who ran a site called BoingBoing. Suddenly, thousands of people were looking at my website. Making so many people laugh was an exhilarating feeling, and—after a frantic midnight call to my friend Derek to get a more robust server set up—I started drawing more strips. After a few lapses, I started on my regular update schedule for good at the start of 2006, and *xkcd* was born.

I followed the lead of a few other webcomic artists by putting some comics on T-shirts, and was surprised to find that people bought them. In late 2006, my contract ended and wasn't renewed. (My lack of enthusiasm for working probably contributed to management's lack of enthusiasm for paying me). There were some offers of other contracts on similar projects, but I turned them down. Terry Pratchett once said that he quit his job in the nuclear industry when he calculated that, given the success of his writing hobby, every day he went into the office he was losing money. I realized I was at the Pratchett Point, and the comic was successful enough that I didn't have time to both handle *xkcd* orders and work full-time. I decided to leave NASA entirely.

Three years have passed since then. Derek became first the *xkcd* sysadmin and then business partner, building and managing the *xkcd* store. The comic has gathered more and more readers, who (for reasons unclear) like acting out what I draw. A strip about playing chess on a roller coaster led to a flood of emailed amusement-park photos of people trying it. Another comic poked fun at free-software legend Richard Stallman, suggesting he sleeps with katanas under his bed in case Microsoft agents come for him in the night. Days later some readers mailed Stallman a sword, while others started showing up at his events dressed as ninjas. One comic suggested that YouTube commenters might write more intelligently if they had to listen to their posts read aloud before they were published. I meant it as a joke, but someone at YouTube liked the idea and built an audio preview feature. And in 2007, I drew a comic involving a character hearing coordinates in a dream, but visiting them and finding no one there. The coordinates in the comic were real (a park in Cambridge), with a date six months in the future. I stayed mum about the meaning of the coordinates, and so when the day came, thousands of *xkcd* readers and their friends descended on the park for a day-long party. (Friends suggested I try writing a comic entitled Everyone Mails Randall Twenty