

Keep it complex, stupid!

creating games as a service

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Funcom, DICE, Stardoll, Paradox North

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Good with online stuff and whiteboards

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Good with online stuff and whiteboards

Bad at fancy design terms and math

questions?

questions?

who are you exactly?

are you joking or just wierd?

what is this complexity you speak of?

it all sounds very complicated?

why should complexity in games be any good?

what does this have to do with service?

do you have any useful tips?

So, are you joking or just wierd?

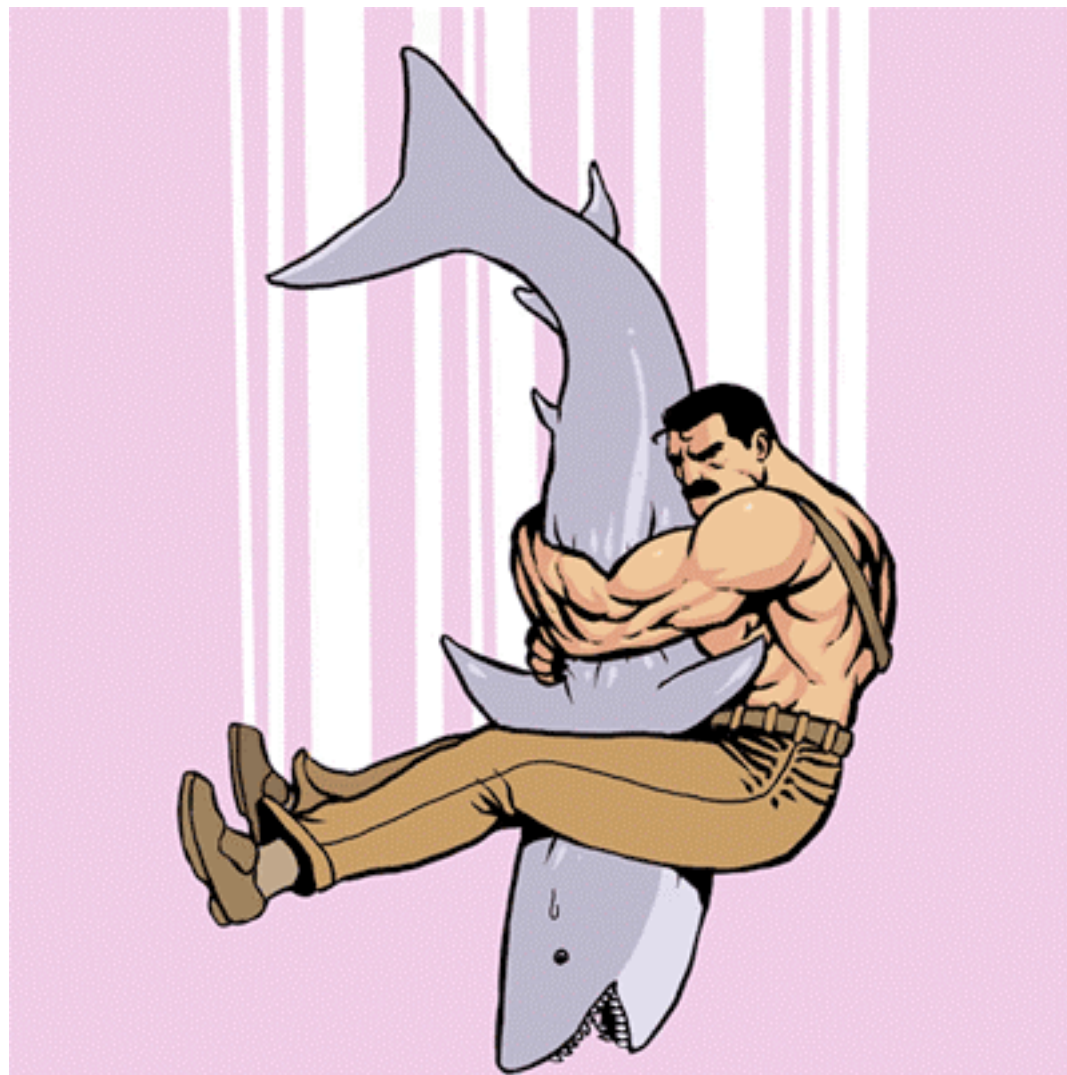


So, are you joking or just wierd?

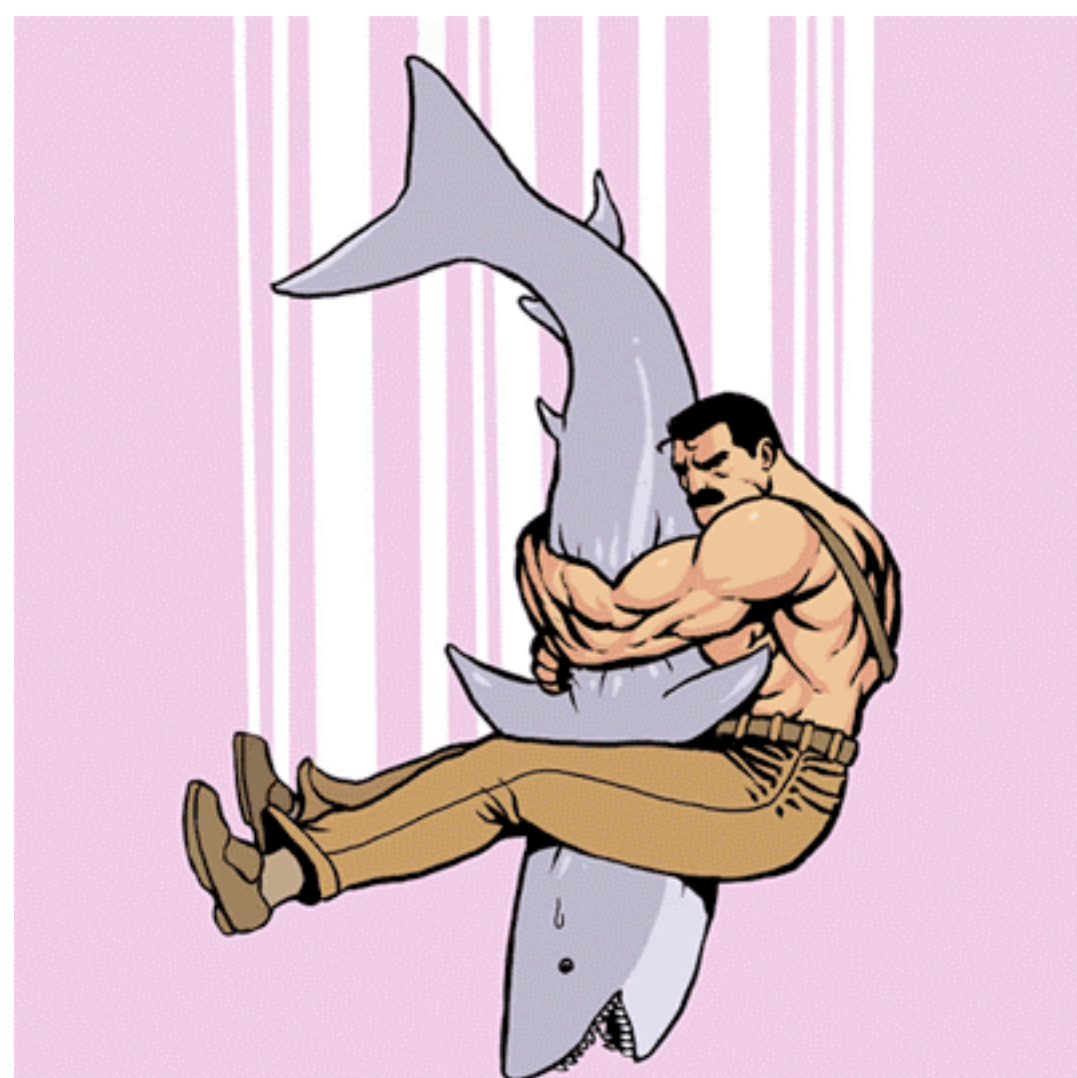


Things that are complex are not useful, things that are useful are simple.
— Michail Kalashnikov

complexity is awesome!

