

All Spreadsheets must Die

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May 3, 2019

Getting started

A random list of languages we love to hate



Hating by numbers

C++ *4.4 Million* (2015)

C *1.9 Million* (2015)

Java *9 Million* (2009)

JS *10 Million* (2018)

These are all small fish

These are all small fish

Excel

≈ 750 Million (2016)¹

¹[3, 4]





**BUT EXCEL IS
NOT PROGRAMMING**

Oh, but it is

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Consolidated Statements of Shareholders' Equity											
2	(DOLLARS IN THOUSANDS)											
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50												

Functional programming in Excel
Felienne Hermans
@Felienne

goto;
conference



goto;

A little bit of Spreadsheet bashing

Seeing the code is difficult

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet interface with a formula bar at the top and a table below it.

Formula Bar:

- Cell reference: B1
- Icon: A dropdown arrow icon.
- Icon: A small icon with three dots and a yellow star.
- Icon: A Greek letter Σ (Sigma).
- Icon: An equals sign (=).
- Text: =A1 * 13.37

Table:

	A	B	C
1	10	133.7	
2	14	187.18	
3			

Dynamic Types

	A	B	C
1	Firstname	Lastname	Age
2	John	Doe	34
3	Hans	Mustermann	twenty-five
4			

Dynamic Types

D4	A	B	C
1	Firstname	Lastname	Age
2	John	Doe	34
3	Hans	Mustermann	25

Dynamic Types

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet interface with a toolbar at the top and a data table below. The toolbar includes a dropdown menu, a formula editor icon, a sum icon (Σ), an equals sign icon (=), and a value '25'. The table has columns labeled A, B, and C. Row 1 contains column headers: '1' under A, 'Firstname' under B, and 'Lastname' under C. Row 2 contains data: '2' under A, 'John' under B, and '34' under C. Row 3 contains data: '3' under A, 'Hans' under B, and 'Mustermann' under C. The cell containing 'Mustermann' is currently selected.

C3	A	B	C
1	Firstname	Lastname	Age
2	John	Doe	34
3	Hans	Mustermann	25



git blame

git blame

git blame

git blame

lets not go there

we will just become sad

Code refactoring

- =SUM(1,2)

Code refactoring

- =SUM(1,2)
- equal, identifier, lparen, int(1), comma, int(2), rparen

Code refactoring

- =SUM(1,2)
- equal, identifier, lparen, int(1), comma, int(2), rparen
- set excel locale to de_DE
- =SUM(1,2)

Code refactoring

- =SUM(1,2)
- equal, identifier, lparen, int(1), comma, int(2), rparen
- set excel locale to de_DE
- =SUM(1,2)
- equal, identifier, lparen, float(1.2), rparen

Bits and Pieces

- Knowledge silos
- Slow
- No separation between data and code
- Access management ...

Bits and Pieces

- Knowledge silos
- Slow
- No separation between data and code
- Access management ... anybody?

(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private shopping spreadsheet
2. Show spreadsheet to college
3. Use spreadsheet for all company purchases
4. Put web frontend on spreadsheet backend
5. Pivot company to become commerce company

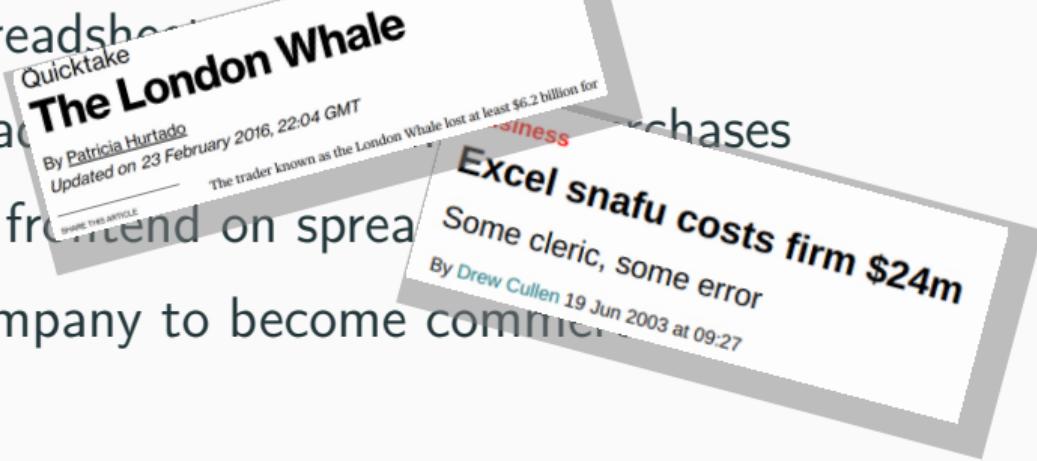
(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private shopping spreadsheet
2. Show spreadsheet to college
3. Use spreadsheet for all company purchases
4. Put web frontend on spreadsheet
5. Pivot company to become commerce



(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private shopping spreadsheet
2. Show spreadsheet to business partners
3. Use spreadsheet to make large purchases
4. Put web frontend on spreadsheet
5. Pivot company to become commercial



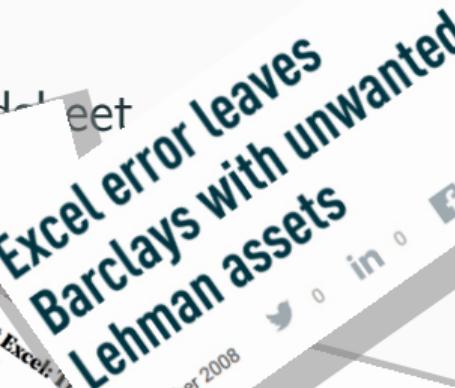
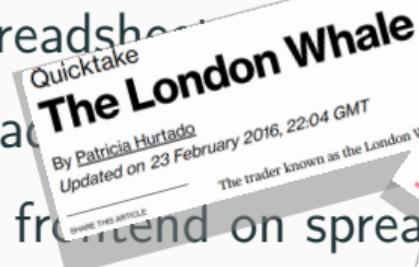
(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private shopping spreadsheet
2. Show spreadsheet to clients
3. Use spreadsheet to make purchases
4. Put web frontend on spreadsheet
5. Pivot company to become commercial



