Operational Excellence in April Fools’ Pranks:

Being Funny Is Serious Work!

Thomas Limoncelli
@YesThatTom
364 days have elapsed – your Site is fully graduated.

Cast your vote: What should your Site do next?
One vote is required in this round, one user has voted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Asking improves your Site’s questions. Too few questions also negatively affect its answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Posting answers is what your Site’s life is all about. Only with many answers (and high quality!) can it attract traffic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upvote</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Getting upvotes on their good posts to make your Site’s users happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downvote</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Voting down posts is essential for your Site’s quality. Unfortunately, users don’t like getting downvotes on their content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Closing bad questions gives your Site’s quality a big boost, but it does so at the expense of its questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Do nothing in this round. Don’t do this too often; your Site needs constant attention in order to grow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restart</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Give up and restart the game with a brand-new Site. This has to be confirmed by a second vote.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
April 1, 2015:
10:23 StackEgg launched
13:14 +2:50 Site overloaded!
April 1, 2015:
10:23  StackEgg launched
13:14  +2:50  Site overloaded!
13:17  +0:03  StackEgg disabled
April 1, 2015:
10:23  StackEgg launched
13:14  +2:50  Site overloaded!
13:17  +0:03  StackEgg disabled
13:47  +0:30  All good
April 1, 2015:
10:23 StackEgg launched
13:14 +2:50 Site overloaded!
13:17 +0:03 StackEgg disabled
13:47 +0:30 All good
14:56 +1:09 Re-launched
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Thomas Limoncelli
@YesThatTom

Photo Credit: ©iStockphoto.com/katkov
WHO IS TOM LIMONCELLI?

• SRE Manager at Stack Overflow, Inc (NYC)
• Sysadmin since 1988 (Google, AT&T/Bell Labs, Mentor)
• Blog: https://EverythingSysadmin.com
• Twitter: @YesThatTom
• Quarterly Column in Queue Magazine: https://queue.acm.org
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PAY TO THE ORDER OF Thomas Limoncelli

One and 81/100

$1,81

DOLLARS

FOR 2017 Royalties

David Clunberg

2106

68-54/514

BRANCH 77726
TALK OVERVIEW

• Something
• Not Something
• Top 5:
  • Thing
  • Thing
  • Thing
  • Thing
  • Thing (3 parts)
TALK OVERVIEW

• Introduction
• Something
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  • Thing (3 parts)
WHAT MAKES AN AFP FUNNY?

1. Topical
2. Absurdist
topical

[Top-i-kuh l]

adjective
1. pertaining to or dealing with matters of current or local interest:
   a topical reference.
2. pertaining to the subject of a discourse, composition, or the like.
3. of a place; local.
4. Medicine/Medical. of, relating to, or applied externally to a particular part of the body; local:
   a topical anesthetic.

noun
5. Philately. any of a collection of different stamps treating the same subject.

Topical: adj.
Pertaining to or dealing with matters of current or local interest.
Absurdist:

Not simply silly for silliness' sake.

Absurdism acts as a crucible that burns away all lies to get to the truth.
surprise

[ser-prahyz, suh-]

verb (used with object), surprised, surprising.
1. to strike or occur to with a sudden feeling of wonder or astonishment, as through unexpectedness:
   Her beauty surprised me.
2. to come upon or discover suddenly and unexpectedly:
   We surprised the children raiding the cookie jar.
3. to make an unexpected assault on (an unprepared army, fort, person, etc.).
THE MUSTACHE STORY
Stack Overflow Introduces Dance Dance Authentication

DANCE DANCE AUTHENTICATION
WHAT MAKES AN AFP NOT FUNNY?

1. Hurting people
2. Punching down
3. Inside Jokes
**FUNNY EXAMPLES**

- Hurting people
  - Don’t cause real harm.
  - Example: Gmail’s “Drop The Mic” prank
- Punching down
  - Don’t make fun of the downtrodden powerless.
  - Example: Racist/homophobic/sexist jokes are inherently “punch down”
- Do: Mock people in power.
- Inside jokes
  - Make the audience laugh, not (just) you.
TOP 5 BEST PRACTICES

1. Feature Flags
2. Load Test
3. Dark Launches
4. Involve all the silos
5. Perform a project retrospective
1. FEATURE FLAGS

• Hide the feature behind a flag while in development
• Easy to enable/disable in testing and production.
• Better than shipping a new release:
  • Shipping a new release is more risky, more laborious.
  • Should you revert to old binary to ship new binary with prank disabled???
2. LOAD TESTING

• See how it performs under load.
• A/B test with and without prank.

Photo credit: https://huddle.eurostarsoftwaretesting.com/tips-correlation-load-testing/
3. DARK LAUNCHES

- The problem:
  - How do you load test when on day-0 you will have millions/billions users?

- The Solution:
  - Facebook’s “dark launch” for Messenger.
  - Deploy the feature but hide it from users. (CSS display: hidden)
  - % users send test messages.
  - Find bottlenecks before launch.

Photo Credit: https://code.facebook.com/posts/270314900139291/rapid-release-at-massive-scale/
MORE EXAMPLES

• Good:
  • Before launching IPv6, Google inserted JavaScript to silently tested for problems.

• Bad:
  • StackEgg
  • Apple Livesteam “real time updates” overloaded the website during the iPhone 6 / Apple Watch launch.  https://everythingsysadmin.com/2014/10/apple-livestream-outage.html
4. INVOLVE ALL SILOS

- Involve:
  - Marketing
  - PR
  - Sales
  - Engineering
  - Launch control
  - Executives
- Customer support should know how to handle complaints.

Photo credit: My LISA 2016 talk. It was great. You should watch the video.
5. PERFORM A PROJECT RETROSPECTIVE

- Outline:
  - What went right
  - What went wrong
  - What should we do differently next time

- Benefits:
  - Thank all that are involved.
  - Educate entire company about best practices

- Also called:
  - Learning Review
  - Post mortem
  - Post-mortem
  - Postmortem

Beyond Blame: Learning From Failure and Success

by Dave Zwieback

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Failure is inevitable. Our increasingly complex world demands that we continuously learn from failures (and successes) in order to survive and thrive. And yet, our learning is too often undermined. We construct biased but comfortable stories, which often feature a simple, single "root cause"—a villain, someone to take the blame. Having done that, we short-circuit the possibility of developing any deeper understanding of the complex systems we work with. With this common approach, our systems will become more fragile and drift into failure.
I dunno about anybody else, but I really like getting these post-mortem reports. Not only is it \textit{nice to know what happened}, but it’s also great to see \textit{how you guys handled it} in the moment and \textit{how you plan to prevent these events} going forward. Really neato. Thanks for the great work :)

—Anna
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You are here
THE LAZY WAY
1. Use someone else’s resources.
DANCE DANCE AUTHENTICATION

- A blog post and a YouTube video.
- Unlikely to overload YouTube.
2. Creatively describe something that already exists.
STACKOVERFLOW.COM RUBBER DUCKY MODE
STACKOVERFLOW.COM RUBBER DUCKY MODE
STACKOVERFLOW.COM RUBBER DUCKY MODE
GO 3.0

Finally!

Every damn feature newbies beg for:

• Generics
• Closures
• Modules
• Setters and Getters
• Fully object oriented
• And more!
• And more more
Finally!

Every damn feature newbies beg for:

- Generics
- Closures
- Modules
- Setters and Getters
- Fully object oriented
- And more!
- And more more
3. Mislead your audience
Tips for...
Launching New Features

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Fool you very much!

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