Show and Tell: Skill Acquisition

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Skill Acquisition

- I have been re-learning a skill recently
- I tracked myself doing it
- This is the story...

The Skill

- A puzzle for you...

Typing!

(not me)

Motivation

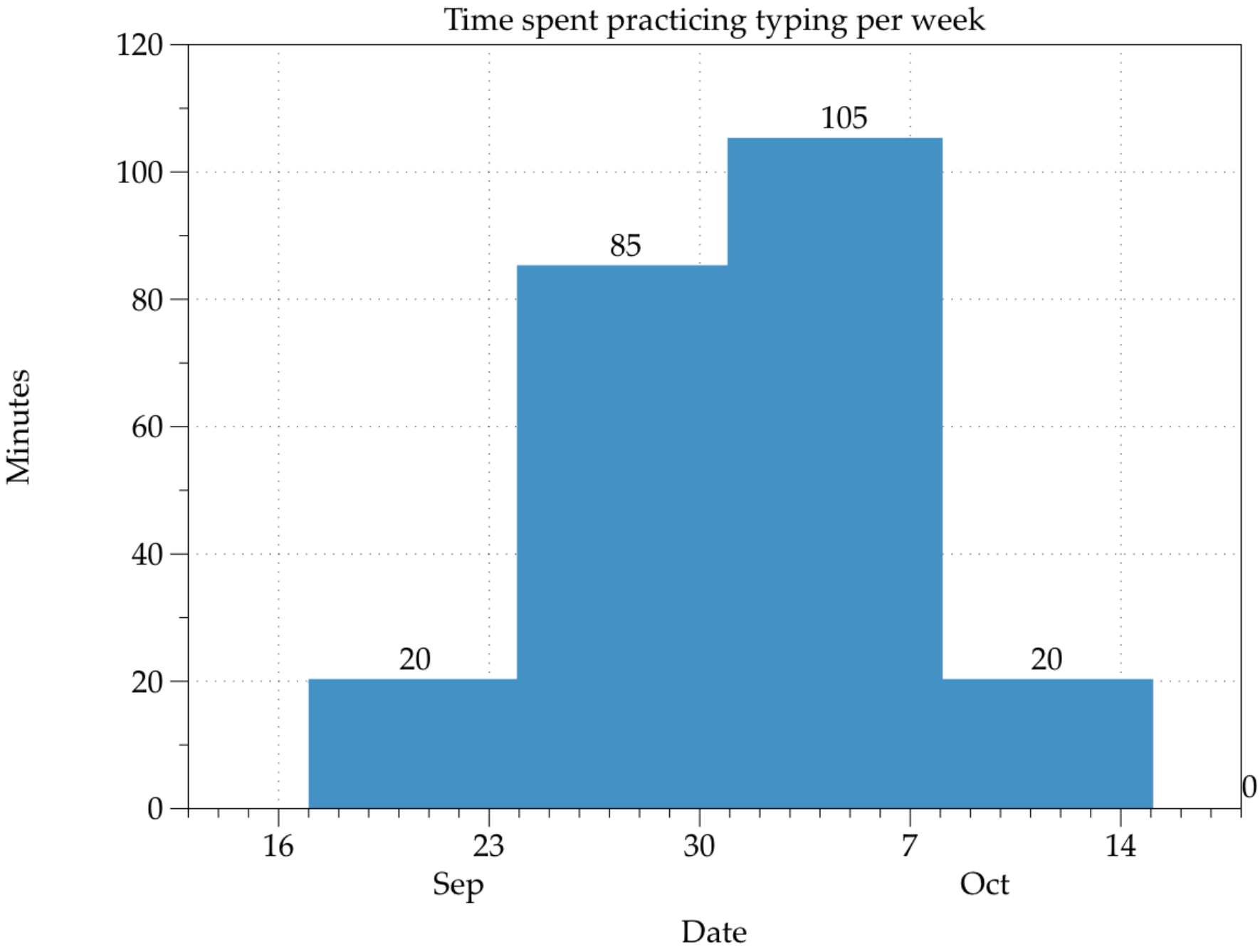
- I'm a programmer - I have a lot of typing to do!
- Fear of RSI - both Mum and colleague have both been crippled by it
- Stat: "In the USA, carpal tunnel syndrome results in an average of $30,000 in lifetime costs" (Wikipedia)

