



ARC Training Centre for Behavioural
Insights for Technology Adoption

ARC BITA Geek Seminars

Intro to the Geek Seminar Series &
My Personal Story/Background

27 August 2025



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Acknowledgement to Country

I acknowledge the **Turrbal** and **Yugara** as the First Nations owners of the lands where we now stand (***Meanjin***).

I pay respect to their Elders, lores, customs and creation spirits, and recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research and learning.

I acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the QUT and wider community.

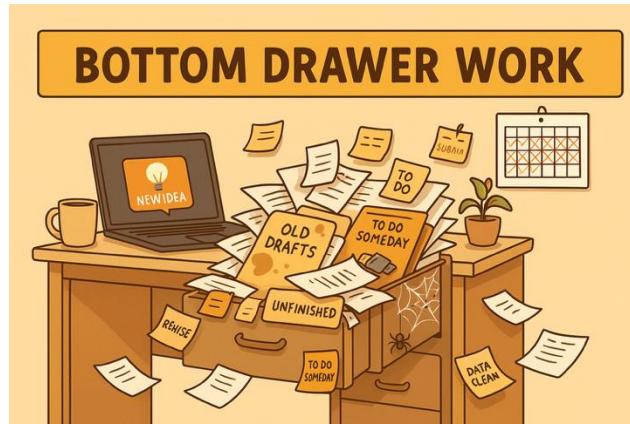
Intro to ARC BITA Geek Seminars

Welcome and thank you for your attendance today!

Slides Available at: <https://github.com/stevejbickley/arcbita-geek-seminars/tree/main>

Welcome to the ARC BITA Geek Seminars!

- **Informal, practical, peer-led sessions**
 - Short, focused sessions (~1hr) with “demos” (*with loose terminology/usage here..*)
 - Recorded and/or transcribed, per-session licensing in each session’s README.md
 - *Works in progress* & “bottom drawer” work very welcome/encouraged for feedback!
- **Aims:** Build technical confidence | Learn usable skills | Share tools & insights
- **Today:** “Business Development Approach to Growing Your Research”



Why now?

- Research is competitive; outputs + partnerships matter
- Many great ideas stall before delivery
- We need repeatable habits, shared templates, and a pipeline

Notes: Move from ad-hoc to systematic; from solo to shared assets.

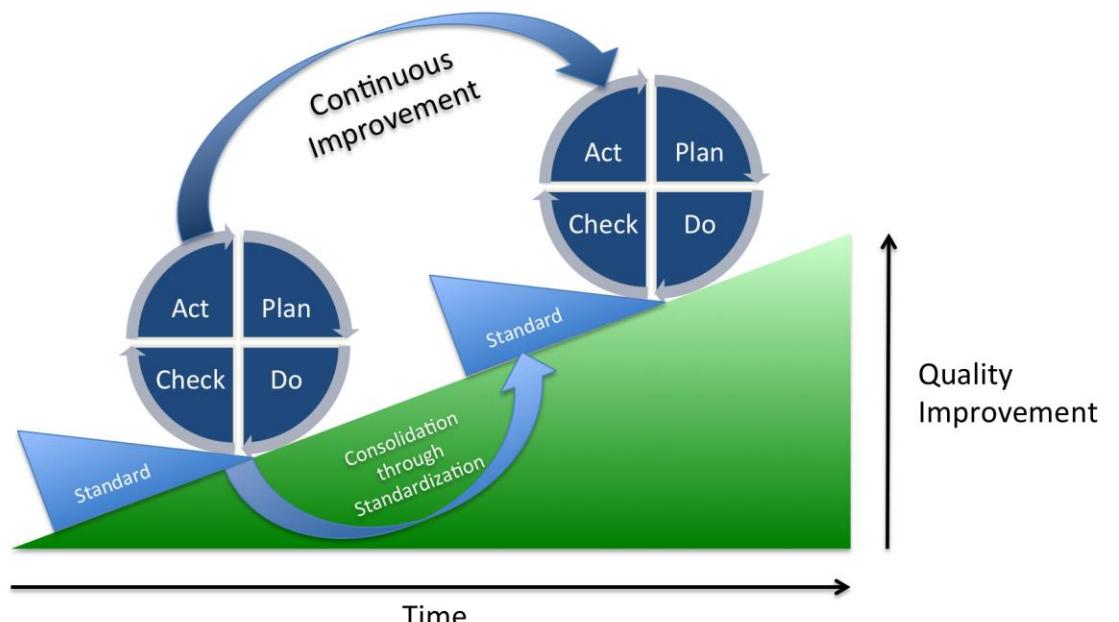


Image Ref: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PDCA_Process.png.

