I decided to write about section 42, “Well-Practiced Skills Don’t Require Conscious Attention”. This was an interesting and fairly applicable section. It can be a great thing to make an action easy to repeat so that certain tasks don’t take as much mental effort or as much time. The consequences of doing so are that the user of a website might be less mentally involved in the task making them more prone to error. I think a good thing to point out here is that, many times, the solution to this sort of a problem or trade-off is allowing that action to be completed in bulk. Rather than forcing the user to delete pictures one at a time, have them select which pictures they wish to be deleted, (this forces them to be mentally involved in the process of evaluating which picture needs to be deleted), once all the pictures are selected the user need only press the delete button once. I think that, many times, this sort of solution can be very effective in saving the user time as well as preventing the user from making errors.

Another interesting section is section 44, “Sustained Attention Lasts About Ten Minutes”. Depending on the subject and how much my brain is engaged in understanding the material, I think my attention span is much longer than 7-10 minutes, especially when it comes to lectures and debates that engage my brain. If the material is too complicated and the lecturer losses me halfway through the presentation, I will lose focus. However, if the lecturer does a good job of making the subject understandable while still being relevant and interesting, I can pay attention a lot longer. If the lecturer mixes information I already know with information that’s new I generally zone out when I already know the information and may not zone back in until well into the section, I may not know about causing me to miss critical information about knowledge I do not yet have. I think (I have not backed this up with any external scientific analysis or research but this is mostly from personal experience) that if we are able to do our best to make our websites relevant, concise, easy to skim or skip (so that users can jump straight to the section that is relevant to them using things like headers or video chapters), and mentally engaging it can really help stretch this attention span.