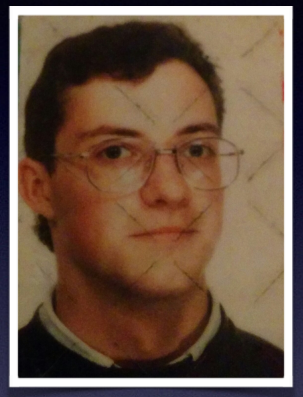
How we build Software

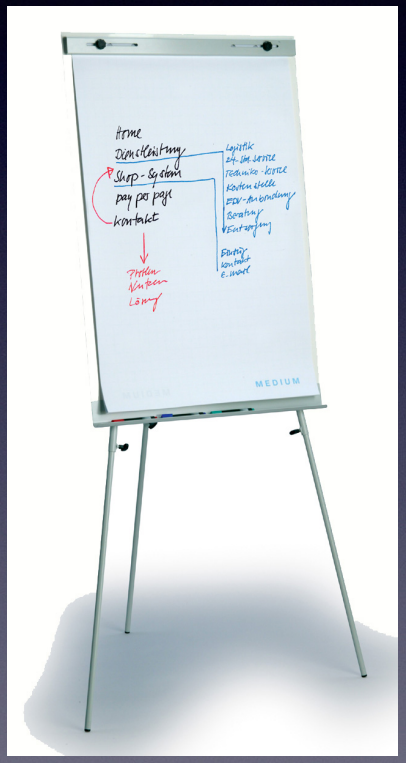
Owen O Byrne — @owenobyrne
Product Architect at Fire Financial Services

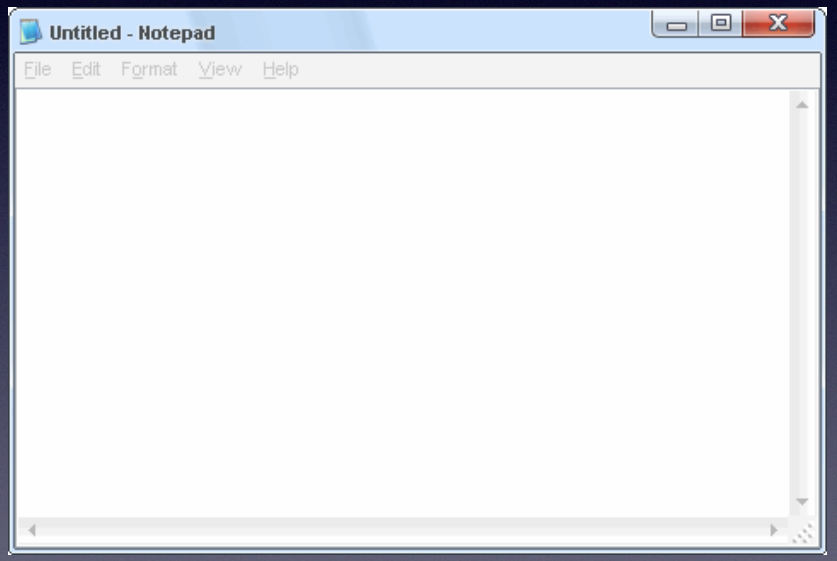
Who am I?

- Theoretical Physics in TCD 1995 - ’99
- Self-taught programmer.
- Helped found Realex Payments in 2000.
- Lead (i.e. “only”) developer for several years, built the first version of the platform.
- Evolved into the Product Guy, and then moved over to Fire Financial Services.

