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# SENSORY FRIENDLY MONITORING

Keeping the noise down

 QuintessenceAnx



**logz.io**

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# When we try to know everything...

The collage features several overlapping notification windows:

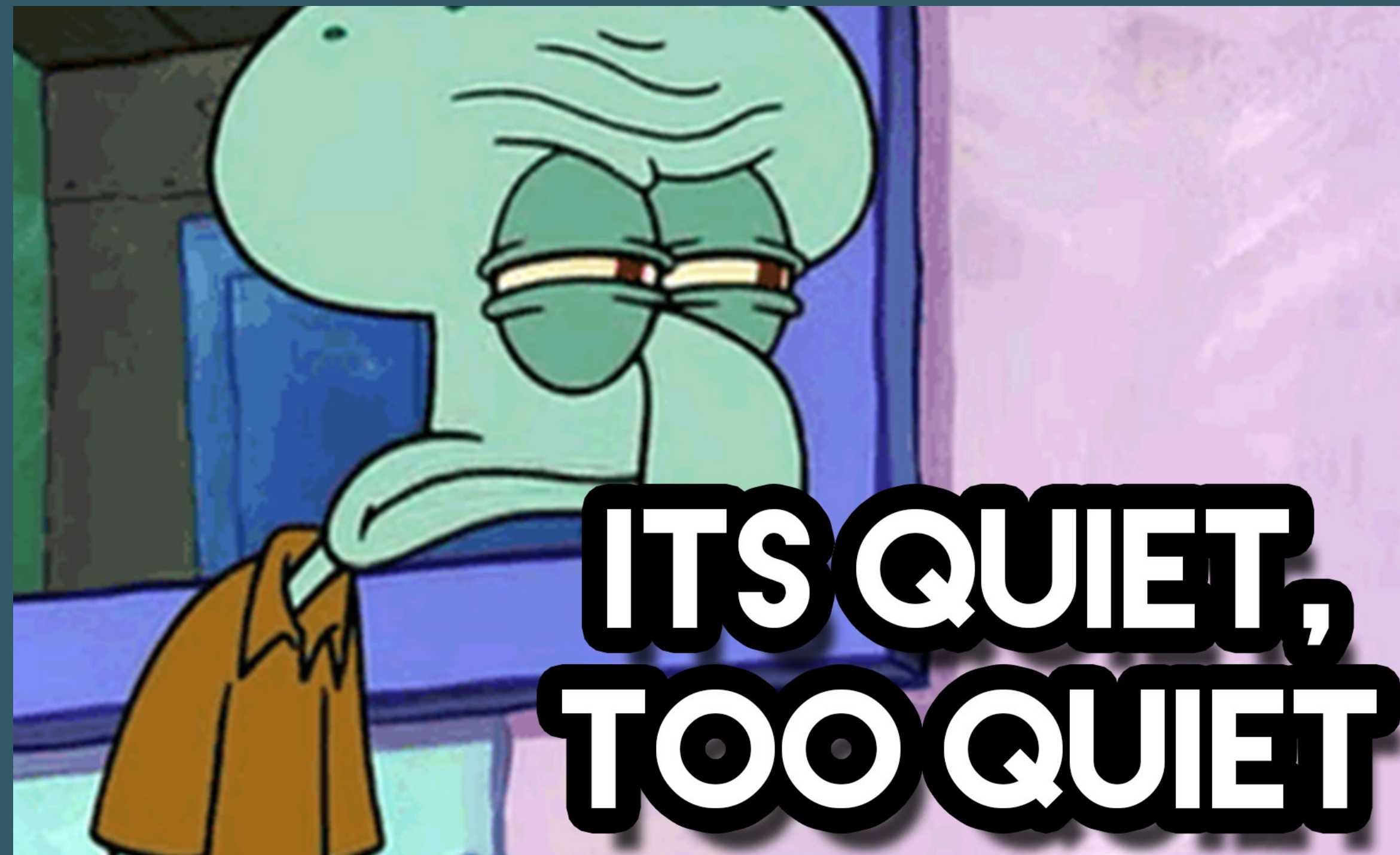
- Slack #gcp channel:** A series of bot messages reporting lognames and bucket statuses. A user named 'dror' has also joined the channel.
- JIRA Cloud:** A notification that 'Helen transitioned a Story from To Do to Done' with a link to 'TIS-18: Update the documentation on the launch sequence'.
- Confluence:** A notification that a page titled 'Project Milestone Overview' was created in the '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' and other users.
- System Status:** A 'MISSION: DEMO ACCOUNT' section with a 'Multitenancy Demo' button. Below it, a 'Partial System Outage' banner is visible. At the bottom, a status table shows 'Management Portal' as 'Operational' and 'API' as 'Major Outage'.
- Central Cartoon:** A cartoon of a woman with a distressed expression, sweating profusely, with a speech bubble that reads 'ACK! ACK!!! ACK! AAACK!'.

