Show and Tell: Skill Acquisition

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I have been learning a skill...

...what is it?

- Something you did today
- You've been paid to do it
- You've probably never *really* practiced it in your life...

Typing!

(not me)

Motivation

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

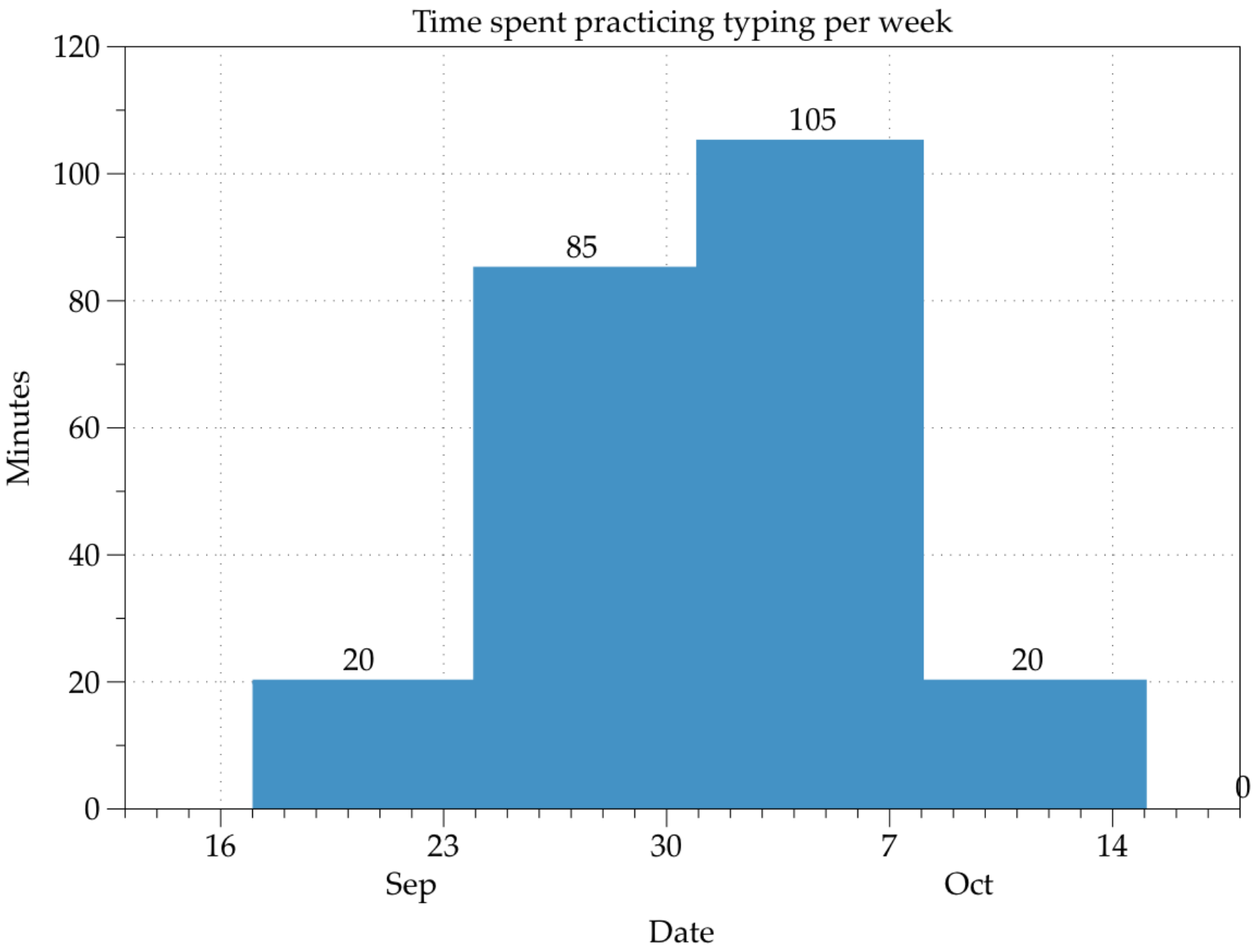
To business!

