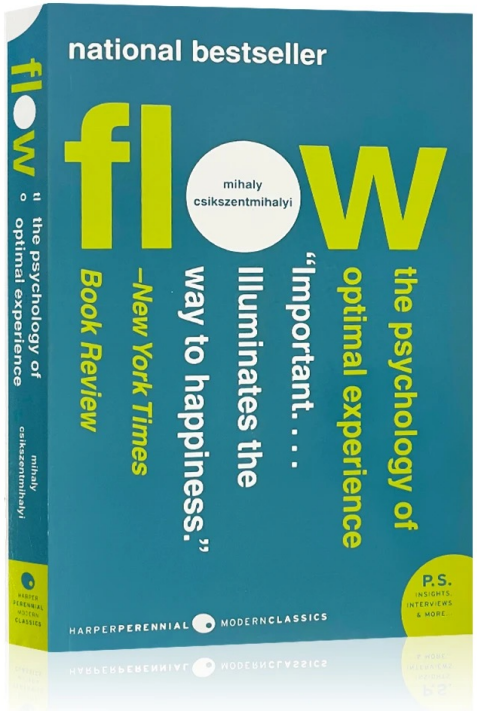
Attention and Capacity Limits in Perception: A Cellular Metabolism Account

- BNIRS and oxCCO
- Cellular Metabolism as Mental Fuel
- Finite Energy Supply
- High Load Mode vs Low Load Mode

WHICH SYSTEM DO WE USE FOR CODING?

SYSTEM ONE	x Fast x Intuitive x Automatic x Emotional x Cheap and Eager
SYSTEM TWO	x Slow x Analytical x Controlled x Logical x Expensive and Lazy

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING



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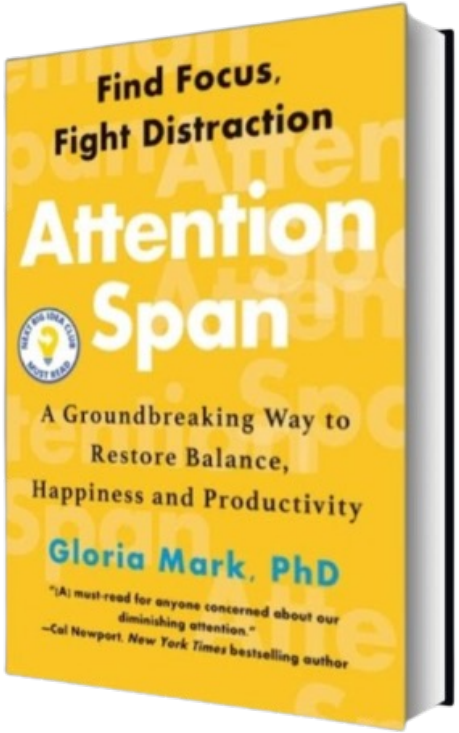
"STATE OF **EFFORTLESS** CONCENTRATION SO DEEP THAT PEOPLE LOSE THEIR SENSE OF TIME, THEMSELVES, AND THEIR PROBLEMS"

ATTENTION CONTROL IS EXPENSIVE


Find Focus,
Fight Distraction
Attention
Span
A Groundbreaking Way to
Restore Balance,
Happiness and Productivity
Gloria Mark, PhD
"[A] must-read for anyone concerned about our diminishing attention."
—Cal Newport, New York Times bestselling author

Is email stealing your focus?

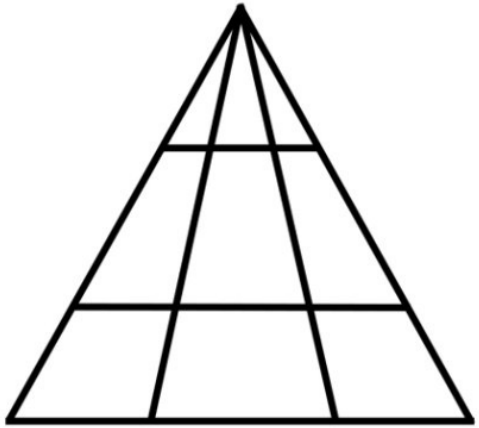
The average person checks their email 77 times a day.

Our attention span has dwindled to about 47 SECONDS on any screen.

It takes 25 minutes to return focus to a task after interruption.

```java
public class DiscountCalculator {
    public static void main(String[] args) {
        calculateDiscount(100, 15);
    }

    public static void calculateDiscount(double price, double discount) {
        double finalPrice = price - (price * discount / 100);
        System.out.println("The final price after a " + discount + "% discount
is: " + finalPrice);
    }
}
```