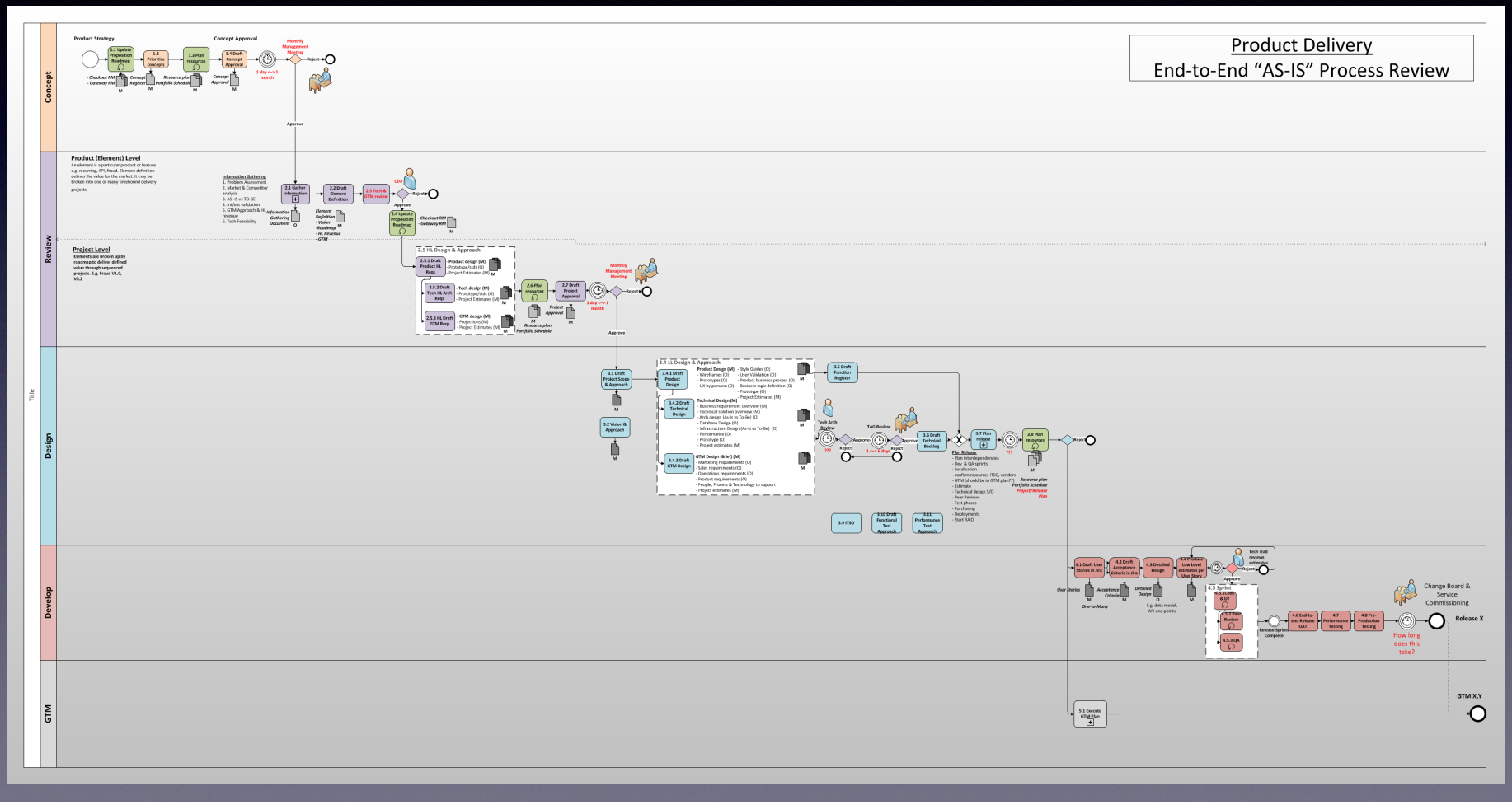


Then:


Home
Dienstleistung
Shop-System
pay per page
kontakt
MEDIUM


Untitled - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help

Now:


Product Delivery
End-to-End "AS-IS" Process Review
Concept
Review
Design
Develop
GTM
Title
Product Strategy
Concept Approval
Product (Element) Level
Project Level
Information Gathering
2.5 HL Design & Approach
3.4 LL Design & Approach
Change Board & Service Commissioning
Release X
GTM X,Y
How long does this take?

