

Escape from the data center

Lessons from a recovering manager

VIDEO:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hOM4p7chJY

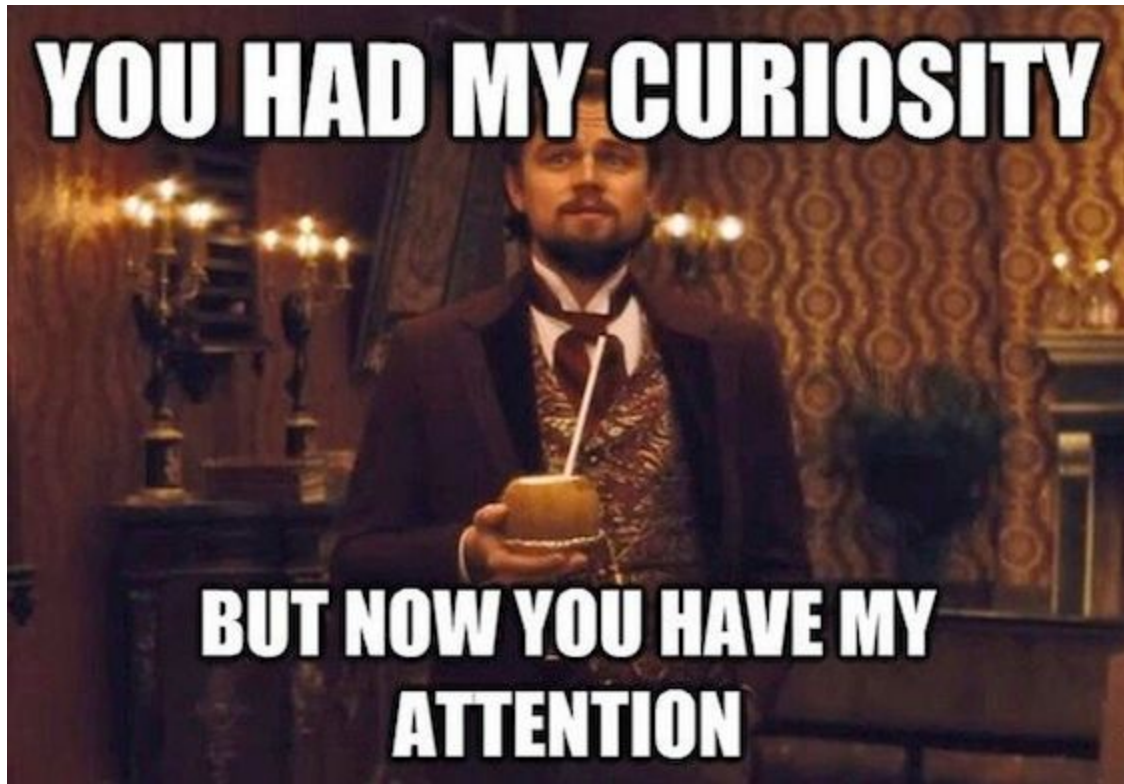
<http://tinyurl.com/nlnog2015>

The issue

In short, management thinks you are one or probably more of the following:

- Unreliable
- A lying bastard
- Rude
- Smelly
- Dangerous

YOU HAD MY CURIOSITY



**BUT NOW YOU HAVE MY
ATTENTION**

I HIRED A CONSULTANT
TO HELP US EVOLVE OUR
PRODUCTS TO CLOUD
COMPUTING.



Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com

BLAH BLAH CLOUD.
BLAH BLAH CLOUD.
BLAH BLAH CLOUD.
BLAH BLAH CLOUD.

