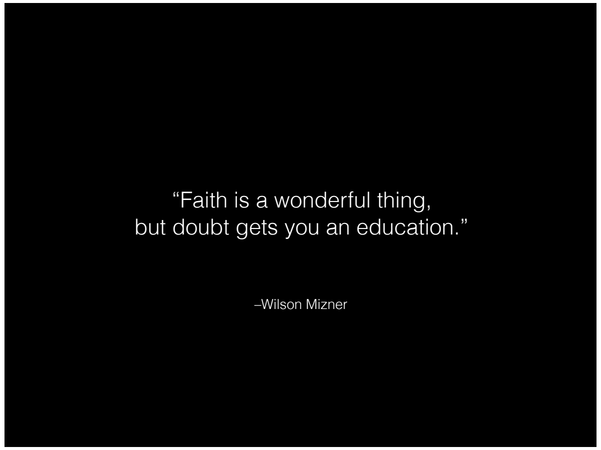
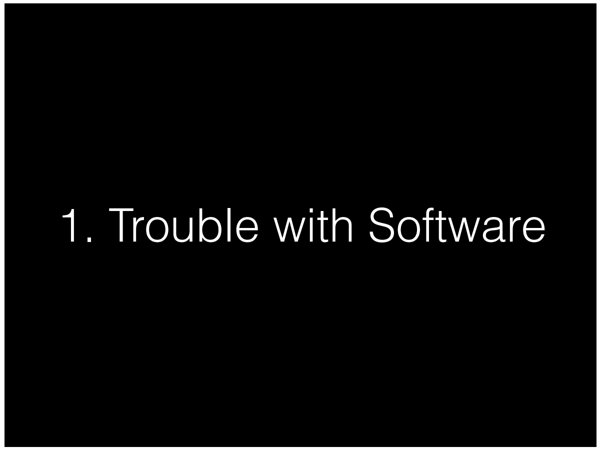
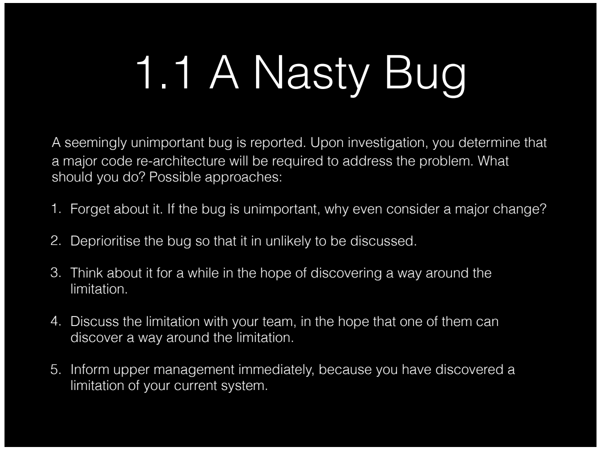
Management Scenarios



> “Faith is a wonderful thing,
> but doubt gets you an education.”
>
> –Wilson Mizner



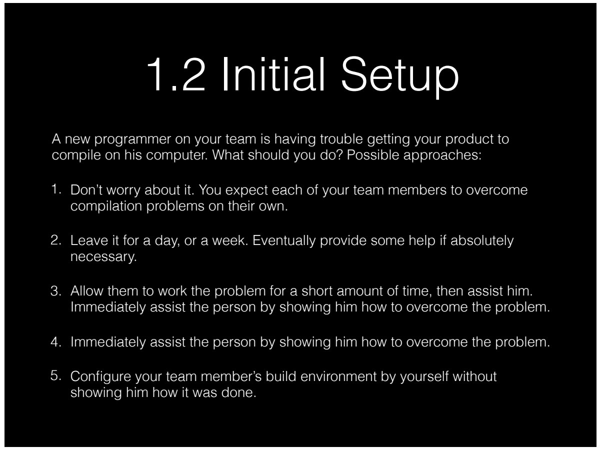
1. Trouble with Software



1.1 A Nasty Bug

A seemingly unimportant bug is reported. Upon investigation, you determine that a major code re-architecture will be required to address the problem. What should you do? Possible approaches:

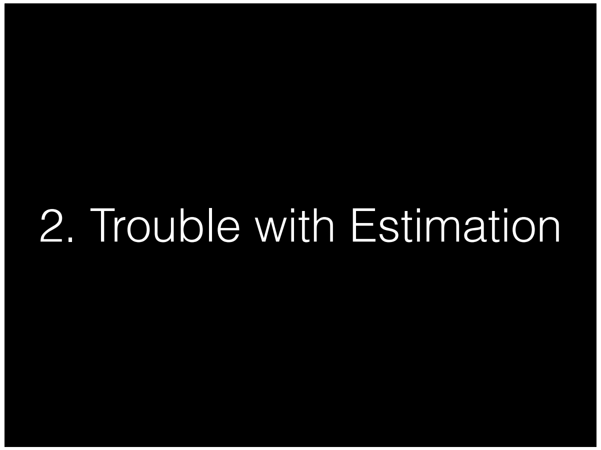
1. Forget about it. If the bug is unimportant, why even consider a major change?
2. Deprioritise the bug so that it in unlikely to be discussed.
3. Think about it for a while in the hope of discovering a way around the limitation.
4. Discuss the limitation with your team, in the hope that one of them can discover a way around the limitation.
5. Inform upper management immediately, because you have discovered a limitation of your current system.