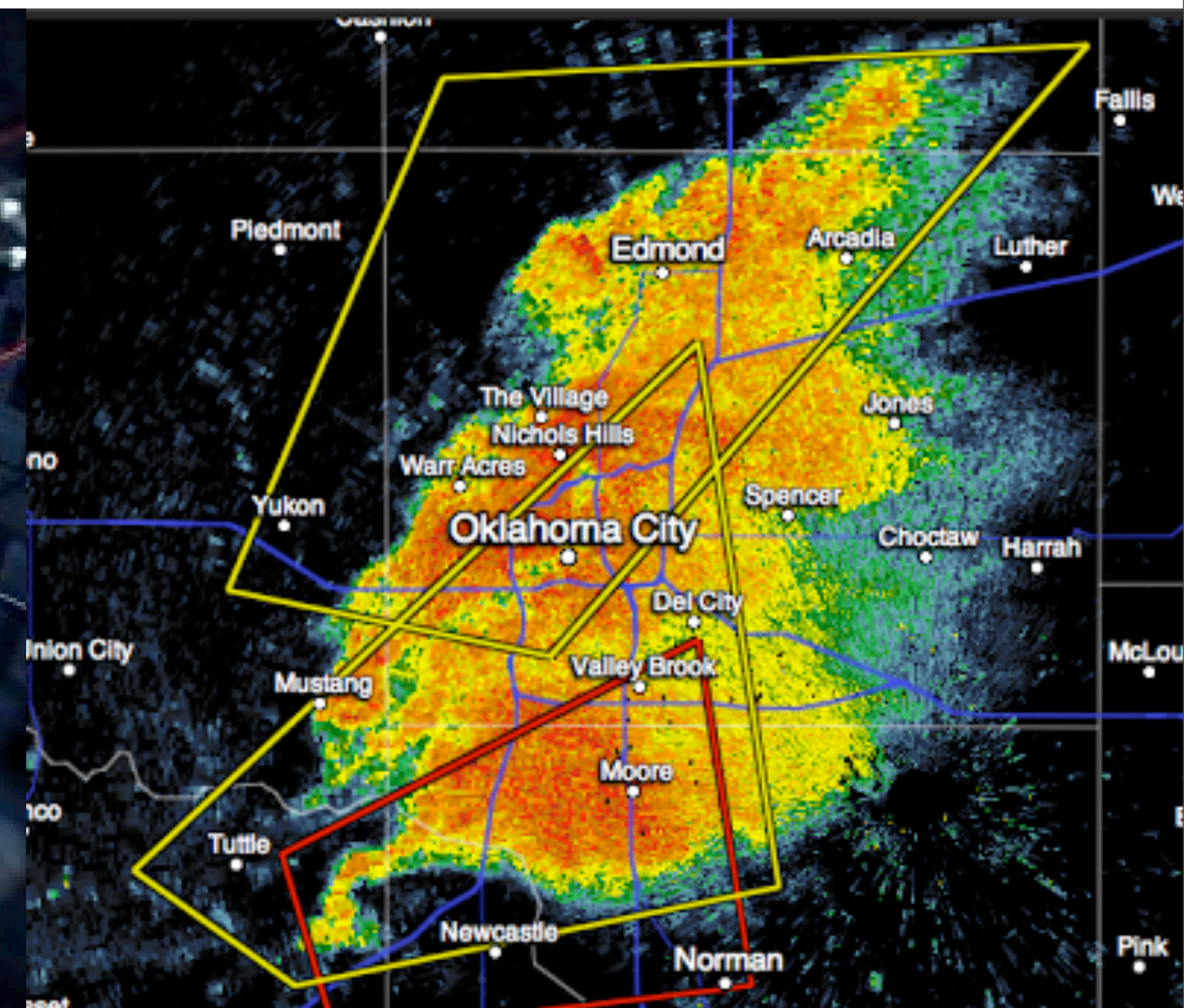
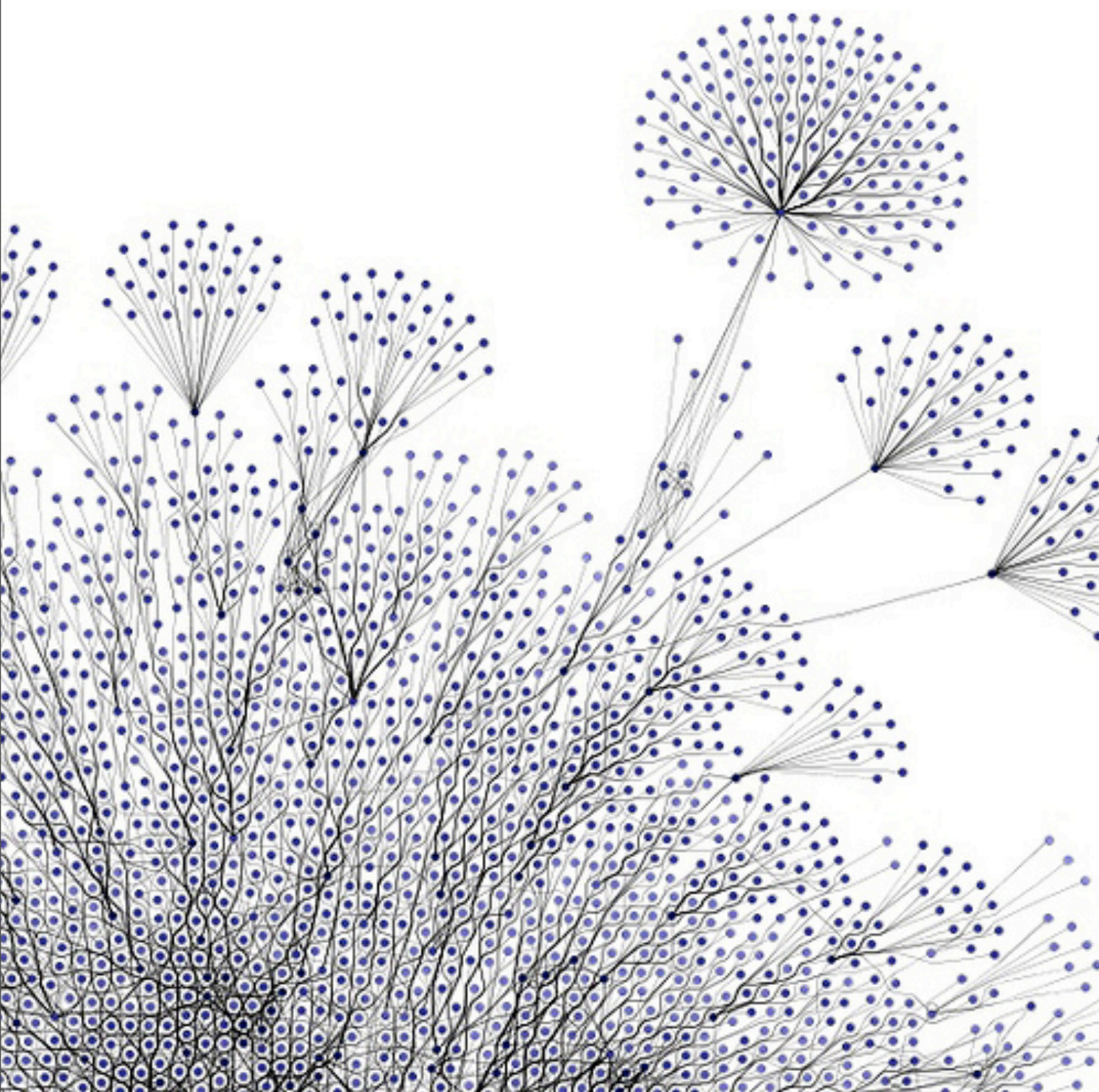


complexity is awesome!



complexity in games creates emergent gameplay
emergent gameplay creates high replayability
high replayability is kind of like providing a service!

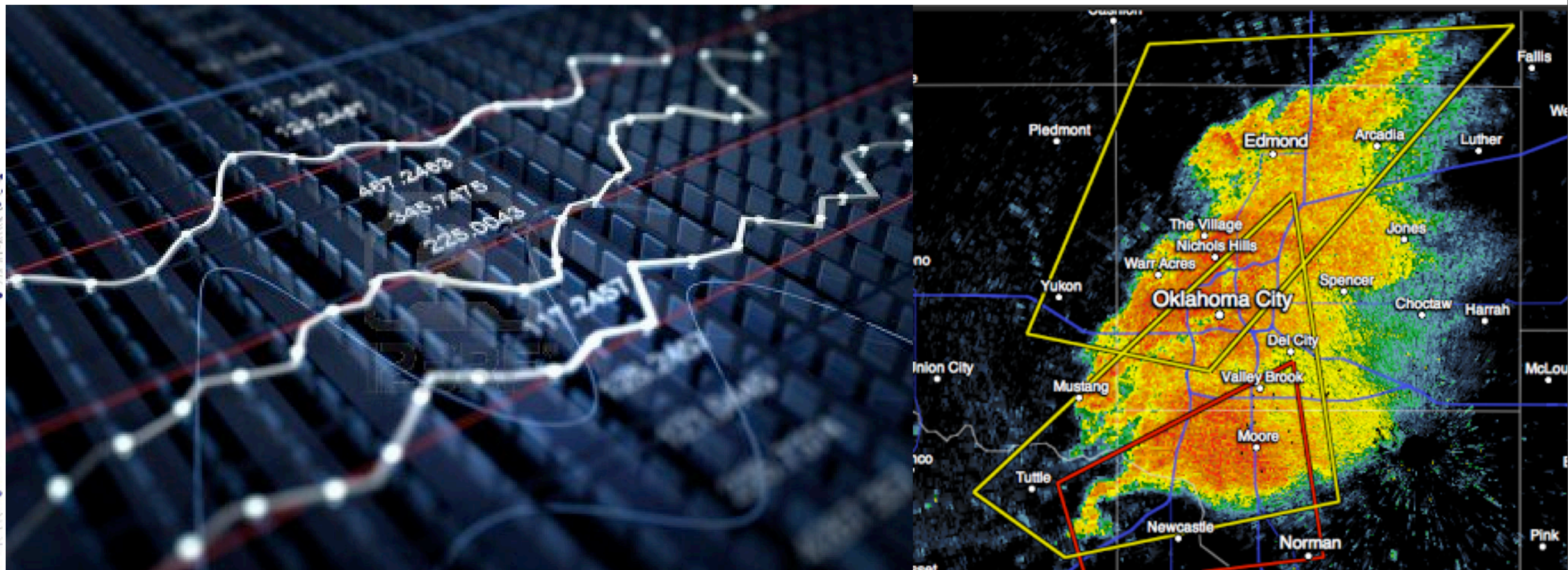
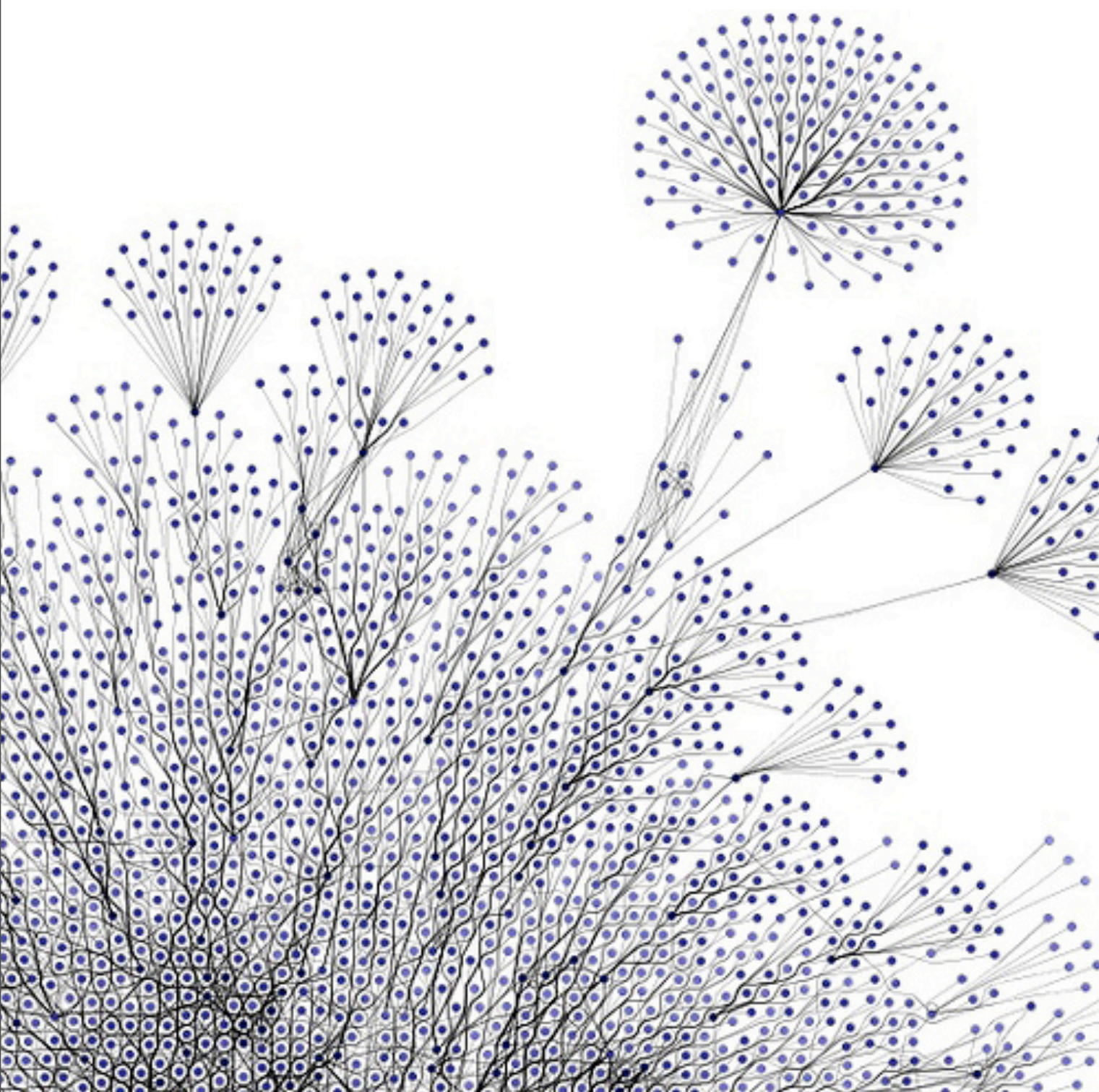
so what is complexity?