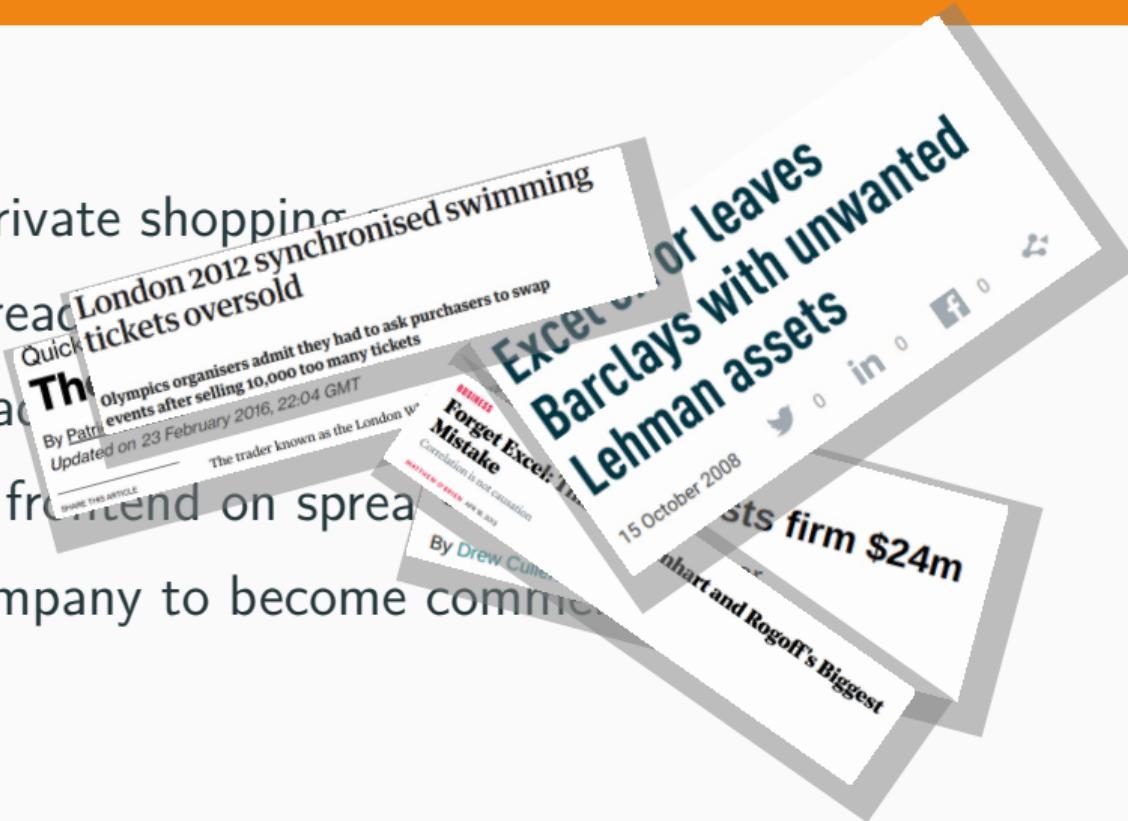
(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private shopping spreadsheet
2. Show spreadsheet to colleagues
3. Use spreadsheet to make decisions
4. Put web frontend on spreadsheet
5. Pivot company to become commercial



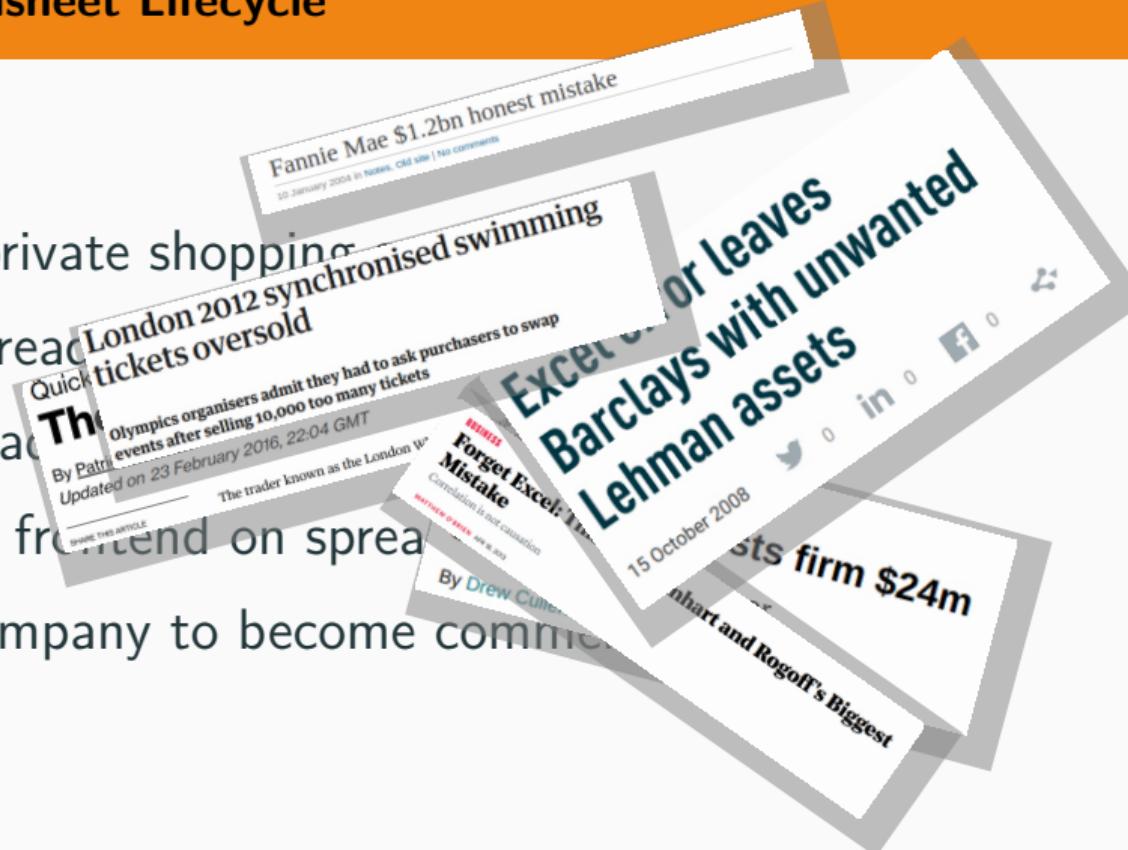
(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private shopping list
2. Show spreadsheet to friends
3. Use spreadsheet to calculate
4. Put web frontend on spreadsheet
5. Pivot company to become commercial



