Debugging your brain

Navigating the pitfalls of the mind

What is a Cognitive Bias?

A systematic pattern of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment

Confirmation Bias

Confirmation bias is the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms or supports our preexisting beliefs or hypotheses

Confirmation Bias

- Coding: good experience with a framework biases research or evaluation

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- Debugging: a hunch that a bug lies in a newly written module, you might focus all your debugging efforts there, meticulously stepping through that code, while potentially overlooking an obvious error in a more stable, older part of the system that interacts with it.

Confirmation Bias

Hidden cost:

- suboptimal technology choice
- Longer debugging sessions

Confirmation Bias

Mitigation

- actively seek disconfirming evidence
- task of arguing for the alternative options
- define objective criteria before you start evaluating options