# 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...





 Updates Available Do you want to install the updates now or try tonight?	Install
	Later

**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



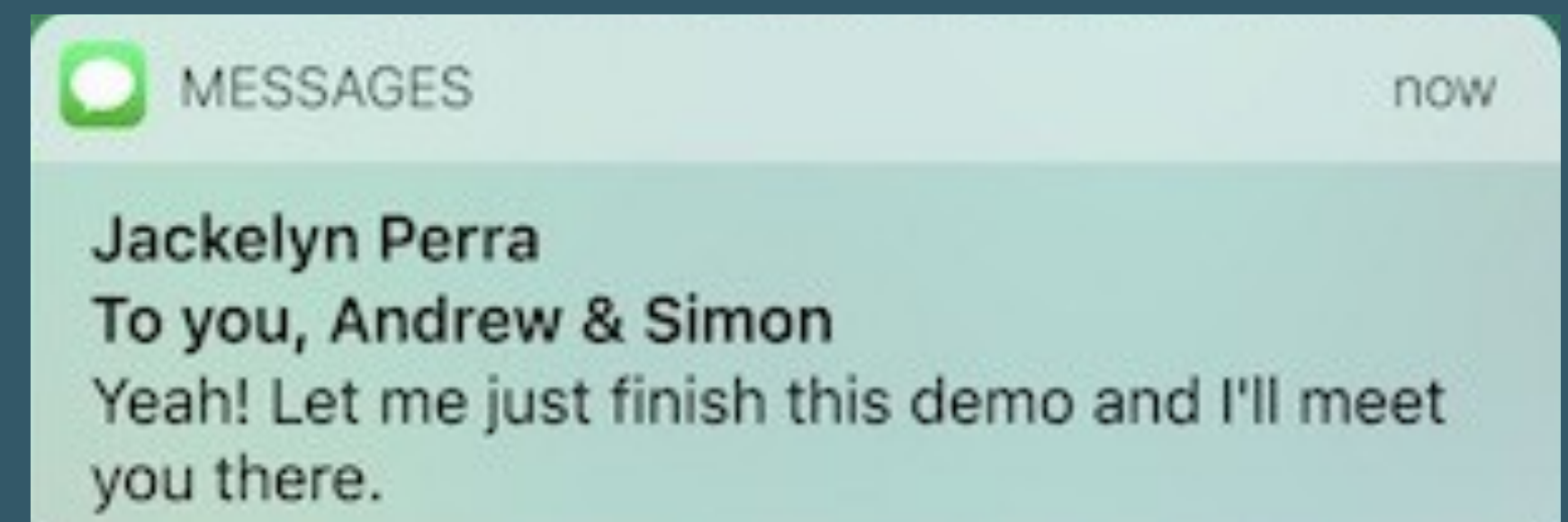
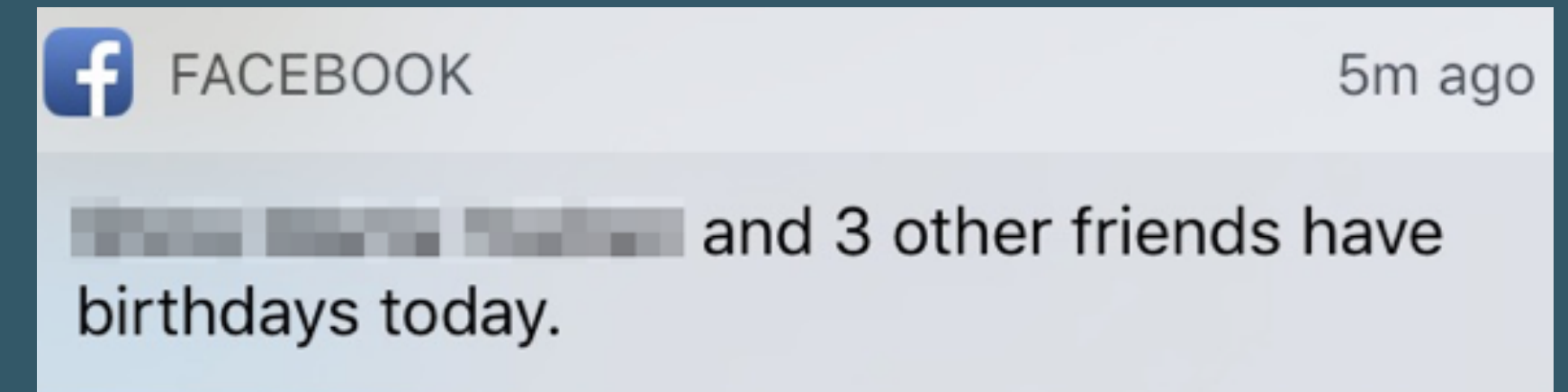
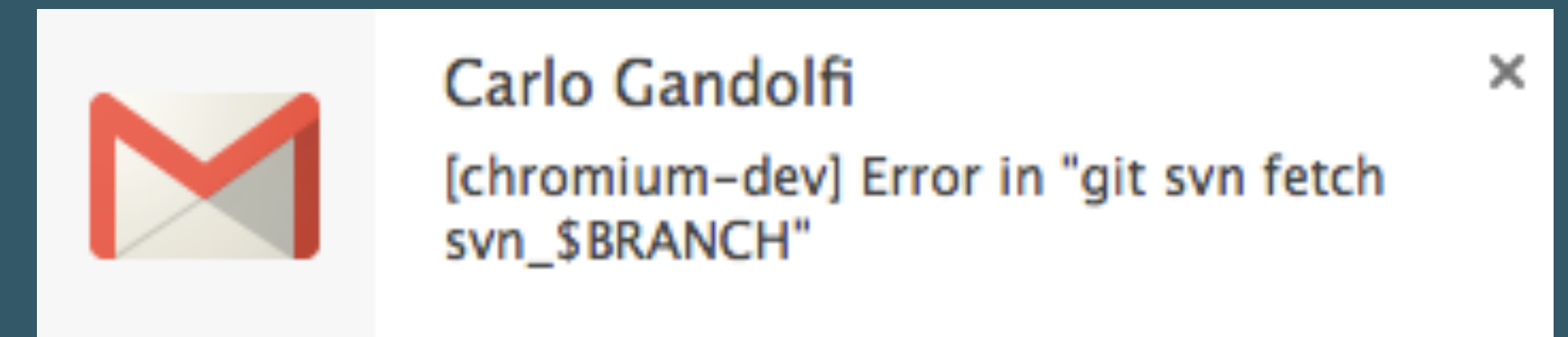