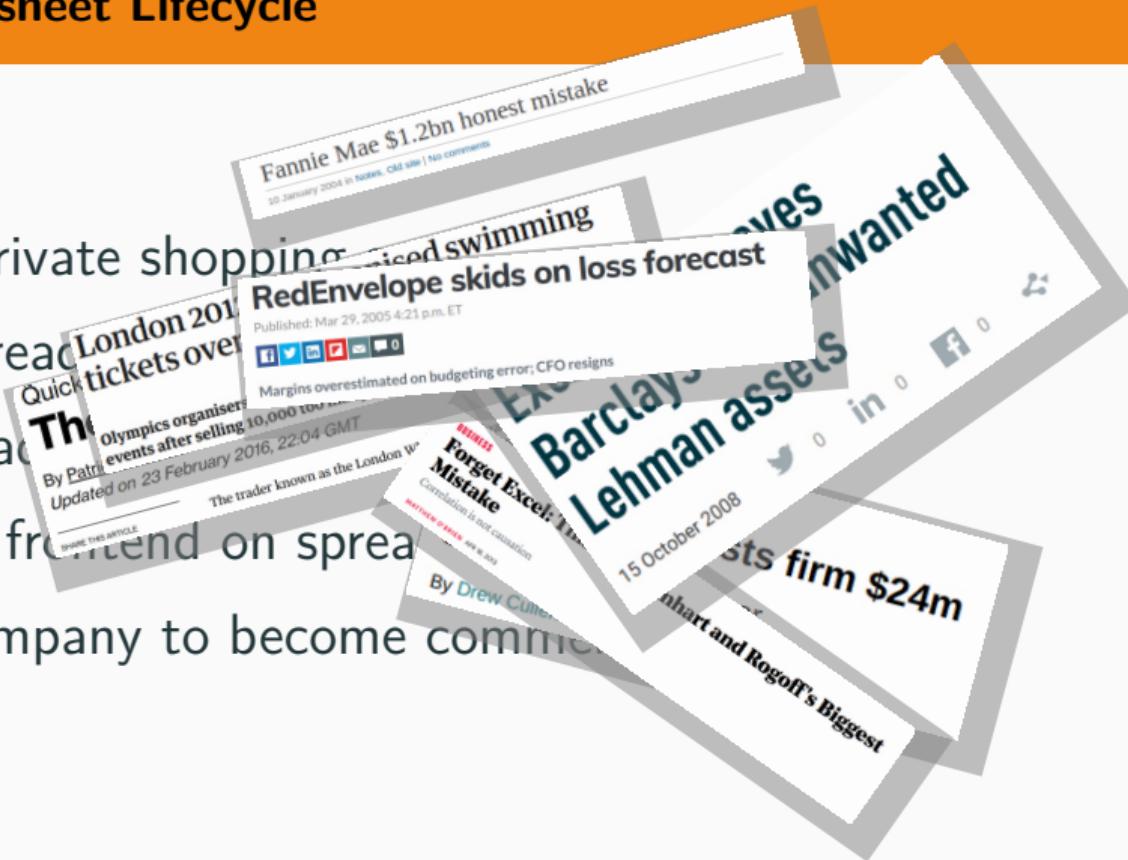
(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private shopping list
2. Show spreadsheets to friends
3. Use spreadsheets to calculate
4. Put web frontend on spreadsheet
5. Pivot company to become commercial



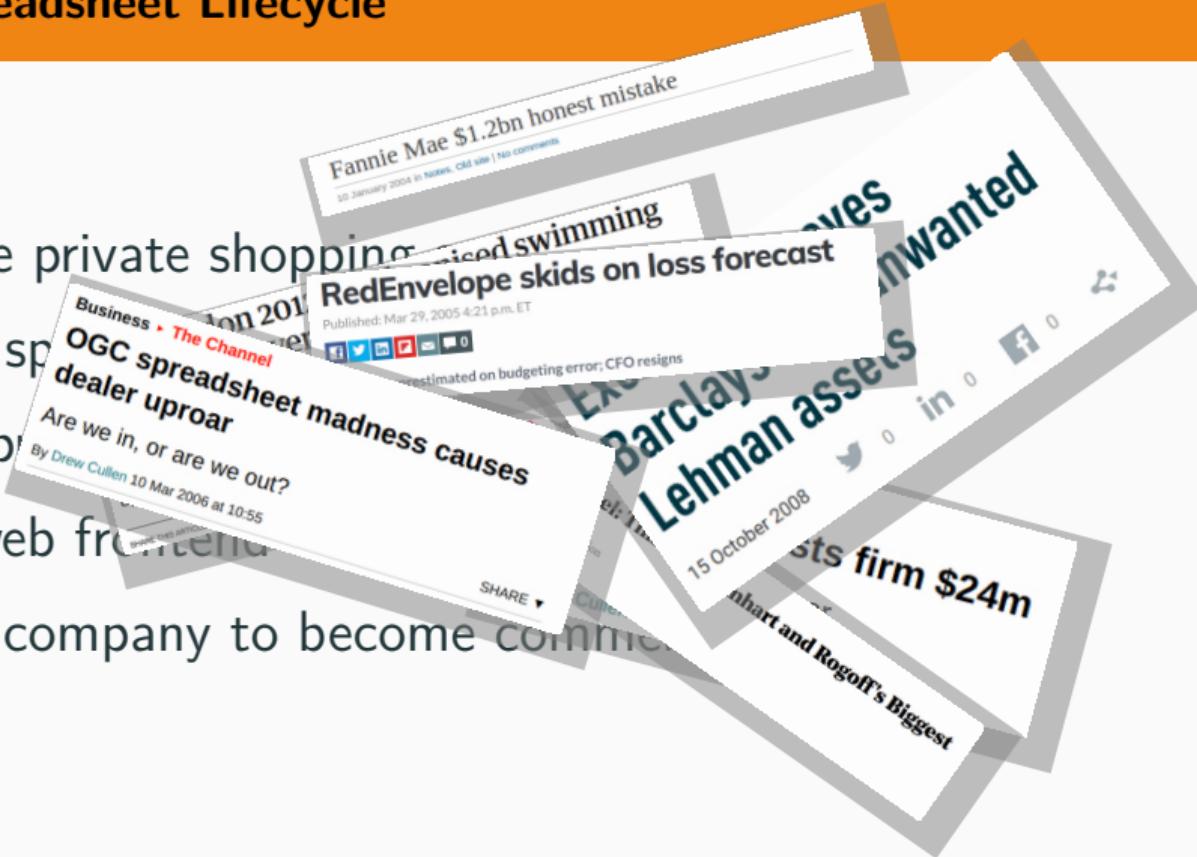
(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private shopping list
2. Show spreadsheets to investors
3. Use spreadsheets to manage risk
4. Put web frontend on spreadsheets
5. Pivot company to become commercial



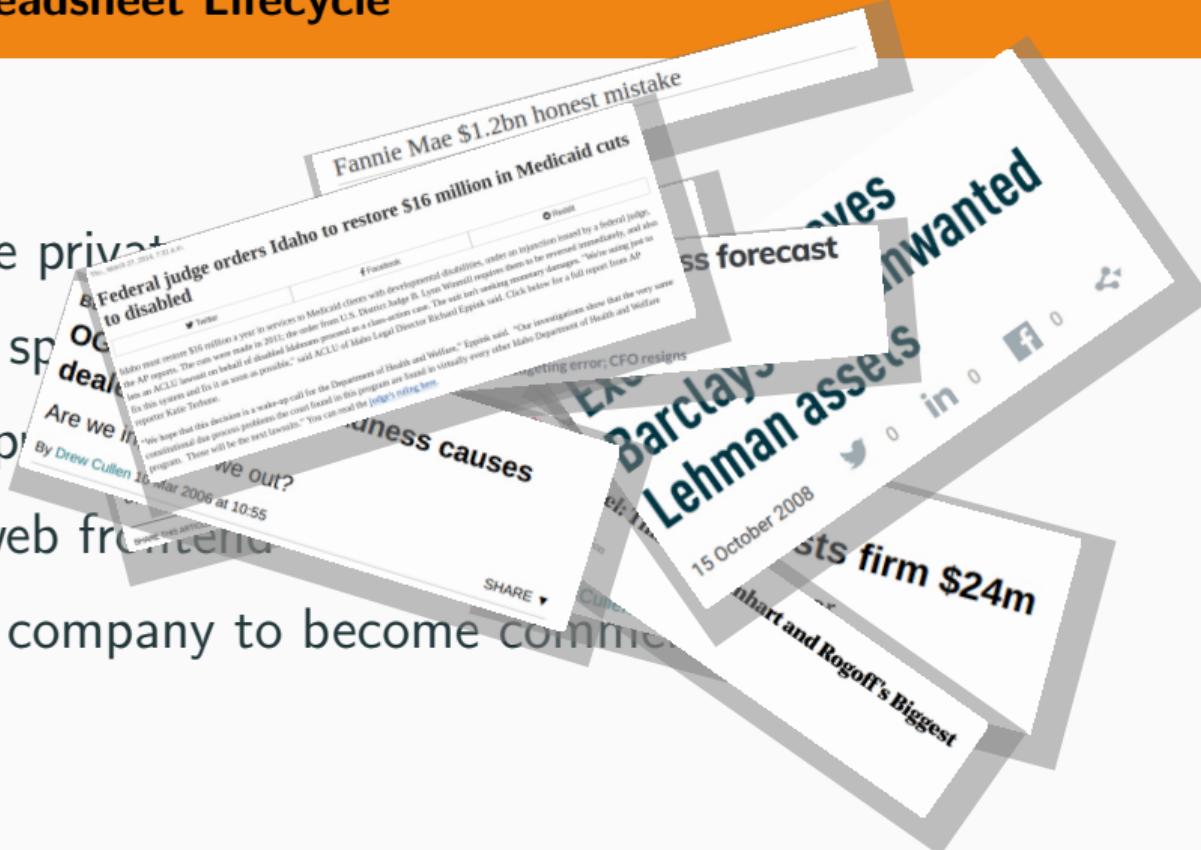
(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private shopping list
2. Show spreadsheet to your boss
3. Use spreadsheet to calculate ROI
4. Put web frontend up
5. Pivot company to become consulting firm