so what is complexity?

study of phenomena which emerge from a collection of interacting objects.

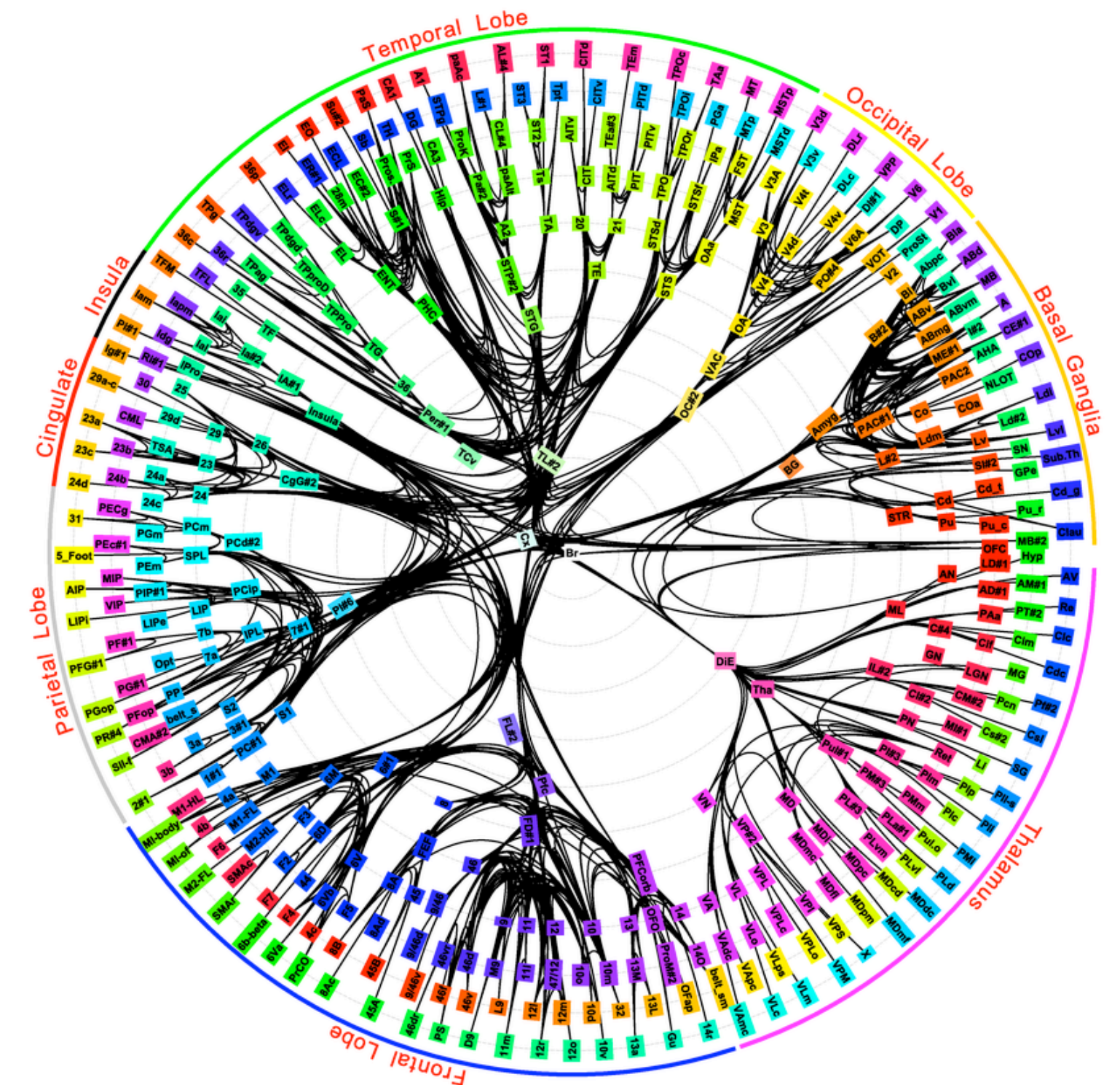
-science



what is complexity?

a bunch of pretty simple things
hooked up together
resulting in non-linear behaviour

(hard to predict, but not random)



you mean like a game?



you mean like a game?

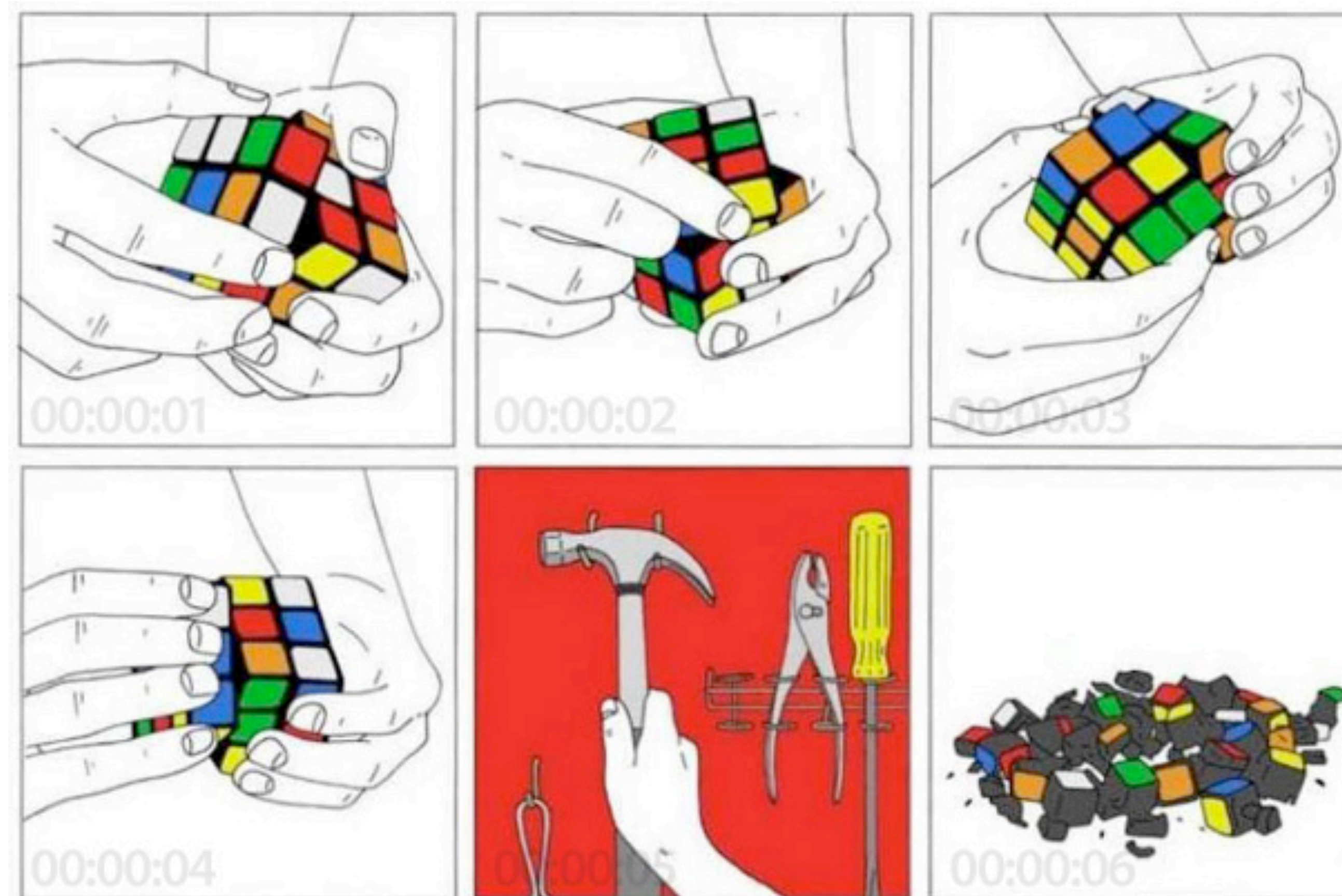
Games are largely about getting people to see past the variations and look instead at the underlying patterns.



Delight strikes when we recognize patterns but are surprised by them.