**Wait, I need to be aware of  
myself?**

**Absolutely.**

# How often do you...

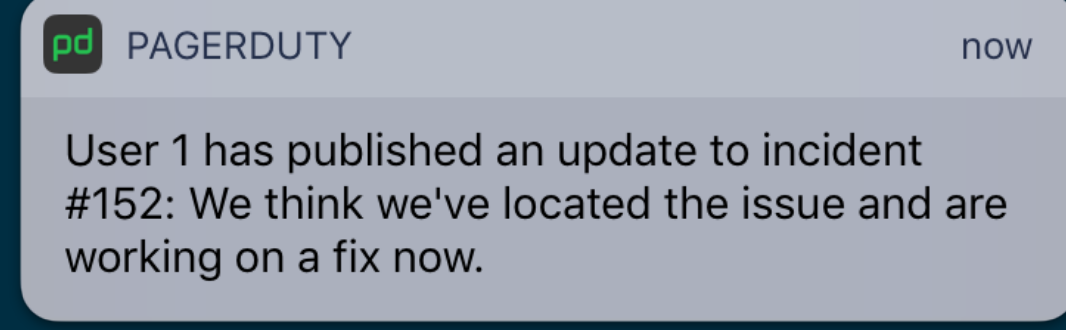
- ...check your email?
- ...check your social media?
- ...check your text messages?
- ...check your Apple / Google messages?
- ... the list goes on.



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?