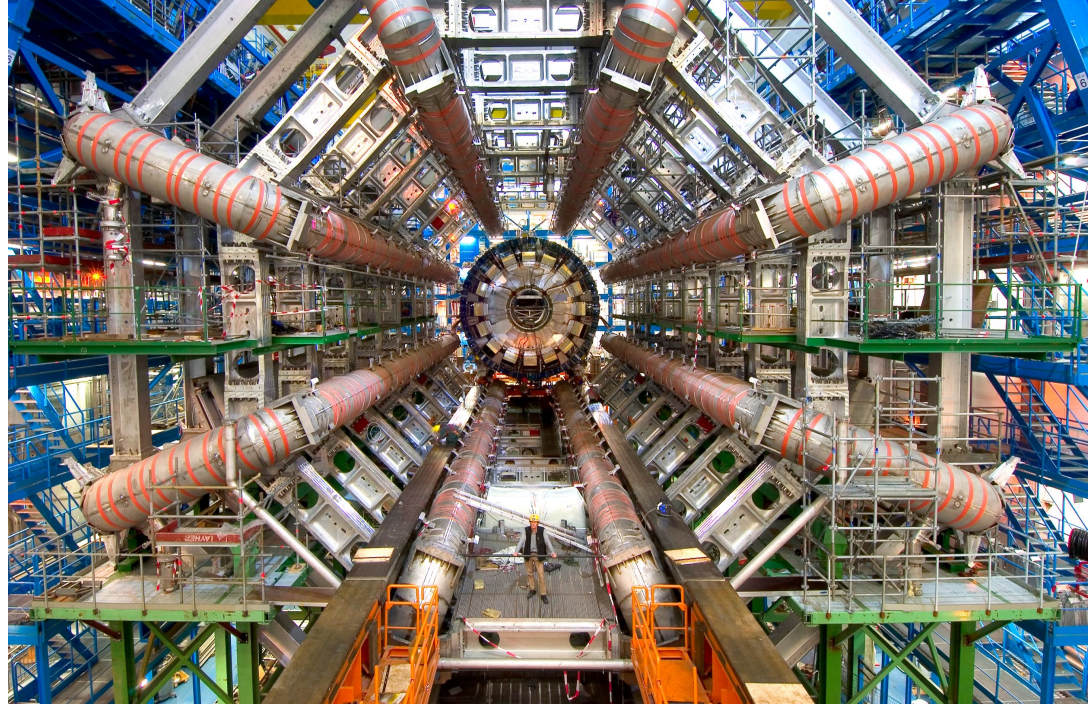


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IT'S AS IF YOU'RE A
TECHNOLOGIST AND
A PHILOSOPHER ALL
IN ONE!



What they did in school / What you did





Their evening / Your evening



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FOX IT
FOR A MORE SECURE SOCIETY