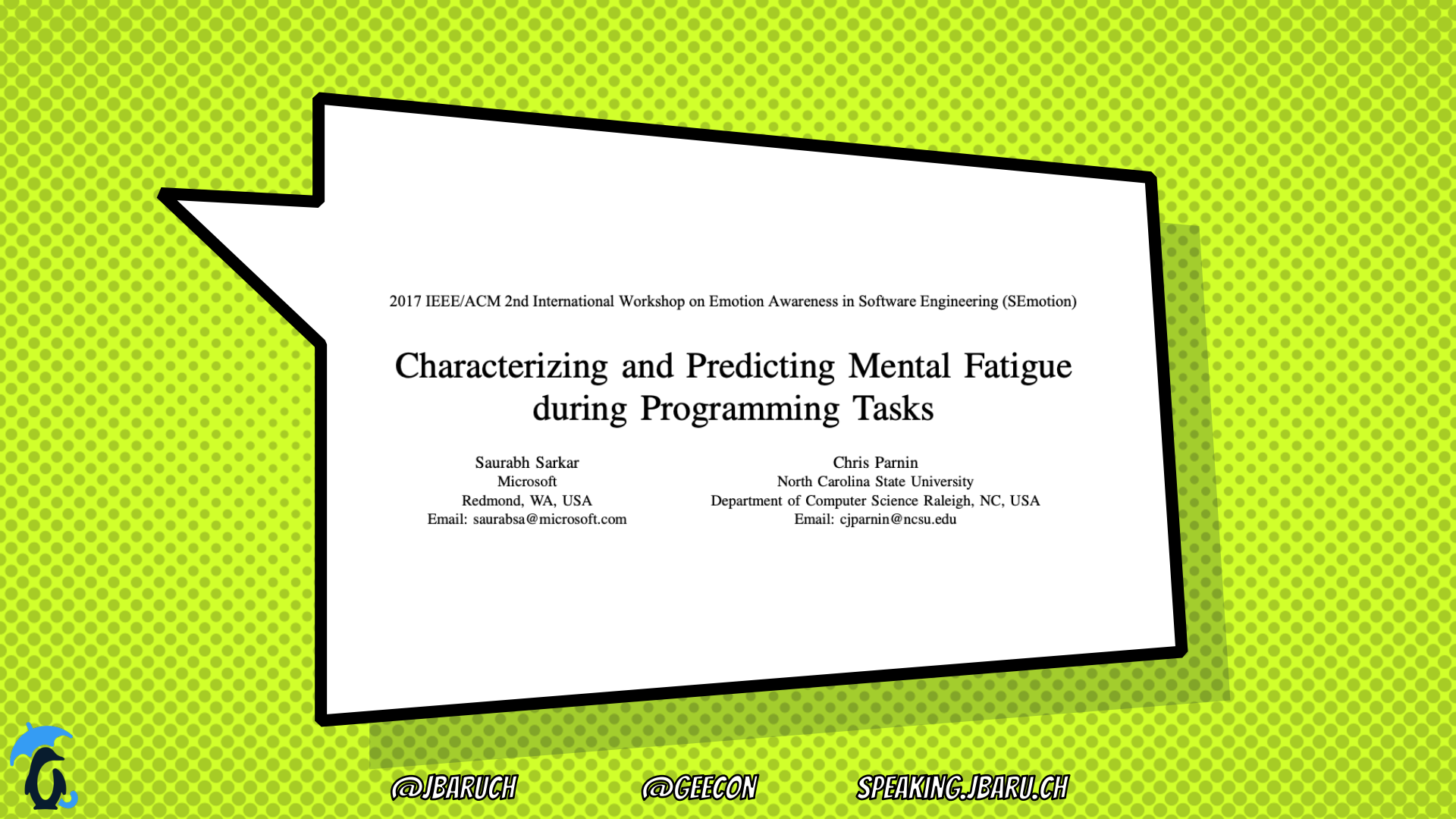
HOW MANY TRIANGLES?

```java
public class TaxCalculator {
    public static void main(String[] args) {
        calculateTax(100, 5);
    }

    public static void calculateTax(double amount, double taxRate) {
        double totalAmount = amount + (amount * taxRate);
        System.out.println("The total amount with tax: " + totalAmount);
    }
}
```

THE PROBLEM:

- × You deplete your fuel by context-switching
- × You're not in the flow because of context-switching
- × Loose-loose: you need more fuel needed, but you have less fuel



2017 IEEE/ACM 2nd International Workshop on Emotion Awareness in Software Engineering (SEmotion)

Characterizing and Predicting Mental Fatigue during Programming Tasks

Saurabh Sarkar
Microsoft
Redmond, WA, USA
Email: saurabsa@microsoft.com

Chris Parnin
North Carolina State University
Department of Computer Science Raleigh, NC, USA
Email: cjparnin@ncsu.edu