(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

1. Create private spreadsheet
2. Show spreadsheets to investors
3. Use spreadsheets to manage business causes
4. Put web frontend on spreadsheets
5. Pivot company to become commercial



(Typical) Spreadsheet Lifecycle

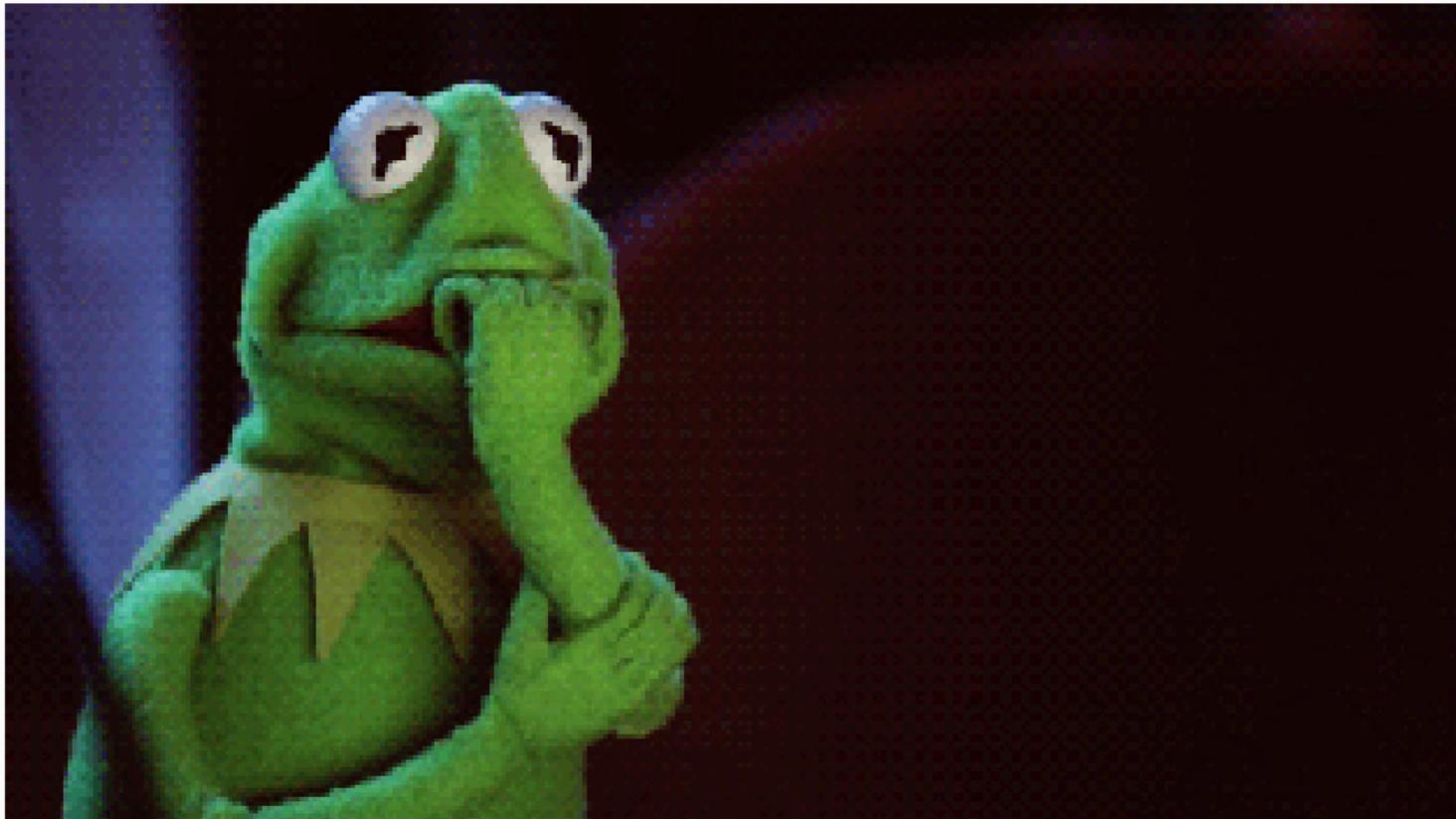
1. Create problem
2. Show spreadsheet errors
3. Use spreadsheets
4. Put web pages online
5. Pivot control

The collage includes:

- A screenshot of the EuSpRIG homepage featuring a banner about a "£2bn honest mistake".
- A screenshot of the "Original Horror Stories" section, showing a story titled "089) Which way around do you calculate a percentage change?" which discusses a political error.
- A screenshot of the "Original Horror Stories" section, showing a story titled "088) Scoring an own goal" which discusses a procurement error.
- A screenshot of the EuSpRIG LinkedIn page with a post about a \$24m procurement error.
- A screenshot of the EuSpRIG Facebook page with a post about a procurement error.

Spreadsheets rule the world!

How you should be feeling right now



Two assumptions going forward

1. You believe that spreadsheets rule the world.
2. You want D to rule the world instead.

How are we going to win this?

How are we going to win this?

We are not!