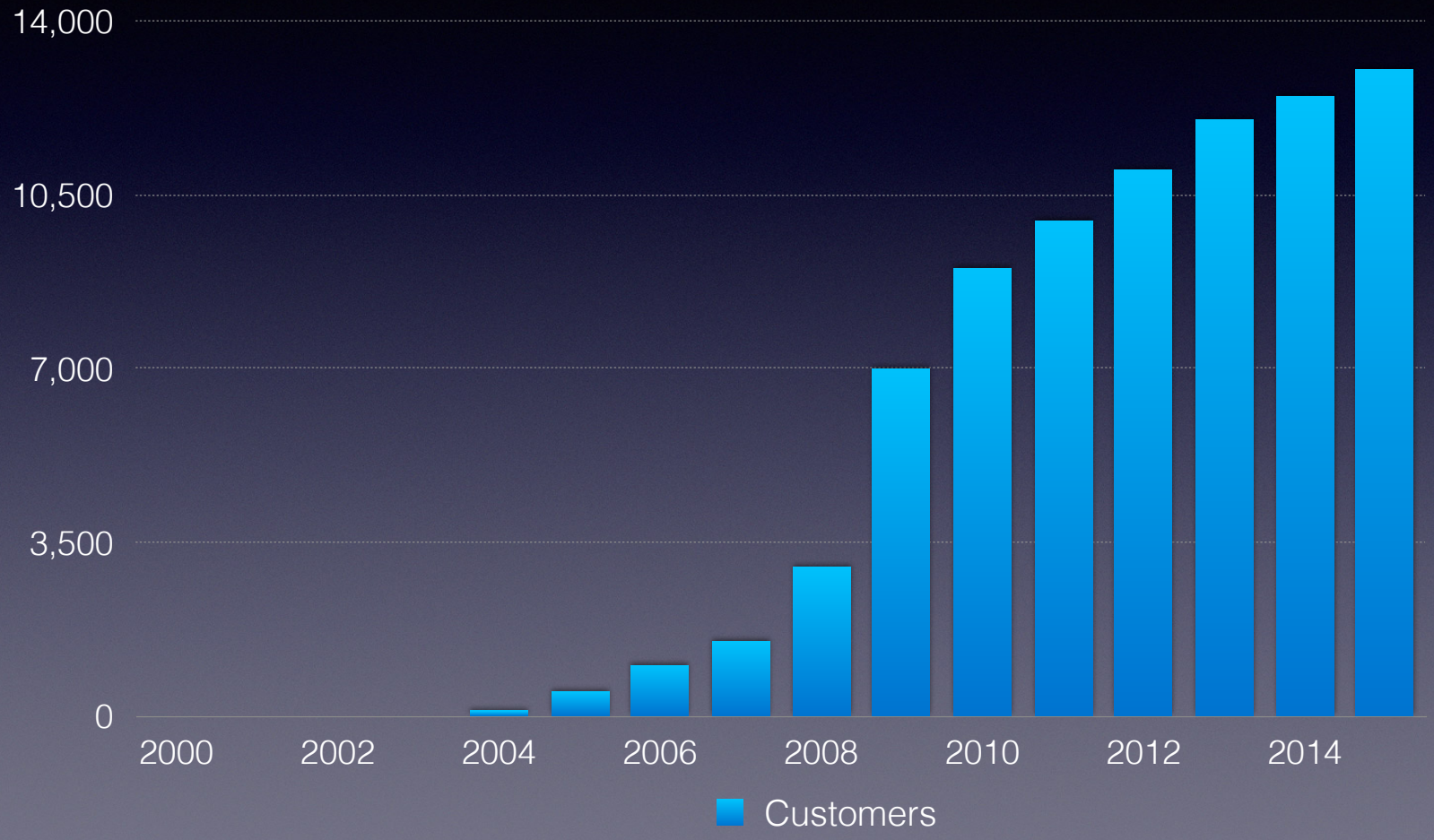
What the !@*#
happened there?!

Other People Happened!

The limits of shared vision

- There's only so many people who can retain a shared vision in their heads.
- Once we got to the 3rd or 4th developer, problems began.
- The overall context of the changes we were making were lost in translation.
- The feature was implemented correctly, but in a manner that actually blocked the planned evolution of the product!
- We needed a way to communicate the vision.

More Customers Happened!