# 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 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. The main heading is "Outage" with a red minus sign icon, followed by "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 resolution of the connectivity issues. On the right side, there is a summary box with the following information:

Services affected
Connections

Status
Resolved



# Resilient noise builds trust

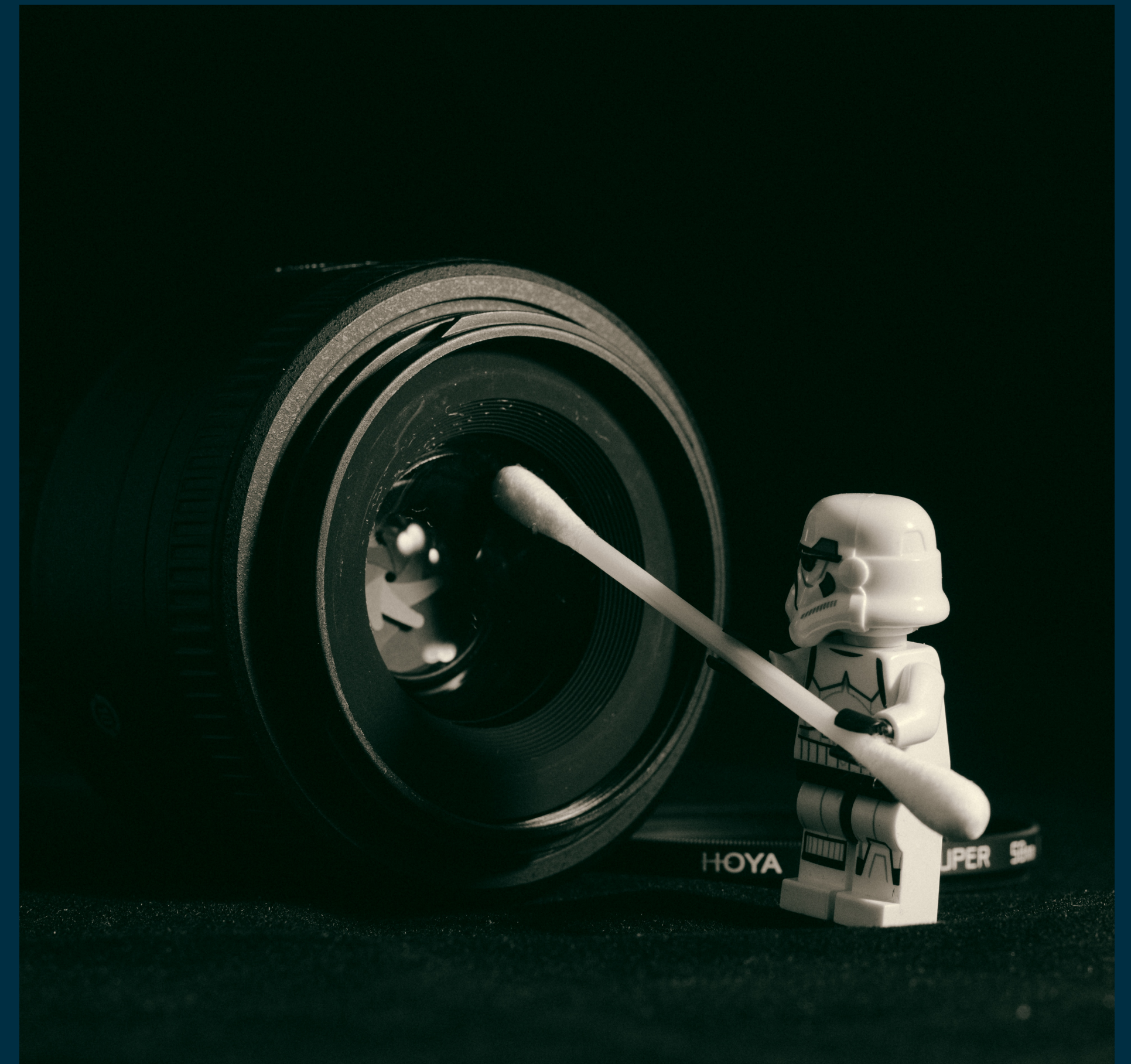
- How reliable are your tools and services?
- How much notification duplication is needed?
- Do you have the ability to switch alert endpoints in the event of a service outage?
- Do you regularly evaluate the reliability of your services (external and internal)?



# 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?





# 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>



# Slides Available on Notist

<https://noti.st/quintessence>

# Thank you!

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 QuintessenceAnx

US Developer Advocate 🥑



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