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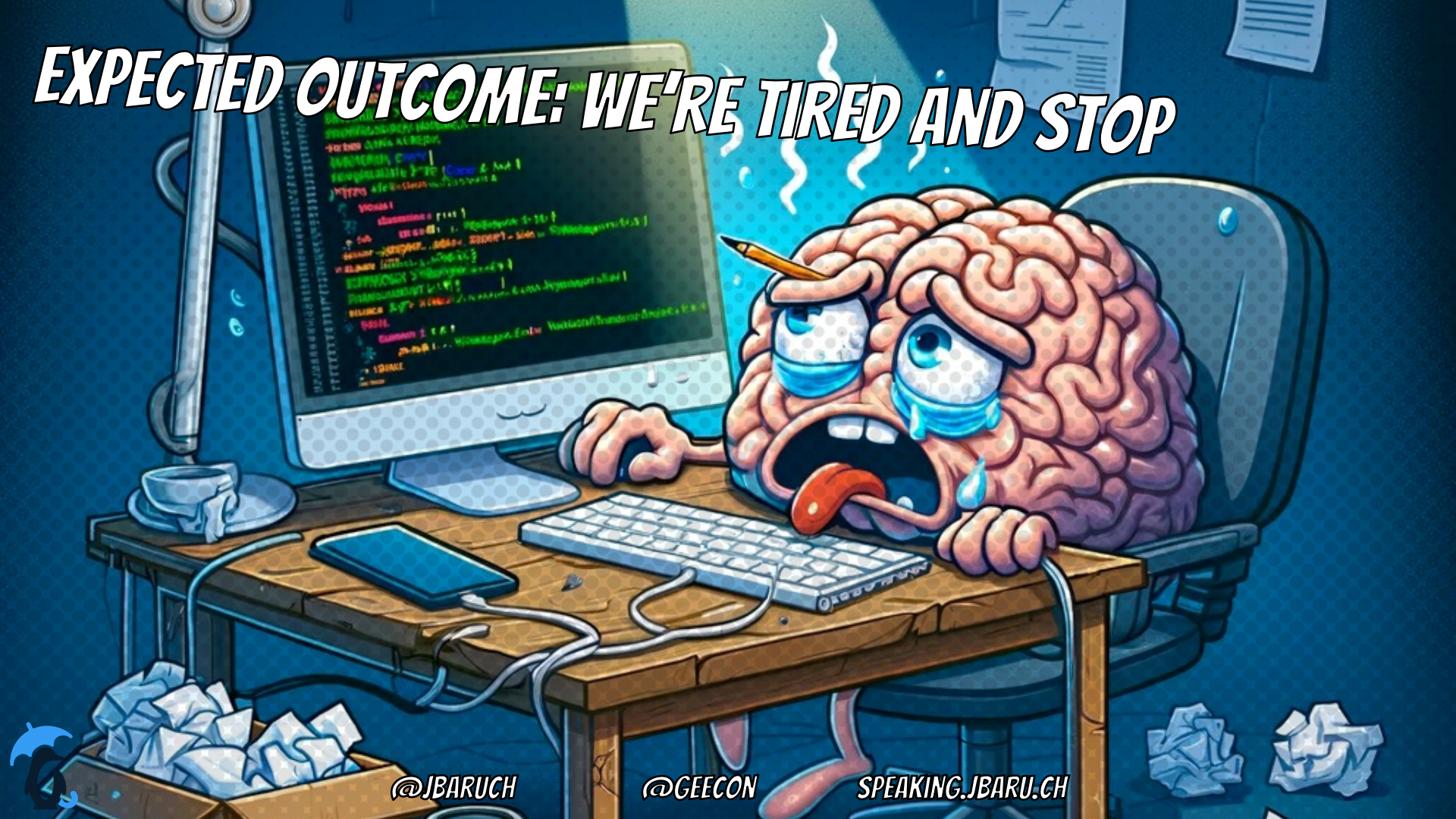
When we are tired, we produce worse code

- "Developers are cutting corners on quality when fatigued."

(duh)


EXPECTED OUTCOME: WE'RE TIRED AND STOP
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@GEECON
SPEAKING.JBARU.CH

But we don't know when to quit

- × Default parole decision: deny
- × Fewer paroles when judges are tired/hungry
- × Granting parole needs System 2 thinking
- × Judges unaware of switching to System 1

Real-life outcome: you run on System One

System One	x Fast x Intuitive x Automatic x Emotional x Cheap and Eager
System Two	x Slow x Analytical x Controlled x Logical x Expensive and Lazy

"OK code"

