



Software Engineering

Empirical Results



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Seven Years War





Seven Years War
Actually nine years long
(1754-63)



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Britain lost 1,512 sailors to enemy action



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And almost 100,000 to scurvy



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Actually nine years long
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Britain lost 1,512 sailors to enemy action
And almost 100,000 to scurvy
Unnecessarily



James Lind (1716-94)

1747: first controlled medical
experiment in history



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cider • sea water

vitriol • oranges

vinegar • barley water



James Lind (1716-94)

1747: first controlled medical
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- | | |
|---------|------------------|
| cider | • sea water |
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James Lind (1716-94)

1747: first controlled medical

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Allowed British ships to be effective on long patrols
during the Napoleonic Wars



1950: Hill & Doll study comparing
smokers and non-smokers



1950: Hill & Doll study comparing
smokers and non-smokers
1. Smoking causes lung cancer



1950: Hill & Doll study comparing
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1. Smoking causes lung cancer
2. Many people would rather fail
than change



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+





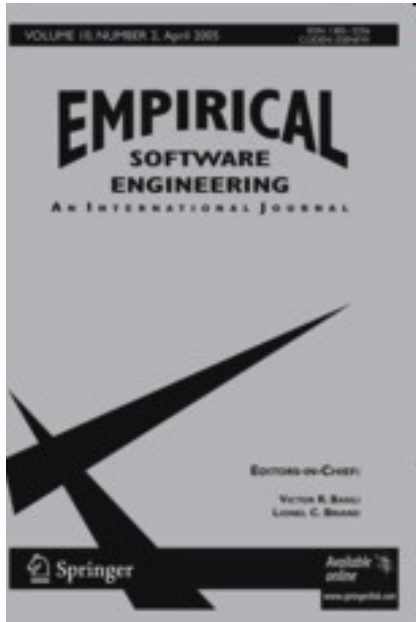
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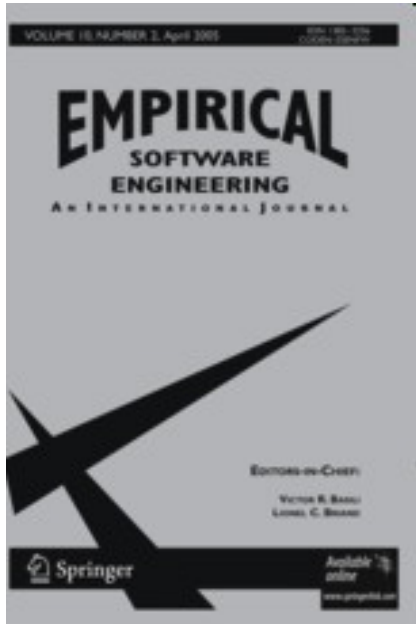
A rarity in software engineering until the mid 1990s

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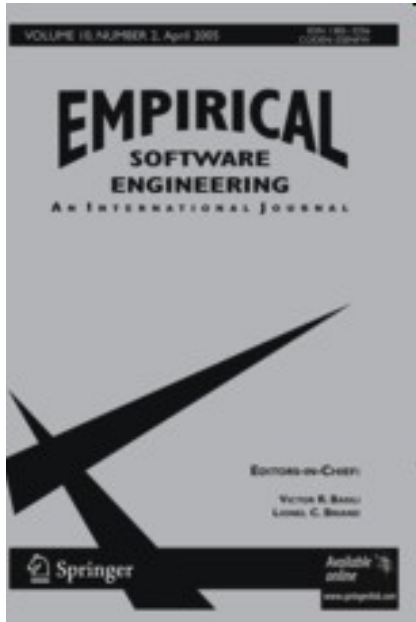
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Particularly ones by young researchers

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Many are flawed or incomplete,
but standards are constantly improving