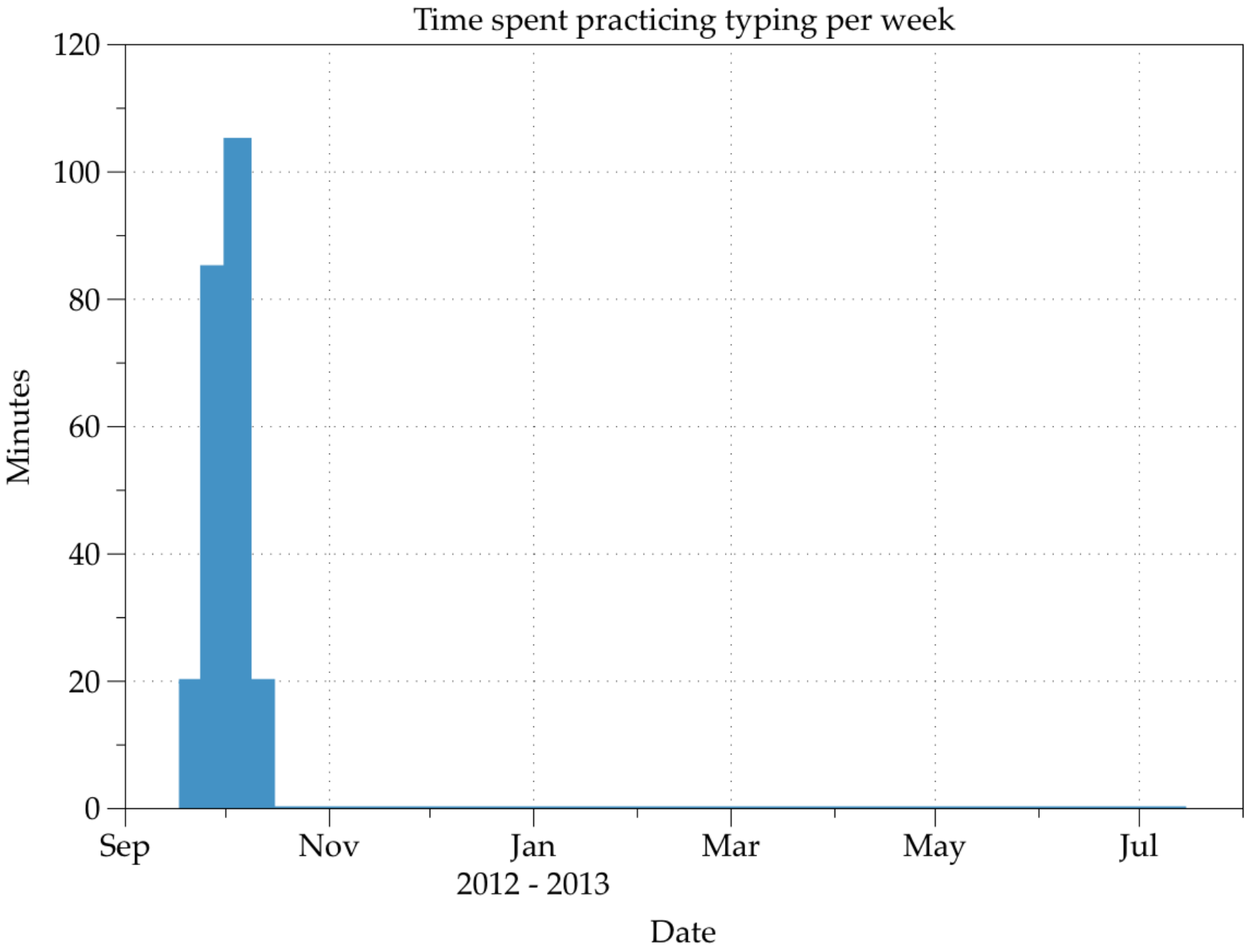
- Just need to grab some typing programs
- Get down to learning QWERTY the *right* way!!

Ten Thumbs

Finger Placement
You type this key with the first (index) finger of your right hand.
Replay Placement
Next
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

Undefined

- Didn't know how long it would take
- Is this really the best idea?
- Hard practicing QWERTY *the right way* at night, then going back to old habits during the day

...what changed?

A Book

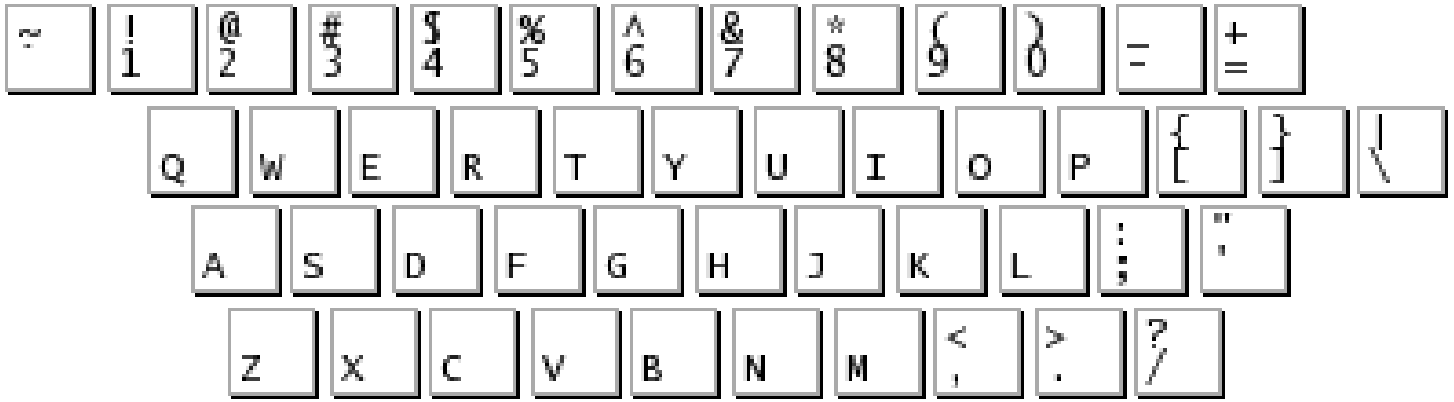
- Josh Kaufman, 2013 - `http://first20hours.com/`

