

How I Learned
Things and
Influenced
People with
Visual Notes

PNSQC

OCTOBER 10-12 2022

Moss Drake



ABOUT ME

- Developer and project leader who has been developing professional software for nearly three decades.
- Certified Scrum Master
- Focus on vertical market software for health & insurance industries.
- Marketing Chair for PNSQC 2022





ABOUT THIS TALK

- My story with visual note taking
- How to Sketchnote
- Some Tips & Exercises
- References

MY HISTORY



- Grew up reading & collecting comics
- Degrees in Computer Science & English Literature
- Introvert
- 35 + years experience programming
- But... teams are the future

COMMUNICATION IS HARD



"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

— George Bernard Shaw

The word "run" — in its verb form alone — has 645 distinct meanings.

- go faster than a walk
- to play a musical passage
- to keep company
- to enter an election
- a series of identical things
- fish spawning
- Etc...

<https://www.npr.org/2011/05/30/136796448/has-run-run-amok-it-has-645-meanings-so-far>.



SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT IS COMMUNICATION

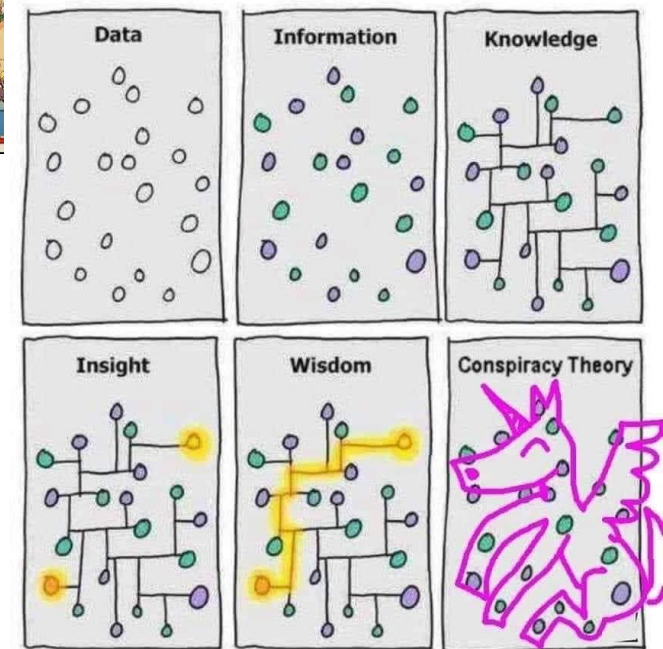
Programming as Theory Building

“...programming properly should be regarded as an activity by which the programmers form or achieve a certain kind of insight, a theory, of the matters at hand...” – Peter Naur

"If you don't get the requirements right, it doesn't matter how well you execute the rest of the project" - Karl Wieggers

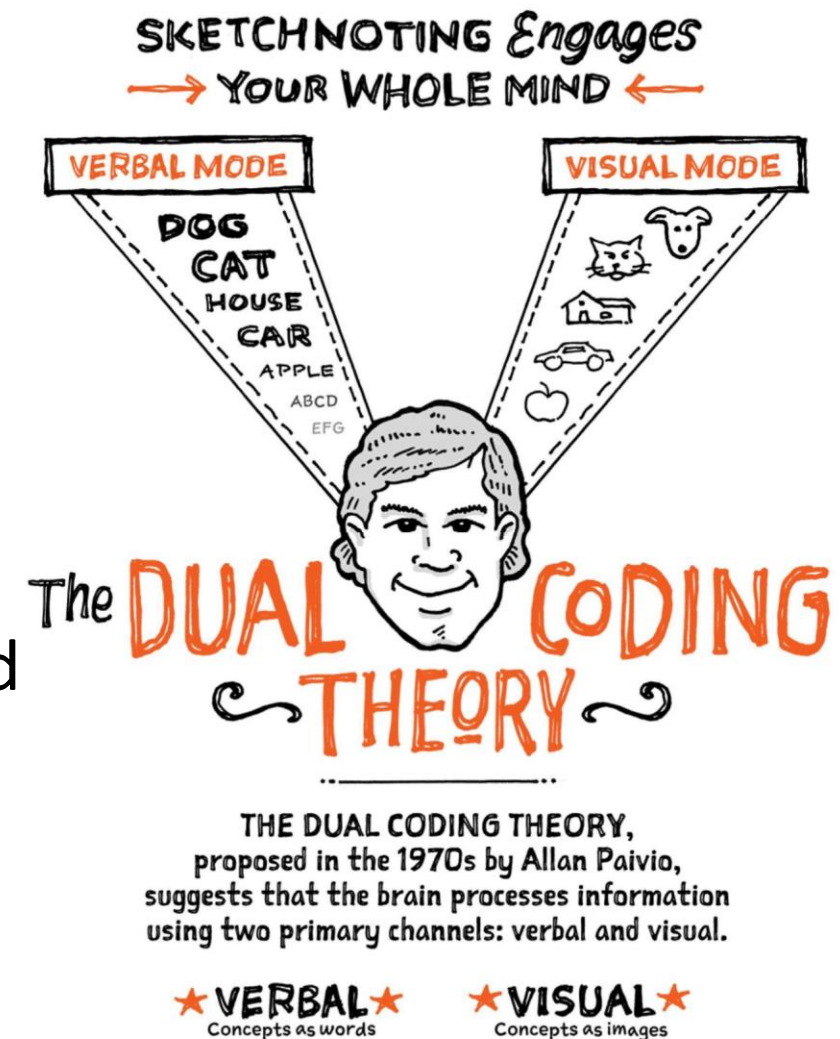
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 - **Learn Things & Influence People with Visual Notes**

A stylized diagram of a cell. At the center is a blue circle containing a white DNA double helix. This is surrounded by a grey ring with four white rectangular segments. The entire cell is enclosed in a black circular border. Outside the cell, there are several red and blue dots of varying sizes, representing molecules or particles.