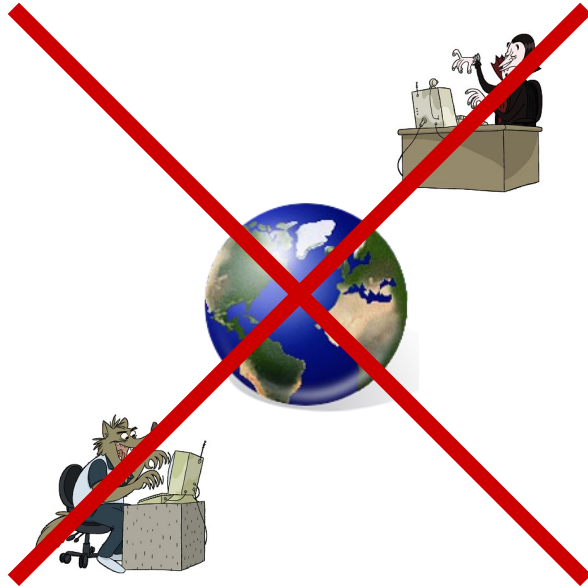




Windows Vista

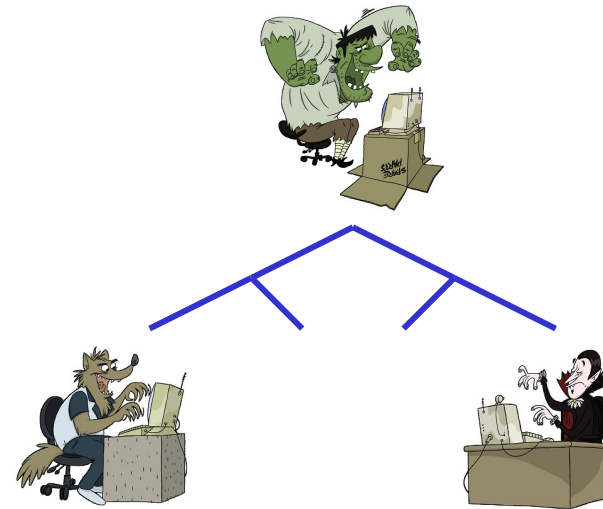
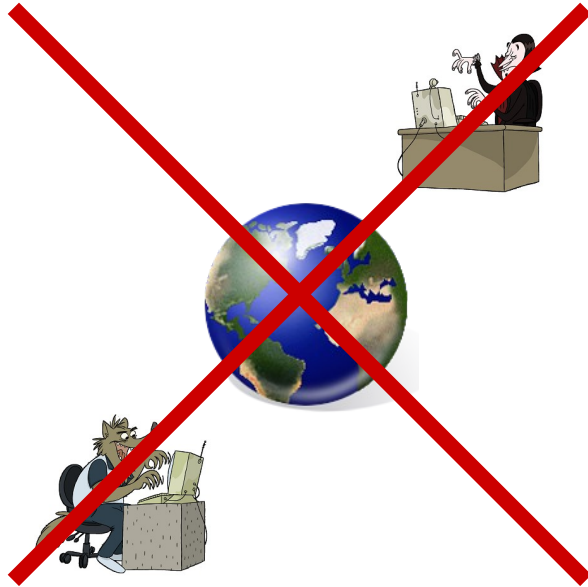


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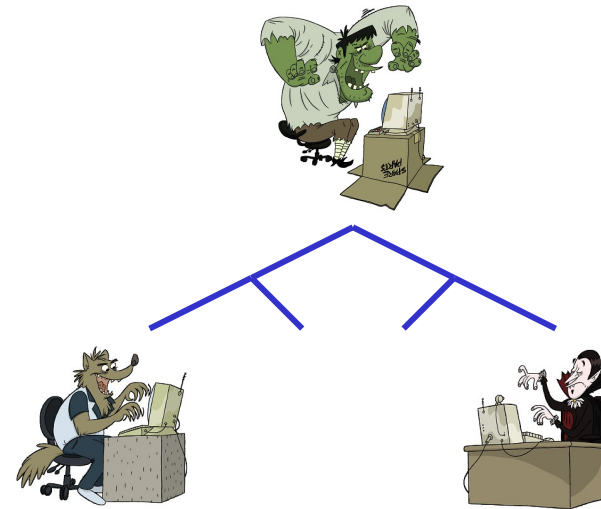