Lets draw up a battle plan

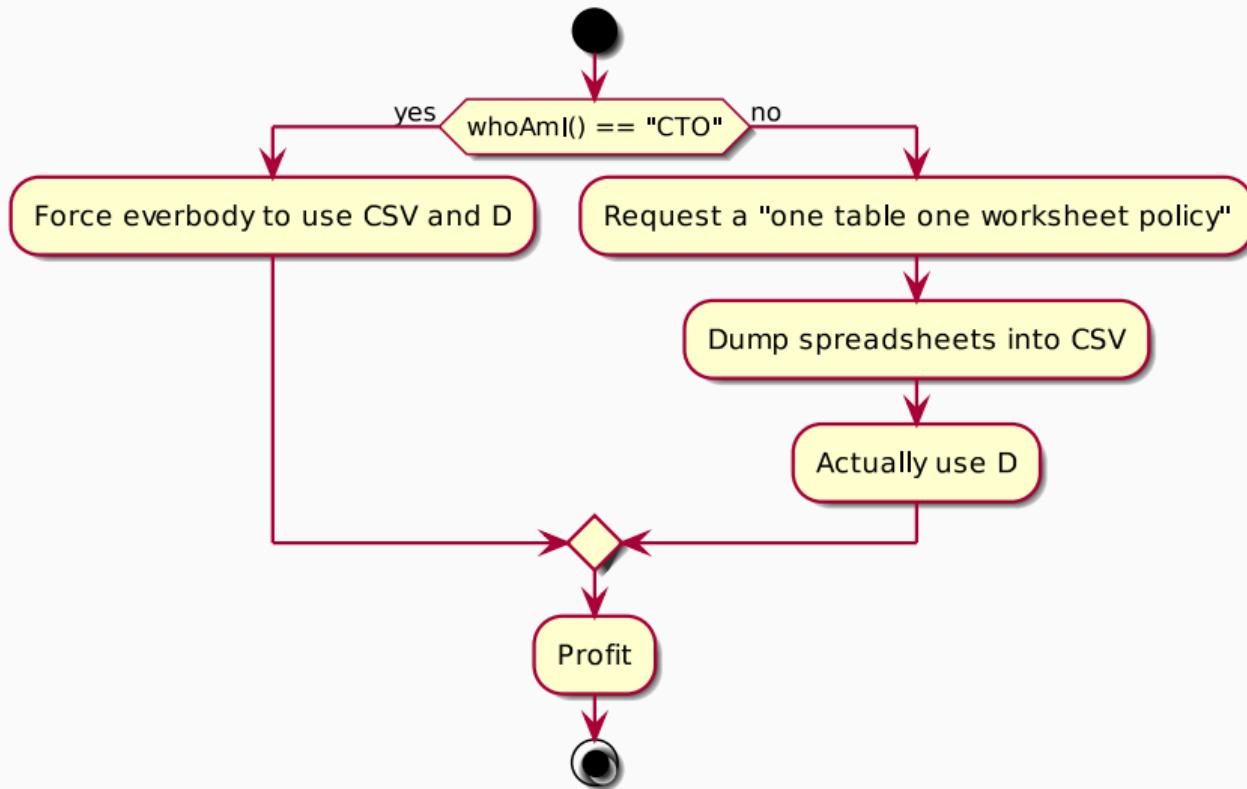
Lets take stock of what we have

- Too many spreadsheets
- Too many tasks
- Too little man-power

Lets take stock of what we have

- Too many spreadsheets
 - Too many tasks
 - Too little man-power
-
- Millions of lines of source in different languages
 - D

Possible Attack Vectors



How to work with limited man-power

Leveraging existing libraries

Writing data to spreadsheets

Leveraging existing libraries

Writing data to spreadsheets

- Is required, people will ask for that
 - Writing a somewhat feature complete xlsx writer is a huge task
-
- libxlsxwriter is a feature rich xlsx writer
 - Wrapping it by hand,

Leveraging existing libraries

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Leveraging existing libraries

Writing data to spreadsheets

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- libxlsxwriter is a feature rich xlsx writer
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-
- dpp to the rescue
 - libxlsxwriter.d (+4000 lines)
 - But it is still a C api

dpp output

```
1 void chart_axis_set_name(lxw_chart_axis*, const(char)*)  
2 void chart_axis_set_name_range(lxw_chart_axis*, const(char)*,  
    lxw_row_t, lxw_col_t)  
3 void chart_axis_set_name_font(lxw_chart_axis*, lxw_chart_font*)  
4 void chart_axis_set_num_font(lxw_chart_axis*, lxw_chart_font*)  
5 void chart_axis_set_num_format(lxw_chart_axis*, const(char)*)  
6 void chart_axis_set_line(lxw_chart_axis*, lxw_chart_line*)  
7 void chart_axis_set_fill(lxw_chart_axis*, lxw_chart_fill*)  
8 void chart_axis_set_pattern(lxw_chart_axis*, lxw_chart_pattern  
    *)
```

Semi-automatic refactoring

```
1 struct ChartAxis {
2     lxw_chart_axis* handle;
3
4     void setName(string name) {
5         chart_axis_set_name(this.handle, toStringz(name));
6     }
7
8     void setNameRange(string name, lxw_row_t row,
9                        lxw_col_t col)
10    {
11        chart_axis_set_name(this.handle, toStringz(name), row,
12                            col
13    );
14    }
15    ...
16 }
```

Creating fake data

Creating fake data

Problem to solve: We needed fake data with a variety of attributes.

- Name
- Address
- i18n
- ...

Cre



faker.js

- +160 attributes
- 39 languages

faker.js

```
1 module["exports"] = [
2     "#{prefix} #{first_name} #{last_name}",
3     "#{first_name} #{nobility_title_prefix} #{last_name}",
4     "#{first_name} #{last_name}",
5     "#{first_name} #{last_name}",
6     "#{first_name} #{last_name}",
7     "#{first_name} #{last_name}"
8 ];
```

Listing 1: locales/de/name/name.js

```
1  override string nameName() {
2      switch(uniform(0, 6, this.rnd)) {
3          case 0:
4              return format! "%s %s %s"(namePrefix(), nameFirstName(),
5                  nameLastName());
6          case 1:
7              return format! "%s %s %s"(nameFirstName(), nameNobilityTitlePrefix(),
8                  nameLastName());
9          case 2:
10             return format! "%s %s"(nameFirstName(), nameLastName());
11         case 3:
12             return format! "%s %s"(nameFirstName(), nameLastName());
13         case 4:
14             return format! "%s %s"(nameFirstName(), nameLastName());
15         case 5:
16             return format! "%s %s"(nameFirstName(), nameLastName());
17         default: assert(false);
18     }
19 }
```

FakeD

```
1 import faked;
2
3 auto f = new Faker(1337);
4 writeln(f.nameName());
5
6 // localized to german
7 f = new Faker_de(1338);
8 writeln(f.nameName());
```

- Input:
 - Parser and Generator \approx 1500 lines of D
 - A day of labor

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 - Parser and Generator \approx 1500 lines of D
 - A day of labor
- Output:
 - Output feature equivalent \approx 70000 lines faker.js clone
 - Most changes in faker.js just require a rerun of the tool to update

- Input:
 - Parser and Generator \approx 1500 lines of D
 - A day of labor
- Output:
 - Output feature equivalent \approx 70000 lines faker.js clone
 - Most changes in faker.js just require a rerun of the tool to update
- Bonus:
 - Created two PRs to faker.js fixing wrong template expansion