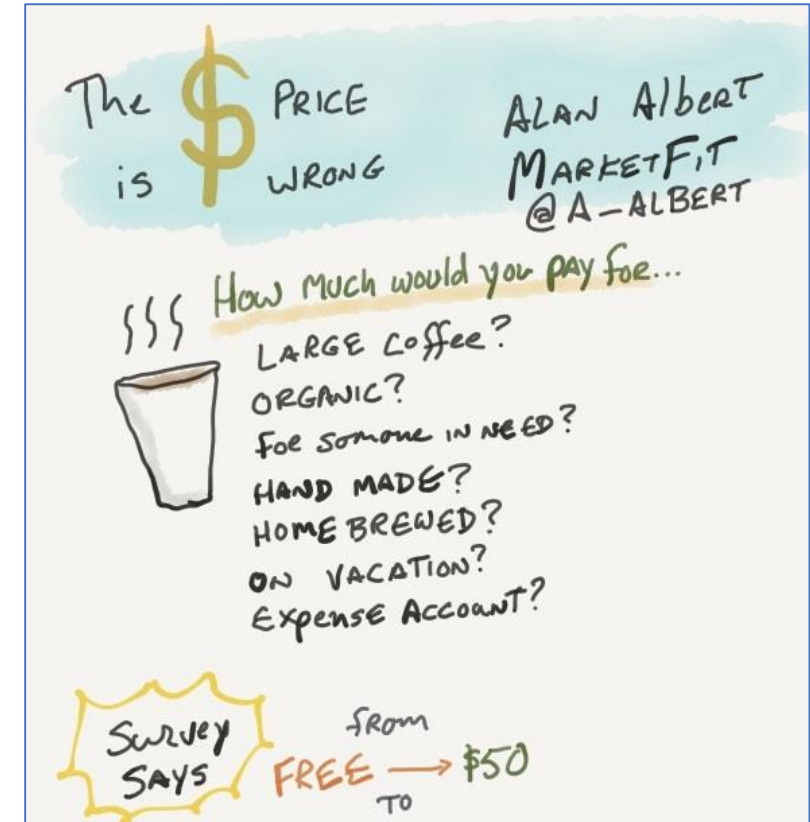
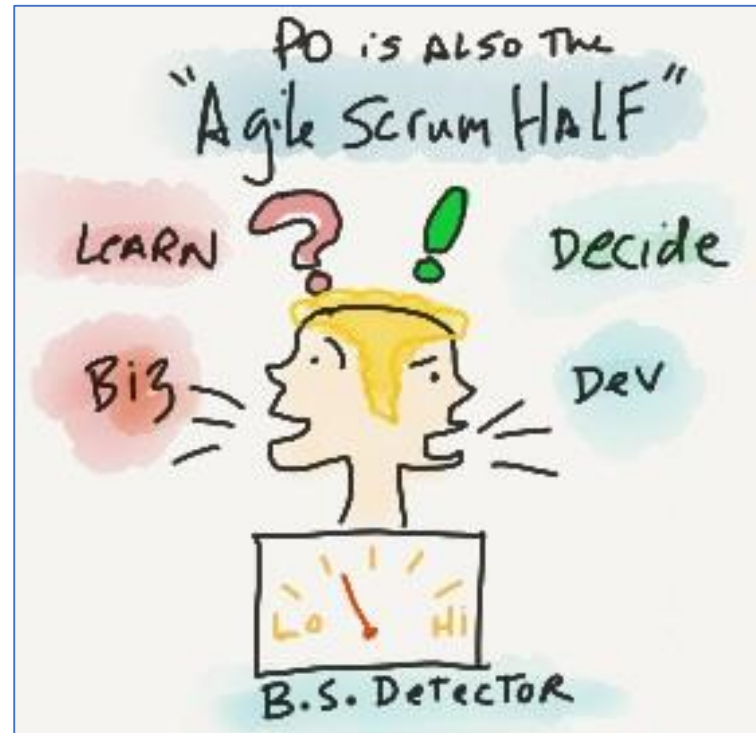
HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Combines icons, drawing and text together to quickly document a topic
- Uses multiple modes of thought, triggering different parts of the brain, which helps store and process the concepts
- Readers also use multiple modes to gain similar benefits



