

How *not* to approach a Client Requirements Gathering Interview...

Mark O'Reilly, March 2015

- Read through each scenario below – Questions from the interviewer, Answers from the client.
- In the third column indicate what the interviewer might have done wrong...

#	Interview Transcript	What did the interviewer do wrong?
1	<p>Q: "What is it that you do in your business?"</p> <p>A: "We contract to various government and private groups to mark out and paint the lines in car parks."</p> <p>Q: "And how do you see us helping you?"</p> <p>A: "We need a piece of software to graphically draw car parks to scale and have the software calculate and draw the optimum configuration for the car park lines."</p> <p>Q: "Do you want the software to store client details?"</p> <p>A: "No. We need it to calculate and draw the car park lines."</p> <p>Q: "Do you want the software to produce invoices?"</p> <p>A: "No. We need it to calculate and draw the car park lines."</p> <p>Q: "Do you want the software to record stock on hand?"</p> <p>A: "No... Get out. Out! Out!"</p>	
2	<p>Q: "I / We have a few questions we'd like to ask."</p> <p><i>Interviewer drops out a wad of paper presumably containing a thousand questions.</i></p> <p>A: "No... Get out. Out! Out!"</p>	
3	<p><i>Interviewer comes in looking very scruffy and unkempt. He does not make eye contact with the client, throws himself into a chair and thumps his feet up on the client's table.</i></p> <p>Q: "Hey man, how are ya?"</p> <p>A: "Get out. Out! Out!"</p>	

4	<p>Q: "We've been promoting i7, 16gig RAM, 2 Terra HDD, 1600 by 900 pixel resolution, gigabyte graphics card, Blaster sound card, 3 USB 2.0 ports, 3 USB 3.0 ports, serial port, rewritable Blu-ray, 2 SD mini card slots..."</p> <p>Q: "That work for you?"</p> <p>A: "No... Get out. Out! Out!"</p>	
5	<p>Q: "How do you see us helping you?"</p> <p>A: "We need a piece of software to help us map out lines in car parks, so that..."</p> <p>Q: <i>Interrupting</i> "What hardware will you need?"</p> <p>A: "We have a couple of computers already, mainly..."</p> <p>Q: <i>Interrupting</i> "Do you need accounting software?"</p> <p>A: "No, we are currently using..."</p> <p>Q: <i>Interrupting</i> "What about printers?"</p> <p>A: "No... Get out. Out! Out!"</p>	
6	<p><i>Interviewer comes in and immediately on being invited to sit down...</i></p> <p>Q: "...so our standard product line has facilities for optimising data retrieval and high volume throughput. Our standard product line has iron-clad security built from industry standard libraries. And our standard product line has user friendly UI on all components - fully technically compliant. Also our standard product line has..."</p> <p>A: "Get out. Out! Out!"</p>	
7	<p><i>The client is pacing back and forth, looking impatient and constantly checking the clock: 10 past the hour, 15 past the hour, 20 past the hour...</i></p> <p><i>Interviewer walks in, stops and looks at the client...</i></p> <p>Q: "What? Am I late?"</p> <p>A: "Get out. Out! Out!"</p>	

8	<p>Q: "What hardware do you need us to supply?"</p> <p>A: "We already have all the hardware we need."</p> <p>Q: "Do you need us to purchase laptops?"</p> <p>A: "No. We already have all the hardware we need."</p> <p>Q: "Do you need a laser printer?"</p> <p>A: "No."</p> <p>Q: "Do you want mice with that?"</p> <p>A: "No... Get out. Out ! Out!"</p>	
9	<p>Q: "So Jim, what hardware do you need?"</p> <p>A: "My name is Steve. We're right for hardware."</p> <p>Q: "Okay Shane, what about software?"</p> <p>A: "My name is Steve. What is software?"</p> <p>Q: "Well Simon... software is..."</p> <p>A: "I don't care! Get out. Out! Out!"</p>	
10	<p>Q: "Can you give me some background on what you do here."</p> <p>A: "Well we contract to..." <i>Phone rings.</i> "Excuse me for a minute." <i>Answers phone and then after the call asks:</i> "Where were we?"</p> <p>Q: "I was asking what you do here."</p> <p>A: "Oh yes... well we contract to..." <i>Phone rings again.</i> "Excuse me again." <i>Answers phone and then after the call continues:</i> "Sorry really busy today. Where were we?"</p> <p>Q: "I was asking what you do here."</p> <p>A: "Oh yes... well we contract to..." <i>Phone rings yet again.</i> "Excuse me again." <i>Answers phone and then after the call again continues:</i> "Sorry - where were we?"</p> <p>Q: "Too busy!?" <i>There is a pause as the interview and the client look at each other. Then the interviewer says: "I know... Get out. Out! Out!"</i></p>	