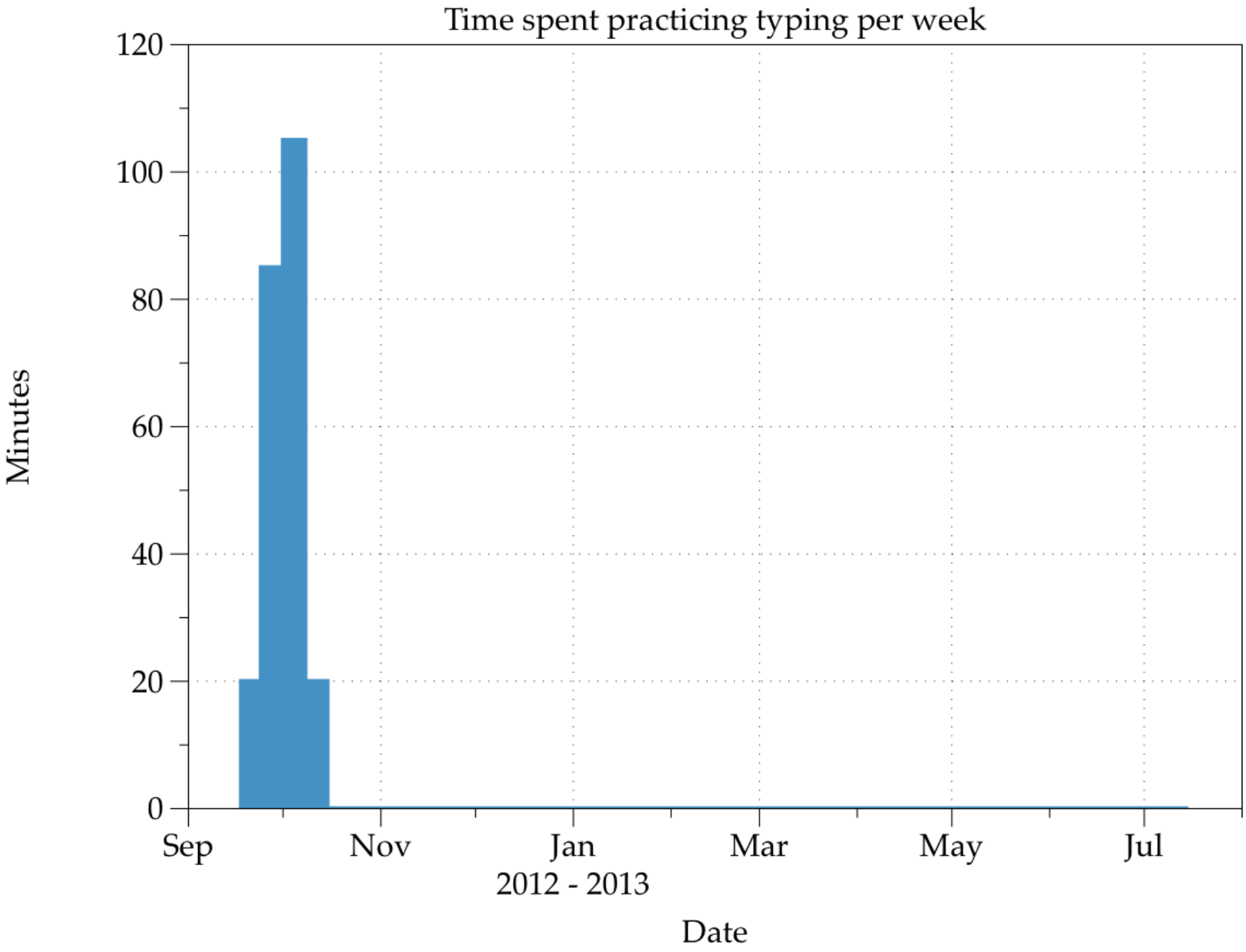
To business!

- Just need to grab some typing programs
- Get down to learning QWERTY the *right* way!!

Finger Placement
You type this key with the first (index) finger of your right hand.
Replay Placement
Next
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 - = ←
q w e r t y u i o p [ ]
a s d f g h j k l ; ' #
\ z x c v b n m , . /
ctrl alt space alt ctrl
Lesson
Report
Extra Practice
Safari Park
Brick Factory
Options
Help
Quit

Oh no....