— Raph Koster, A Theory of Fun

but complicated games are too hard





complex does not mean complicated



ETQW Servers

OptionsInternetNew ListRefresh ListBaseFiltersServers: 35

Server Name	Map Name	Game Type	Time	Players	Ping
!! Pink Taco Bar Ranked () PinkTacoBar.com	Sewer	Campaign	01:48	17/18	189
!! = VIP = FOR THE FREEDOM OF EARTH Ran	Ark	Campaign	14:17	22/24	97
!!!!TheXclamation Ranked!!!! (2.0)	Ark	Campaign	05:15	24/24	195
!!![Bernds] und Freunde - Ranked Server!!!	Outskirts	Campaign	13:04	18/20	107
!Qf! UK **RANKED**	Island	Campaign	10:03	18/20	98
R.U.S Straggification Facility	Sewer	Campaign	16:03	22/24	87
SpecialForces~ Ranked Server	Refinery	Campaign	Warmup	2/24	165
OCB- Scotland [><] 18+ Only Ranked!	Valley	Campaign	12:48	23/24	105
Jesus/ - Ranked	Valley	Campaign	Reviewing	15/20	154

Join Server

!!!!TheXclamation Ranked!!!! (2.0)
8.12.21.214:27733
Ark
Campaign
05:15 - Map 2 Of 3
Mature and Fun Players Welcome
Ask any ! tag for help!
TheXclamation.clanservers.com [Pan
Enjoy your stay, come back soon - AC

GDF	Kills	Deaths	XP	Ping
FunkyMuppet	24	8	271	150
Monkey600	13	12	256	62
SuperHappyCov	16	8	245	43
<ESM>Darth_ba	20	6	212	52
Itx	4	7	189	56
ComerEste87	11	6	173	90
agustin89	7	6	162	76
<ESM>MajorPat	13	5	145	90
ChristianTerror	11	8	135	108
SniperVoodoo	4	4	97	96
happykat_1	5	11	96	97
Coffee_Maker	1	2	4	179

Strogg	Kills	Deaths	XP	Ping
ClanlessTim74	12	13	191	141
ly	15	9	185	54
yvarr	9	18	117	57
baracudaTA	8	6	111	56
XcepticZP_Zoki	3	12	92	392
{TLC}DAMGUY	7	13	84	142
TAWHeme-i-14	15	14	82	54
TAWMongrelon	5	15	77	48
Mard52	3	6	20	108
rootbeer71	2	1	12	48
starkwolf	1	8	9	76
hankcoll	1	1	8	156

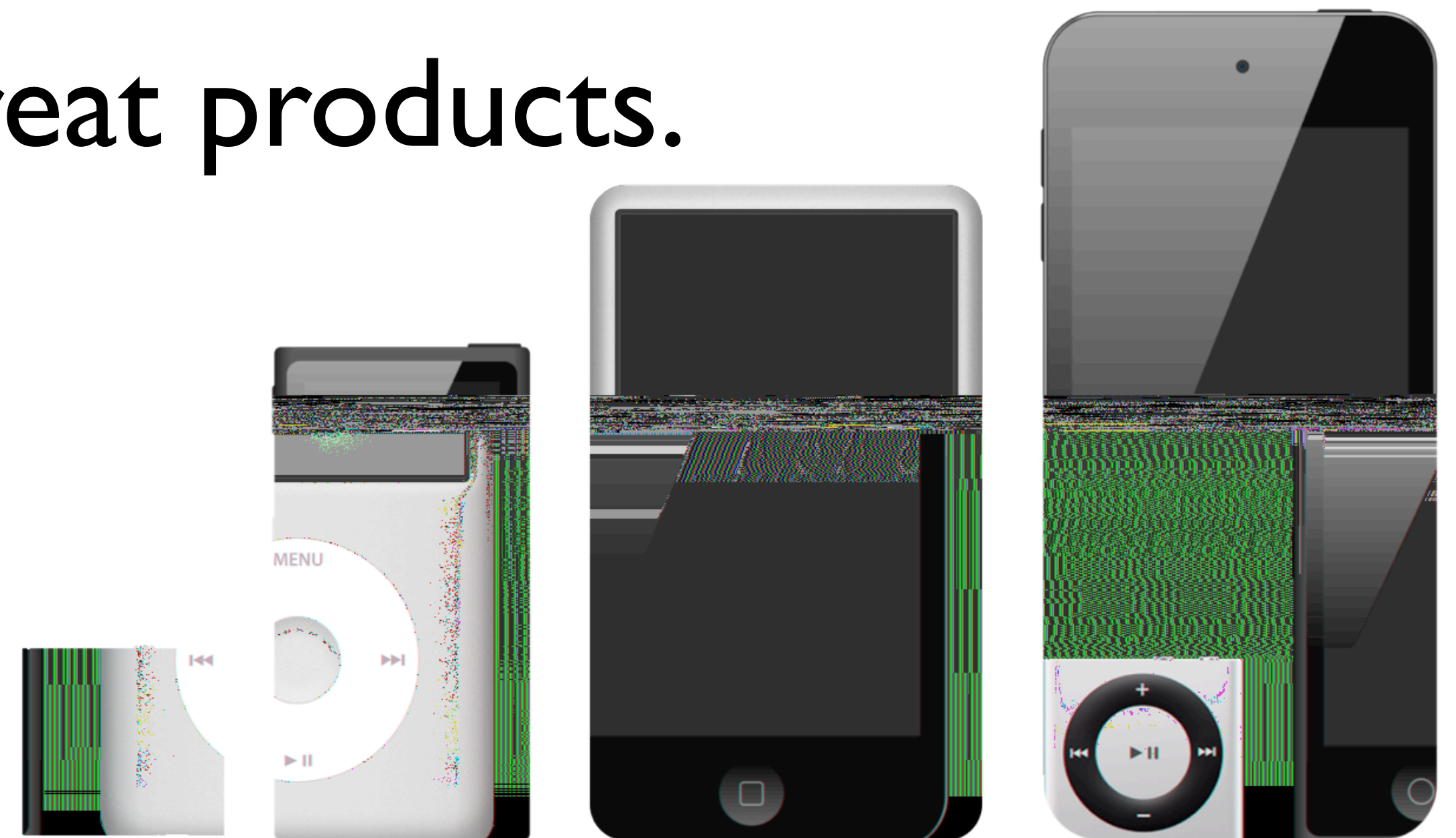
complex does not mean complicated

Keeping it Simple can create great products.



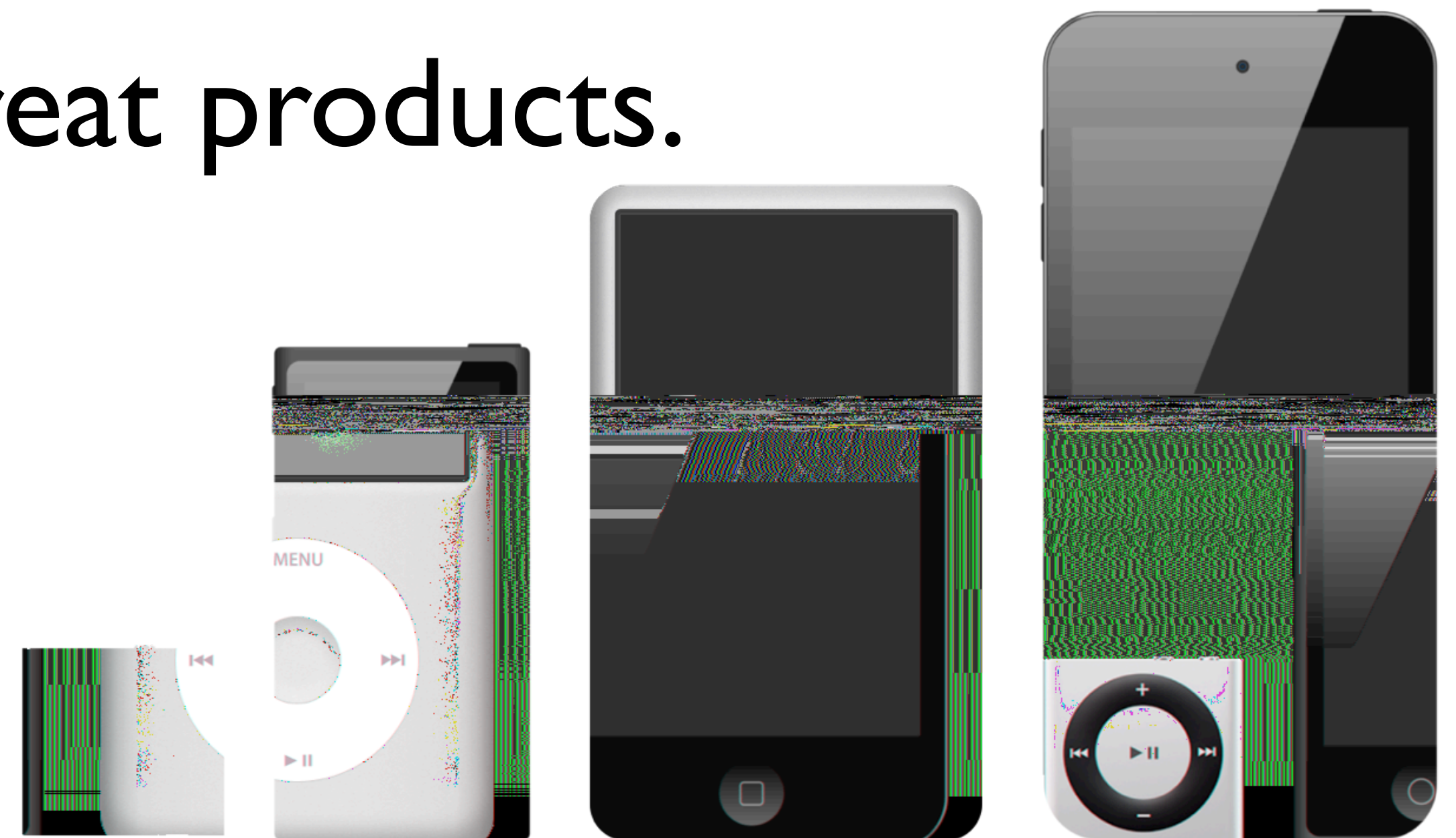
Keeping it Complex can create great services.
Because Services need to change all the time.

Keeping it Simple can create great products.