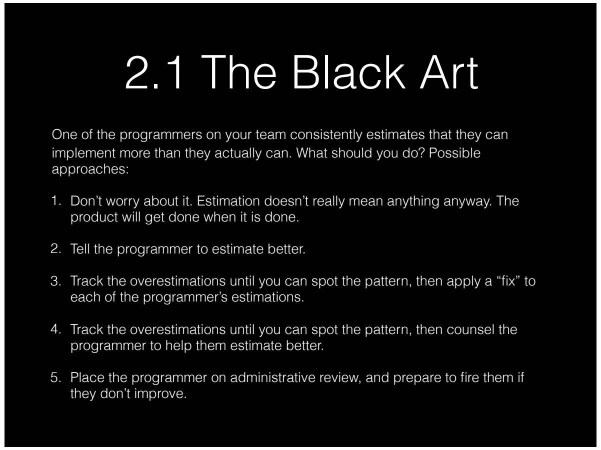
1.2 Initial Setup

A new programmer on your team is having trouble getting your product to compile on his computer. What should you do? Possible approaches:

1. Don't worry about it. You expect each of your team members to overcome compilation problems on their own.
2. Leave it for a day, or a week. Eventually provide some help if absolutely necessary.
3. Allow them to work the problem for a short amount of time, then assist him. Immediately assist the person by showing him how to overcome the problem.
4. Immediately assist the person by showing him how to overcome the problem.
5. Configure your team member's build environment by yourself without showing him how it was done.



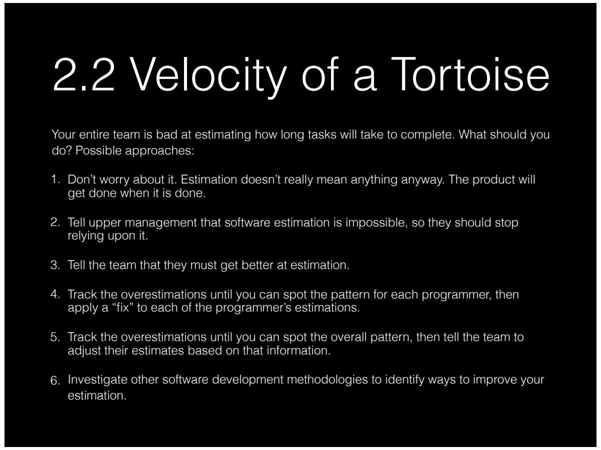
2. Trouble with Estimation



2.1 The Black Art

One of the programmers on your team consistently estimates that they can implement more than they actually can. What should you do? Possible approaches:

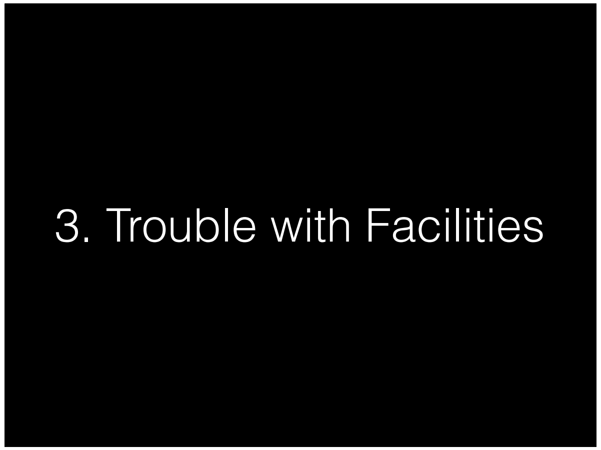
1. Don't worry about it. Estimation doesn't really mean anything anyway. The product will get done when it is done.
2. Tell the programmer to estimate better.
3. Track the overestimations until you can spot the pattern, then apply a "fix" to each of the programmer's estimations.
4. Track the overestimations until you can spot the pattern, then counsel the programmer to help them estimate better.
5. Place the programmer on administrative review, and prepare to fire them if they don't improve.