From "The Sketchnote Handbook" by Mike Rohde

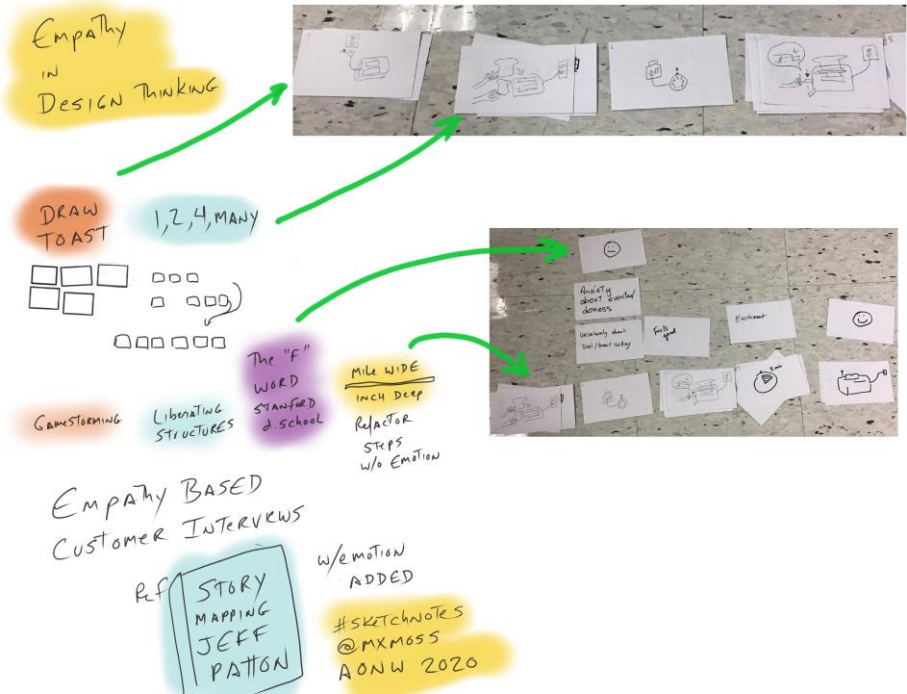
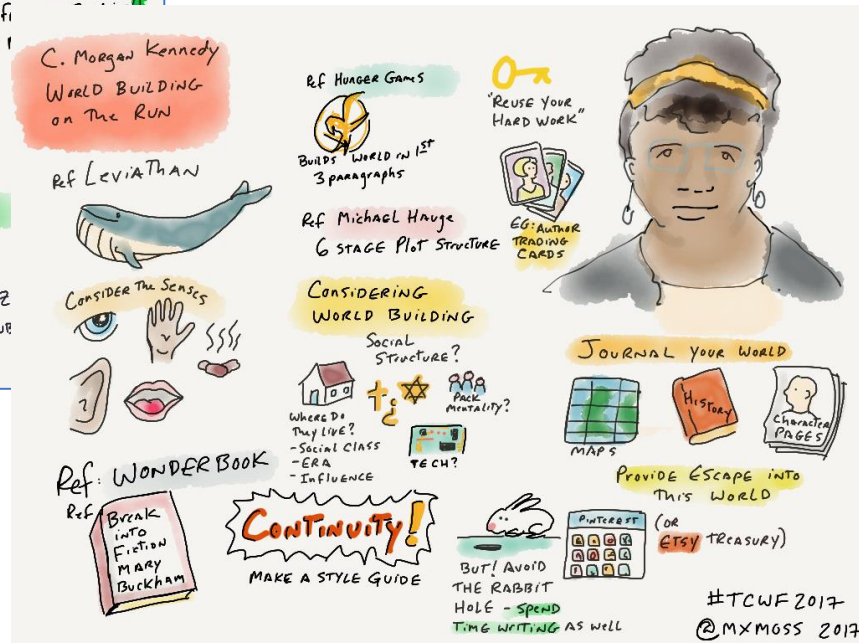
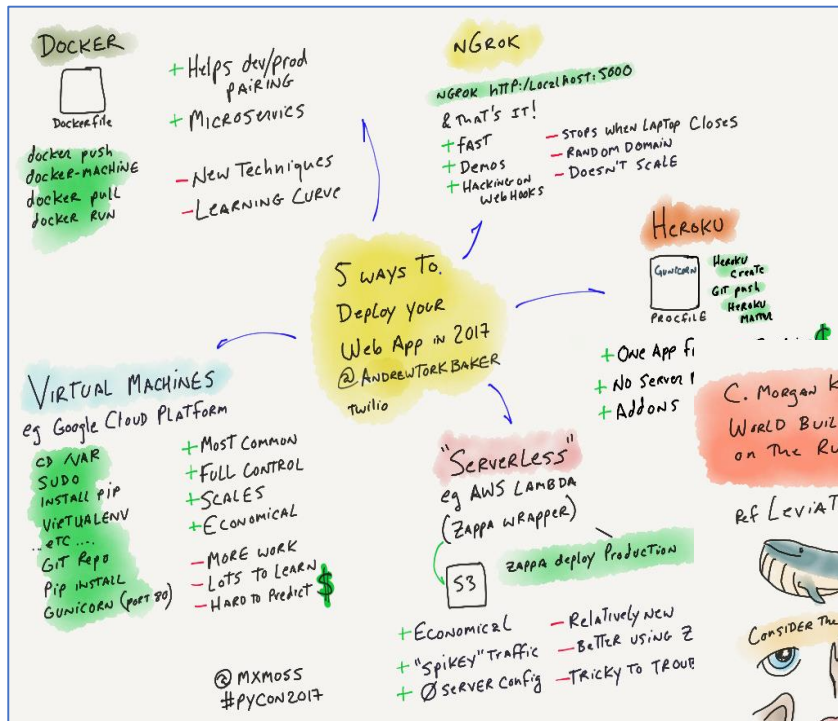
BENEFIT: IMPROVED RETENTION