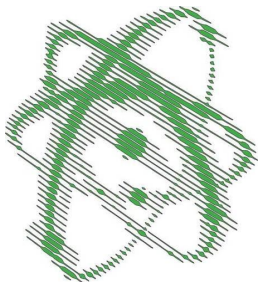


Rijksoverheid

POWERDNS 

POWERDNS 

POWER



Fox Replay BV
has been acquired
by NetScout



www.netscout.com

FoxReplayAnalyst
LIVE



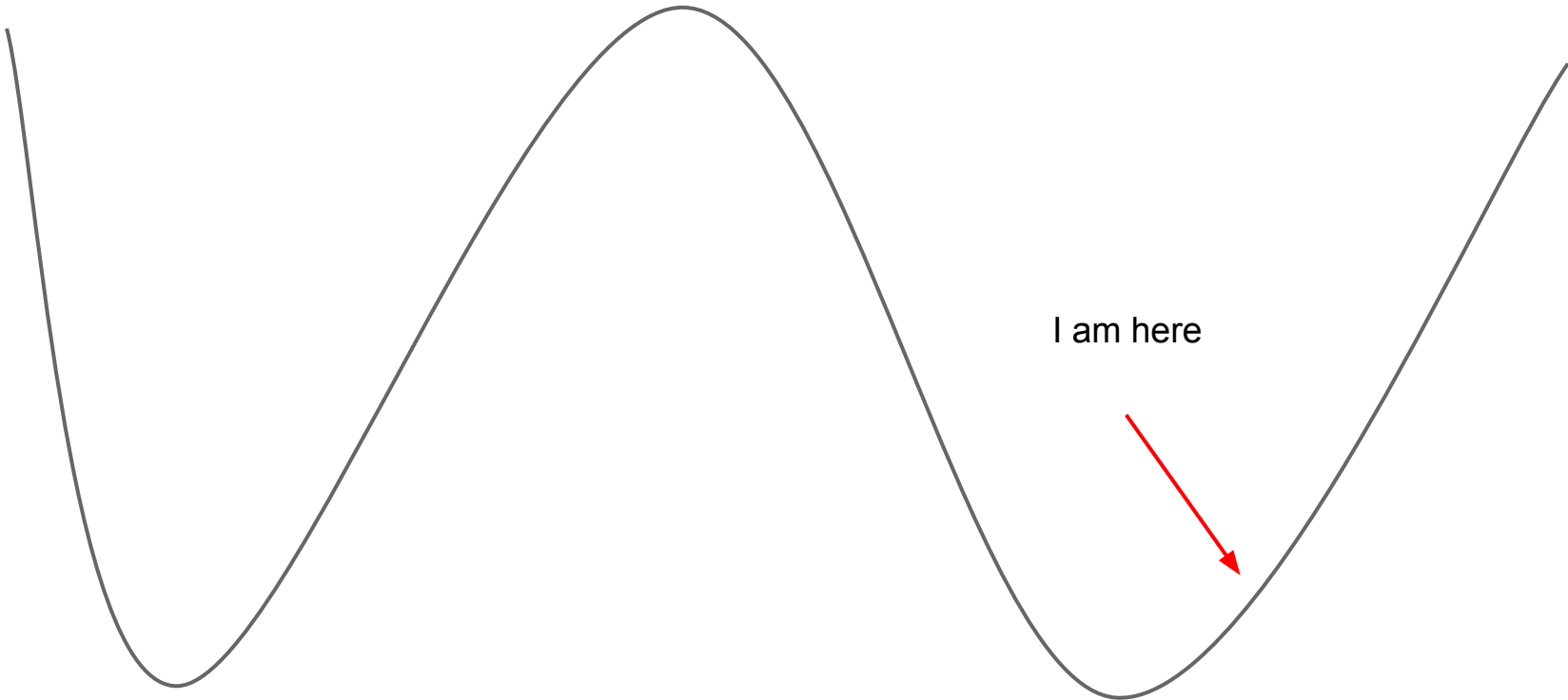


Actual code

Management,
Sales,
Marketing

Time

I am here



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Symptoms

- My management buys million dollar stuff I could build as a shell script
- Management team trusts vendor advertising more than they trust me
- There is a push to outsource my department to people 10000km away???
- Marketing/sales keeps trying to sell impossible things, why don't they ask me?

Two possible diagnoses

1. My management is completely stupid and consists of idiots
2. Perhaps we as geeks did something wrong

I'm pretty sure it is more **2** than **1**.

Mistakes we make

- We need direct communications. We are not good with hints
 - “don’t give me hints, give me requirements!”
- Management layer is very good at **reading** hints. **They can see from your face that you think they are stupid.**
- They do communicate with hints, which we do not pick up!

Typical conversation

Management: “I discussed it with the techies and implied we were very unhappy with the user experience”

Techies: “Dunno, he had a long story about someone that said he saw a blank page. I heard nothing we could work on”

THE VERY WORST MISTAKE WE MAKE

- If you've ever said this, or know someone who said this: beat yourself up or your coworker
 - Call me if you need help
- Manager: long string of inane requirements
- Techie: **well you should not be wanting this anyhow**
 - The “Debian” or OpenBSD approach