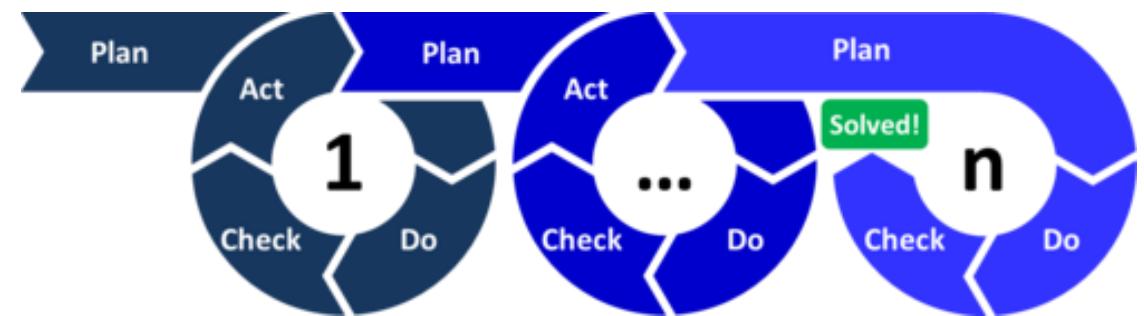


Image Ref: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PDCA-Multi-Loop.png>.

Why now? (cont.)

- Treat research like a pipeline/portfolio: **leads → scoping → proposal → delivery → impact.**
- Build **offerings** (what you do) + **proof points** (what you've done).
- Maintain a **contact/partner map** and cadence.

Notes: Same muscle as BD; different artefacts (papers, datasets, tools).

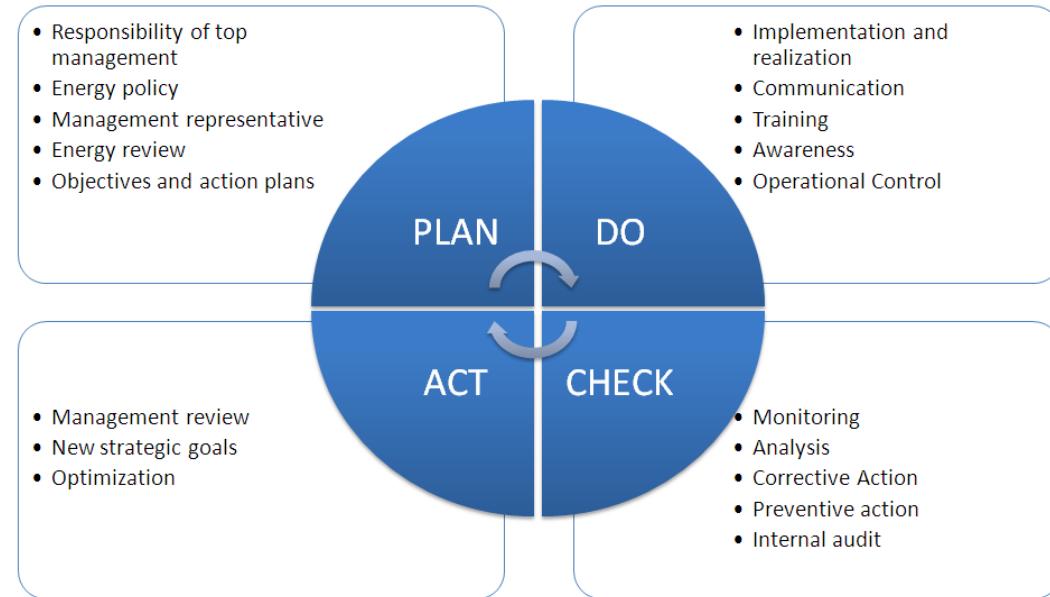


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Image Ref: Dr. Steve Bickley x ChatGPT 5 on 22 August 2025