@JBARUCH
@GEECON
SPEAKING.JBARU.CH

Real-life outcome: you run on System One

System One	x Fast x Intuitive x Automatic x Emotional x Cheap and Eager
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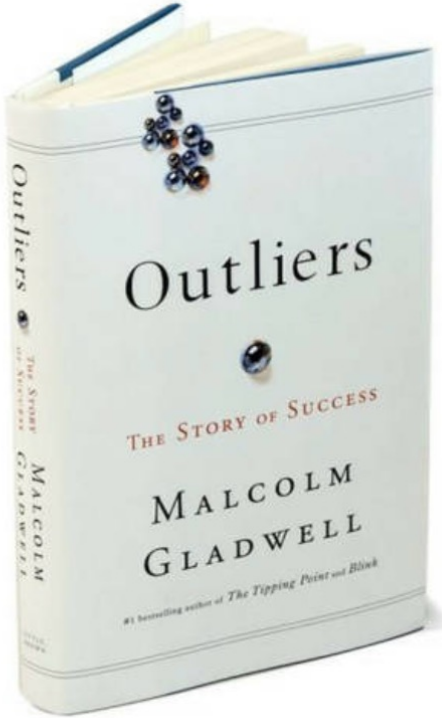
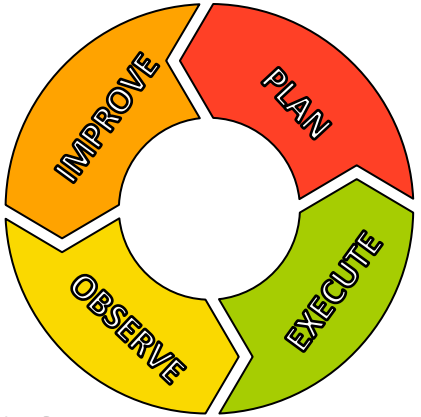
"EXECUTE SKILLED RESPONSES AND GENERATE SKILLED INTUITIONS AFTER ADEQUATE TRAINING"


Outliers
The Story of Success
Malcolm Gladwell
#1 bestselling author of The Tipping Point and Blink

10,000 hours of practice move some system 2 activities to system 1

- × Driving
- × Golf
- × Tennis
- × Music playing
- × Safety drills for fire fighters



Wait, let's think about that!
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I recognize this pattern!
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@JBARUCH
@GEECON
SPEAKING.JBARU.CH

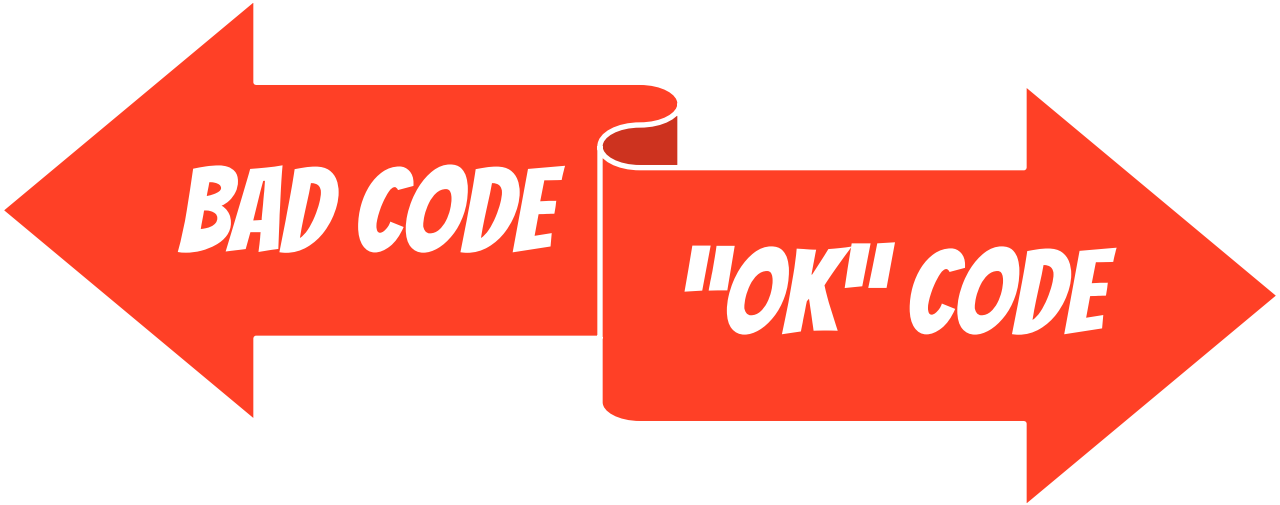
Real-life outcome: you run on System One

System One	x Fast x Intuitive x Automatic x Emotional x Cheap and Eager
System Two	x Slow x Analytical x Controlled x Logical x Expensive and Lazy