Time spent practicing typing per week
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Minutes
105
85
20
20
0
16
23
30
7
14
Sep
Oct
Date


Time spent practicing typing per week
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Minutes
Sep
Nov
Jan
Mar
May
Jul
2012 - 2013
Date

Under-motivation

- Didn't know how long it would take
- Relative size of advantage
- Hard practicing QWERTY *the right way* at night, then going back to old habits during the day

So what changed?

The First 20 Hours

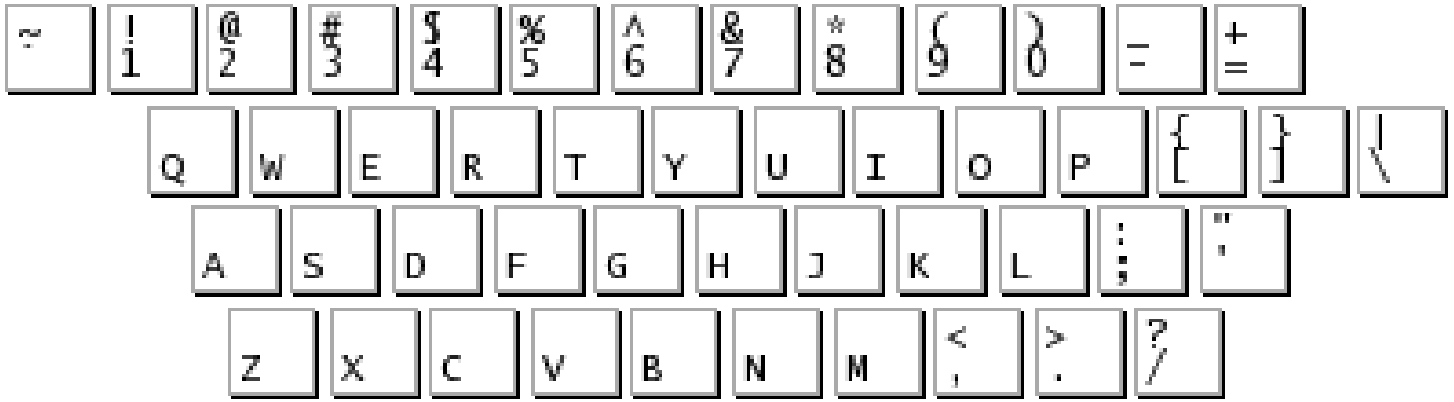
- Josh Kaufman, 2013

- `http://first20hours.com/`

The First 20 Hours : Rapid Summary

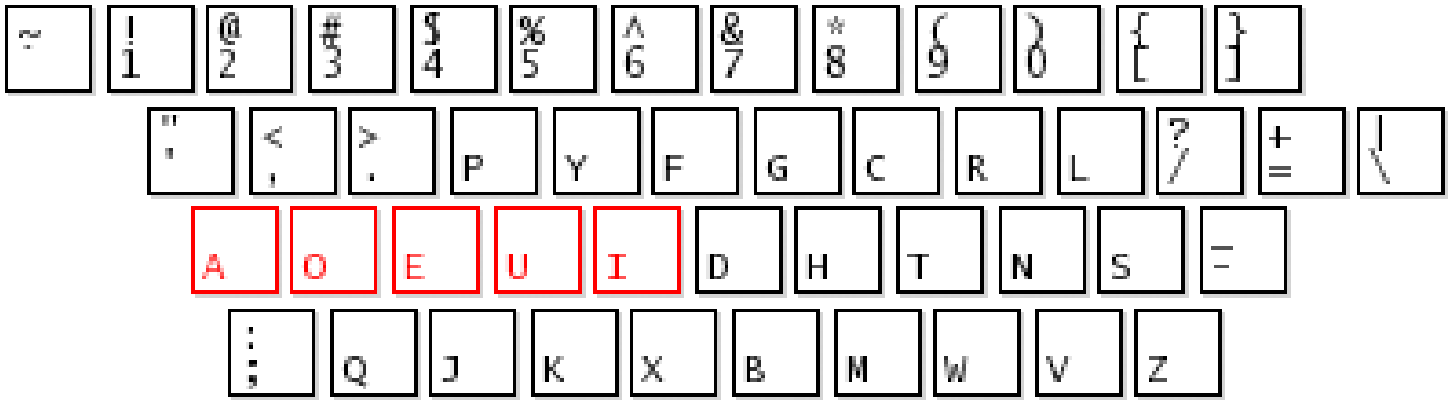
- Nearly any skill can be learnt to a useful degree in 20 hours
- A couple chapters of general how-to, then one chapter on each skill he learnt with his method
- One of these was on touchtyping... in 'Colemak'