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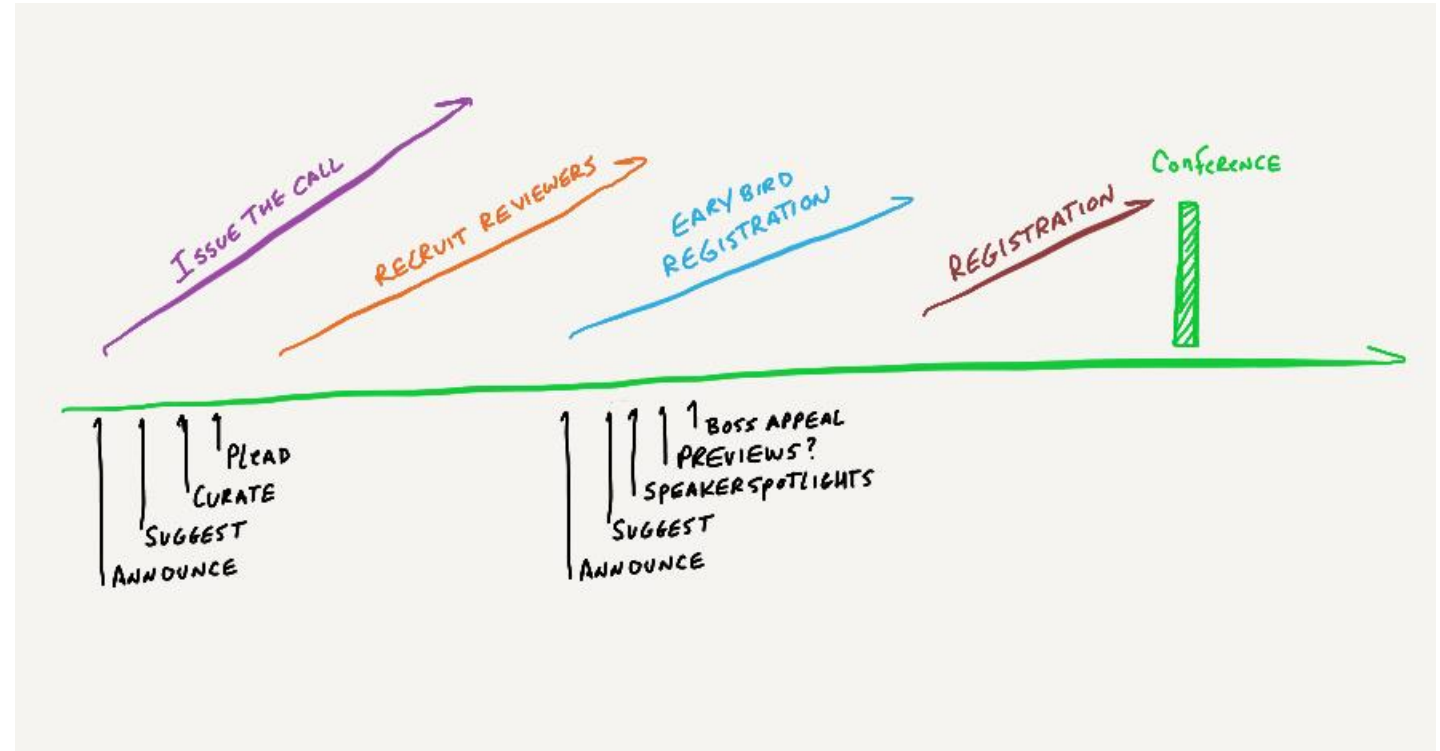
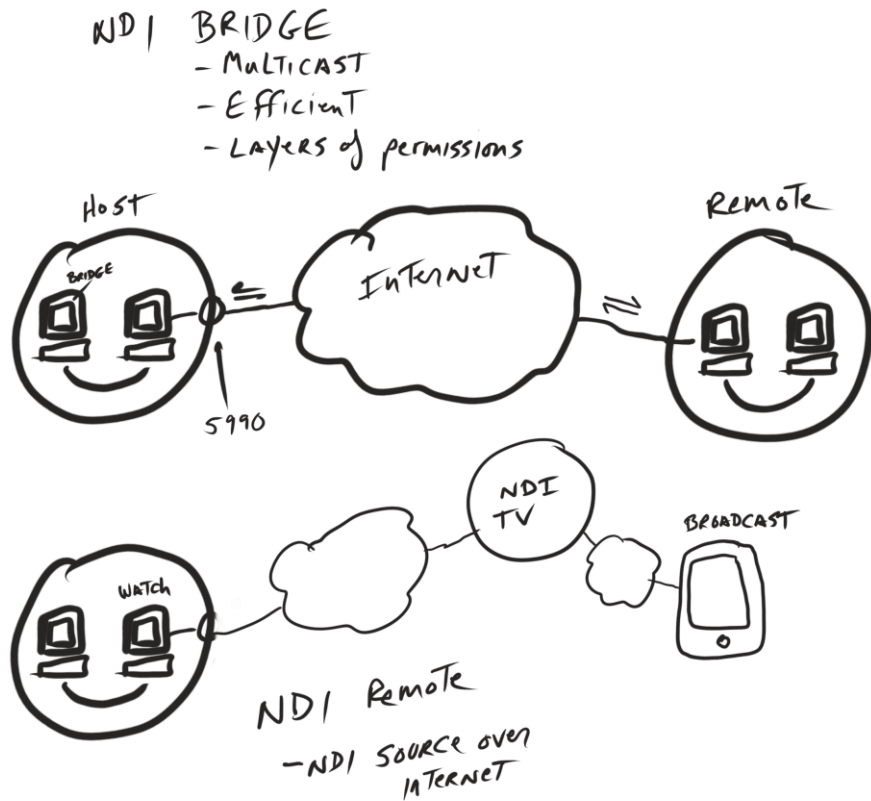
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BENEFIT: SHARED UNDERSTANDING



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BENEFIT: VISUAL ENGAGEMENT



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SKETCHNOTING: SHAPES & FONTS



The NO ESTIMATES MOVEMENT
 Ryan Ripley - @RyanRipley
 AGILE FOR HUMANS Podcast

"Why is #NoEstimates Even A Topic?"
 AN ESTIMATE IS A BET, Like PLINKO

Estimate → → VALUE DELIVERED

CHAOS
 Comp
 Simple Com
 STACEY DIAGRAM

Preferably
 Estimates
 MADE IN SAFETY

Ref NATE SILVER
 80% CLINTON 20% TRUMP
 IT WAS STILL A GUESS
 + WE'RE LIVING THE 20%

Why Do We NEED ESTIMATES?
 - EXTERNAL DEPENDENCIES
 - VALUE DECISIONS?