Bilingual researchers (our north star)

- **Methods ↔ Domain:** empirical rigor + subject expertise
- **Code ↔ Communication:** reproducible scripts + clear narratives
- **Academia ↔ Industry:** grant logic + delivery logic
- **Individual ↔ Team:** solo craft + shared standards



Image Ref: <https://www.rawpixel.com/image/6031482/photo-image-public-domain-arrow-free>, CCO 1.0 Universal License

Bottom line: Modern problems are networked and non-linear;
bilingual researchers cross boundaries without dropping quality.

About Me - Part 1

Leaving High School and Attending University...

* ***Disclaimer:*** from this slide onward I got a bit lazy and bent my own copyright rule – i.e., *remaining images = my photos + AI-generated + CC-licensed (via Google Images)*.

During high school, I was smart but maybe not so committed/troublemaker (*and/or lacked belief in myself..?*)

I was for sure the next AFL superstar



had other things in mind (*overtraining..?*)

My back-up plan? The special forces /

I good spines (*and less free-thinking minds..?*)

SO... I found myself asking



BUT I realised that I had no real knowledge (apart from what I'd learned)



Thinking back to old advice/scolding from a former maths teacher, Mr Broome...
(with some age/perspective.. he WAS right after all and had my best interests in mind!)

+

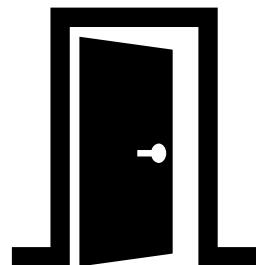
Coupled with some long-term childhood interests/obsession with electronics, understanding “how things work”, and asking/answering “why this” and “why that”



Starting my first year of double degree in Engineering (Electrical) and Business (Economics)...



AND with genuine interest.. my grades DRAMATICALLY improved too! (so, I wasn't dumb/lazy after all..?)



With the increased engagement/interest, I also decided to take on extracurriculars...
(hint: also good for building up a CV)



Like student clubs – EESS or Electrical Engineering Student Society
(hint: also good for partying... and building event organization skills, an industry network, etc.)
(e.g. CEOs, CTOs, senior/mid-level engineers, peers)



Case competitions and hackathons like Nudgeathon, Bikeathon, NEXT Innovation Challenge, Engineers without Borders, ...

Applied for Scholarship programs like Australian Power Institute (API) Bursary Program
(i.e. networking, industry/work experience opportunities, cash!!)

NUDGEATHON
BEHAVIOUR / INSIGHT / CHANGE

AND my personal favourite..

Overseas travel and exchange programs like a semester abroad in TU Delft (The Netherlands), Huawei Seeds for the Future Program (China), WASAA Academy at IMT Atlantique (France)





About Me - Part 2

Entering the Workforce and Life after University (??)

Towards the end of my 2nd year of Engineering/Economics double degree.. my first internship!



Assigned to the digital asset management team (which seemed pretty boring to me at first...)



BUT over time.. and in meeting/interacting with employees from across the business.. it turned out to be pretty interesting after all!

(and I applied newly learnt/developing skills in python to their big data problem/s...)

Not long after this, I had my first casual gig (initially unpaid, later remunerated..) as a Research Assistant



This came about initially by participating in experimental economics sessions (paid sessions, \$20-30/hr)

One day I noticed the person (Steve W) running the session was a past lecturer (who I had walked out on..)

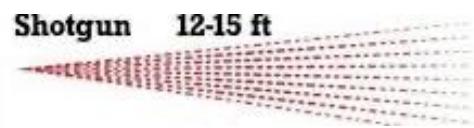
We got to talking and one thing led to another.. *Next time I was running the experimental session!*
(hint: ask and you shall/may receive)

Towards the end of my 3rd year.. I started thinking, maybe I should get a REAL job!

By this time, I had been working in retail and/or hospitality since 13.5 y.o. (sometimes 2-3 jobs at a time...)



So, I blasted out a BUNCH of resumes to anyone looking for graduate/undergrad engineers...