QWERTY



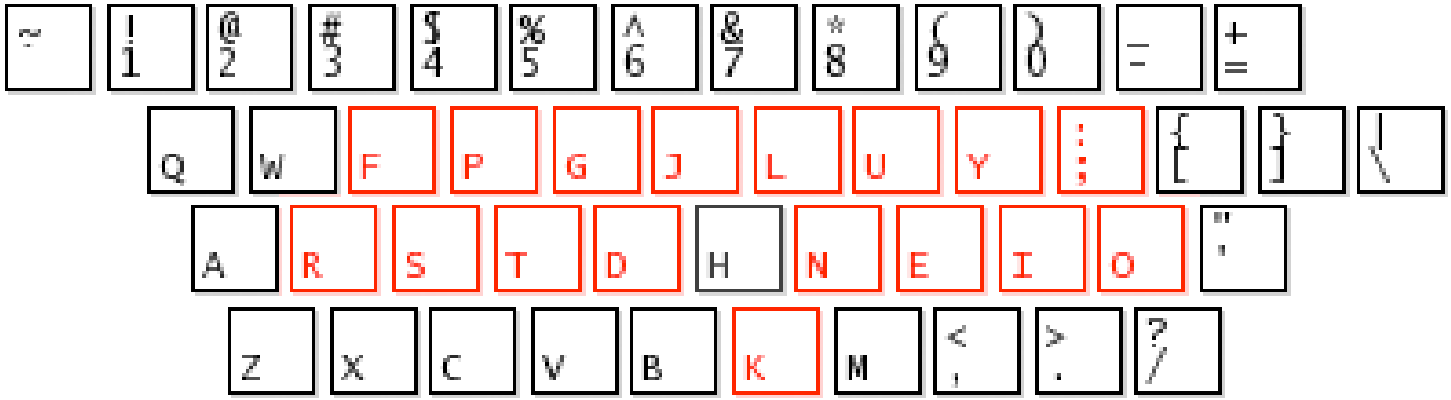
- "Slowly took over the world", since 1872. Main design constraint: to stop typewriter key bars jamming.