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 of six skills he learnt with his method
- One of these was on touchtyping... in **'Colemak'**

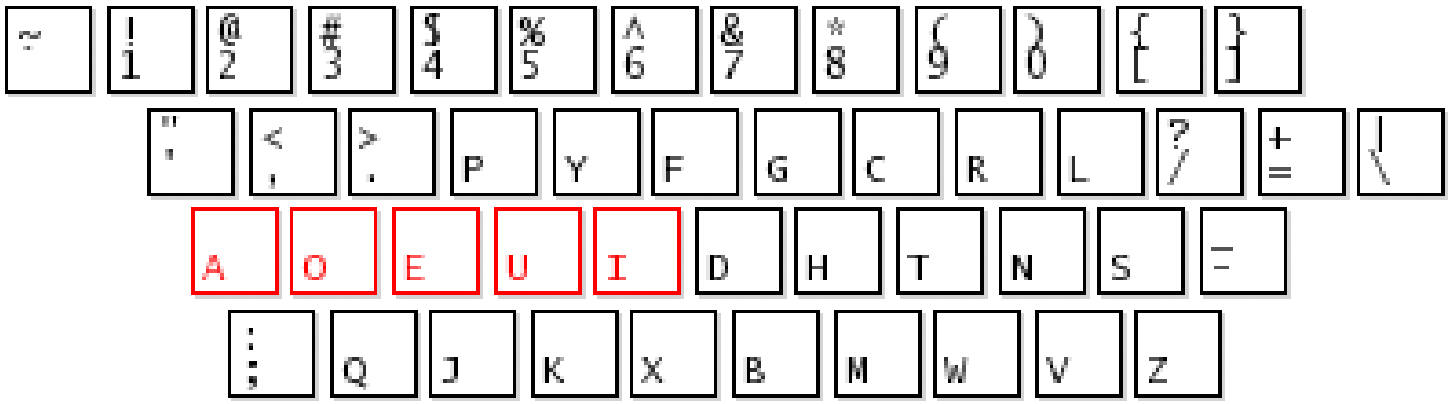
A brief history of keyboard design...

QWERTY



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

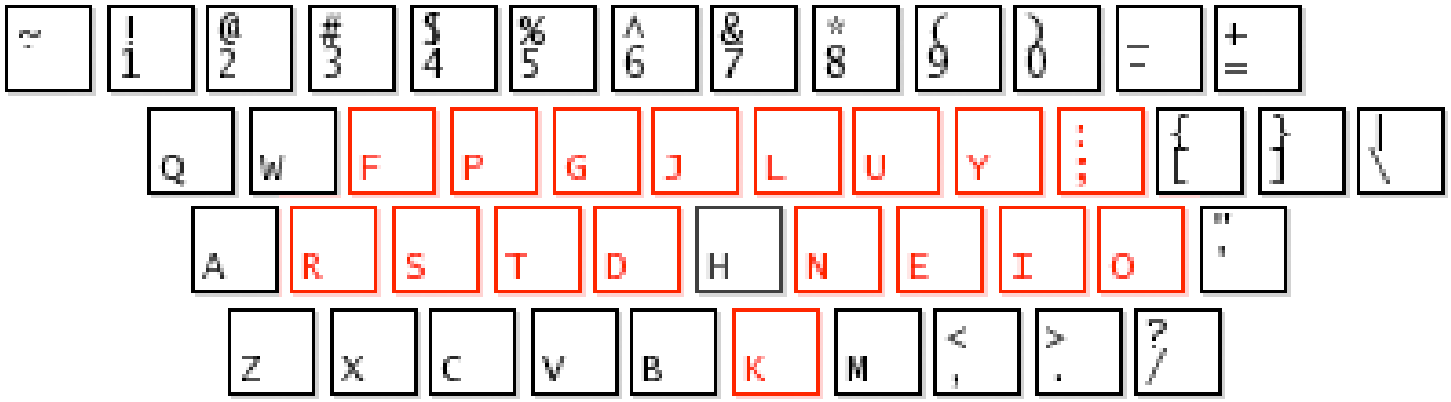
DVORAK



- 1932 design for an optimal layout.