(hint: shoot for the moon, at the very least you'll land among the stars)
(i.e. maybe you ARE more qualified/fit better than it first seems)

A few emails came back, a few interviews were attended.. Finally, I got picked!



(and asked for)

As a young/eager engineer, I took on as many projects and learning opportunities as I could...

^



The more times I showed that I could handle what they threw at me..

The opportunities they sent my way got bigger/better but also more challenging!



The technology and pace of innovation/development kept me going..

And took me to some pretty cool places (both geographically, but also w.r.t. network and experience)



As I was nearing the end of my Engineering (Hon) / Business double degree..
And having been working in industry for 2+ years..

I found myself wondering again.. *is this all there is?!*



Engineering was cool and all, but I was increasingly frustrated by the lack of HUMAN FACTORS and CONTEXTUAL ELEMENTS in functional/machine safety, risk management, quality management, ...

*Coupled with the fact that I rarely got to apply my programming/electronics skills
And was constantly feeling tied down by the rules/regulations (i.e. "the system") and market forces
(i.e. the client is always right/pays your wage)...*

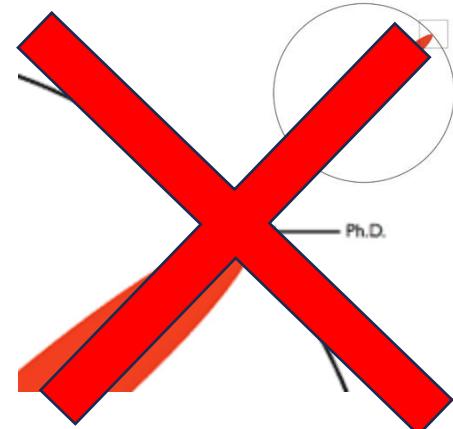
I found myself thinking.. ***THERE MUST BE A BETTER WAY!!***
(Mr Broome... I still had so much else to learn and contribute..)





And so, after some convincing by Dr Steve Whyte..
(remember this name..?)

I decided to start a PhD in (behavioural) economics!



This was a whole new sort/level of challenging..
No longer would I be a big fish in a small pond!

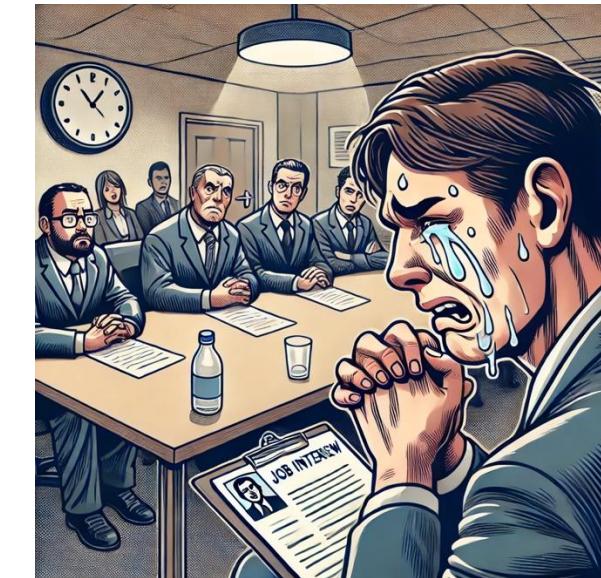
I probably should've guessed so since my first interview with supervisors went something like this:

However, getting past this first ego check
and always being pushed and challenged..

*("this is too much for a 3-4 year PhD",
"you can't work full-time whilst in PhD")*