#NoEstimates
 IDEALIST → @WoodyZull
 NO WASTE → @duarte-vasco
 ESTIMATES ARE REDUNDANT → @NEIL Killick

Ref STORY MAPPING J. PATTON

INSTEAD...
 CUMULATIVE FLOW DIAGRAM

FEAT. → TIME
 WIP → DEV → TEST → DONE
 UNTESTED

- FEEDBACK
 - SMALL SLICES
 - CONTINUOUS FLOW
 - DIGESTIBLE
 "GET WHAT YOU KNOW"
 Slice & ship the MVP

CASE: NORDSTROM
 - Lo-Tech, in-Store R&D + Mockups
 - 1 day increments
 MVP IN A WEEK
 - TEAM COST VS INVESTMENT %
 - LEARN SOMETHING

Ref Predicting The Unpredict. ROTHMANN
 SOFTWARE ESTIMATION McConnell

ESTIMATE = EFFORT + Accidental Complication + ESSENTIAL Complication
 WORK

Q Do ESTIMATES ADD VALUE?
 maybe...
 - SMALL SLICES
 - WAYS TO COMMUNICATE ASSUMPTIONS

THINGS THAT WE'RE BAD AT

WORK

"A Good ESTIMATE IS WITHIN 25% of ACTUAL 75% of THE TIME" - McCONNELL

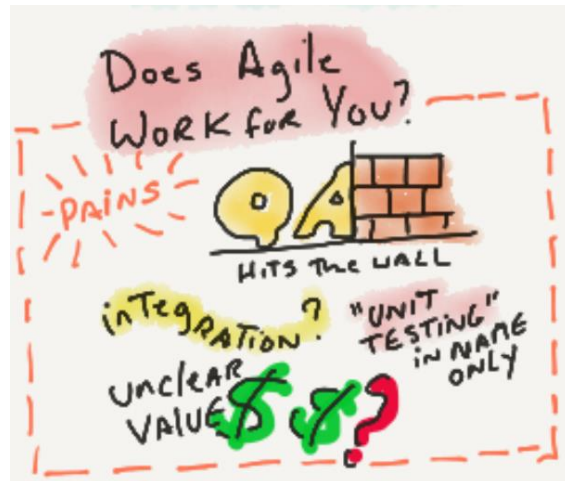
FIXED BID
 FIXED VALUE

METAPHOR:
 DOLLAR COST AVERAGING IN STOCKS.
 SMALL BETS OVER TIME

BACKLOG ITEMS > 6 months
 = HOARDING
 CLEAN IT OUT!