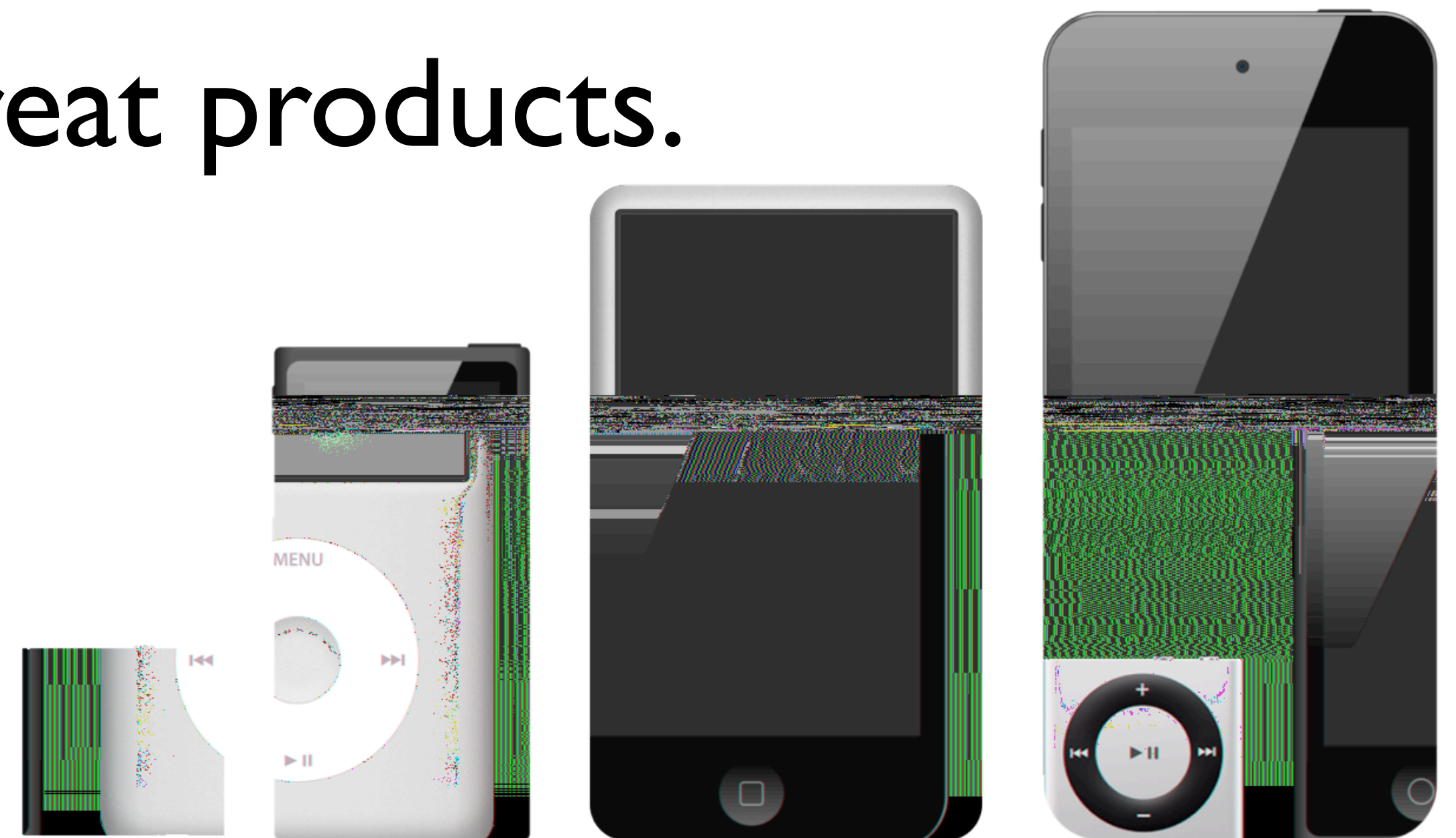
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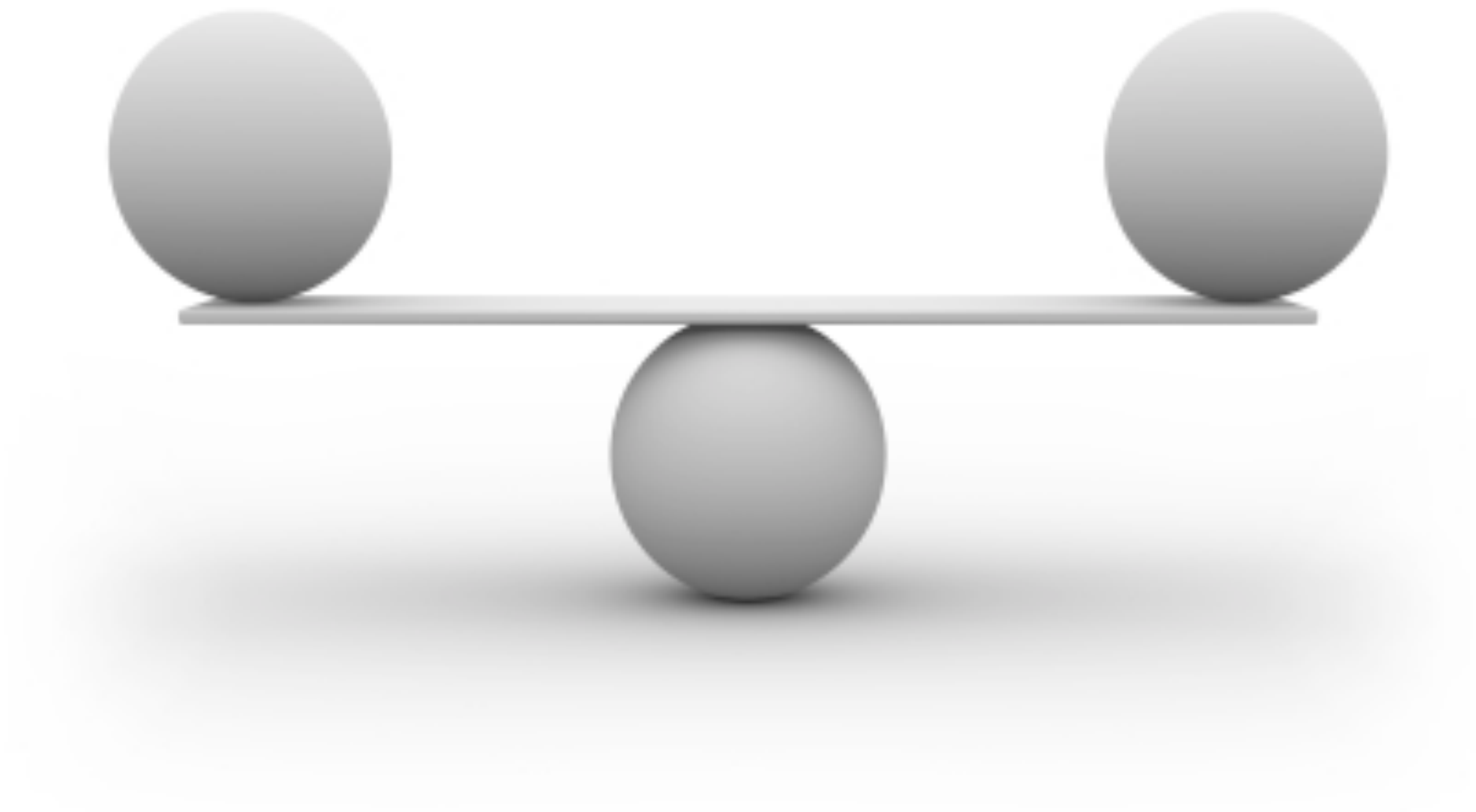
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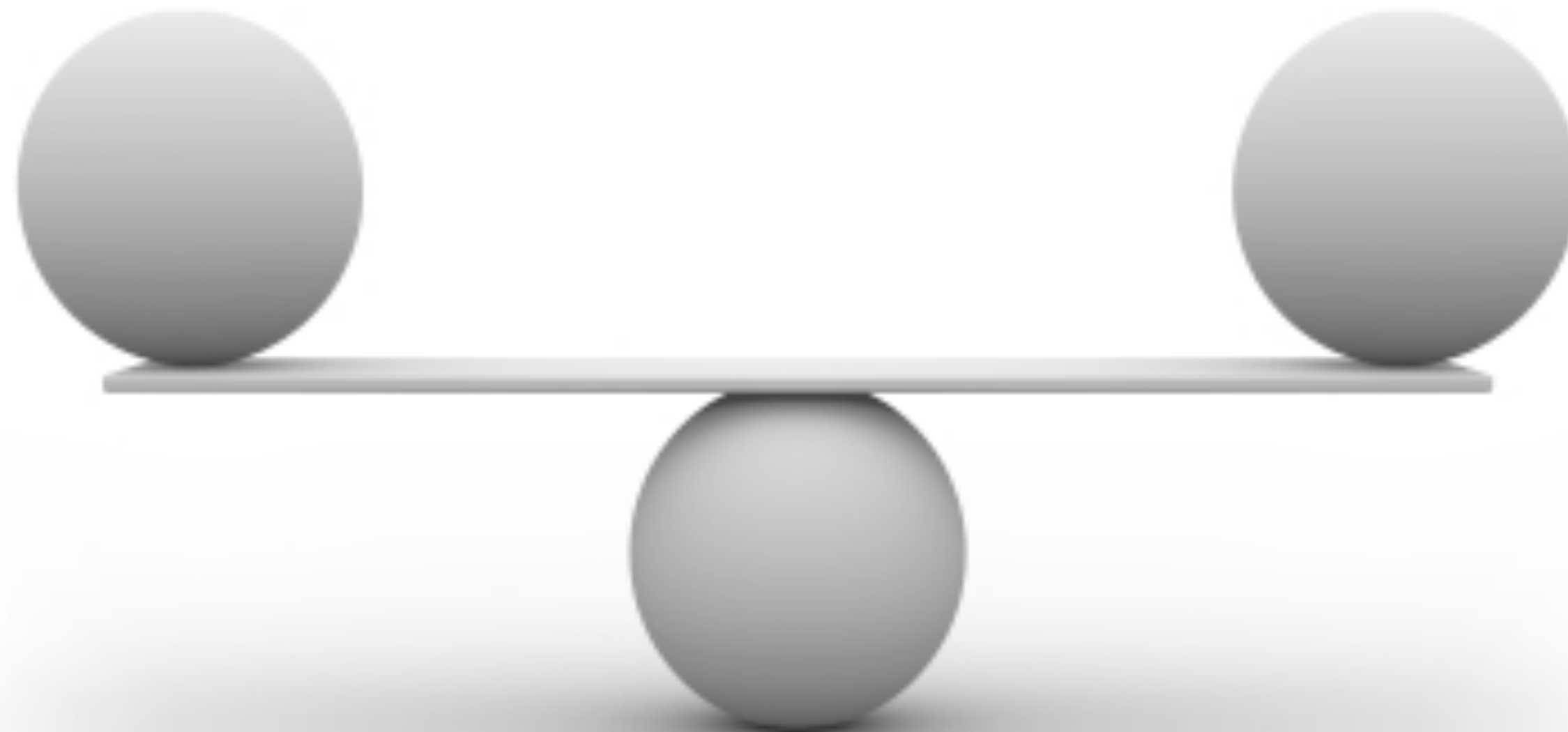


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Because Services need to change all the time.