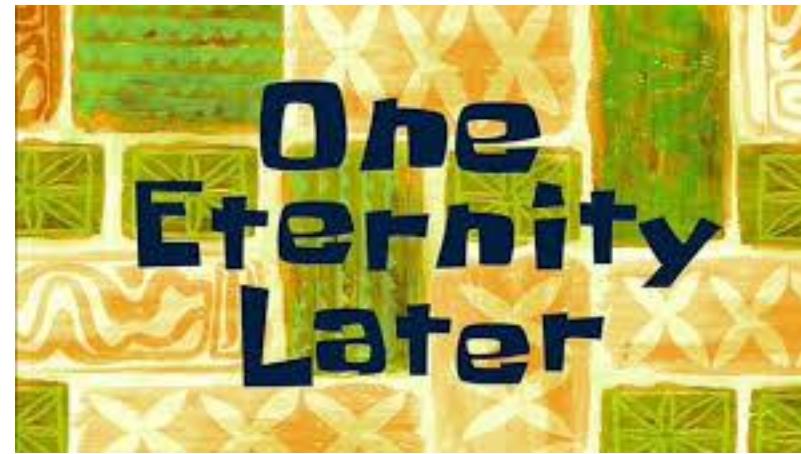


I was determined to
prove them wrong!!
(so, play ping pong I did..)