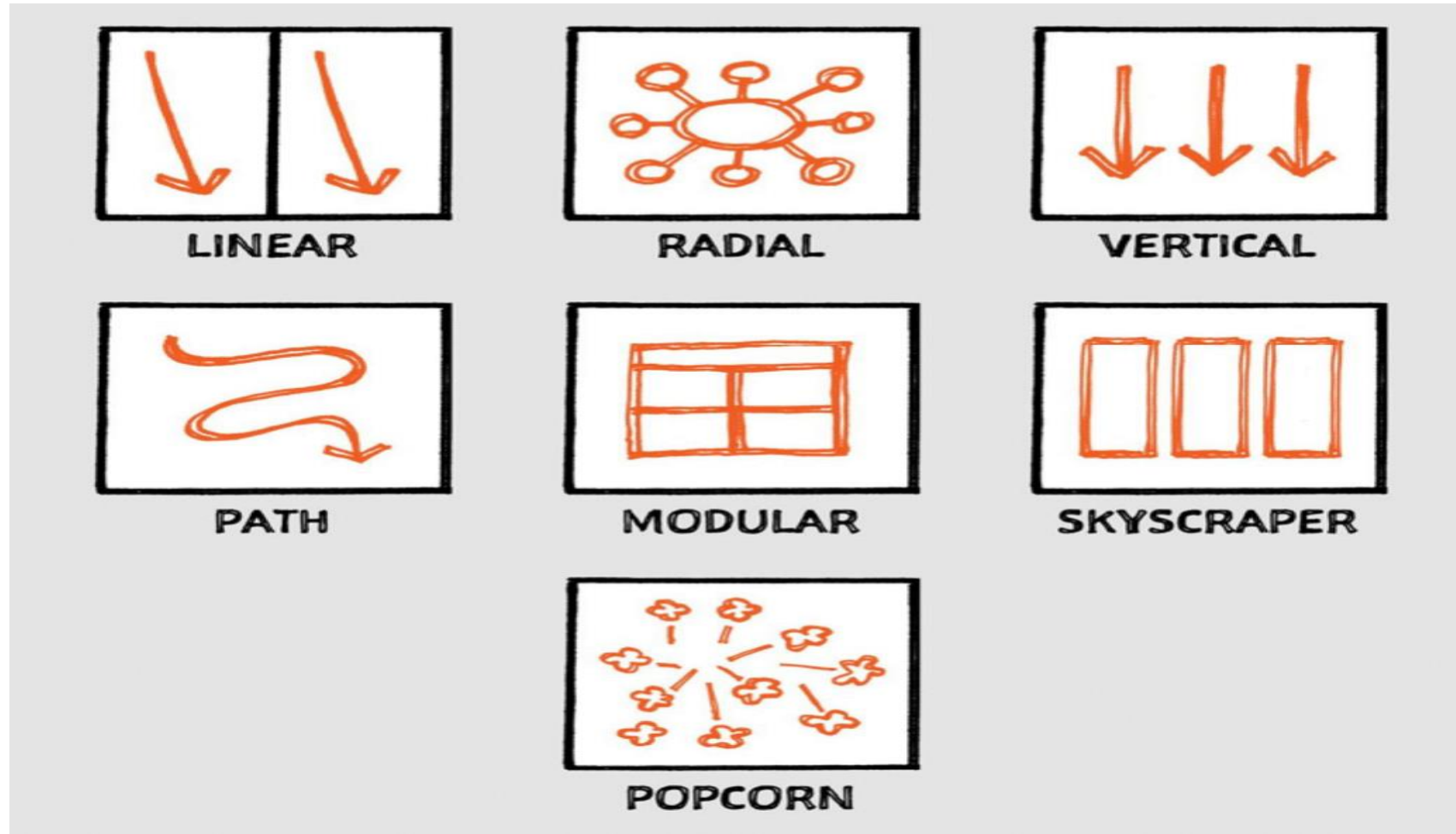
@MXMOSS, 2017
 #BetterSoftwareCon

SKETCHNOTING: ELEMENTS



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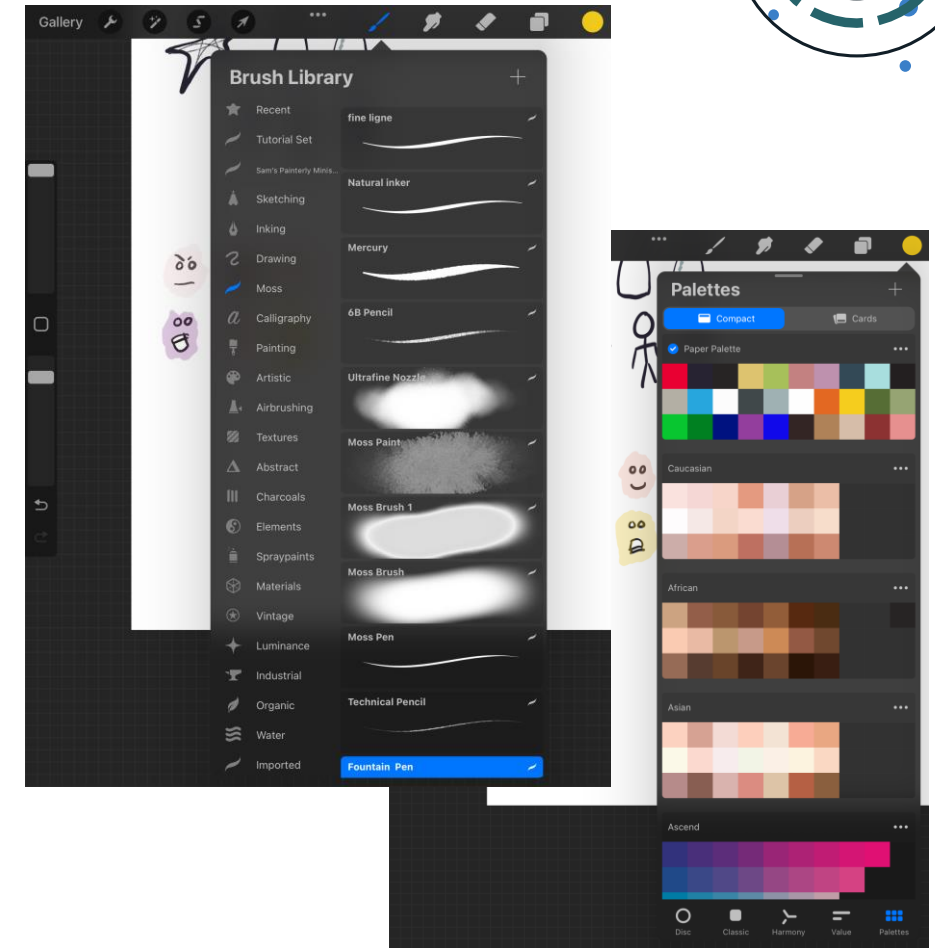
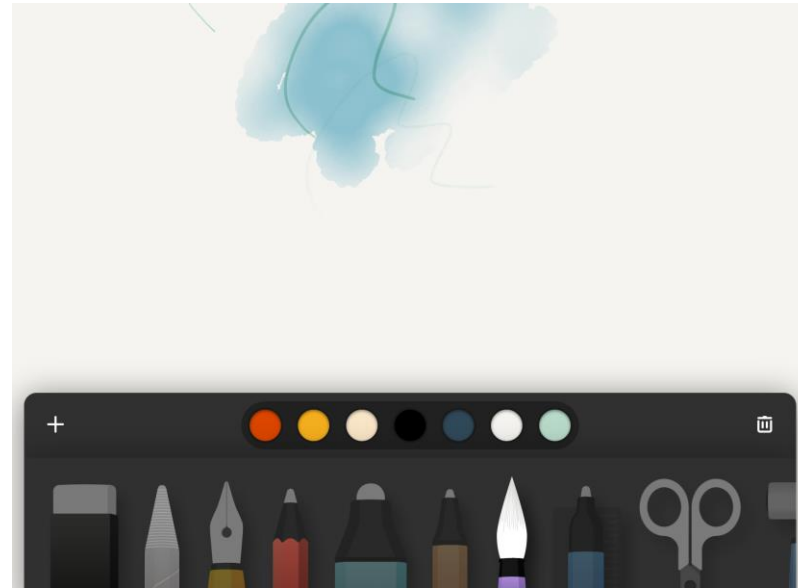
SKETCHNOTING: STRUCTURE