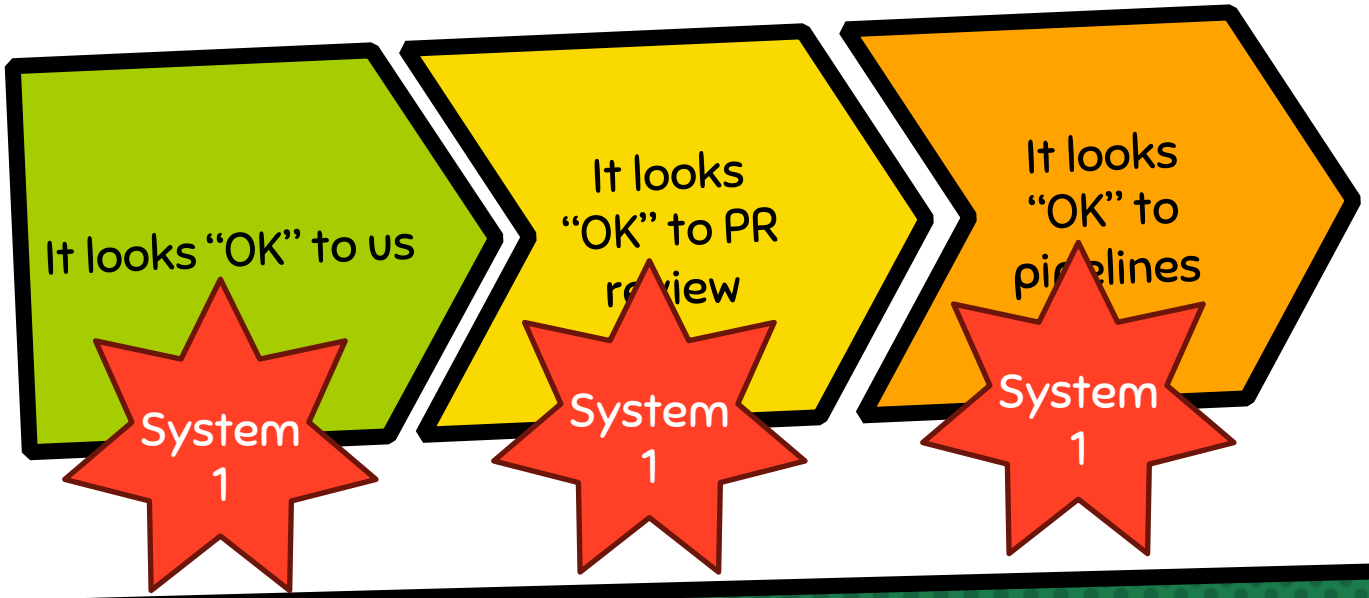
"OK code"

NOT GREAT, NOT TERRIBLE.

WHICH SUCKS LESS?



THE PROBLEM OF "OK CODE"



Next thing you know:

You have an "OK" product

INVEST IN
FUEL SAVING TECHNIQUES
The goal: Have enough mental fuel to last all day
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Time Management Strategies

- Time Blocking
- Pomodoro Technique

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Time Management Strategies

- Time Blocking
- Pomodoro Technique
- Task Batching

reclaimai

Defend focus time

Find the best time for productive heads-down work in your calendar (while keeping your schedule flexible for changes) — so you can get more done as a team every week.

Tasks Habits Planner

- × Block time
- × Batch tasks
- × Allow access

Mindfulness and Cognitive Practices

- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Reflective Practices
- Single-tasking

Workspace and Interruption Management

- Workspace Organization
- Notification Management
- Prioritization Techniques

Physical and Mental Well-Being

- Physical Exercise
- Breaks and Downtime

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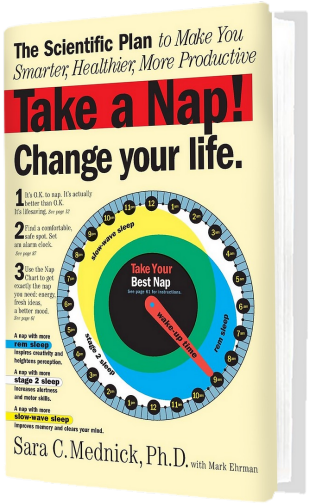
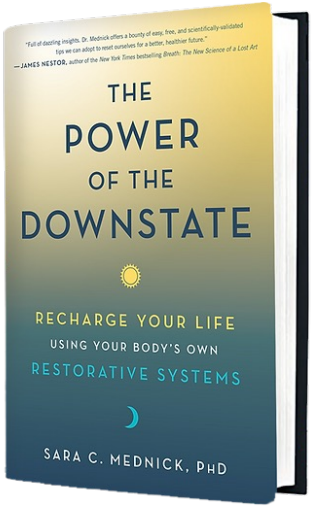
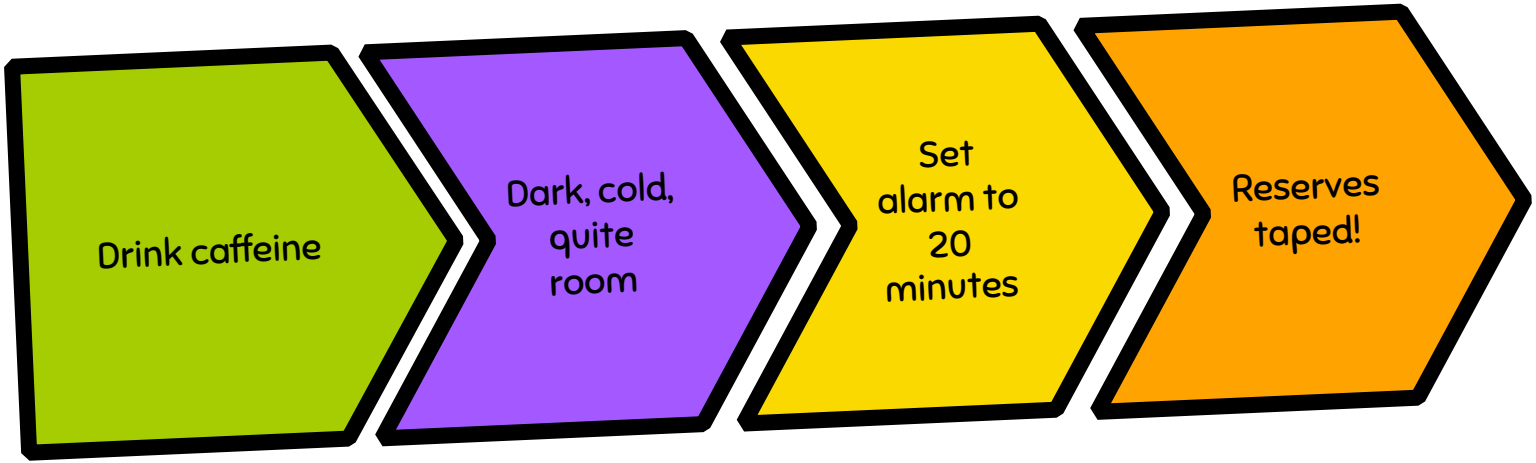

