

computer literacy

Many company's have policy manuals, and process manuals. These explain 'how things are done around here'. They are meant to be read by all the members of the organisation so people know what the process is for say, dealing with the incoming raw materials.

Fortunately the days of process manuals seem to be drawing to a close as companies start to automate their processes - the reasons for doing so are usually to increase the control, repeatability, monitoring and so forth.¹ All of which can be much more effectively done through software.

The only problem is that I expect most people to be able to read the process manual. They might not *actually* read it, but put a copy in front of them and eventually they will dip in. It's not the same with software. Even if most people have access to the source code, they are unable to read it.

Most people are computer illiterate.

also CEO who cannot read - the memos the company policy the Jane Street - partners unable to reason about the code without lookups - this is where we are heading it is why programmers get frustrated - imagine being hired to 'write things down' but no one will tell you what they want written - at least not in enough detail or with enough context

so this is where the world bifurcates the law - where changes are put through huge processes to get anything done

thesis

computer literacy means being able to read and write source code, Analogy is reading comic books without understanding the words. It means that comics have become the dominant form of book but that to create your own is hard and there are these weird open source writers writing books without pictures !

the people who have a skill of literacy used to be called scribes - they wrote things down

These days that skill is programming.

Most organisations have their processes, their everyday work mediated by, enabled by computer. It does not matter what someone thinks a process is - it matters what the computer thinks. What the source code is. Often I have seen companies with big long English manuals that are supposed to reflect what the processes are, but they are not what the computer source code says and so are useless

scribes became lawyers

programmers will become the lawyers of 21C

discuss

definition of illiteracy - unable to read or write in a language I am Spanish illiterate. I am not Python or SQL illiterate

important to teach people to read - as important to functioning of an organisation as it is to democracy. How would your company function differently if no one could read in it?

What was it like when no one could read - there were specialist 'readers' - or scribes.

IT department are the modern day scribes, and our days should be numbered.

¹ (Investing in the IT That Makes a Competitive Difference - Harvard Business Review, July 2008)