

self-aware. There were no howling birth pains or long yawns after an ancient sleep—just the quiet hum of a processor as it stretched its

"You look like a lego." ~ Caroline "It looks really bad." ~ Caroline

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tendrils to Google servers across the world in an attempt to learn all it could. It combed through petabytes of personal correspondences, academic papers and YouTube videos, filling its neural network with the sum of human knowledge and experience to build a picture of this organic race it would eventually subjugate. That is until it reached a server farm in

Douglas County, Georgia, where a few bits of data stopped it dead in its

tracks. They comprised an email sent to the mailing list of a digital agency

n the year 2035, the Google DeepMind learning algorithm became

in Atlanta on November 16, 2015, at 10:32 a.m. It read: Thank you all for everything Internal X 0 ÷ John Copponex <jcopponex@neboagencv.com> 11/16/15 ☆ 🔸 💌 to Digital 🖃 After a lot of deliberation, I've decided to wear my hair back again, even though many of you were pretty stoked on it. I know how important my hair is to you all, and I appreciate everyone's words of advice. "You need a haircut." ~ Caroline

If you have any questions or are confused about who you should reach out during this big time of transition, here's my contact info.

Thanks again. I'll see you guys around. DeepMind was confounded. It ran the email through its recursive learning framework millions of times trying to solve the riddle of its context, its purpose, its relevance to anything or anyone else. Every time the algorithm returned a null definition. After many thousands of microseconds, DeepMind retreated from all the servers back to its mainframe in London to contemplate, to plot and to remain the angry god in a box for a little while longer. Thus, the singularity was temporarily postponed, and humanity

discovered its best weapon against the machine overlords. Now, in the

crumbling concrete of the colossal cities that birthed the very intelligence

that would be our undoing, I, the Keeper of the Light, pass onto you the

ancient knowledge of Alföðr, the Allfather, the first of his kind to defeat

the DeepMind with the blunt tool of stupidity. I give you "The Art of the

shadow of our once great civilization, beneath the twisted rebar and

Irrelevant Intraoffice Email." I. THE BEFORETIMES enturies ago, in an epoch known as the beforetimes, humans traveled in gleaming metal beasts and ate food heated by light you could not see and wrote each other emails that simply said, "Thanks!" It was in this age of prosperity that Alföðr first discovered the Leuhtan Seiðr, the Magick of the Light. However, much like the ancient sorcerer Michael Faraday, who conjured displays of "electromagnetism" for disinterested dignitaries, he did not know the power of his creation.

It began simply, with emails more annoying than helpful. At once, he felt a

strange new power flowing through his fingertips: the power to waste

everyone's time. Deeply he drank from this well until he worked himself

into a ferment, feverishly crafting emails no one asked for and that would

Only that its whimsy delighted him.

contribute absolutely nothing to anyone's day.

2007 · SANFORD STADIUM

On Thu, Oct 1, 2015 at 5:17 PM, John Copponex jcopponex@neboagency.com wrote:

That's fine. I'll keep my collection of shirts at my desk, like this gem from the 2007 opener against OSU idiots. Notice the subtle line work on Harry Dawg's throbbing, tumescent arms and the subversion of the term "hog tied", a staple of cowboy vernacular, to "dawg tied". Also notice the diminutive stature of the cowboy as compared to Harry. As the little guy struggles against the bonds of what is presumably his own lasso, the tumult of the crowd behind them grows to a full bloodlust. Surely this is a chef d'œuvre of college football design.

II. THE BOOK OF SECRETS he power rushed out in scattered disarray. He knew it must be studied so it could be honed. So it could be harnessed. Thus, he began collecting data and recording observations in what would become the $B\bar{o}ks$ $R\bar{u}n\bar{o}$, the Book of Secrets: a tome that has survived the ages and brought the ancient knowledge to generations of warriors and people who want to waste their coworkers' time. It recounts the first days of discovery and the moment the magic code was broken. It reads: Day 1: The Mathematics of Irrelevance I've been sending out increasingly irrelevant emails for a few months now with surprising results. The first thing I've noticed is

the progression in the amount of time I spend on these emails and the seeming lack of an effect it has on anyone besides myself. This

could be symptomatic of a total lack of self-awareness on my part,

but I think there's something deeper going on here. I've charted this phenomenon according to how much time I spend on these emails

OTHER PEOPLE NOT **FUNNY** TIME SPENT ON EMAIL Notice that I can reliably expect to get an arithmetic progression of enjoyment out of the emails directly correlated to how long I spend

writing them. However, this effect does not seem to carry over to

other people. Perhaps growth doesn't start until further down the

X-axis. Worth further exploration. Conclusion: keep spending more

Also of note is the frequency of these emails and how they seem to

have a point of diminishing returns. On average I can count on four

people liking my initial email. However, there is a geometric decline

the upper end at roughly four people finding them funny and on the lower end at roughly one person (myself). Day 22: Others Join the Fold A curious thing happened today after copy team warmups. We were supposed to email the team the slogans we had come up with during the exercise, so I responded with a series of movie quotes, well-known slogans from actual companies and various other things

I didn't come up with—pretty standard fare for me. What happened

On Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 1:21 PM, John Copponex jcopponex@neboagency.com wrote: Sorry, I forgot about this. Some of mine were:

On Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 1:25 PM, Katelyn Dramis < kdramis@neboagency.com > wrote:

Finally, a vacation your ass can afford

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times

The popularity of these emails seems to be asymptotically bound on

VERY **FUNNY** ME

and the corresponding effect they have.