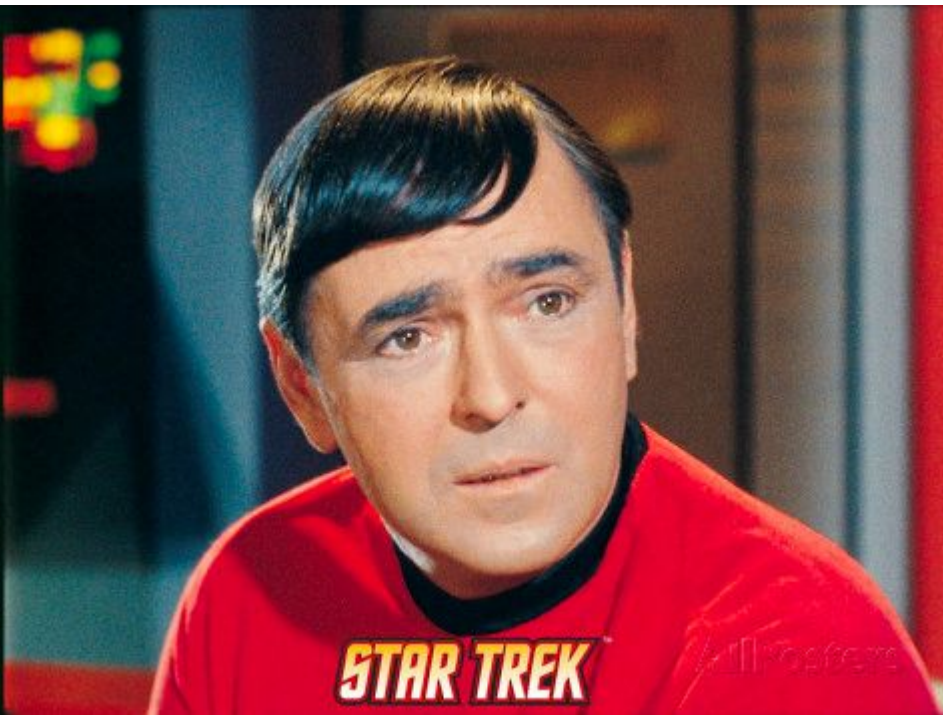


Another big mistake: undesirable versus “impossible”

- “They want us to use NAT on IPv4 instead of migrating to IPv6”
- “\$@#\$@#%\$”
- “Ok, just tell them that it is impossible. Say the state is too much to keep track of”
- ...
- Manager walks in with CGNAT sales guy & PoC you have to do

Everyone has sent this email. Don't.

- Project is going from bad to worse, bad decision after bad decision is taken
- **I CANNAE TAKE IT NO MORE**
- Send out 5 page email listing every mistake that has been made on the project
 - Including dates at which you sent email predicting for each of them what would break
- **What did you expect? Thanks?!**
- Pro-tip: write the email, don't send it



Geordi La Forge: Yeah, well, I told the Captain I'd have this analysis done in an hour.

Scotty: How long will it really take?

Geordi La Forge: An hour!

Scotty: Oh, you didn't tell him how long it would **really** take, did ya?

Geordi La Forge: Well, of course I did.

Scotty: Oh, laddie. You've got a lot to learn if you want people to think of you as a miracle worker!"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xRqXYsksFg>

Time/project management

- The less a company understands what you are doing, the more tightly they want to manage it, including timing
- “How many hours for multithreading the server?”
 - <http://bert-hubert.blogspot.nl/2014/02/how-many-hours-for-multithreading.html>
- In short - be smart about this. Do not pad or sandbag. Not wanting != will take months.

We actually do not communicate directly

- Many examples:
 - Guy X is an asshat and wrecks the team
 - Everyone assumes management knows
 - **They don't**
- Management decides to assign a single /128 to each subscriber
 - Because we never told them how IPv6 works, assumed they already knew or would not understand anyhow (?!)

Judging books by their covers

- Or... projects by their URL.
- <http://www.somebank.com/login.php3>
 - JESUS NO PLEASE NO
- <http://www.sourceforge.com/downloads/security-firewall.zip>
 - GO AWAY NOT CLICKING ON THAT. EVER.
- .. does big presentation full of spelling errors, unreadable slides, t-shirt with holes

Big & growing gap

- This situation is bad and getting worse
- Outsourcing, offshoring & moving to the cloud means managers can be less and less technical.
- And as we geeks get older, we frequently become even more hardcore in our beliefs
- **This can only end badly.**

So.. all our fault?

- No. Management frequently actually is not that smart or at least highly undereducated
- But since they are with more and get valued better, **it is up to us to change the situation**
- Be trustworthy partner, start educating people, be transparent about 'do not want' versus 'will take long time'
- Give suits some credit and they might return it!

Further reading

- <http://bert-hubert.blogspot.nl/2014/04/seen-t-hat-sketch-expert-well-i-blame.html>
- <http://bert-hubert.blogspot.nl/2014/02/how-many-hours-for-multithreading.html>
- <http://tinyurl.com/nlnog2015>
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