Eventually.. after lots of **blood, sweat** and **PLENTY** of tears

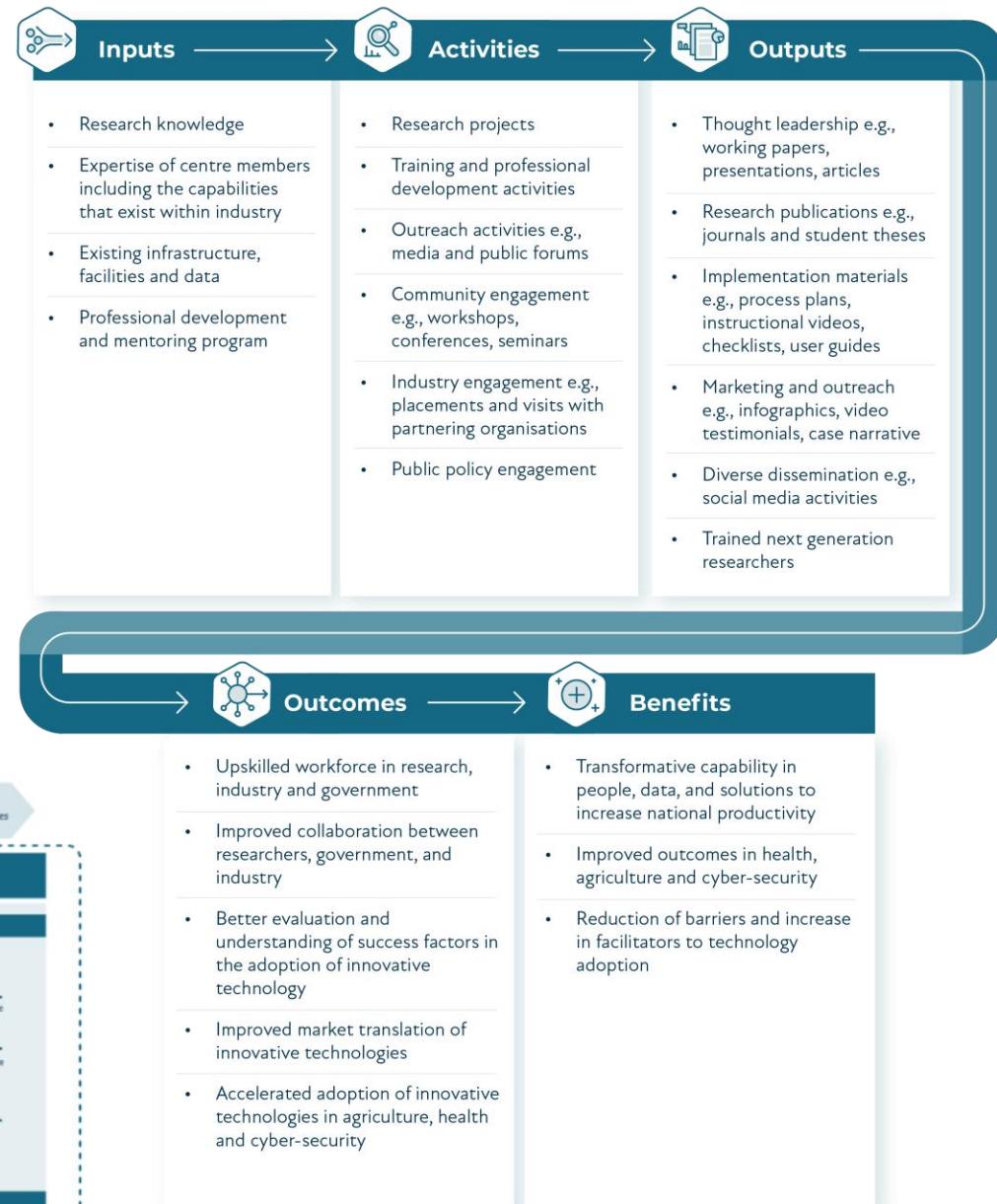
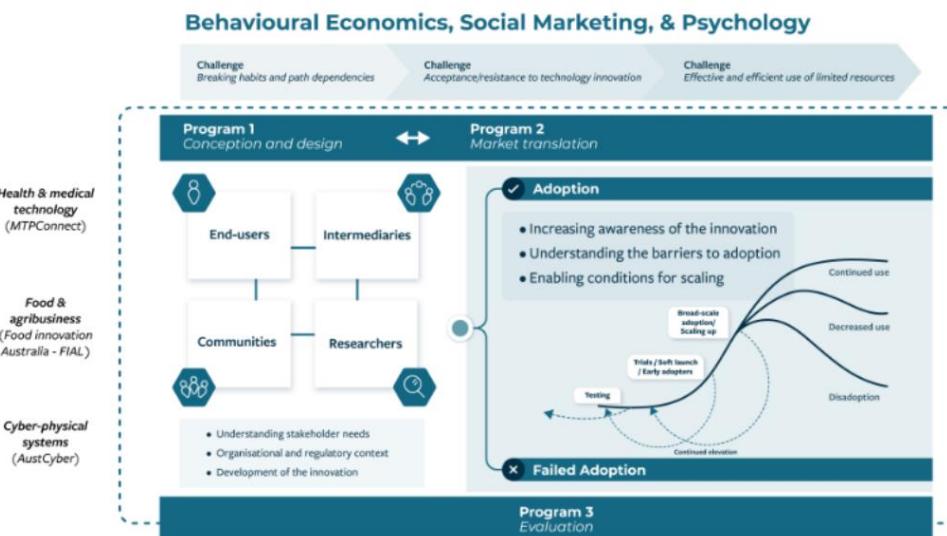
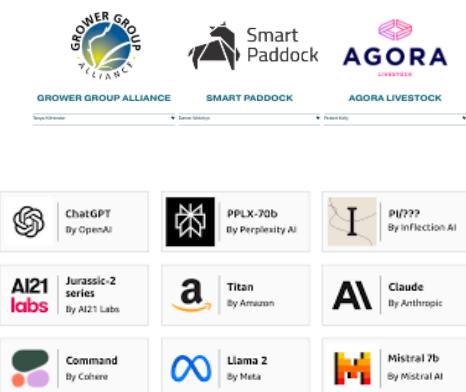
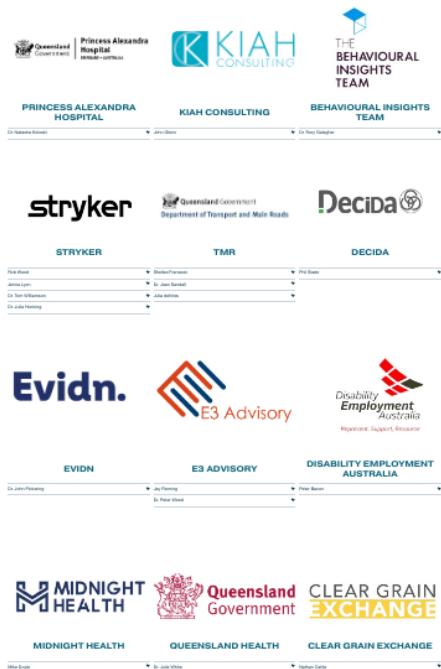
(and approx. 550-600 pages of thesis later..)



I was awarded my PhD, alongside some lifelong friends/family made along the way!



Since then, I've been fortunate enough to start work as a Lecturer/Research Fellow



Since then, I've been fortunate enough to start work as a Lecturer/Research Fellow
(with some more amazing opportunities that have followed..)

