

The Default Heuristic

The Default Heuristic technique helps solve our struggle for searching the best AWS services and features.

We'll cover the following ^

- Optimization fallacy
- The default heuristic
- Our default choice

Optimization fallacy

Chasing the best tool for the job is a particularly insidious trap when it comes to making progress—especially at the beginning of a project. We consider the relentless search for the best tool to be an **optimization fallacy**—in the same category as any other premature optimization.

Searching for the optimal option is:

- Almost always expensive.
- Any belief that we can easily discover the best option by exhaustively testing each one is delusional.

To make matters worse:

- We developers tend to enjoy tinkering with new technology and figuring out how things work, and this only amplifies the vicious cycle of such a pursuit.

The default heuristic

Instead of searching for the best option, we recommend a technique we call the default heuristic. The premise of this heuristic is that when the cost of acquiring new information is high and the consequence of deviating from a default choice is low, sticking with the default will likely be the optimal choice.

But what should your default choice be?

- It should be any option that gives you very high confidence that it will work.
- It is something you've used before.
- Something you understand well.
- Something that has proven itself to be a reliable way for getting things done in the space you're operating in.
- It doesn't necessarily have to be the theoretical best choice.
- It doesn't have to be the most efficient. Or the latest and greatest.
- It simply needs to be a reliable option to get you to your ultimate desirable outcome.
- It should be very unlikely to fail you; you have to be confident that it's a very safe bet. In fact, that's the only requirement.

With this heuristic, you start making all your choices based on your defaults. You would only deviate from your defaults if you realize you absolutely have to.

Let's take a small quiz to check your understanding of the default heuristic.



What should your default choice be?

Retake Quiz

Our default choice

When you start with little experience, you might not have a default choice for everything you want to do. In this course:

- We're going to share our own default choices when it comes to AWS services and features.
- We're going to explain why some things became our defaults, and why other things we don't even bother with.

We hope this information will help you build or supplement your basket of default choices so that when you take on your next project you will be able to make choices quickly and confidently.

In the next chapter, we will look at all the good parts of AWS one by one.