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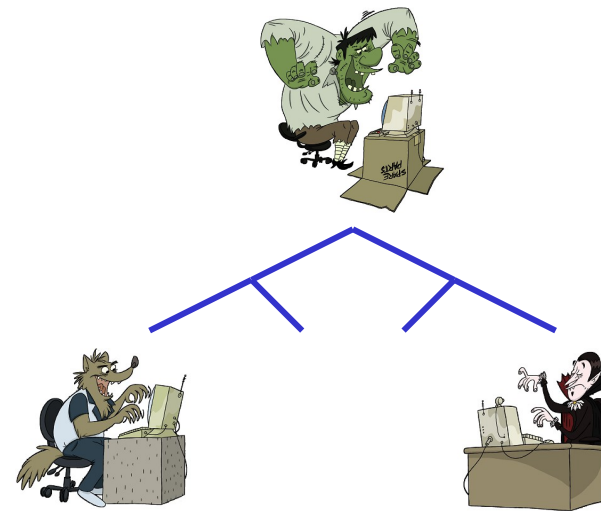
Windows Vista



Unsurprising in retrospect



Windows Vista



Unsurprising in retrospect
Actionable



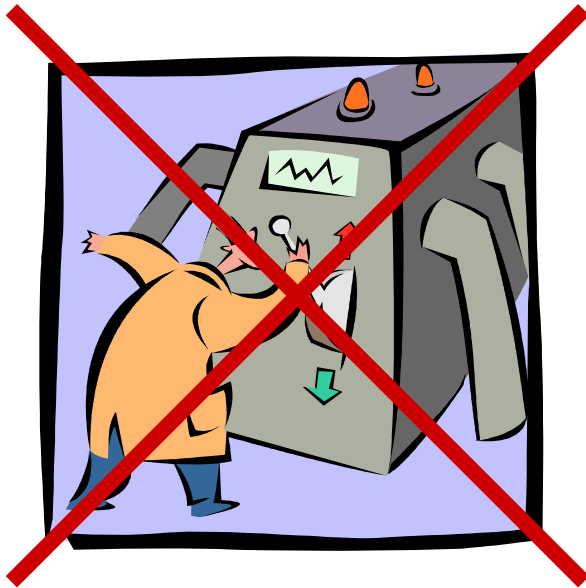
What goes wrong in developers' first job?

Microsoft®



What goes wrong in developers' first job?

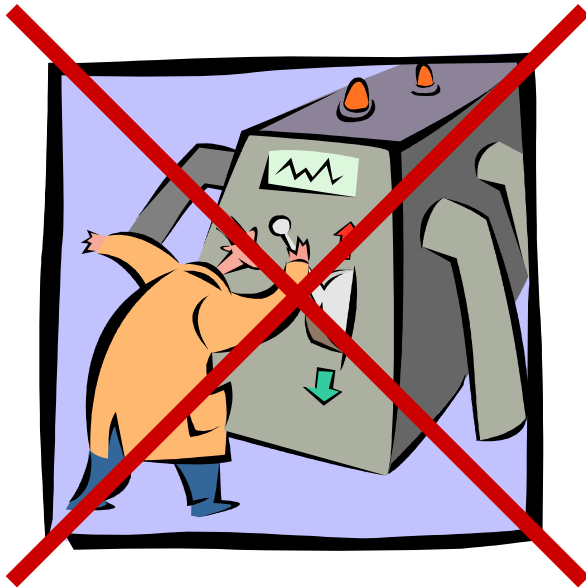
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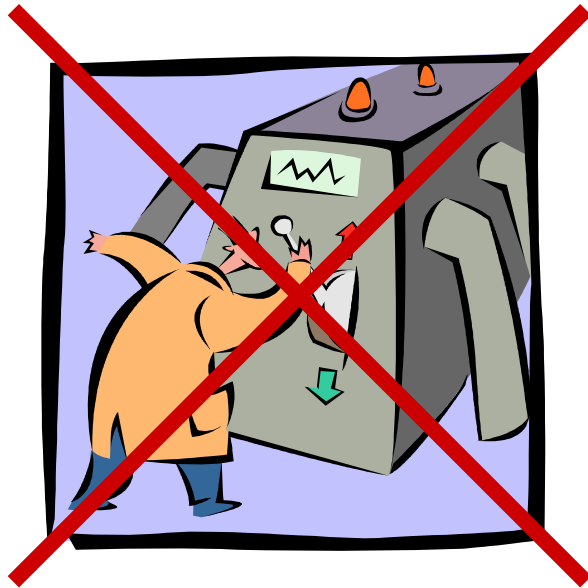
Microsoft®





What goes wrong in developers' first job?