From "The Sketchnote Handbook" by Mike Rohde

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SKETCHNOTING: TOOLS



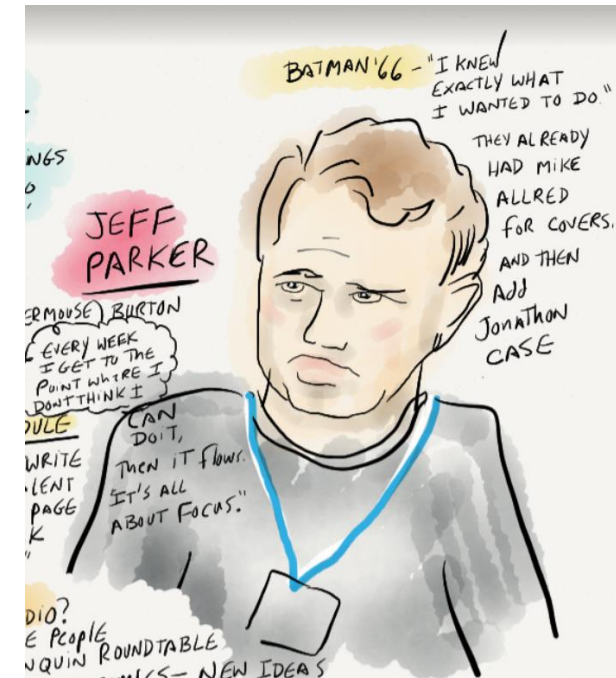
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DOs & DON'Ts



Think visually

Simplify – big picture



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DOs & DON'Ts



Plan ahead
Practice
use muscle memory
know your tools



Avoid preconceptions
Don't make it perfect



A HEADER

01011011101011
00100110100110
10111010100011



ANOTHER HEADER

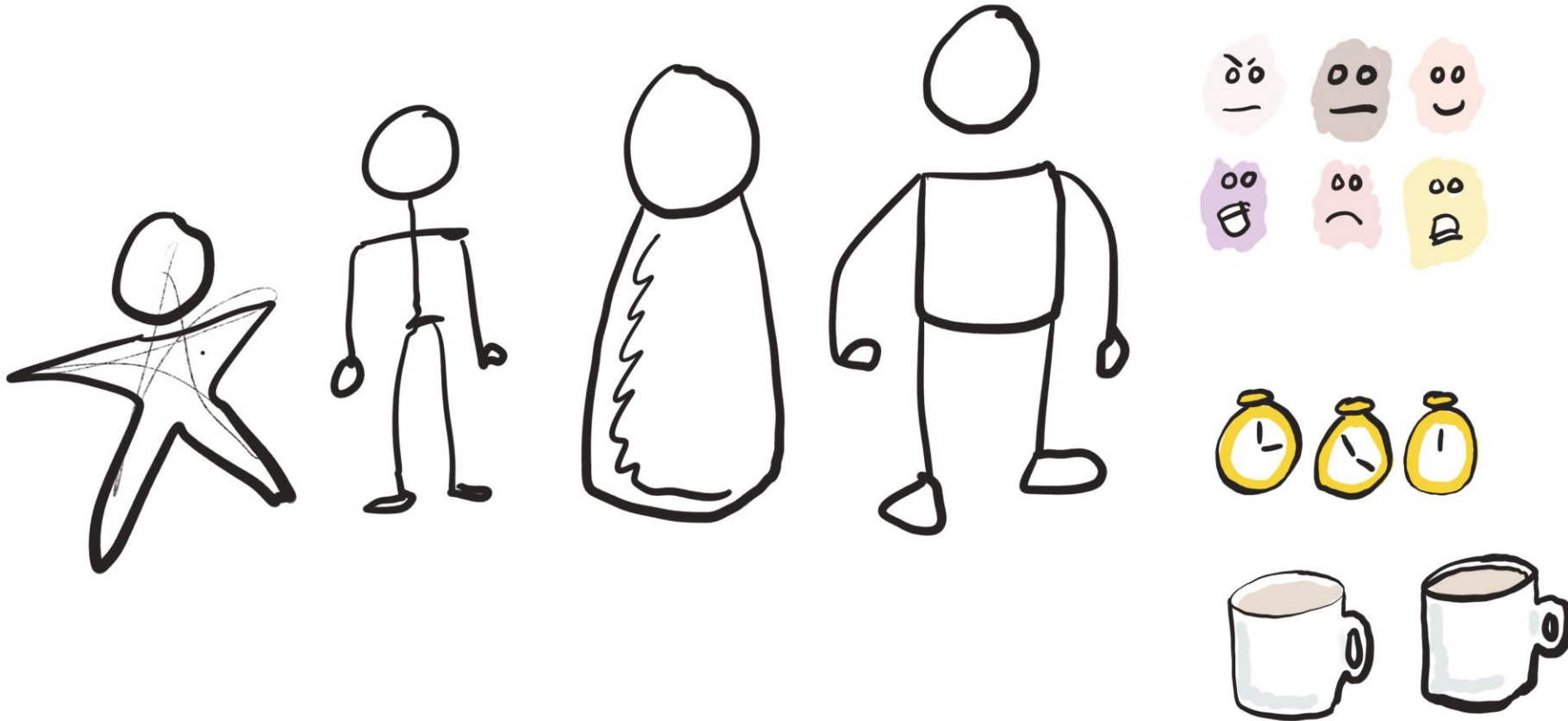


COMMON ICONS



My NAME
CONTACT
YEAR, CONTEXT

EXERCISE: 4 WAYS TO DRAW A PERSON



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EXERCISE: DRAW A CAR (Muscle Memory)

- Draw a car from memory – 30 seconds
- Draw a car in 10 seconds
- Draw 5 cars, 5 seconds each

SUMMARY



- Improve retention through “dual-coding”
- Get ideas out of your head into a shared area
- Engage others
- Combine context, knowledge and practice
- Work in an agile manner