”A Product”

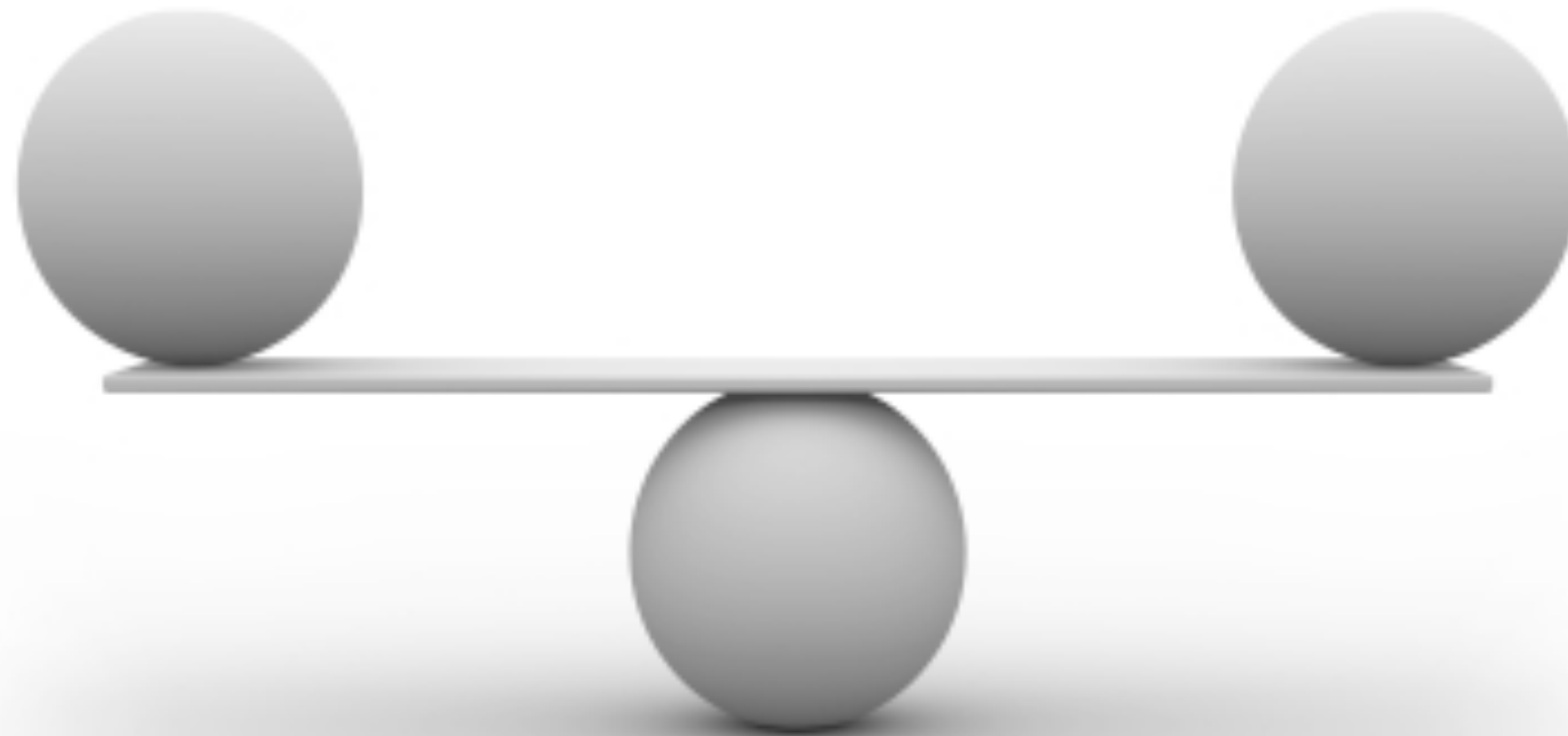


”A Product”



Simple and perfectly balanced

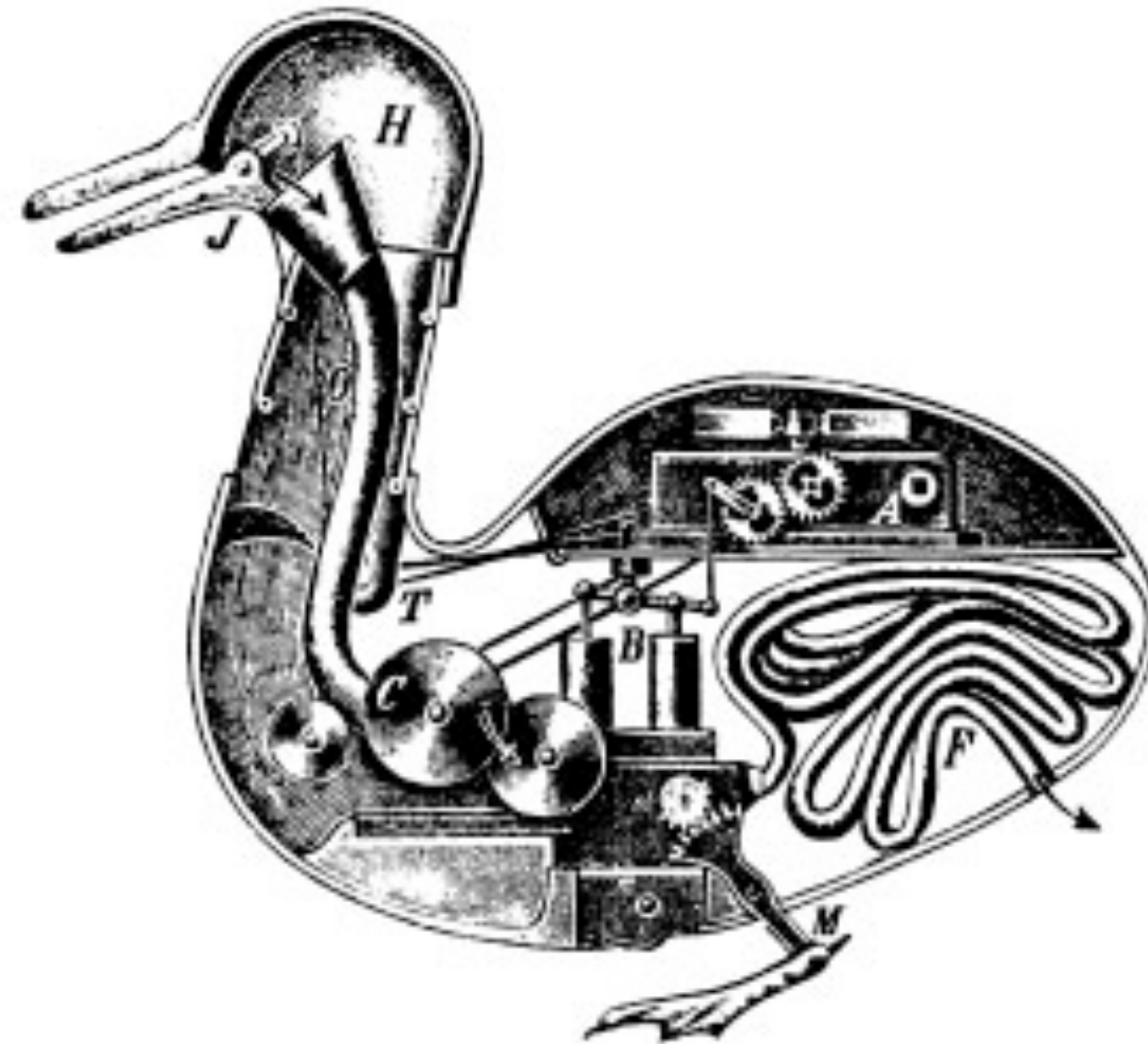
”A Product”