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Also unsurprising in retrospect, and actionable

Statistics is just one path

Statistics is just one path



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Controlled experiments are expensive...

Statistics is just one path



Controlled experiments are expensive...
...and often eliminate exactly what we want to study

Statistics is just one path



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Biggest hurdle is re-education

Test-Driven Development

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An article of faith among many programmers

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An article of faith among many programmers



Meta-analysis of over 30 studies

No consistent effect

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No consistent effect

- Some positive

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The better the study, the weaker the signal

Boehm et al (1975): "Some Experience with Automated Aids to the Design of Large-Scale Reliable Software"

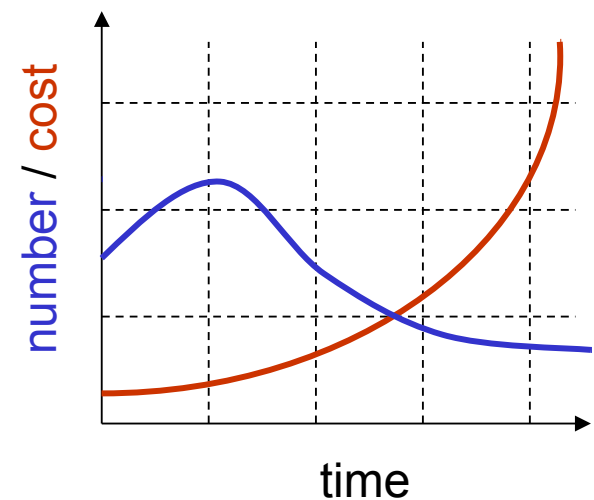
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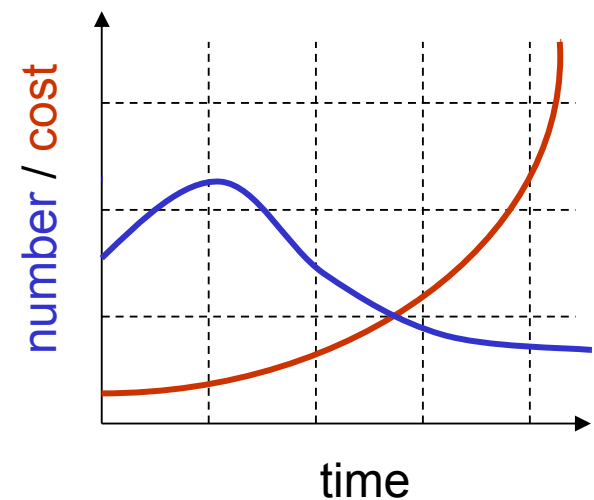
Most errors introduced during requirements analysis and design



Boehm et al (1975): "Some Experience with Automated Aids to the Design of Large-Scale Reliable Software"

...and many more since

Most errors introduced during requirements analysis and design
The later they are removed, the more expensive they are





Pessimists



Optimists



If we tackle the hump in the error injection curve, fewer bugs will get to the expensive part of the fixing curve.

Pessimists



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If we do shorter iterations, the total cost of fixing bugs will go down.