Taking a step back

The Wanted Output: Salary Table

Firstname	Lastname	Amount	Currency	CreatedBy
Hans	Meier	73331	USD	Ruth Ember
John	Doe	83431	GPB	Ruth Ember
Ruth	Ember	103431	EUR	Hans Meier

The starting point

```
1  class Employee {          17  class Salary {           32  class Currency {  
2    long id;              18  long id;             33  long id;  
3    DateTime createdAt;   19  Employee createdBy;  34  string name;  
4                      20  long createdBy;    35  }  
5    EmployeeInfo info;    21  
6    long infoId;         22  CurrencyAmount amount;  
7  }                      23  long amountId;  
8  
9  class EmployeeInfo {    24  }  
10   long id;             25  
11   string firstname;   26  class CurrencyAmount {  
12   string lastname;    27  long id;  
13  
14   Salary salary;     28  double amount;  
15   long salaryId;     29  
16  }                     30  Currency currency;  
                           31  long currencyId;  
                           32  }
```

The vibe.d REST interface

```
1 interface Backend {  
2     Employee[] getAllEmployees();  
3     Employee getEmployee(long empId);  
4     EmployeeInfo getEmployeeInfo(long empInfoId);  
5     Salary getSalary(long salaryId);  
6     CurrencyAmount getCurrencyAmount(long amountId);  
7     Currency getCurrency(long currencyId);  
8 }
```

The Frontend Code: Types

```
1  interface Employee {          17  interface Salary {  
2    id: number;                18    id: number;  
3    createdAt: number;         19    createdBy?: Employee;  
4                                20    createdById: number;  
5    info?: EmployeeInfo;       21  
6    infoId: number;           22    amount?: CurrencyAmount;  
7  }                           23    amountId: number;  
8                                24 }  
9  interface EmployeeInfo {      25  
10   id: number;                26  interface CurrencyAmount {  
11   firstname: string;         27   id: number;  
12   lastname: string;          28   amount: number;  
13                                29  
14   salary?: Salary;           30   currency?: Currency;  
15   salaryId: number;          31   currencyId: number;  
16 }                           32 }
```

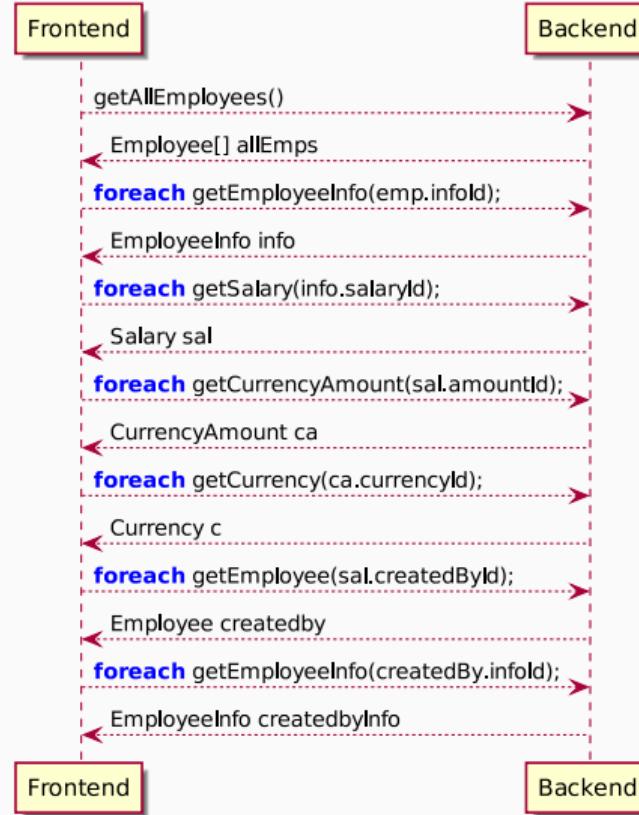
The Frontend Code: Backend Service

```
1 import {  
2     Employee, EmployeeInfo, Salary, CurrencyAmount, Currency  
3 } from "model";  
4  
5 class Backend {  
6     getAllEmployees(): Employee[] { ... }  
7     getEmployee(empId: number): Employee { ... }  
8     getEmployeeInfo(empInfoId: number): EmployeeInfo { ... }  
9     getSalary(salaryId: number): Salary { ... }  
10    getCurrencyAmount(amountId: number): CurrencyAmount { ... }  
11    getCurrency(currencyId: number): Currency { ... }  
12 }
```

The Frontend Code: Calling the Backend

```
1  this.backend.getAllEmployees().pipe(  
2    mergeMap((emps: Employee[]) => {  
3      const obs = [];  
4      for(const emp of emps) {  
5        obs.push(this.backend.getEmployeeInfo(emp.infoId)  
6          .pipe(map((empInfo: EmployeeInfo) => {  
7            const ne: Employee = {...emp, info : empInfo};  
8            return ne;  
9          }))  
10         )  
11       );  
12     }  
13     return forkJoin(obs);  
14   }),  
15   mergeMap((emps: Employee[]) => {  
16     const obs = [];  
17     for(const emp of emps) {  
18       obs.push(this.backend.getSalary(emp.info.salaryId))  
19     })  
20   })  
21   .pipe(map(([emp, salary]) => {  
22     const es: EmployeeWithSalary = {...emp, salary};  
23     return es;  
24   }))  
25   .subscribe(res => {  
26     console.log(res);  
27   })  
28 };
```

The Communication



The Takeaways

- Clearly, this is unworkable
- Not plastic at all
- Just a lot of boring work

The real Takeaway



MAKE GIFS AT GFSOUP.COM

So, what do we/I want?

Declare how we want data to get, when we're asking for it.

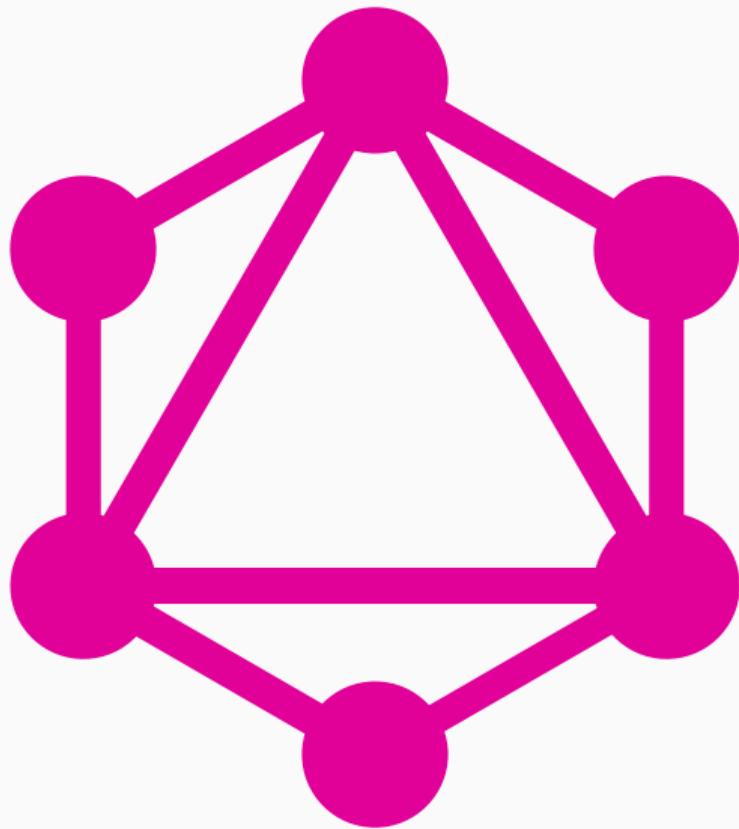
Why can't we write this?

```
1  {
2      allEmployees {
3          info {
4              firstname
5              lastname
6              salary {
7                  amount
8                  currency {
9                      name
10                 }
11                 createdBy {
12                     info {
13                         firstname
14                         lastname
15                     }
16                 }
17             }
18         }
19     }
20 }
```