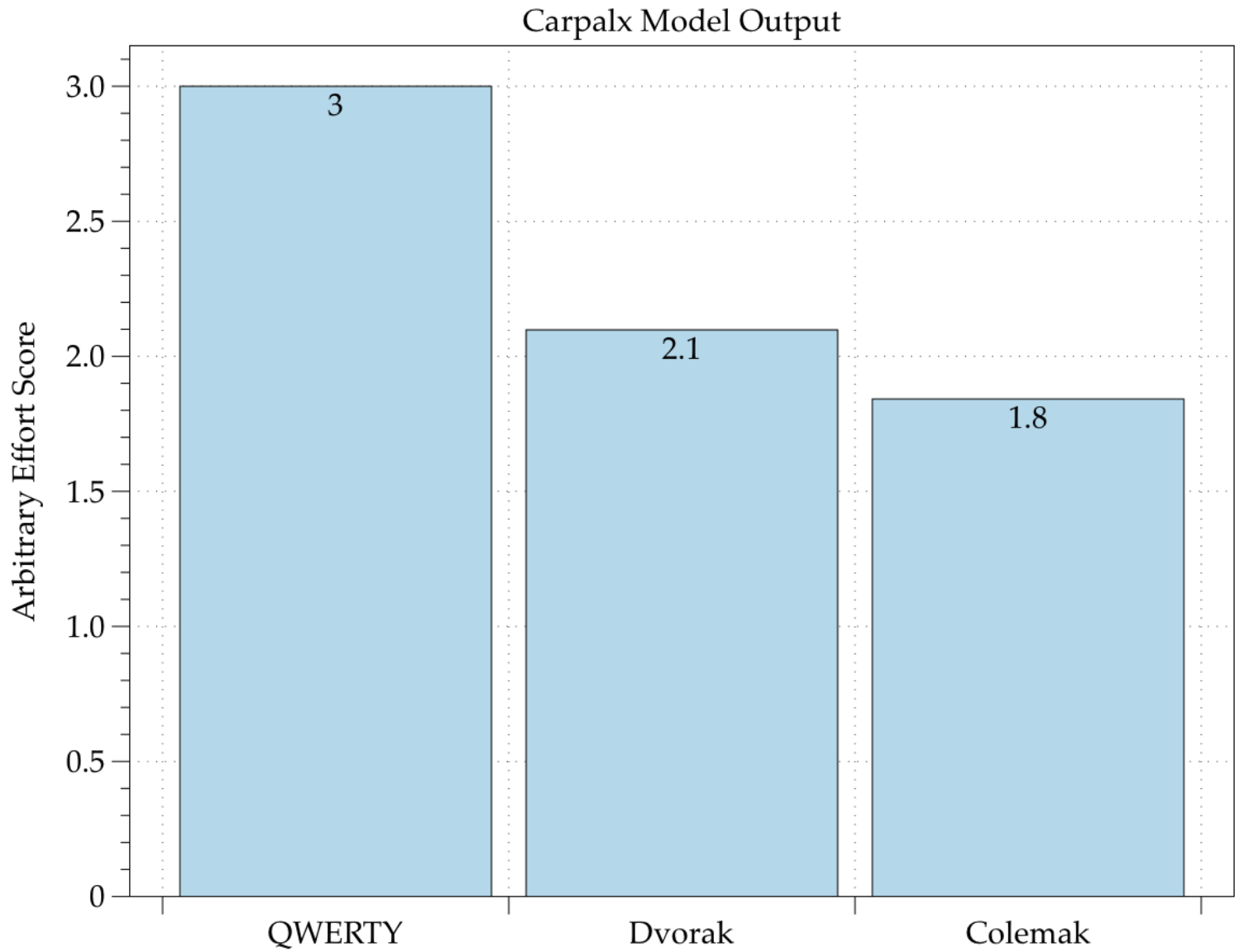
- Relatively hard to learn.