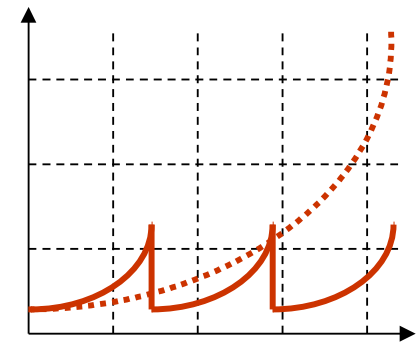
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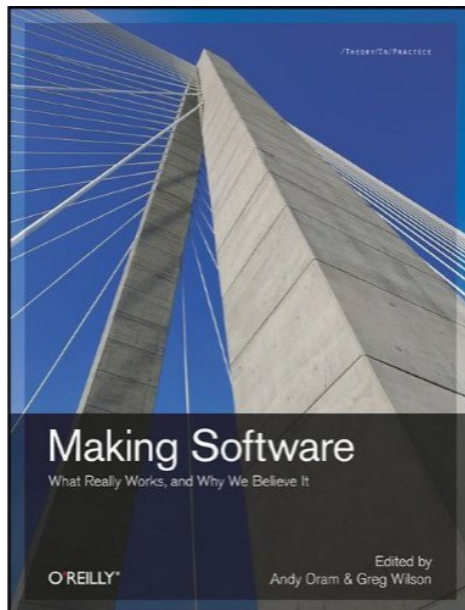
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Code review now normal in open source

Facts and Fallacies of Software Engineering



Robert L. Glass
Foreword by Alan M. Davis

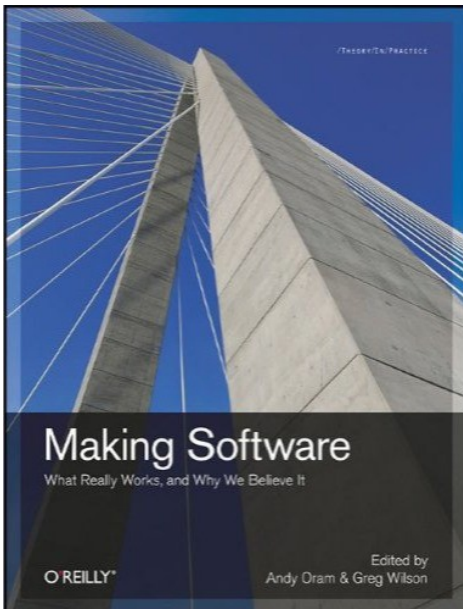


Do programming languages affect productivity?