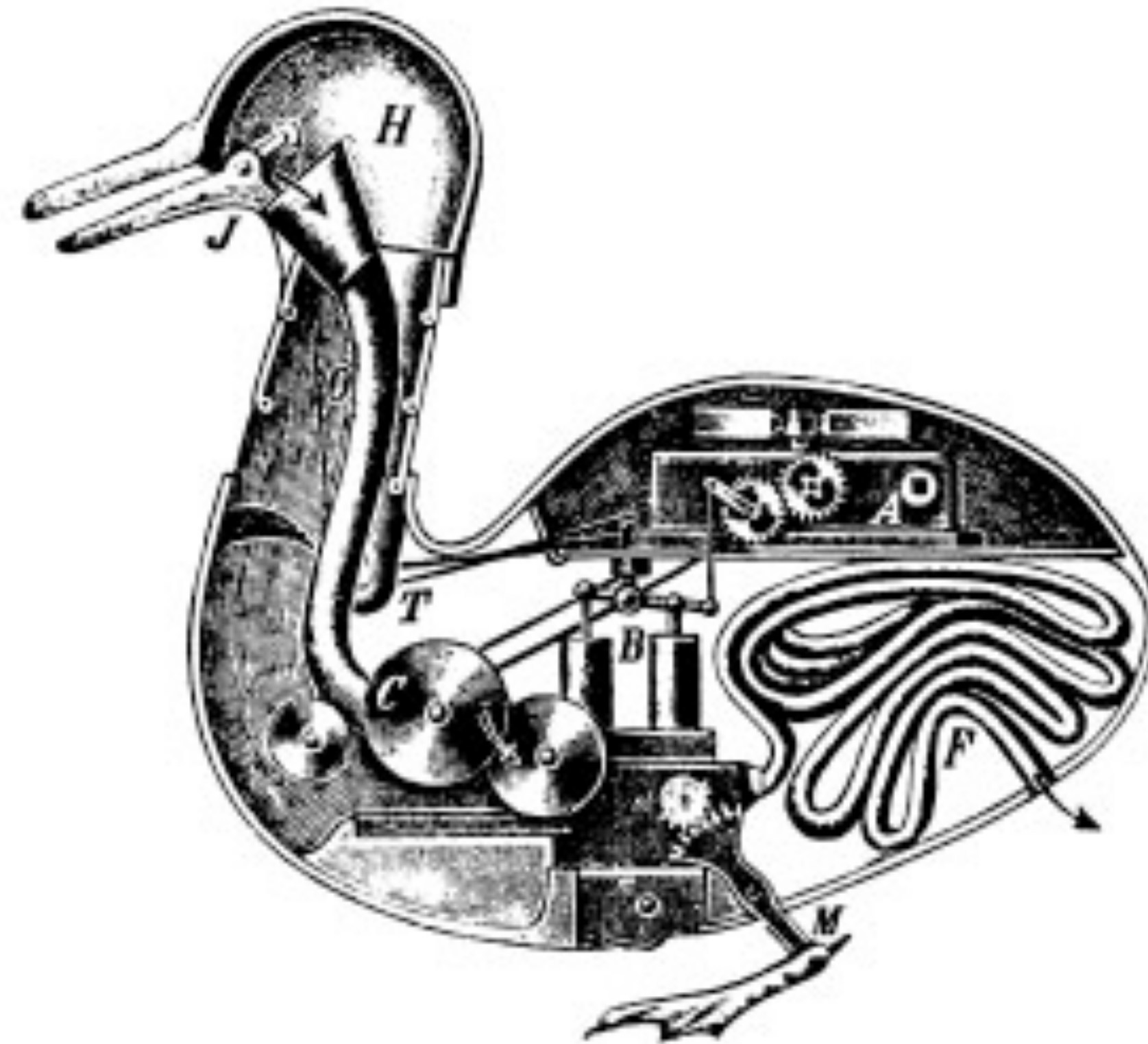
Simple and perfectly balanced

Add whatever and it'll collapse into a useless pile of balls and sticks

”A Service”

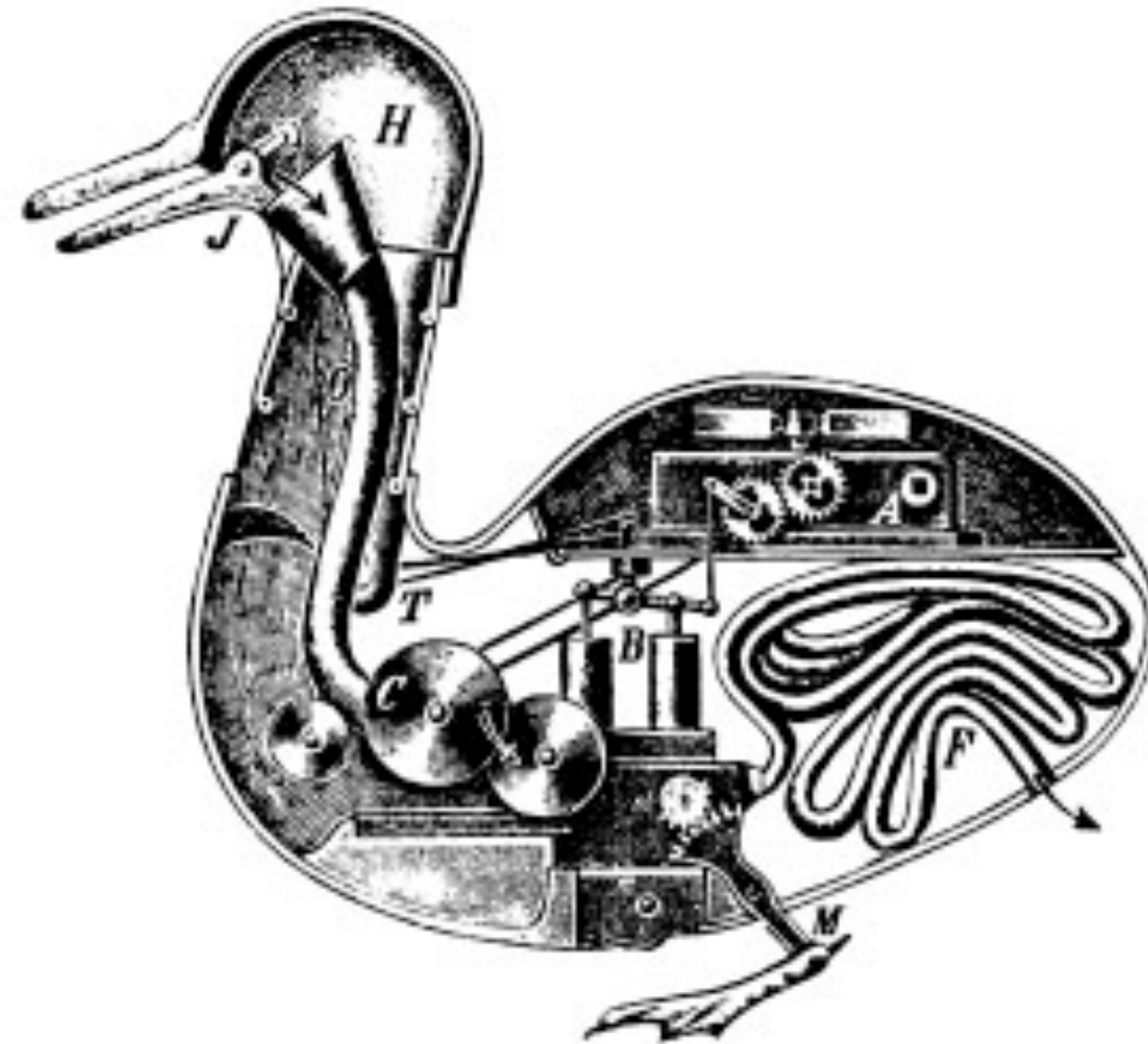


”A Service”



Complex and reasonably balanced

”A Service”



Complex and reasonably balanced

Add whatever and it'll probably just wobble a bit

games as a service?

games as a service?

Feedback from players

Unexpected requests

Constant updates

New bugs and issues



How would making things MORE complex help?





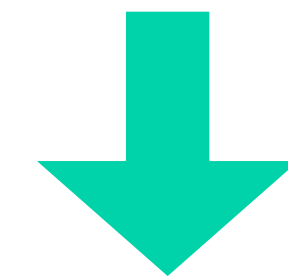
paradox positive feedback loop

paradox positive feedback loop

new stuff
(content / features)

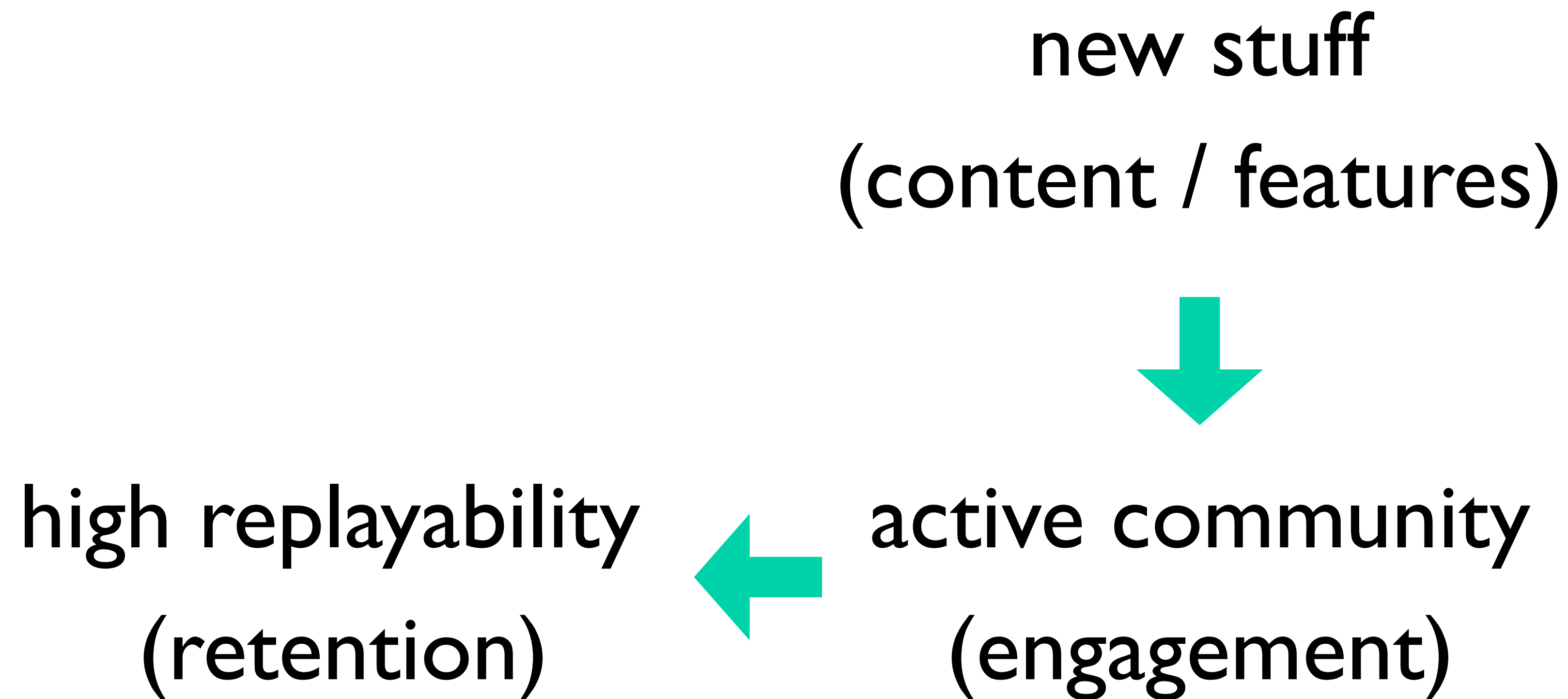
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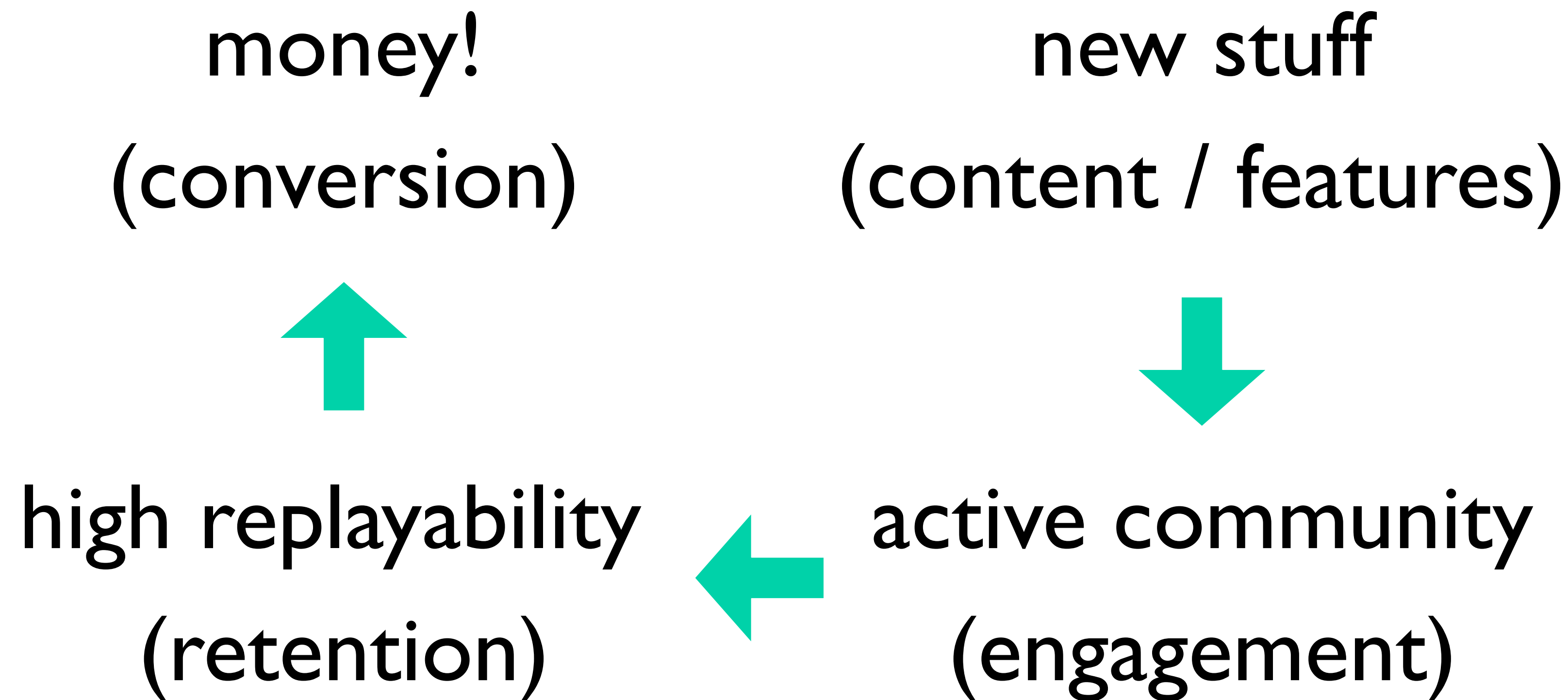


