



Technical Debt is a Social Problem

Most technical debt is a failure to communicate or to consider

# Communication

- Bad Documentation
- Poor test coverage
- Code style
- Project organization

# Consideration

- Code isn't robust
- Code can't be updated easily
- Doesn't solve future problems
- Fragile dependencies

# Status quo bias

"I like my hair the way it is thanks"



# IKEA Effect

"My Poäng is the best Poäng."



# Parenting Effect

"When you watch something grow up, you forgive the mess"



# Build delightful products

- One-step setup
- Clear problem
- Obvious first action
- Path to mastery
- Help is available
- Never breaks

- 1) Find the right beachhead
- 2) Separate users and maintainers
- 3) Empathize with the debtor



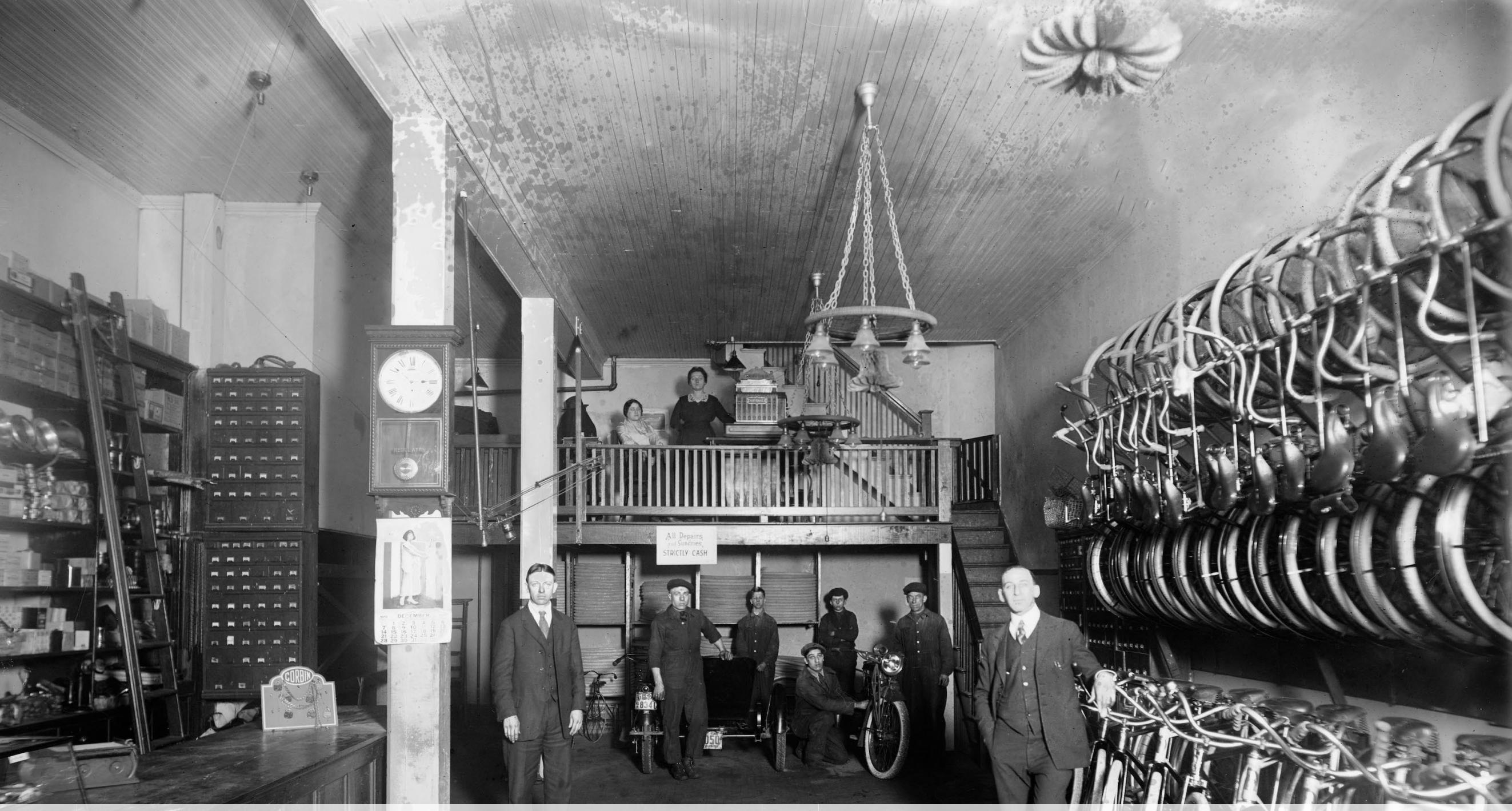
Find the Right Beachhead

# Find the right beachhead



# Find the right beachhead

- Small, contained project
- Big improvement in small area
- Orphan or greenfield
- External pressure



Separate users and maintainers

Users get coddled.

Maintainers get opinions.

# Being a good maintainer

- Responsible for delight
- Product responsibility
- Product authority
- Never blame the user
- Never ask the user to maintain

# Being a good user

- Define delight
- Don't be too smart!
- Don't work too hard!
- Ask about the problem not the solution
- Complain without embarrassment
- Refuse to read source code

If people do not welcome your  
input on code style, you are a user.

## Useful questions:

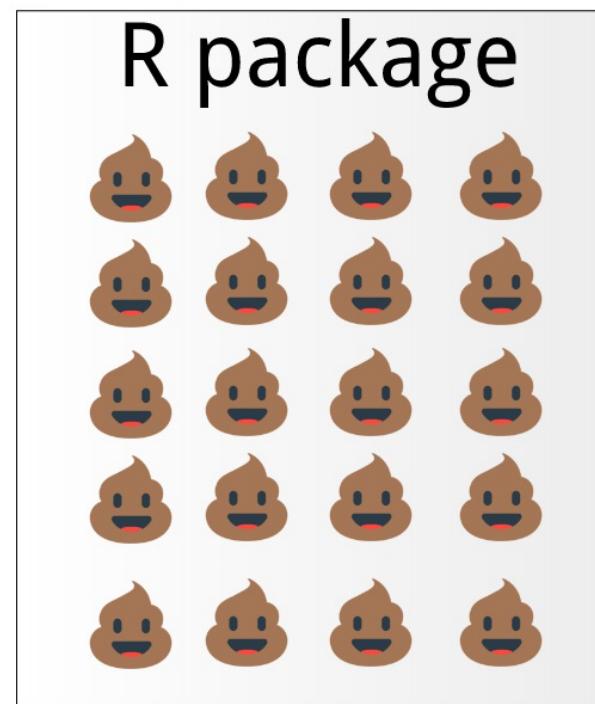
"Can we use tabs instead of spaces?"

"Have you thought about Python Black?"

"My IDE really works best with 87 character line lengths ..."

"The data.table syntax is much more concise than tidyverse"

# Can you add this function?





Empathize with the debtor

# Empathize with the Debtor

- Fear makes learning impossible
- Empathy diffuses fear
- More often than not the debtor is you

# Thank your code

- Technical debt is a good sign
- What we can ask of code
- Thank the debt

# Thank your code





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