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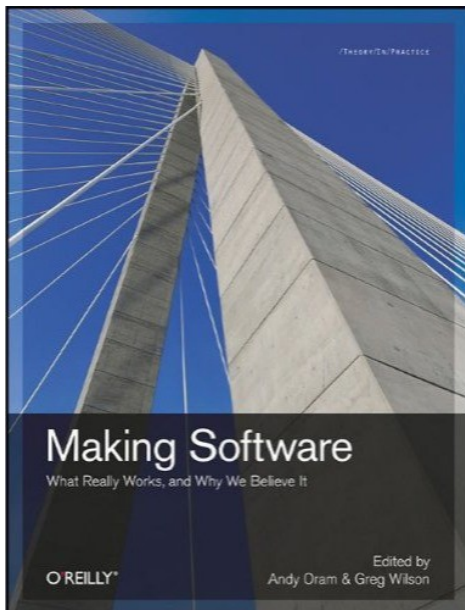
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Does using design patterns
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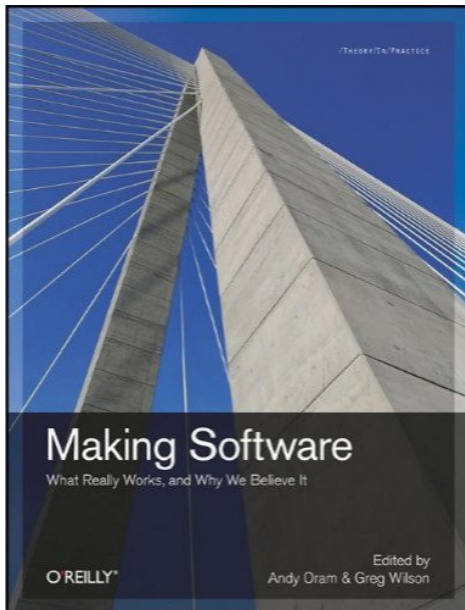
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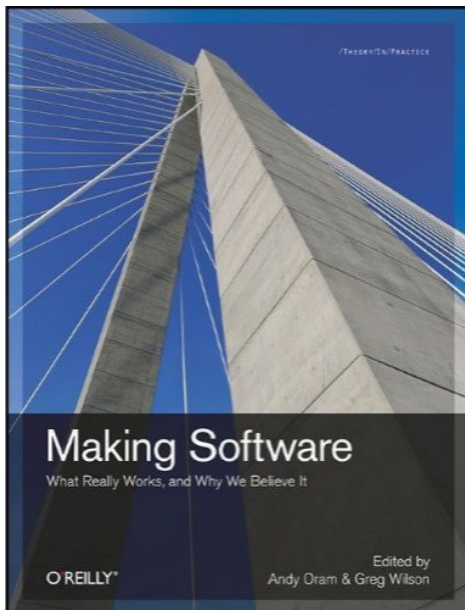
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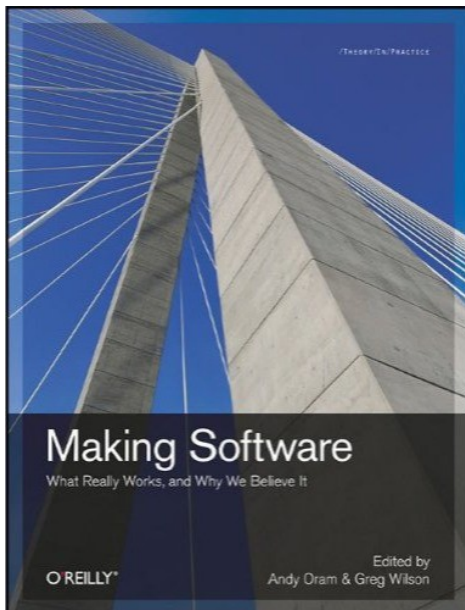
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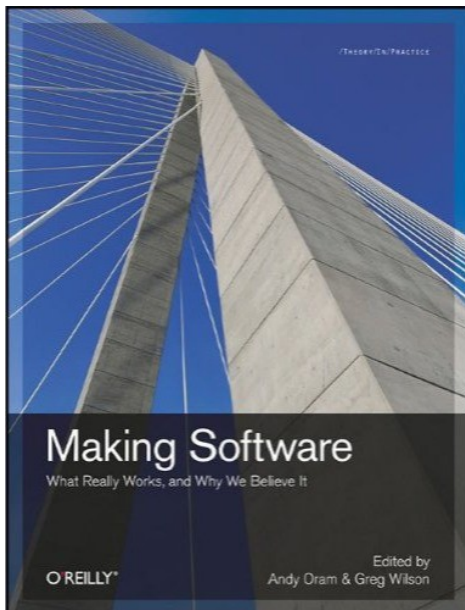


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Is up-front architecture cost-effective?

Why is it hard to learn how to program?

Is open source software actually better?



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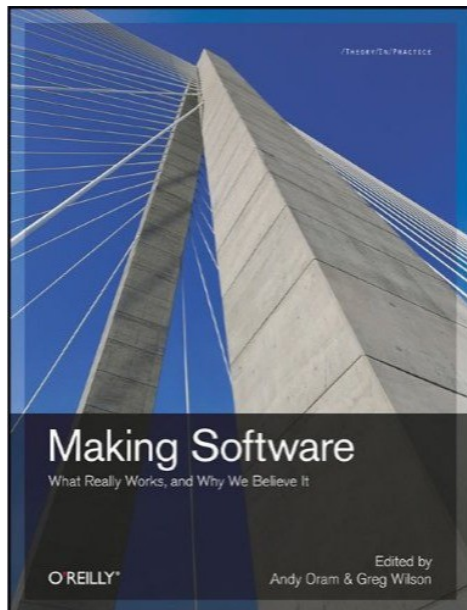
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Why is it hard to learn how to program?

Is open source software actually better?

Are some programmers 10X better?



narrated by

Greg Wilson

February 2011



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