2.2 Velocity of a Tortoise

Your entire team is bad at estimating how long tasks will take to complete. What should you do? Possible approaches:

1. Don't worry about it. Estimation doesn't really mean anything anyway. The product will get done when it is done.
2. Tell upper management that software estimation is impossible, so they should stop relying upon it.
3. Tell the team that they must get better at estimation.
4. Track the overestimations until you can spot the pattern for each programmer, then apply a "fix" to each of the programmer's estimations.
5. Track the overestimations until you can spot the overall pattern, then tell the team to adjust their estimates based on that information.
6. Investigate other software development methodologies to identify ways to improve your estimation.



3. Trouble with Facilities

3.1 Hot, Hot, Hot

The air conditioning is off when you arrive at your office on a hot summer's day. Several people are already at work, and sweating profusely. You are the first senior person to arrive. What should you do? Possible approaches:

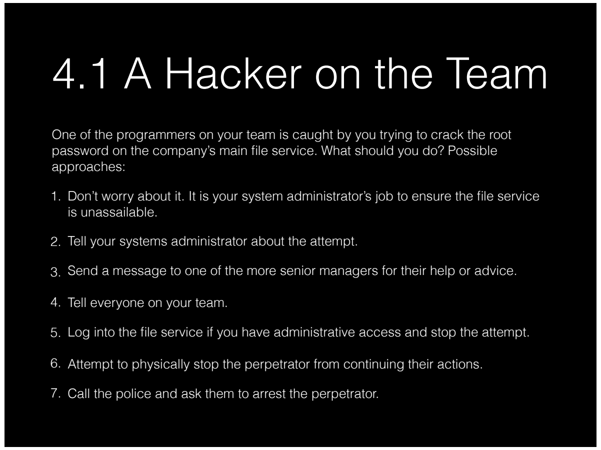
1. Don't worry about it. One of the more senior managers will fix it when they get in.
2. Send a message to one of the more senior managers for their help or advice.
3. Investigate the air conditioning controls to see if you can fix it yourself.
4. Call a repair technician, and tell them to bill the company.
5. Give everyone the day off.

3.2 Hardware Failure

You arrive at work to discover that your central revision control repository is offline. None of your team members can check in new work, but they can continue to work on their own local checkouts. What should you do? Possible approaches:

1. Don't worry about it. One of the more senior managers will fix it when they get in.
2. Send a message to one of the more senior managers for their help or advice.
3. Investigate related physical machinery, logs, and software configuration to attempt to fix the problem yourself.
4. Call your systems administrator.
5. Tell your team to work locally until the problem is resolved. Assign other tasks to anyone who is blocked.
6. Give everyone the day off.

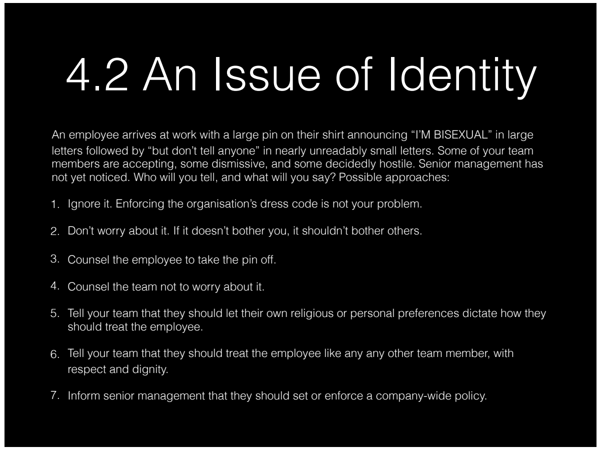
4. Trouble with People



4.1 A Hacker on the Team

One of the programmers on your team is caught by you trying to crack the root password on the company's main file service. What should you do? Possible approaches:

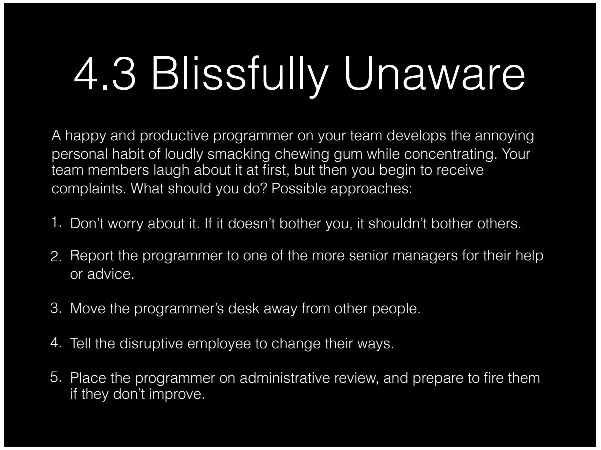
1. Don't worry about it. It is your system administrator's job to ensure the file service is unassailable.
2. Tell your systems administrator about the attempt.
3. Send a message to one of the more senior managers for their help or advice.
4. Tell everyone on your team.
5. Log into the file service if you have administrative access and stop the attempt.
6. Attempt to physically stop the perpetrator from continuing their actions.
7. Call the police and ask them to arrest the perpetrator.