DVORAK

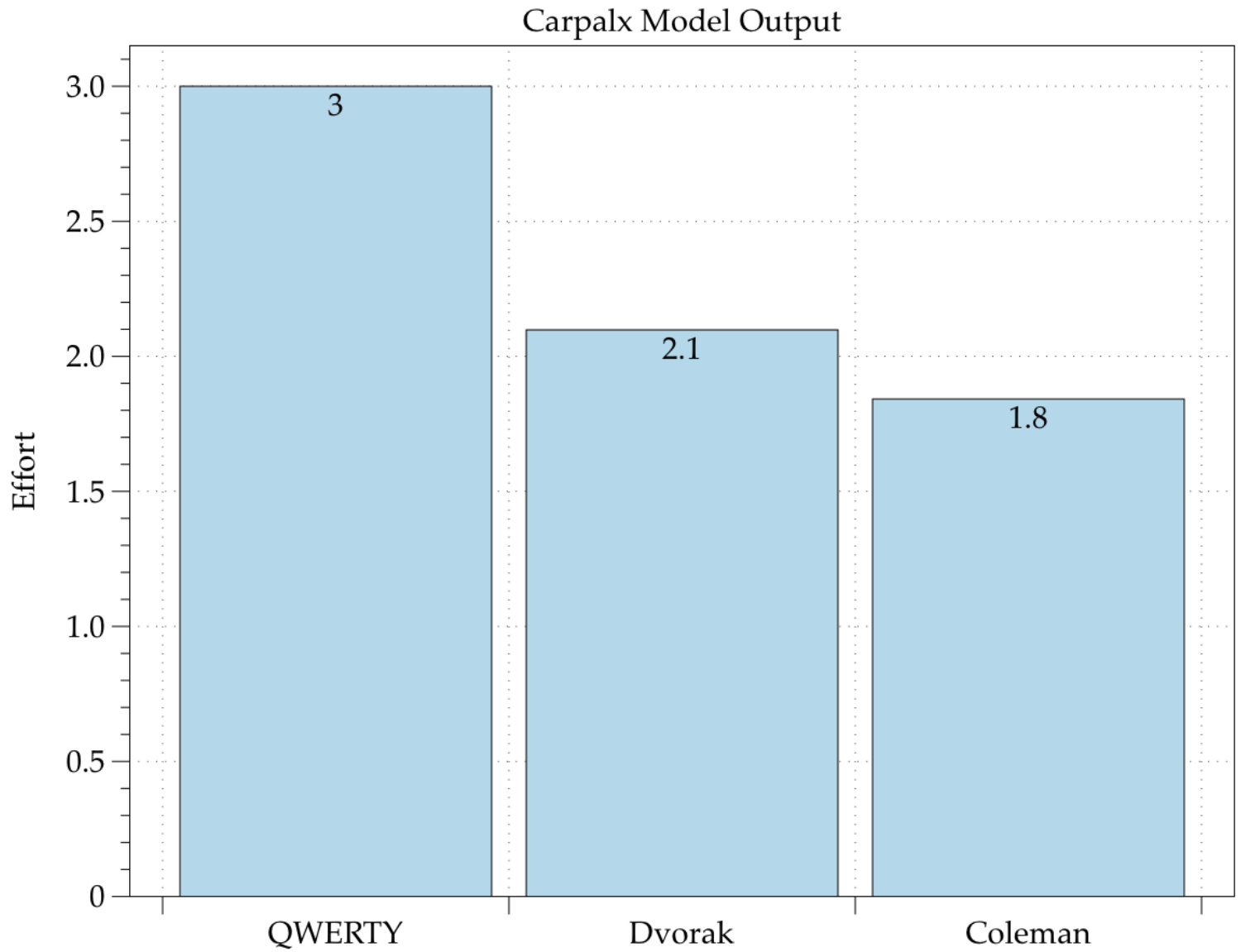


- 1932 attempt at optimisation. Relatively hard to learn.

Colemak



- Designed by a programmer with mathematical models. Split between ease of transition (Q,W,Z,X,C,V stay the same) and optimization.