Why can't we write this?

```
1  {
2      allEmployees {
3          info {
4              firstname
5              lastname
6              salary {
7                  amount
8                  currency {
9                      name
10                 }
11                 createdBy {
12                     info {
13                         firstname
14                         lastname
15                     }
16                 }
17             }
18         }
19     }
20 }
```

```
1  {
2      allEmployees: [ {
3          info: {
4              firstname: "Hans",
5              lastname: "Meier",
6              salary: {
7                  amount: 73331,
8                  currency: {
9                      name: "USD"
10                 }
11                 createdBy: {
12                     info: {
13                         firstname: "Ruth",
14                         lastname: "Ember"
15                     }
16                 }
17             }
18         },
19         ...
20     ]
21 }
```



GraphQL

```
1 schema {  
2   query: Backend  
3 }  
4  
5 type Backend {  
6   getAllEmployees: [Employee]  
7 }  
8  
9 type Employee {  
10   id: number!;  
11   createdAt: number!;  
12  
13   info: EmployeeInfo;  
14   infoId: number!;  
15 }  
16  
17 type EmployeeInfo {  
18   id: number!;  
19   firstname: String!;  
20   lastname: String!;  
21   salaryId: number!;  
22   salary: Salary;  
23 }  
24  
25 type Salary {  
26   id: number!;  
27   createdBy: Employee;  
28   amountId: number!;  
29   amount: CurrencyAmount;  
30 }  
31  
32 type CurrencyAmount {  
33   id: number!;  
34   amount: number!;  
35   currencyId: number!;  
36   currency: Currency;  
37 }
```

Less code is better

```
1 query one {  
2   allEmployees {  
3     ...deep  
4   }  
5 }  
6  
7 fragment names on EmployeeInfo {  
8   firstname  
9   lastname  
10 }  
11  
12 fragment empInfo on Employee {  
13   info {  
14     ...names  
15   }  
16 }  
  
1   fragment deep on Employee {  
2     info {  
3       ...names  
4       salary {  
5         amount  
6         currency {  
7           name  
8         }  
9         createdBy {  
10           ...empInfo  
11         }  
12       }  
13     }  
14   }
```

Introspecting Types

```
1  {
2      __type(name: "Employee") {
3          name
4          fields {
5              name
6              type {
7                  name
8                  kind
9                  ofType {
10                     name
11                 }
12             }
13         }
14     }
15 }
```

```
1  {
2      "data": {
3          "__type": {
4              "name": "Employee",
5              "fields": [
6                  {
7                      "name": "id",
8                      "type": {
9                          "name": null,
10                         "kind": "NON_NULL",
11                         "ofType": {
12                             "name": "INT"
13                         }
14                     }
15                 },
16                 {
17                     "name": "info",
18                     "type": {
19                         "name": "EmployeeInfo",
20                         "kind": "OBJECT"
21                     }
22                 }
23             ]
24         }
25     }
26 }
```

[Packages](#)[Documentation ▾](#)[About ▾](#)[Download](#)[Lo](#)

Search results for: *graphql*

Package	Latest version
---------	----------------

Found 0 packages.

JUST DO IT



```
1 import graphqld;
2
3 interface Query {
4     Employee[] getAllEmployees();
5 }
6
7 class Schema {
8     Query queryType;
9 }
```

```
1 import graphql;
2
3 interface Query {
4     Employee[] getAllEmployees();
5 }
6
7 class Schema {
8     Query queryType;
9 }
```

```
1     auto graphqld = new GraphQL!(Schema)();
2
3     graphqld.setResolver(
4         "queryType", "getAllEmployees",
5         delegate(string name, Json parent,
6                  Json args, ref Context context) @safe
7         {
8             Employee[] employees = getAllEmployees();
9             Json ret = Json.emptyObject();
10            ret["data"] = toGraphqlJson(employees);
11            return ret;
12        });
13 }
```

GraphQL

```
1 void graphqlEndpoint(HTTPServerRequest req,
2     HTTPServerResponse res)
3 {
4     string toParse = extractQuery(req);
5     auto p = Parser(Lexer(toParse));
6
7     Document d = p.parseDocument();
8     auto fv = new QueryValidator(d);
9     auto sv = new SchemaValidator!Schema(d, graphqld.schema);
10    fv.accept(d);
11    sv.accept(d);
12
13    Context con = buildContext(req);
14    Json ret = graphqld.execute(d, extractVariables(req), con);
15    res.writeJsonBody(ret);
16 }
```

GraphQL

```
1 graphQL.setResolver("Employee", "info",
2     delegate(string name, Json parent, Json args,
3             ref Context context)
4 {
5     const id = parent["infoId"].get!long();
6     EmployeeInfo ei = getEmployeeInfo(id);
7     Json ret = Json.emptyObject();
8     ret["data"] = toGraphQLJson(ei);
9     return ret;
10 });
```

- Mostly feature complete
- Some validations are missing
- ≈ 17000 lines
- ≈ 9000 lines are generated by parser
- ready for use now

Homework

Homework

Write a GraphQL backend that uses an excel spreadsheet as a database.

Conclusion

Conclusion

- Spreadsheets are a terrible programming language.

Conclusion

- Spreadsheets are a terrible programming language.
- C++ and Rust are not our main competition.

Conclusion

- Spreadsheets are a terrible programming language.
- C++ and Rust are not our main competition.
- We need to learn to use what is there.
- Use D to work smart not hard.
- Do not write the code, write the code that writes the code.
- Look at JS for inspiration.
- GraphQL 

The End

- [1] *Infographic: C/C++ facts we learned before going ahead with CLion.*
<https://blog.jetbrains.com/clion/2015/07/infographics-cpp-facts-before-clion/>. (Accessed on 04/08/2019).
- [2] Developer Economics. *Developer Economics: State of the Developer Nation 15th Edition*. <https://www.developereconomics.com/reports/state-of-the-developer-nation-15th-edition>. (Accessed on 04/08/2019).
- [3] Microsoft. *Build 2016 Keynote (Day 2)*.
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- [4] Irish Tech News. *Seven reasons why Excel is still used by half a billion people worldwide.* <https://irishtechnews.ie/seven-reasons-why-excel-is-still-used-by-half-a-billion-people-worldwide/>. (Accessed on 04/08/2019).
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Encore

Reappearing UDA Pattern

```
1 struct Employee {  
2     @GQLD(  
3         Description("The social security number of an employee"),  
4         Deprecated(IsDeprecated.yes, "To complex")  
5     )  
6     SocialSecurityNumber number;  
7 }
```