4.2 An Issue of Identity

An employee arrives at work with a large pin on their shirt announcing "I'M BISEXUAL" in large letters followed by "but don't tell anyone" in nearly unreadably small letters. Some of your team members are accepting, some dismissive, and some decidedly hostile. Senior management has not yet noticed. Who will you tell, and what will you say? Possible approaches:

1. Ignore it. Enforcing the organisation's dress code is not your problem.
2. Don't worry about it. If it doesn't bother you, it shouldn't bother others.
3. Counsel the employee to take the pin off.
4. Counsel the team not to worry about it.
5. Tell your team that they should let their own religious or personal preferences dictate how they should treat the employee.
6. Tell your team that they should treat the employee like any any other team member, with respect and dignity.
7. Inform senior management that they should set or enforce a company-wide policy.



4.3 Blissfully Unaware

A happy and productive programmer on your team develops the annoying personal habit of loudly smacking chewing gum while concentrating. Your team members laugh about it at first, but then you begin to receive complaints. What should you do? Possible approaches:

1. Don't worry about it. If it doesn't bother you, it shouldn't bother others.
2. Report the programmer to one of the more senior managers for their help or advice.
3. Move the programmer's desk away from other people.
4. Tell the disruptive employee to change their ways.
5. Place the programmer on administrative review, and prepare to fire them if they don't improve.

4.4 A Simple Matter of Theft

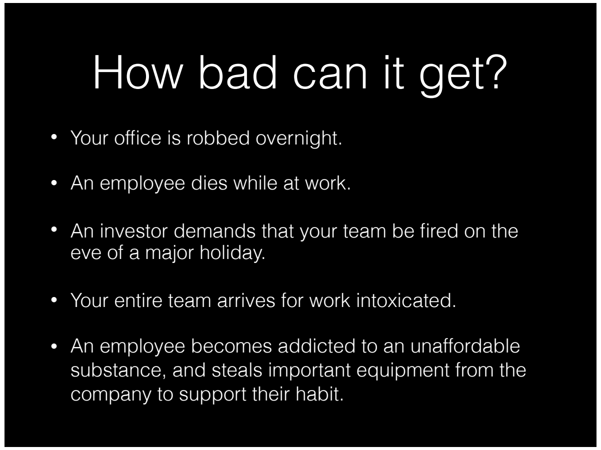
A fellow employee invites you to their apartment. Once there, you begin to recognise that the home is decorated with items belonging to your employer. Your host freely admits that they stole the materials, and presumes that you won't say anything. What should you do? Possible approaches:

1. Ignore it, and pretend that you didn't notice.
2. Tell the employee that you won't say anything.
3. Tell the employee that they should return the stolen items, and that your won't say anything if they do.
4. Tell the employee that they need to tell senior management what they have done.
5. Inform senior management, and recommend that they show leniency.
6. Inform senior management, and recommend that the employee be fired.
7. Call the police and ask them to arrest the perpetrator.

How bad can it get?

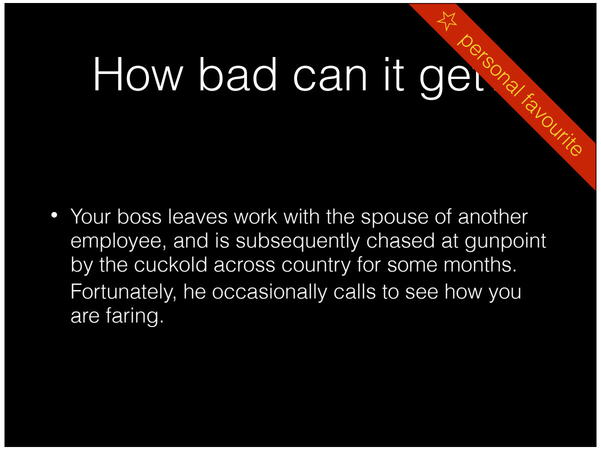
How bad can it get?

- An employee attempts suicide.
- An employee is arrested while at work for domestic violence.
- An engineering team resigns *en mass* on the eve of a product launch.
- An employee brings a goat to your office over a weekend, and leaves it there.
- A proverbial disgruntled employee erases 80% of the files on the company's server infrastructure overnight.



How bad can it get?

- Your office is robbed overnight.
- An employee dies while at work.
- An investor demands that your team be fired on the eve of a major holiday.
- Your entire team arrives for work intoxicated.
- An employee becomes addicted to an unaffordable substance, and steals important equipment from the company to support their habit.



How bad can it get

☆ personal favourite

- Your boss leaves work with the spouse of another employee, and is subsequently chased at gunpoint by the cuckold across country for some months. Fortunately, he occasionally calls to see how you are faring.