Colemak

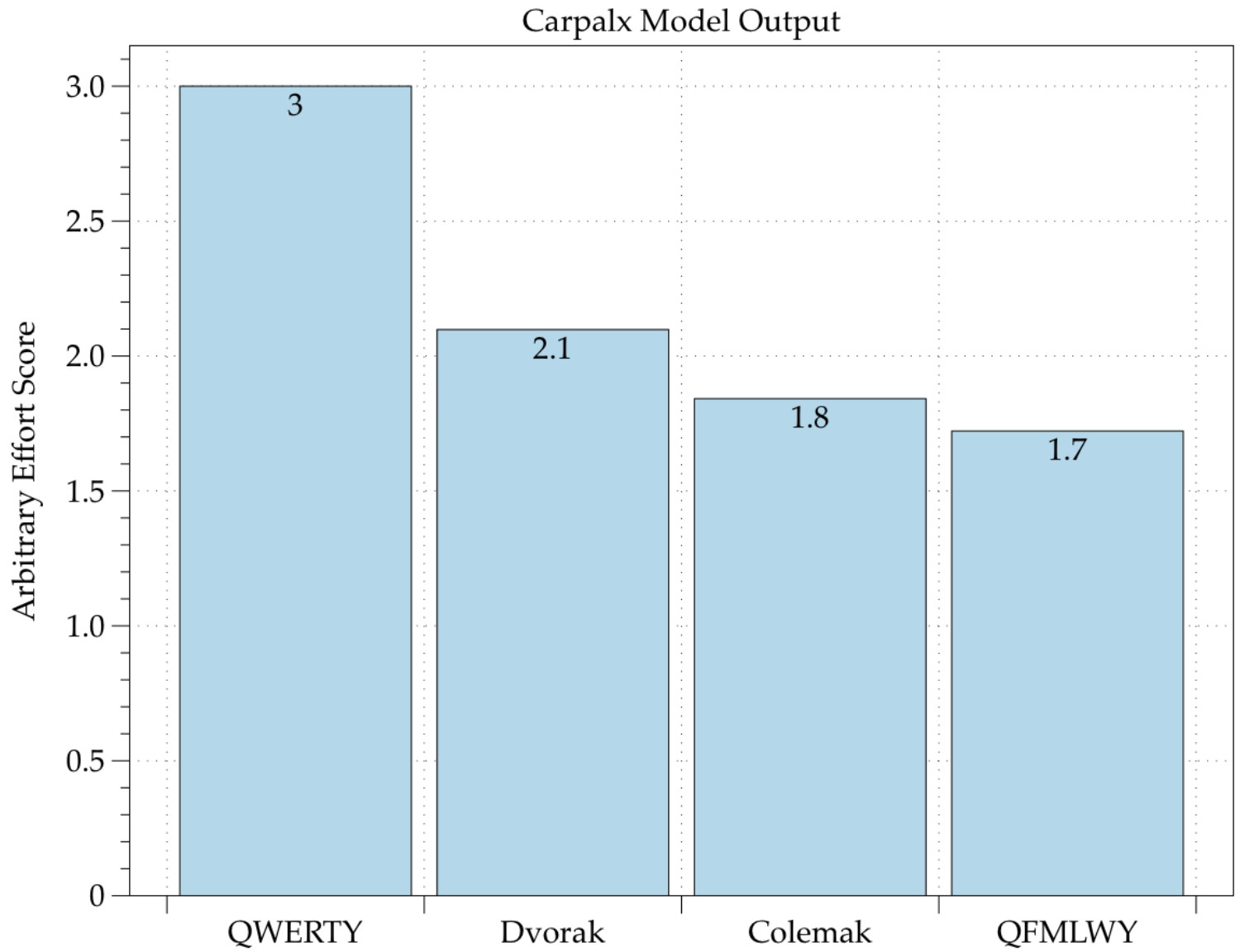


- Designed by a programmer with a mathematical model and lots of spare time.

- Trade-off between ease of transition (Q,W,Z,X,C,V stay the same) and optimization.