- Source: `http://mkweb.bcgsc.ca/carpalx/?colemak`

Method

- Swap keys on OS and keyboard
- Get some training programs
- Fire away

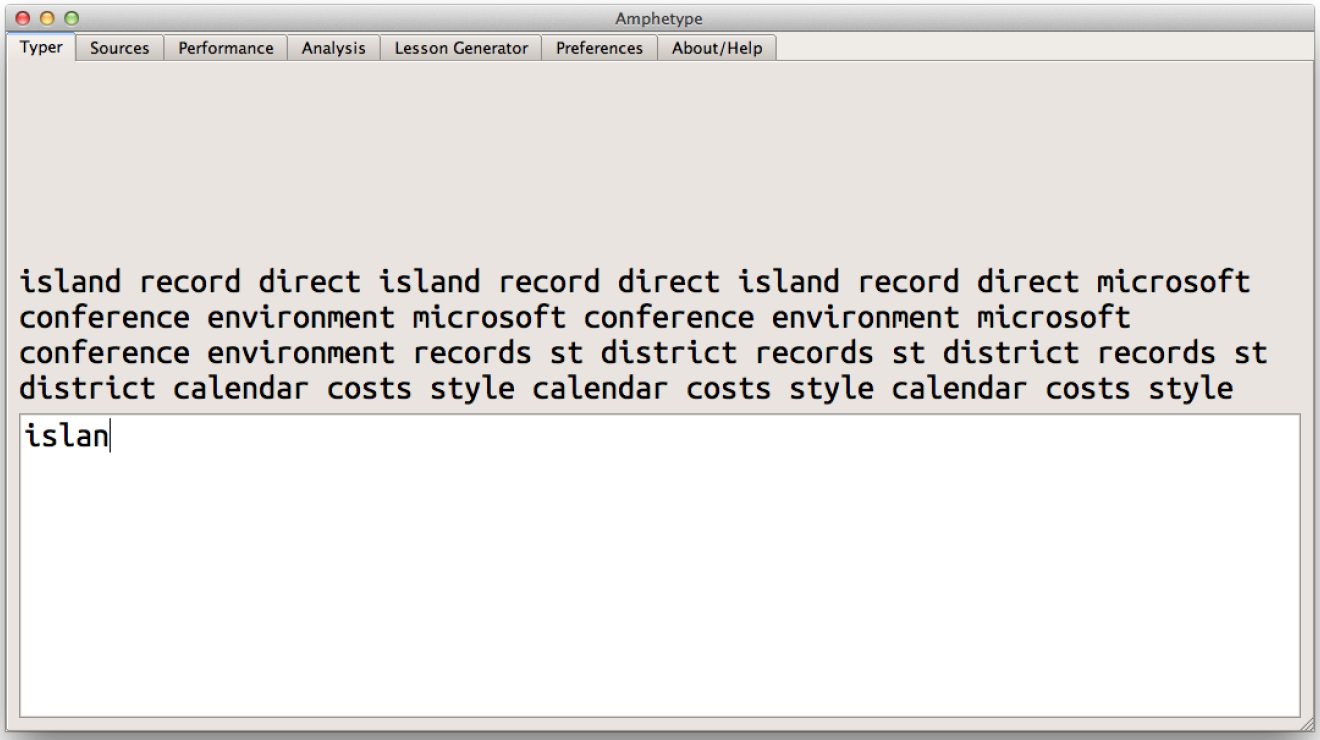
Method

- Swap keys on OS and keyboard
- Get some training programs
- Try to practice in 20 minute + sessions, before bed.

Programs

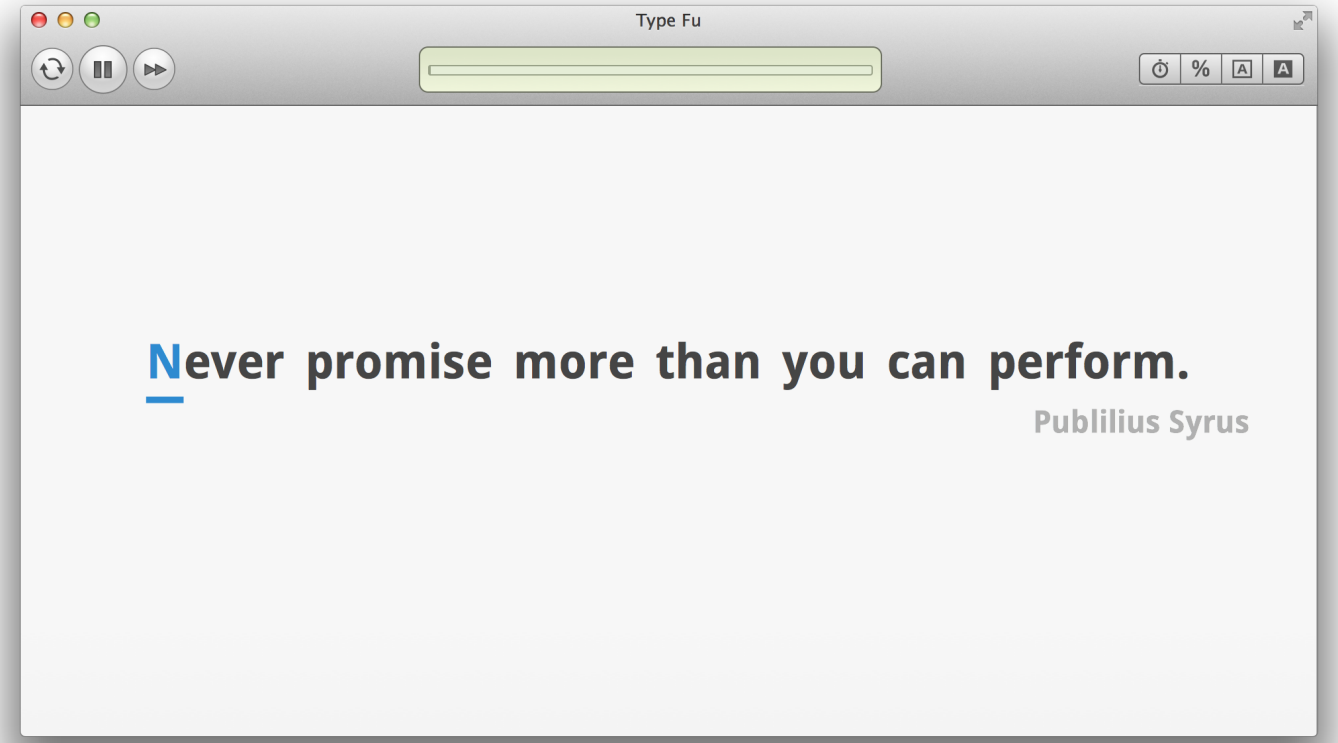
- A good mix of programs is useful
- Practice different subskills - hardest keys, whole prose, etc.
- Data export - not much of a feature here. Many record your WPM + accuracy, but hard to know

