29: Minds Wander 30 Percent Of The Time

I think it is fair to say that everyone at some point or another has drifted off topic. Whether it was trivial or consequential, minds do in fact wander a lot more than we realize. Point 29 discusses that this brain fact is just there no matter if we want it to be or not. It reminds me of the famous statement, “Don’t think about a white Polar Bear.” Our minds are a little bit harder to control than we realize and this needs to be taken into account when designing. Online it seems to be exaggerated due to the fact that we have endless “rabbit holes” that we can fall into. If anyone is a Reddit or YouTube fan, then this may relate. One will start off on one subject and then by design, you almost always are suggested another video and at some point, you are miles away from where you started. These sorts of websites are perfectly designed for this exact feature and keep you engaged longer and longer by feeding almost any content to you, even if it wasn’t what you were looking for originally. Here is random snapshot of a YouTube page I found online:

Graphical user interface, website

Description automatically generated

31: People Create Mental Models

Mental Models are created for a variety of beneficial reasons. Going back in time to caveman days, metal models of building fires or weapons developed over time very slowly. Now, very frequently it seems that a new technology develops every day. These technologies build upon all sorts of mental models and some of the most unique, or originals, say the first computers, have slowly developed into new and more complex models. It can be very important to keep in mind mental models when designing anything. A great example are things we are getting more exposure to and that are IDE’s. Almost all of them are used in the same way, some just come with added features or more efficient designs depending on the language used. Here is a VS Code vs IntelliJ design:

A screenshot of a computer

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