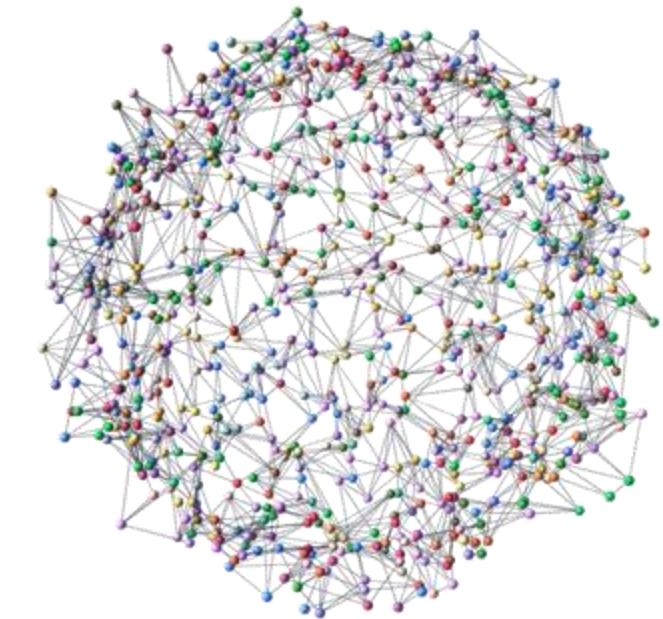
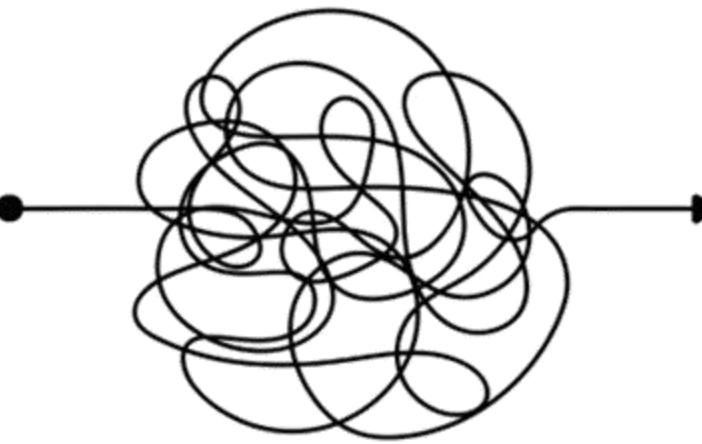




SIMPLES

Well... not really!

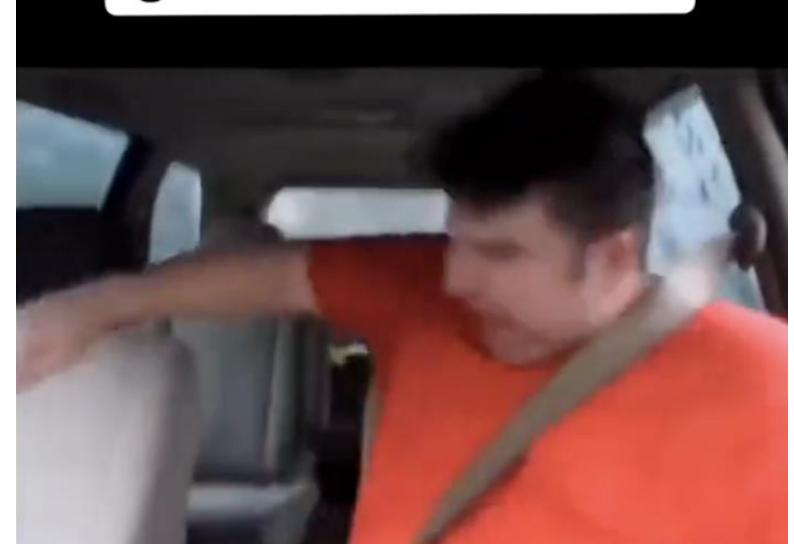
More like this:



What's next?



When your parents gave you work ethic instead of generational wealth.



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

Discovery Early Career Researcher Award

The slide features the Australian Research Council logo (a coat of arms with a kangaroo and an emu) and the text "Australian Government" and "Australian Research Council" above a blue banner that reads "Discovery Early Career Researcher Award".

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