INFLUENCES



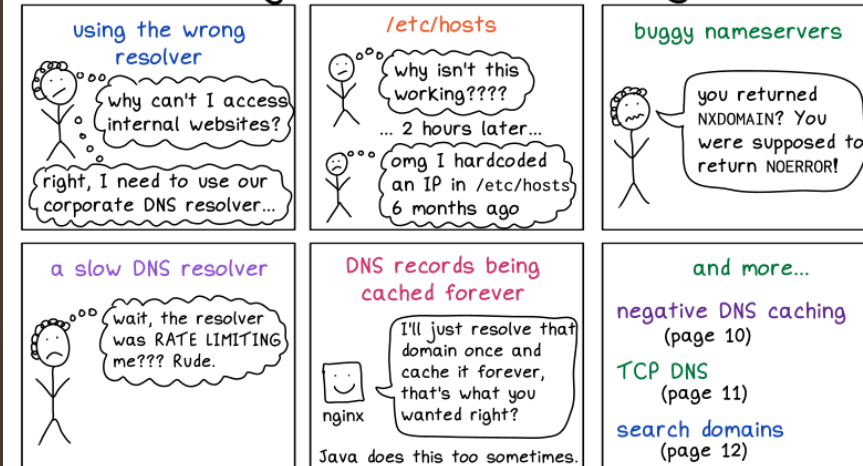
Zeger van Hese



Hélène Pouille

JULIA EVANS
 @bork

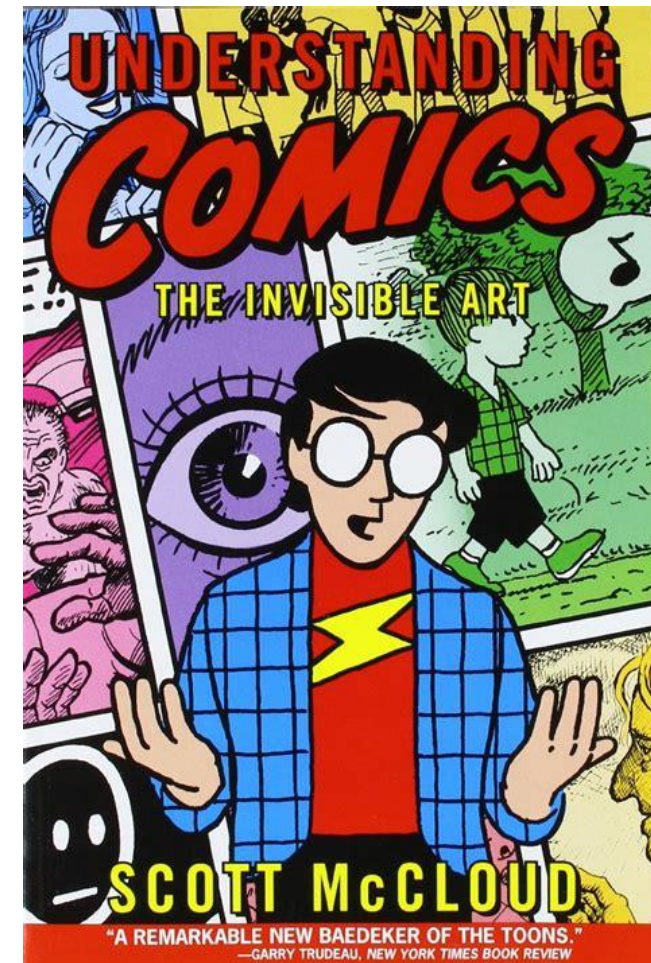
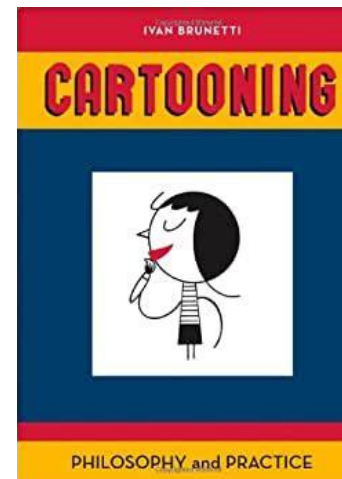
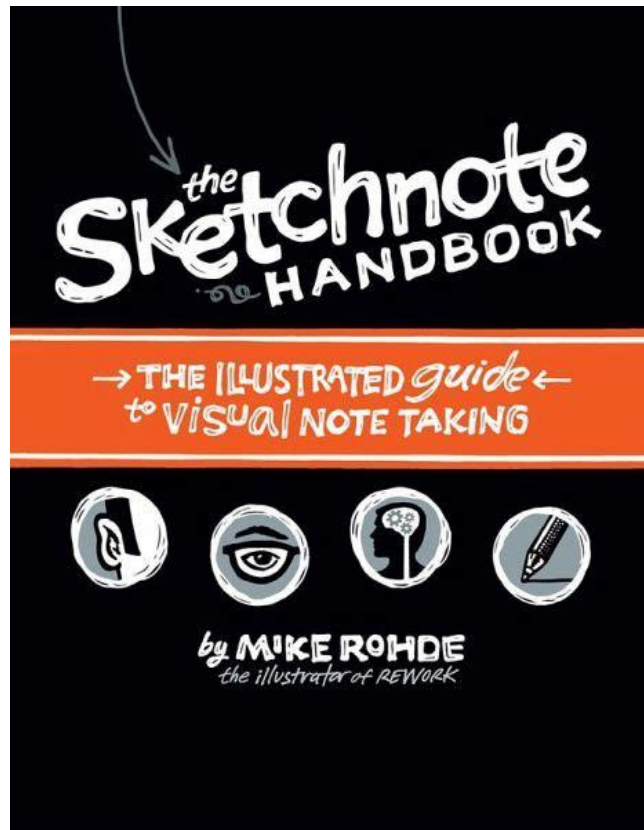
things that can break your DNS



Julia Evans



REFERENCES



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THANK YOU!



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