Reappearing UDA Pattern

```
1  struct Employee {
2      @GQLD(
3          Description("The social security number of an employee"),
4          Deprecated(IsDeprecated.yes, "To complex")
5      )
6      SocialSecurityNumber number;
7  }
8
9  enum IsDeprecated {
10     undefined,
11     no,
12     yes
13 }
14
15 struct GQLDData {
16     Description desc;
17     Deprecated depre;
18 }
```

Reappearing UDA Pattern

```
1 struct GQLDData {  
2     Description desc;  
3     Deprecated depre;  
4 }  
5  
6 GQLDData GQLD(Args...)(Args args) {  
7     GQLDData ret;  
8     static foreach(mem; __traits(allMembers, GQLDData)) {  
9         static foreach(arg; args) {  
10             static if(is(typeof(__traits(getMember, ret, mem)) ==  
11                         typeof(arg)))  
12             {  
13                 __traits(getMember, ret, mem) = arg;  
14             }  
15         }  
16     }  
17     return ret;  
18 }
```

Static Foreach Switch Case

```
1  Json ret = Json.emptyObject();
2  string typename = ...;
3  l: switch(typename) {
4      static foreach(type; collectTypes!(T)) {{
5          case typeToTypeName!(type): {
6              ret["data"] = typeToJson!(type)();
7              break l;
8          }
9      }}
10     default: break;
11 }
12 return ret;
```

Collecting all Referenced Types

```
1 alias allTypes = collectTypes!Schema;
2
3 template collectTypesImpl(Type) {
4     import graphql.uda;
5     static if(is(Type : GQLDCustomLeaf!F, F)) {
6         alias collectTypes Impl= AliasSeq!(Type);
7     } else static if(is(Type == interface)) {
8         alias RetTypes = AliasSeq!(collectReturnType!(Type,
9             __traits(allMembers, Type)));
10        alias ArgTypes = AliasSeq!(collectParameterTypes!(Type,
11            __traits(allMembers, Type)));
12        alias collectTypesImpl = AliasSeq!(Type, RetTypes,
13            ArgTypes, InterfacesTuple!Type);
14    ....
15 } else static if(is(Type == union)) {
16     alias collectTypesImpl = AliasSeq!(Type, InheritedClasses!Type);
17 } else static if(is(Type : Nullable!F, F)) {
18     alias collectTypesImpl = .collectTypesImpl!(F);
19 }
```

Compile-Time are long as

- \approx 7000 lines
- \approx 8 seconds build time

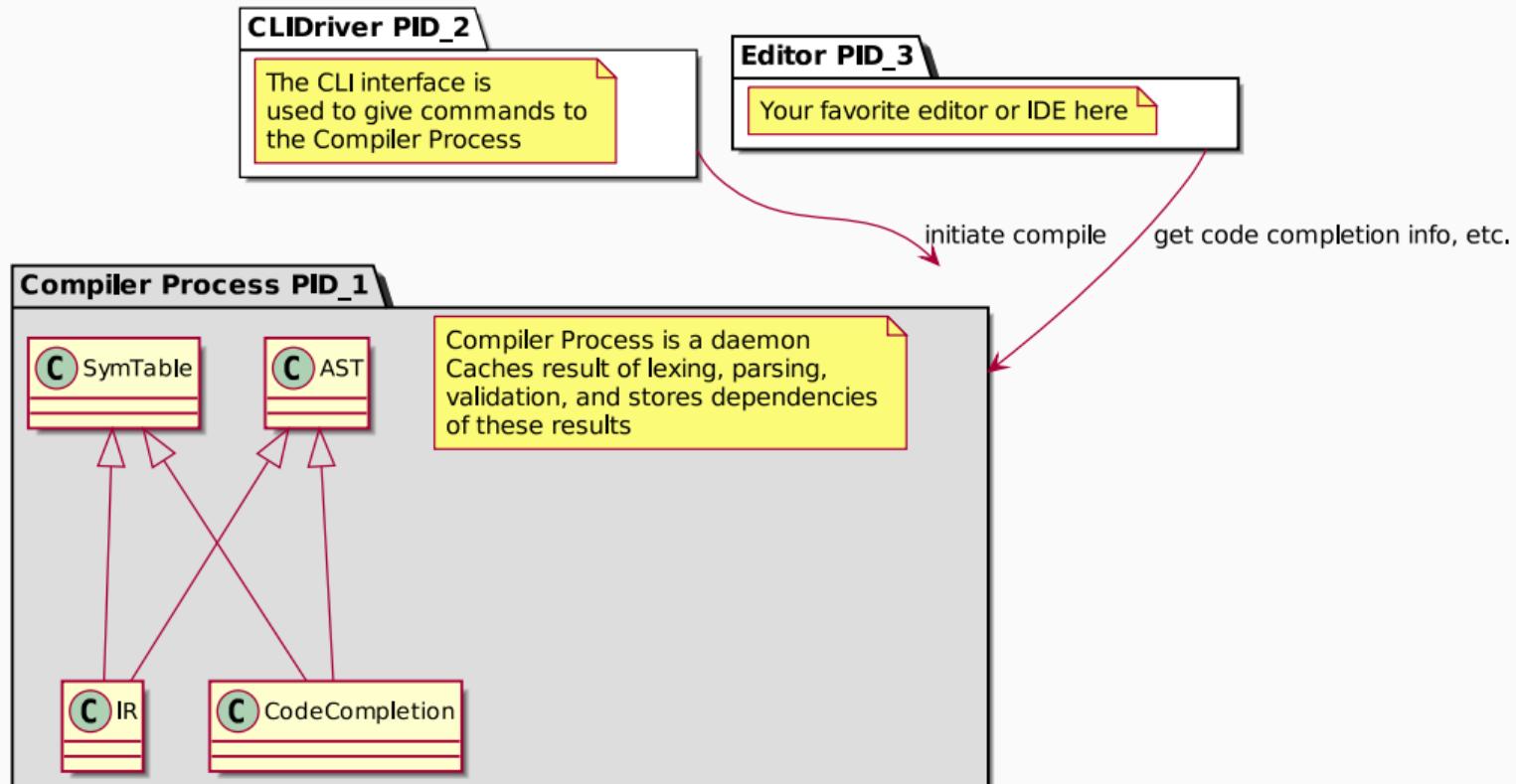
Overall Legacy Architecture

- Traditional compiler pipeline design is dated

Overall Legacy Architecture

- Traditional compiler pipeline design is dated
- We have practically unlimited memory
- Recreating the AST, IR, and ASM on every compile is extremely wasteful
- Why does code-completion and the compiler different frontends

Possible Compiler Re-arch



- Darser is a recursive descent parser generator for LL(1) grammars
- It also generates the AST and a default Visitor
- Not at CT, but as a pre-build step

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 - It also generates the AST and a default Visitor
 - Not at CT, but as a pre-build step
-
- It generates “good” error messages
 - Not just a generic Node types, but names that reflect the grammar
 - Inheriting from the default Visitor is trivial and powerful
 - Used right now by GraphQLD

I'm out of Slides