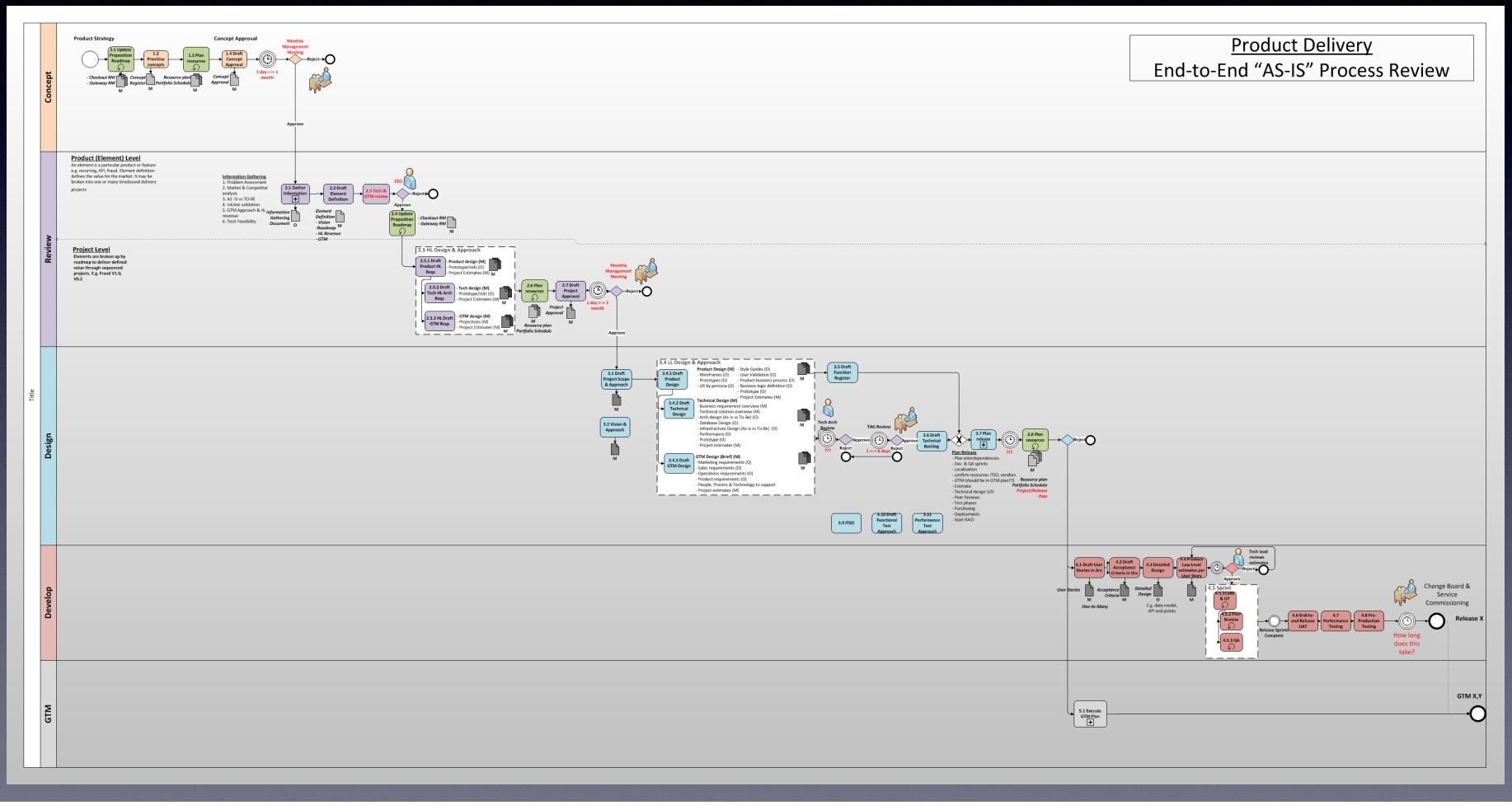


The limits of a Customer-led Organisation.

- In the early days, each new customer had new requirements.
- We gladly implemented each new requirement. Even when that involved this:
  `if ($client == “someclient”) {`
- (yes, it was Perl in those days)
- This led to a brittle codebase, which was impossible to test.
- We needed to become a Product-led Organisation.

Product-led Organisation with a communicated vision?

- We had to decide what our product was and we had to find a way to document it.
- We went with a strategic Product Vision, followed by a definition broken down into Elements, Modules, Functions and Features.
- A high-level Product Roadmap then sequenced the development.

Massive Waterfalls

Ended up with this.