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



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

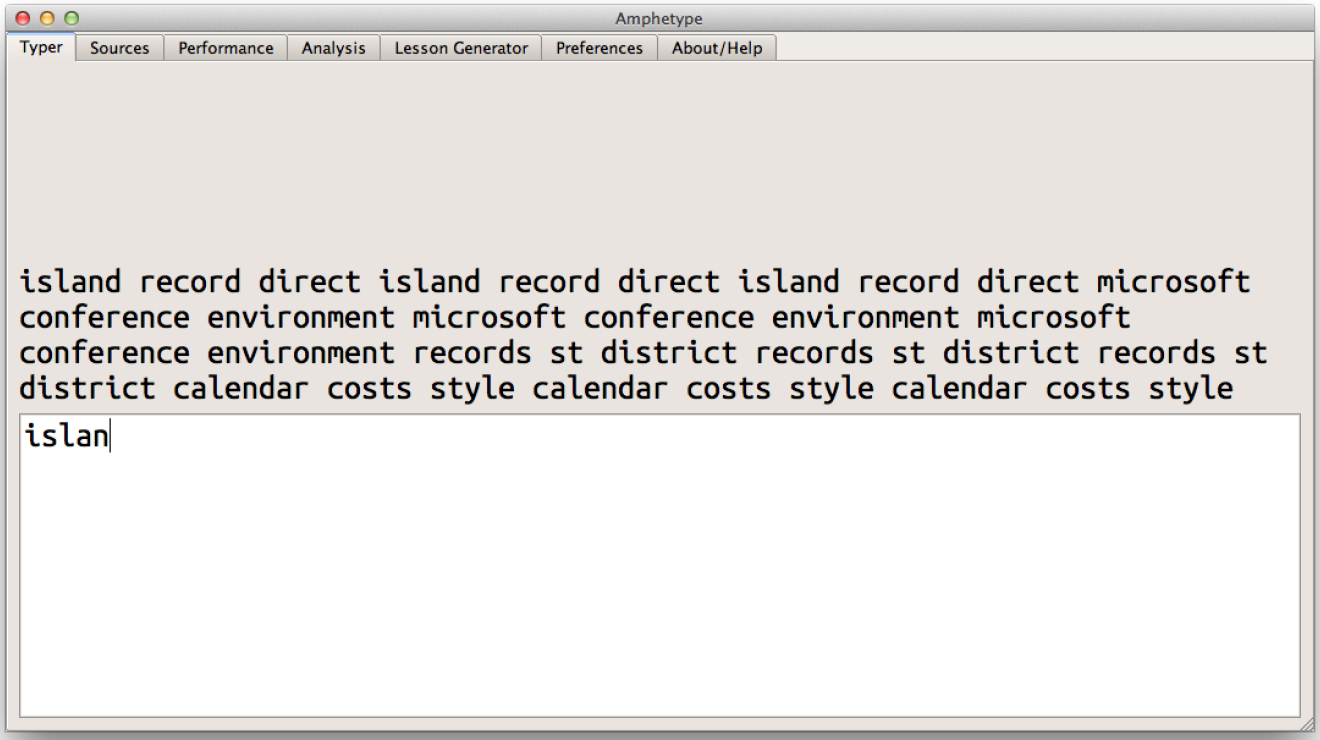
Method

- Swap keys on OS and keyboard
- Get some training programs
- Don't give up before the 20 hour mark

Programs

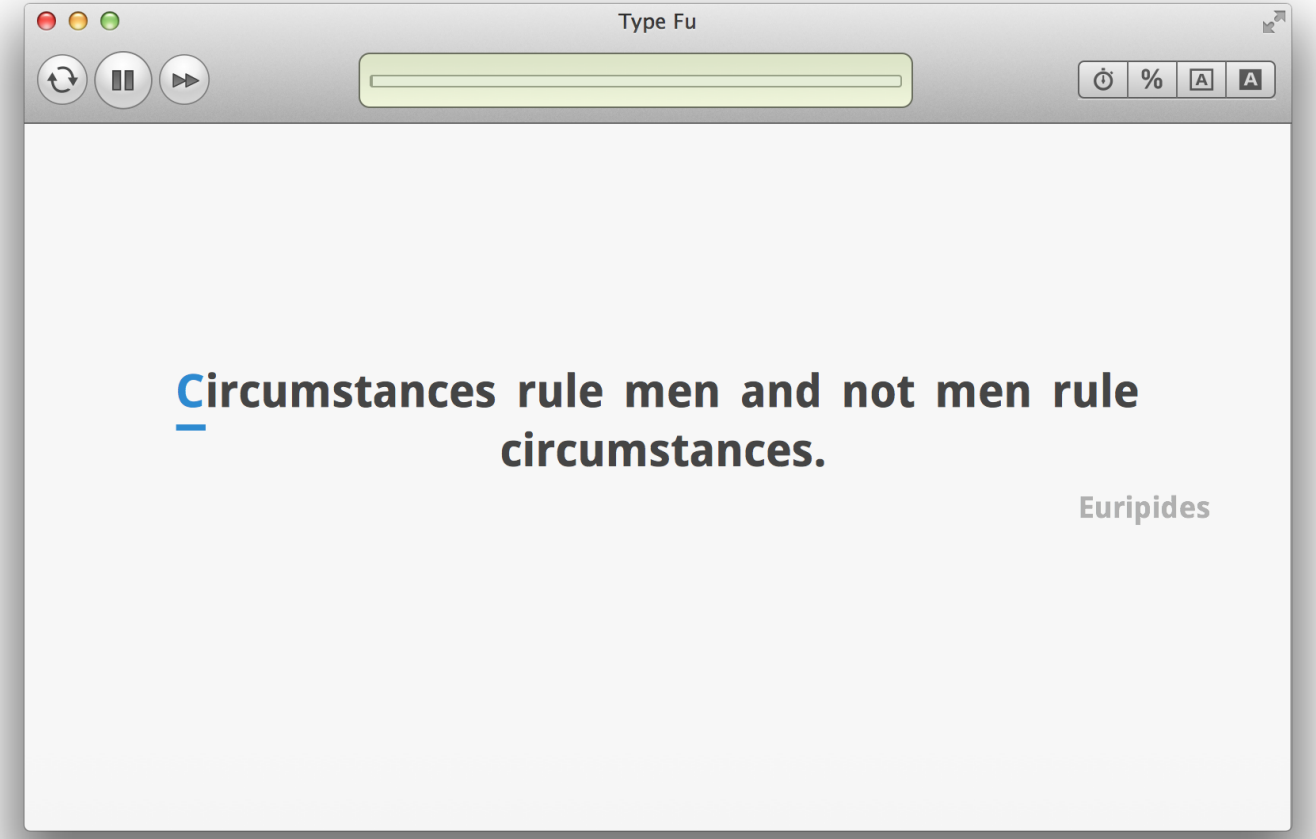
- A variety is useful
- Practice different subskills - hardest keys, whole prose, etc.
- Data export is not much of a feature. Many record your WPM + accuracy, but often only for own graph feature.