The Scientific Plan to Make You Smarter, Healthier, More Productive
Take a Nap!
Change your life.
Take Your Best Nap
Sara C. Mednick, Ph.D. with Mark Ehrman


THE POWER OF THE DOWNSTATE
RECHARGE YOUR LIFE
USING YOUR BODY'S OWN
RESTORATIVE SYSTEMS
SARA C. MEDNICK, PHD

CAFFEINE NAP



CODING PRACTICES

- Automate everything
- Shorten feedback loops
- Delegate to tools!

USE AI SMARTLY!

RIGHT TOOL - RIGHT JOB

Not all tools are created equal.

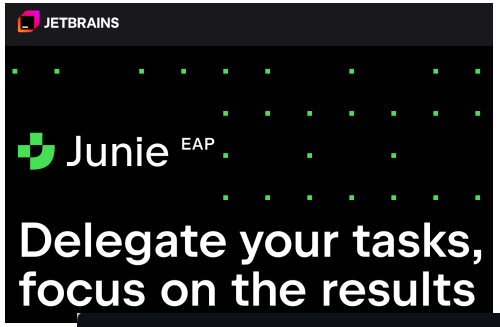
GO DEEP, NOT WIDE

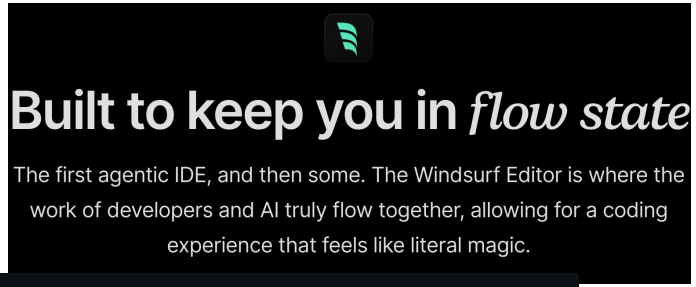
ATM specialized beats generalized

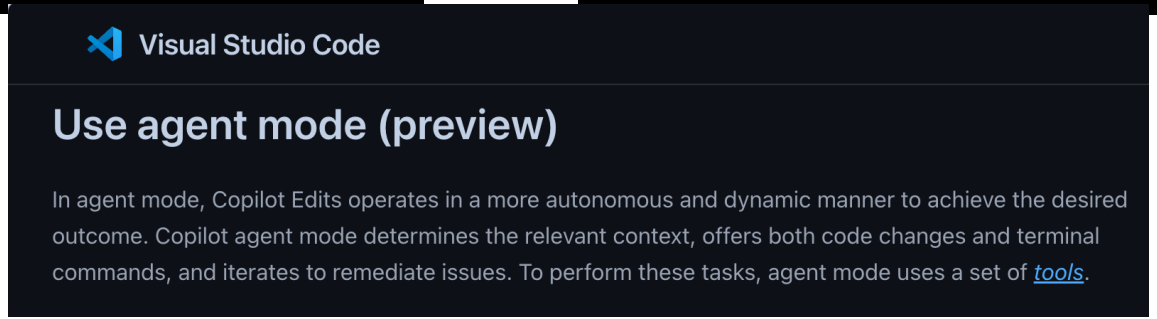
LOCAL AI = CONTROL

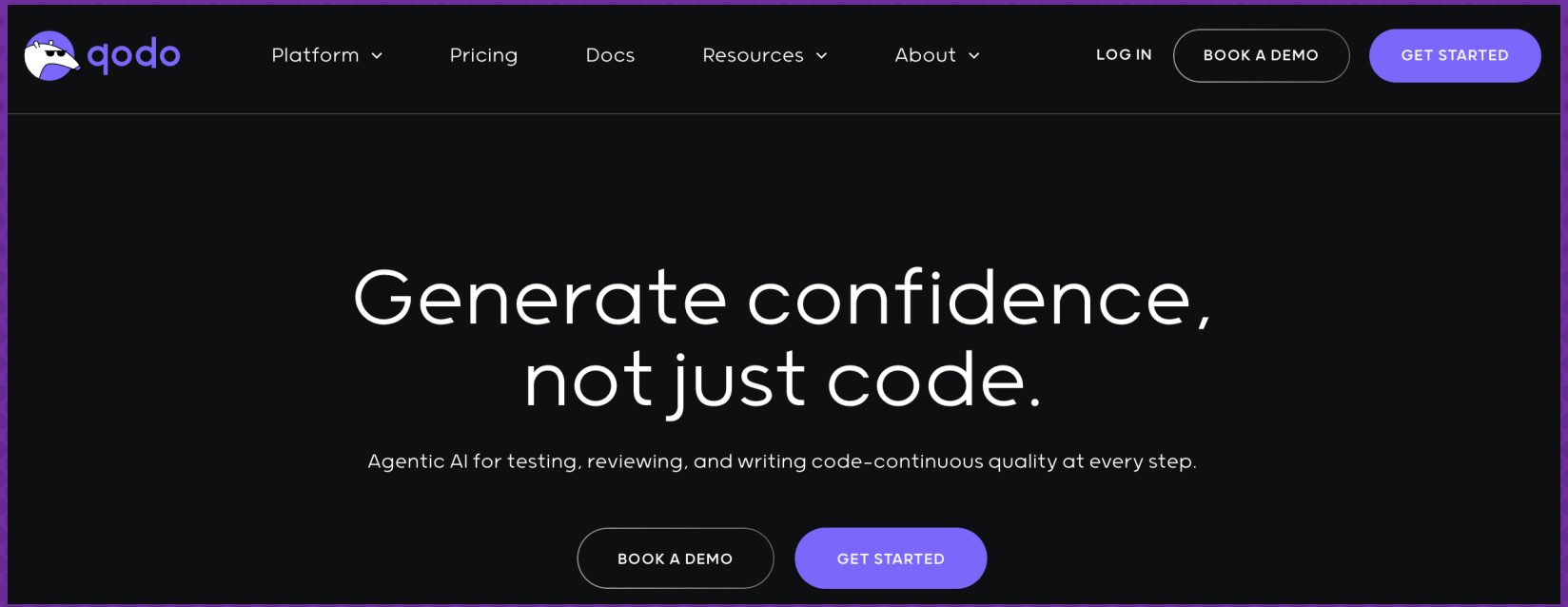
Better control and privacy.