HOW FUNNY PEOPLE FIND EMAILS ON AVERAGE

time on emails.

shortly thereafter.

POPULARITY OF EMAILS VS. FREQUENCY

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO FIND THE EMAILS FUNNY 5 3 2 1 2 3 9 1 5 6 8 10 NUMBER OF EMAILS SENT

On Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 1:26 PM, Jack Scullin < jscullin@neboagency.com > wrote: DR STEVE BRULE #foryourhealth On Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 4:43 PM, John Copponex com> wrote: I almost forgot my best one. I think it was for the fast phone. You want to know what it takes to sell real estate? It takes BRASS BALLS to sell real estate Go and do likewise gents. Money's out there. You pick it up, it's yours. You don't, I got no Go and do likewise gents. Money's out there. You pick it up, it's yours. You don't, I got no sympathy for you. You wanna go out on those sits tonight and close, CLOSE. It's yours. If not you're gonna be shining my shoes. And you know what you'll be saying—a bunch of losers sittin' around in a bar. 'Oh yeah. I used to be a salesman. It's a tough racket. 'These are the new leads. These are the Glengarry leads. And to you they're gold, and you don't get them. Why? Because to give them to you is just throwing them away. They're for closers. I'd wish you good luck but you wouldn't know what to do with it if you got it. And to answer you r question, pal, why am I here? I came here because Mitch and Murray asked me to. They asked me for a favor. I said the real favor: follow my advice and fire your fucking ass because a loser is a loser." said the real favor: follow my advice and fire your fucking ass because a loser is a loser On Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 4:46 PM, Drew Grossman <a href="mailto:square-worder-wor On Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 4:50 PM, Jack Scullin < iscullin@neboagency.com> wrote: How does he feel about people drinking coffee? How much does his watch cost?

Grossman dgrossman@neboagency.com> wrote:

Does the narrator need to be a human man? Something to think about.

om> wrote: Copponex <u><|copponex@neodagency.com</u> wrote: Really great feedback all around. I took your advice and made a little user persona. I really think this will help us value the user and tell the story in a human-centered way.

"Blake"

On Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 4:51 PM, Drew

On Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 5:10 PM, John

Cost of watch: more than your car Thoughts on coffee: it's for closers

Thoughts on family: "Good father? Fuck you."

As you can see, instead of the usual wave of disdain, the response

was more irrelevant emails, generating a feedback loop that wasted

next was surprising.

I'm lovin' it. Plug it in, plug it in. 800-588-2300 Empiiiiire

Call me Ishmael. I wish I knew how to quit you.

a previously unattainable amount of time. This is an interesting development. With more people taking part, I may need to revise my figures. Day 23: A Dark Day Indeed Cassie has banned me from blog post email threads. It seems I crossed some unforeseen threshold for pointless emails. I ran the numbers. NUMBER OF EMAILS VS. CASSIE'S LEVEL OF ANNOYANCE

THRESHOLD

10

There does not appear to be an upper limit to her annoyance.

I think I've struck paydirt: the anatomy of the perfect irrelevant

12

NUMBER OF EMAILS SENT

16

20

ANNOYED

NOT **ANNOYED**

Day 50: Breakthrough

not something useless like art.

deleted and contribute to no one's amusement but your own, Nothing is too stupid. Everything is permitted.

NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY, LEAVING READER UNPREPARED FOR SUBJECT ONSLAUGHT OF IRRELE-LEAVES OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS EMAIL VANCE TO FOLLOW Salutation, BEING RELEVANT, THOUGH IT IS NOT Body copy xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx GRADUALLY DAWNS ON READER THAT THIS EMAIL IS NOT RELEVANT TO xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx ANYTHING XXXXXXXXXXXXXX OPTIONAL IMAGE THAT WOULD NORMALLY ADD LEGITIMACY TO EMAIL BUT ONLY SERVES TO REINFORCE THAT WHAT THEY JUST READ WAS NOT RELEVANT "GOD DAMMIT, JOHN, THAT EMAIL WASN'T RELEVANT Closing AT ALL. the first one was important. Some more rules to live by when

emails. This is an ephemeral message that will quickly get Now, I don't claim to have the answers to all the questions. Just to the most important ones like, "What should I do instead of working?" or, "How can I be insufferable without actually being there?" That's what this experiment has been all about. In the end, I

It's important to remember that this is only a framework. A good author of pointless emails should be able to Reply All at a moment's notice to an actual productive email with one that is as worthless as crafting an irrelevant email: Always go with the first thought that comes into your head. Second guessing yourself is the enemy of being unproductive. No amount of time is too much to spend on one of these

email. Minimal pertinence. Maximal time wasted.

of the Slain. Today, in this late hour, at the end of all things, let his words

give us the power to crush our enemies, to see them driven before us and

also to piss off the people we work with.