Amphetype



- Free open source - `https://code.google.com/p/amphetype/`

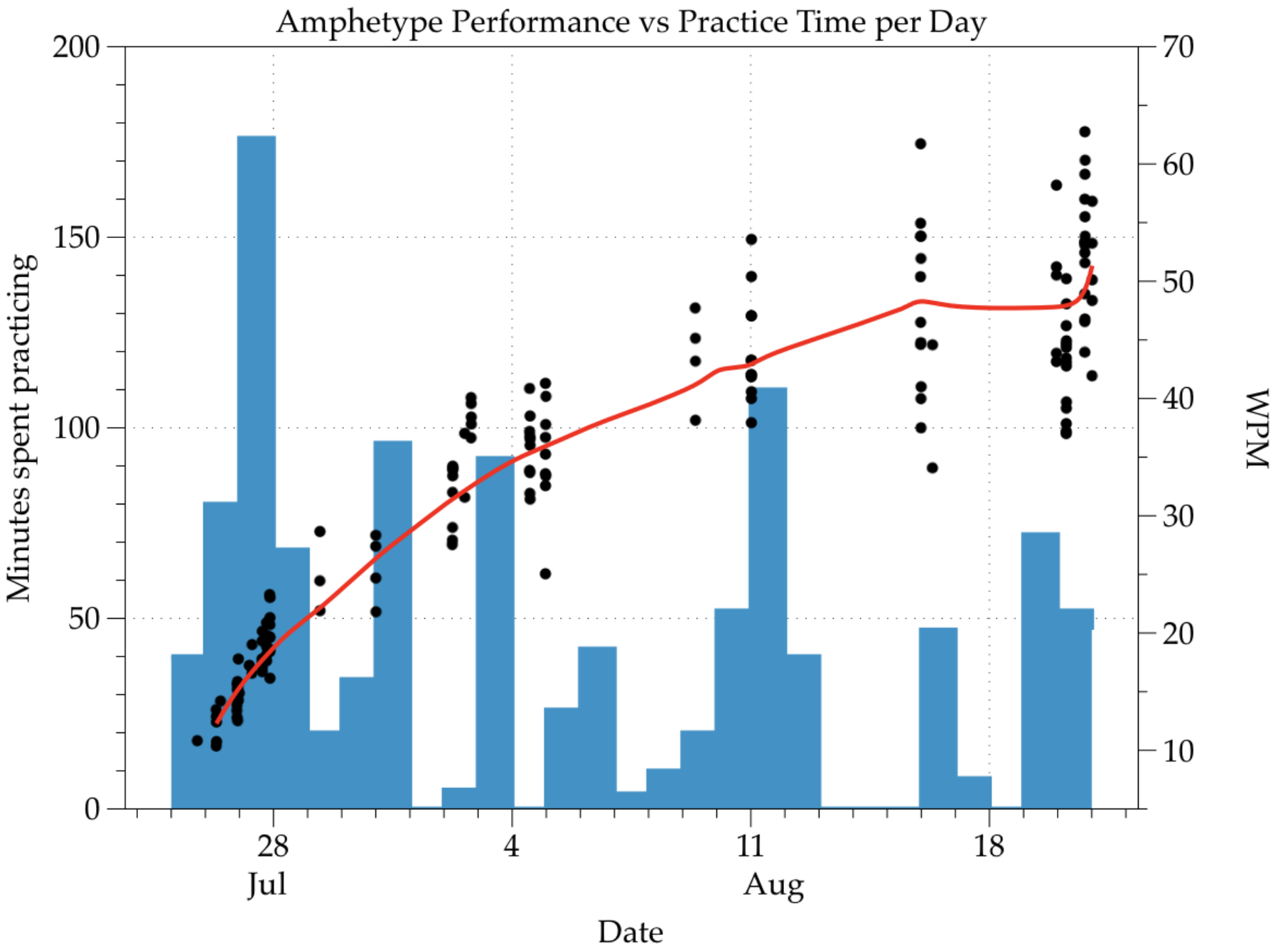
Type-Fu

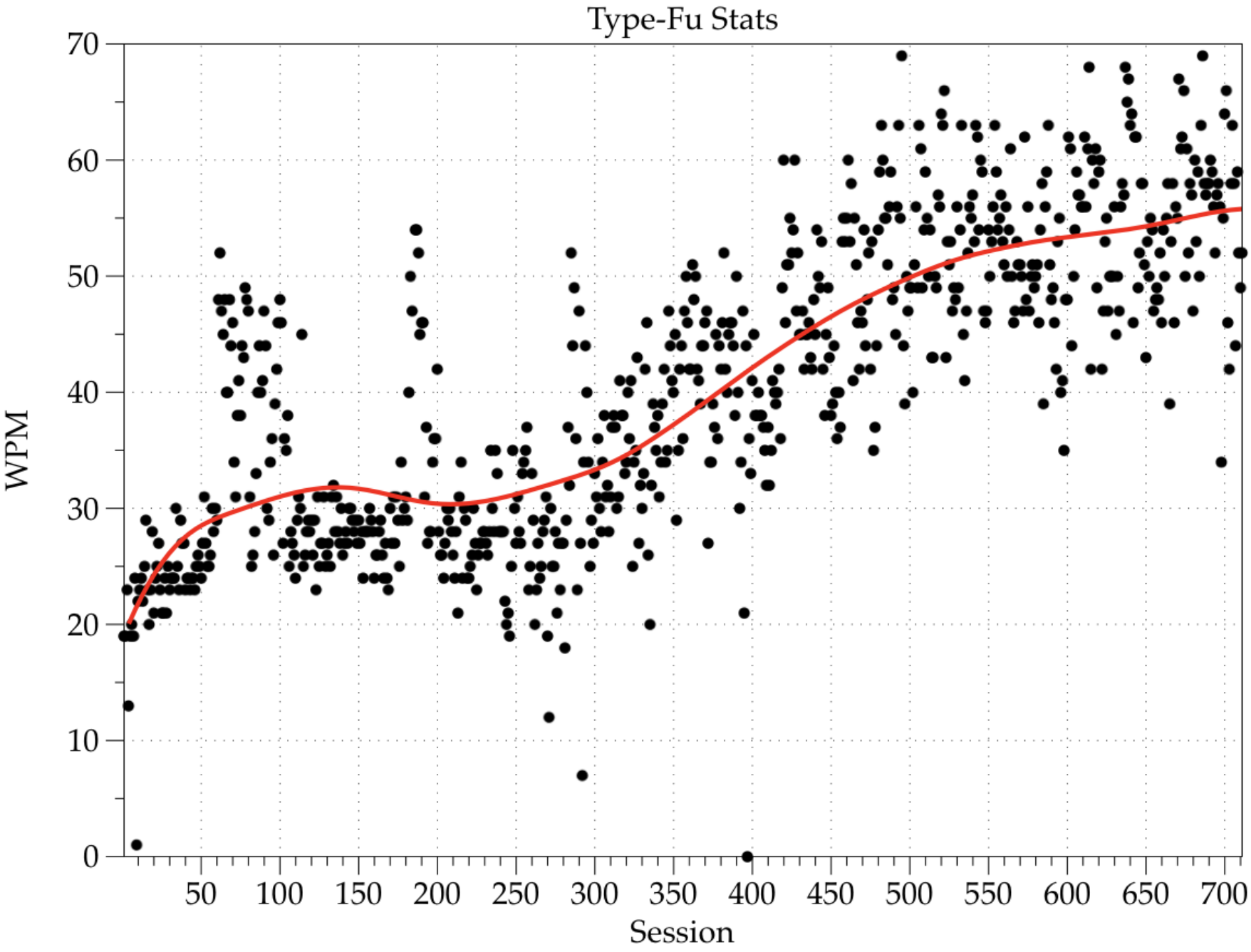


- 6.99 - `http://type-fu.com/`

Typocalypse 3D

- Free - `http://is.gd/typeocalypse`


Amphetype Performance vs Practice Time per Day
Minutes spent practicing
WPM
Date
200
150
100
50
0
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
28
Jul
4
11
Aug
18


Type-Fu Stats
WPM
Session
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
50
100
150
200
250
300
350
400
450
500
550
600
650
700

Thank you

- Slides on GitHub - `http://is.gd/adamIsDaBomb`
- Email me - `me@adamj.eu`