AGENTIC AI IS RAD IF IT DOES THE RIGHT THING





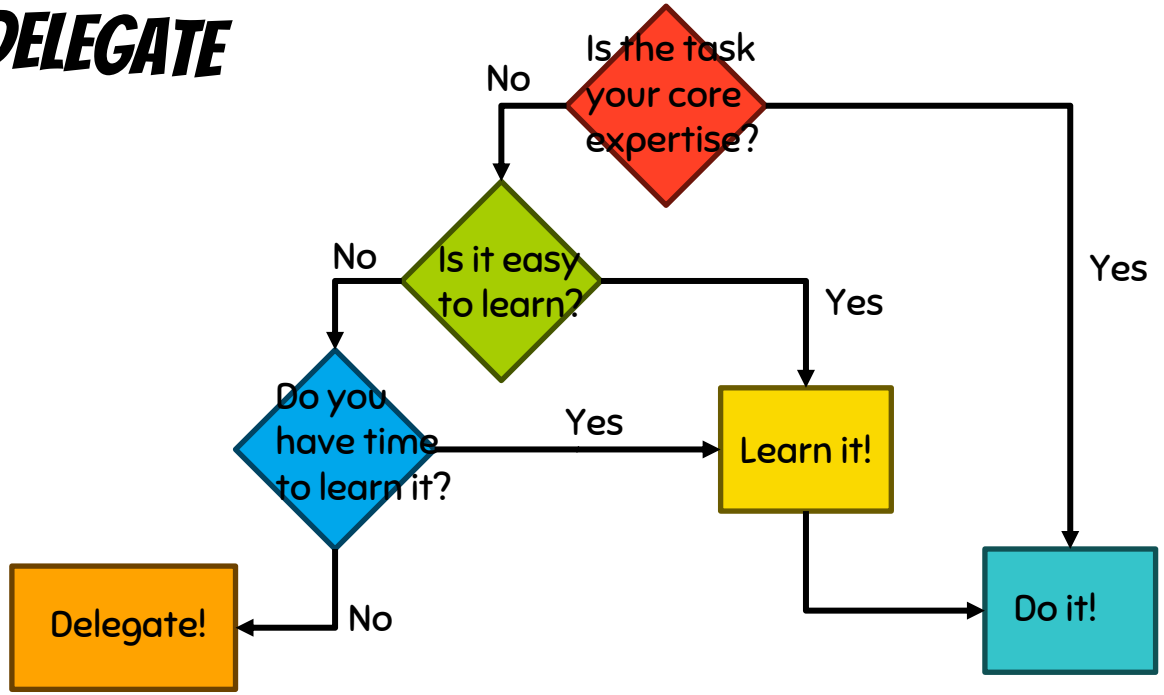


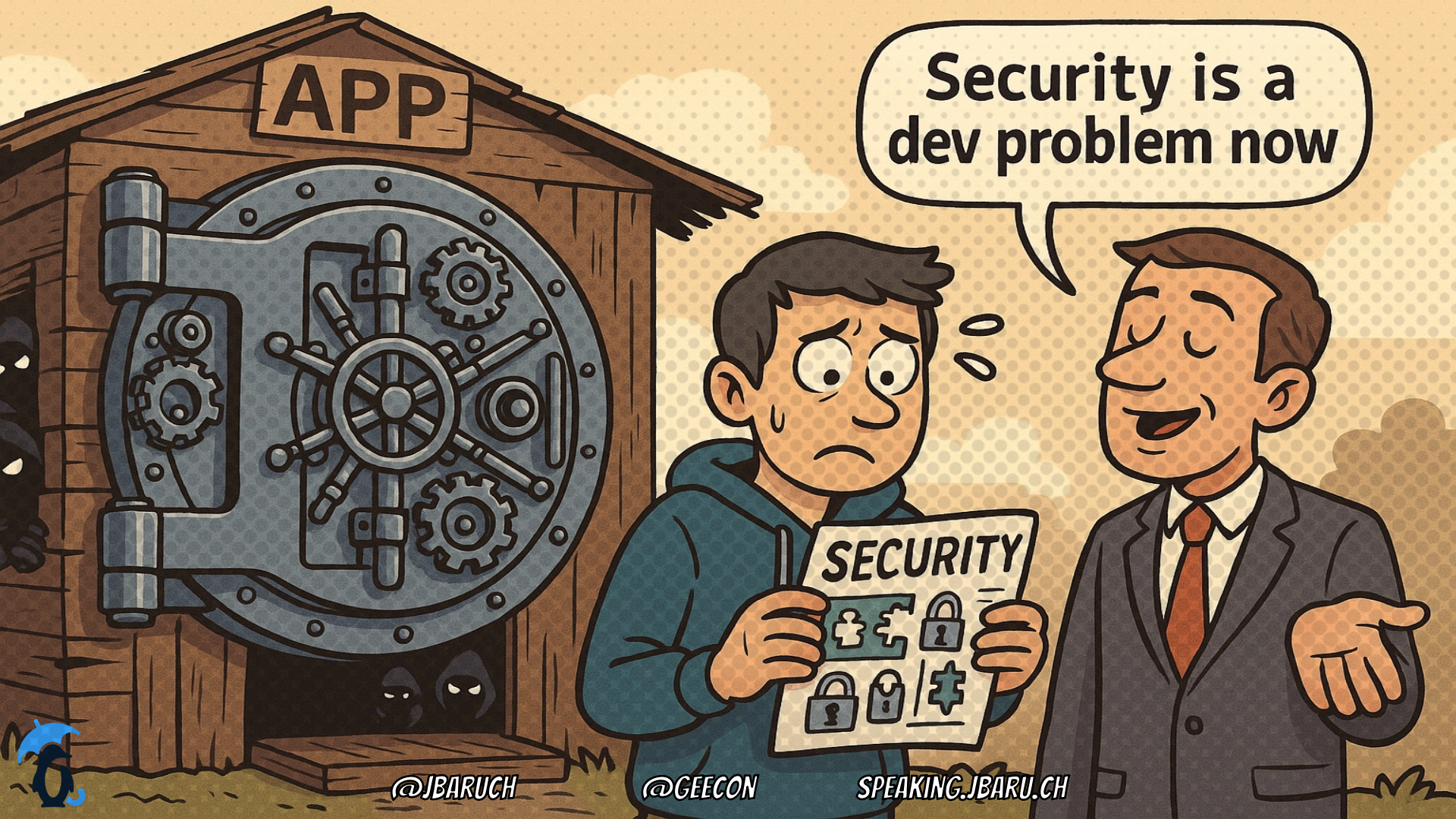

qodo
Platform
Pricing
Docs
Resources
About
LOG IN
BOOK A DEMO
GET STARTED
Generate confidence,
not just code.
Agentic AI for testing, reviewing, and writing code-continuous quality at every step.
BOOK A DEMO
GET STARTED

CODING PRACTICES

- Automate everything
- Shorten feedback loops
- Delegate to tools!
- Delegate to pros!

When to delegate




APP
Security is a dev problem now
SECURITY
@JBARUCH
@GEECON
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TuxCare

SecureChain for Java
Gain access to a single trusted repository of vetted Java packages and libraries to keep your applications secure

SAVE MENTAL FUEL!

- Time management
- Workspace management
- Mental wellbeing
- Engineer fewer interruptions
- Delegate when needed

THANKS!

Q&A and ~~Twitter~~ X/Bsky/Mastodon/LinkedIn ads:

- x @jbaruch
- x @Geecon
- x speaking.jbaru.ch