Amphetype



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

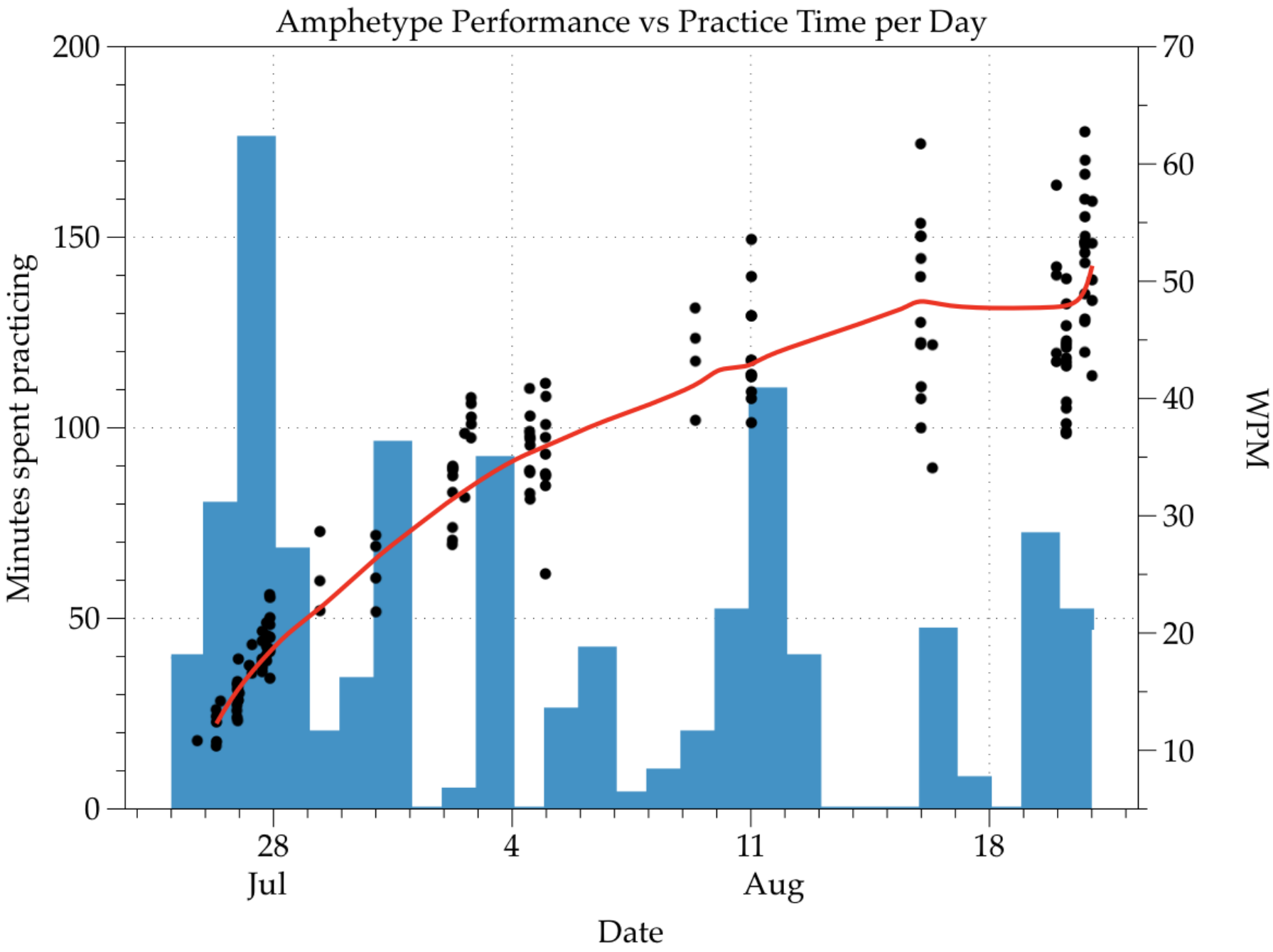
Type-Fu

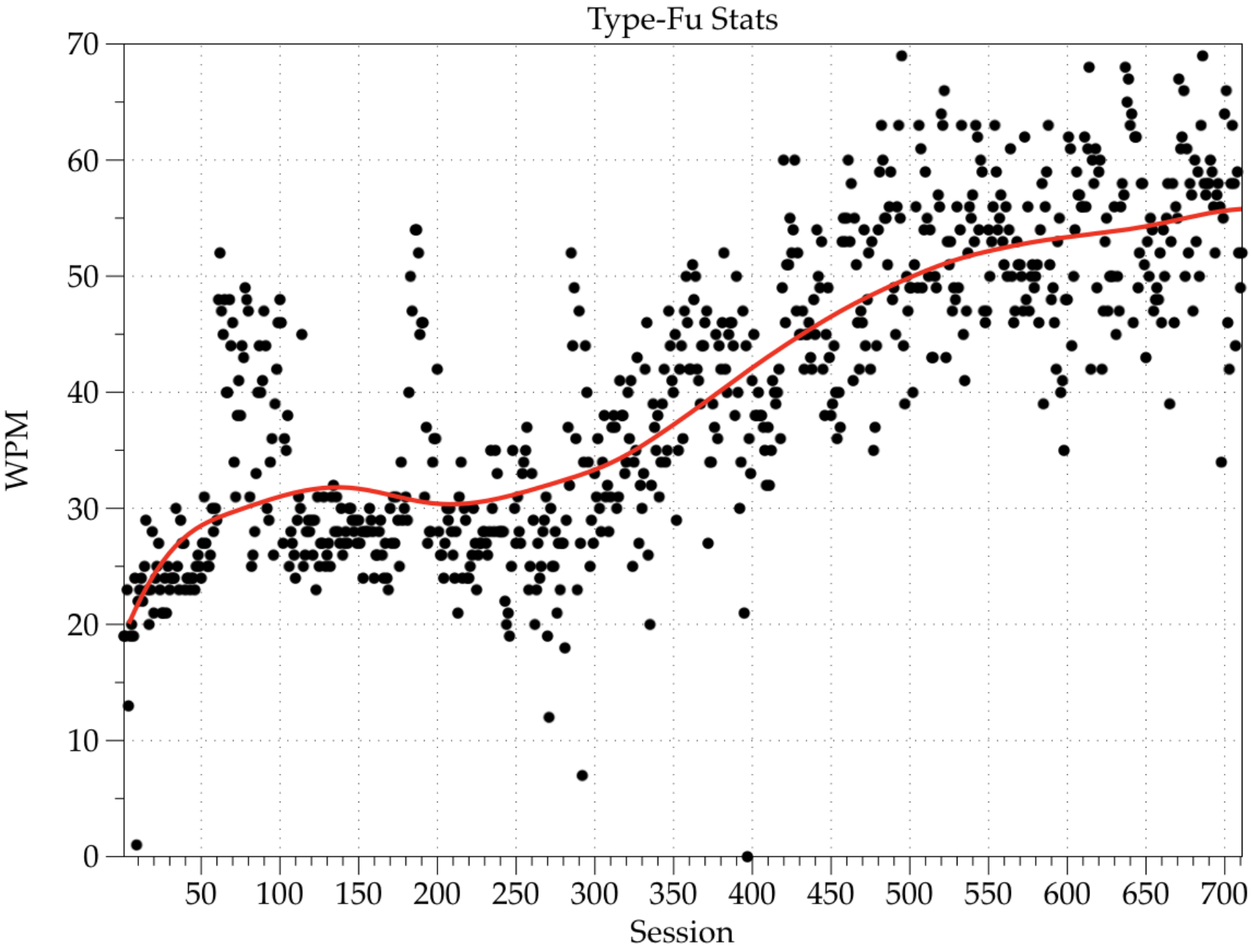


- £6.99 - `http://type-fu.com/`

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

Final Statistics

- Total time spent practicing typing: **20:06**
- Moving Average WPM in Amphetype: **52 WPM**
- Time spent preparing this talk: **3:54**

Thank you

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