active community
(engagement)

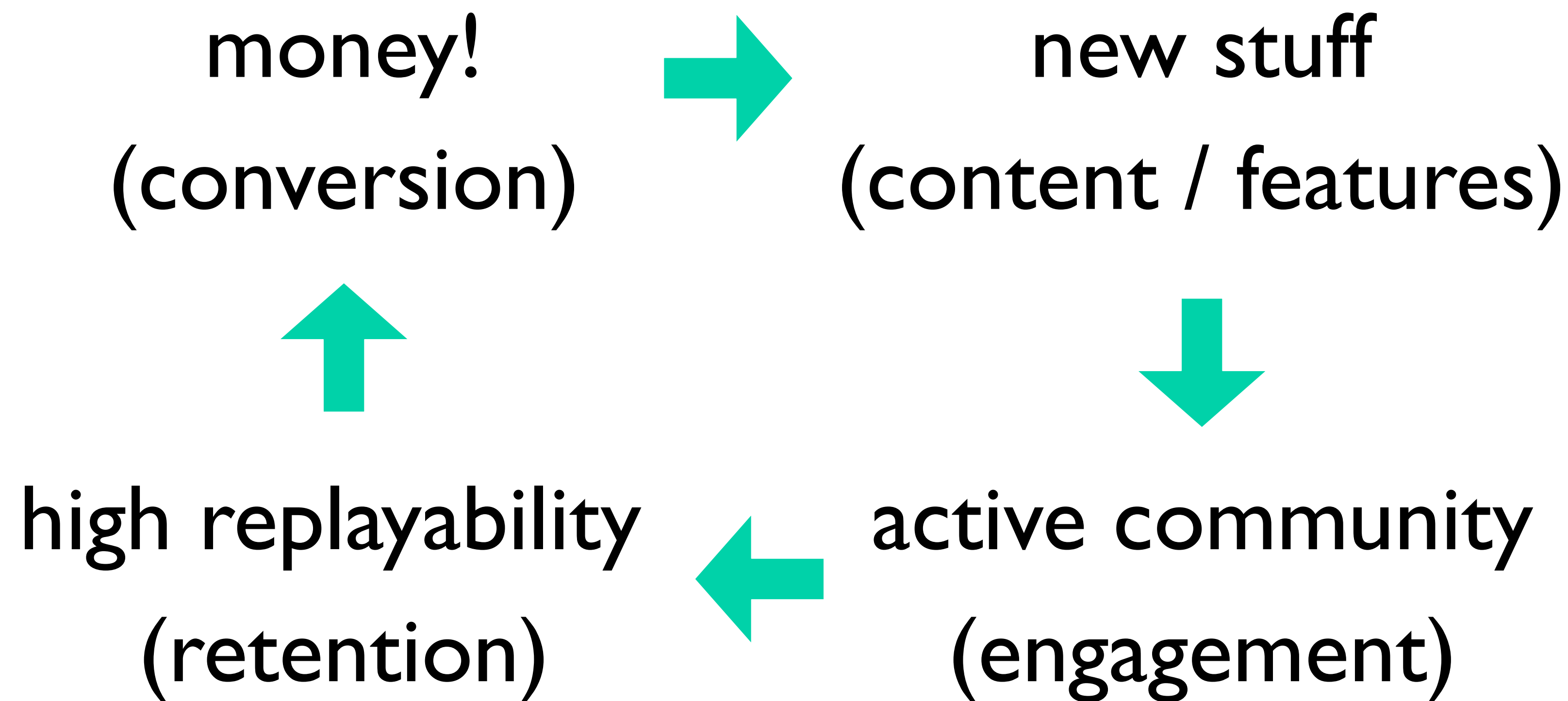
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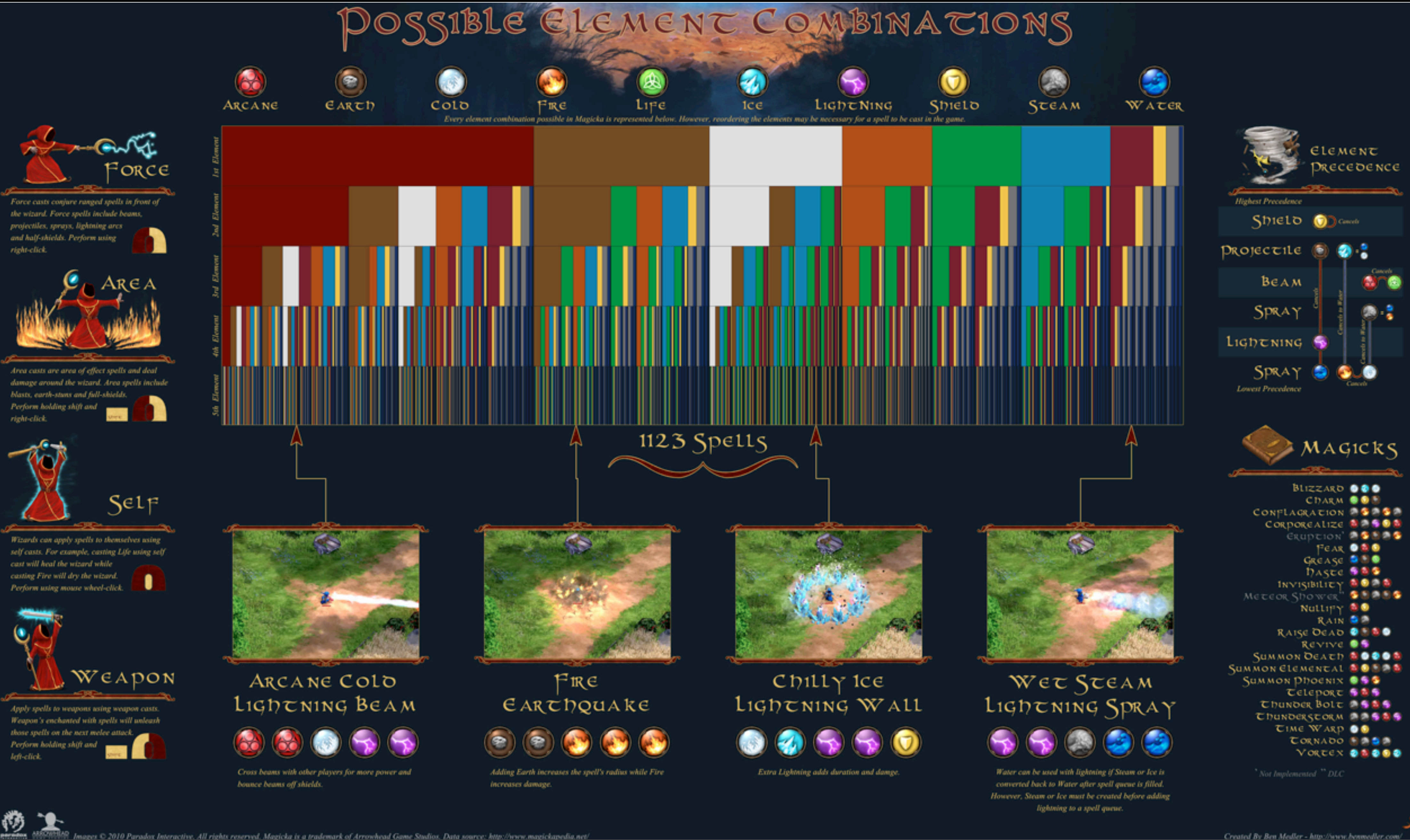


paradox positive feedback loop



Keeping it complex in practise





”People should get Magicka:Wizard Wars in 5 seconds!”

”People should get Magicka: Wizard Wars in 5 seconds!”

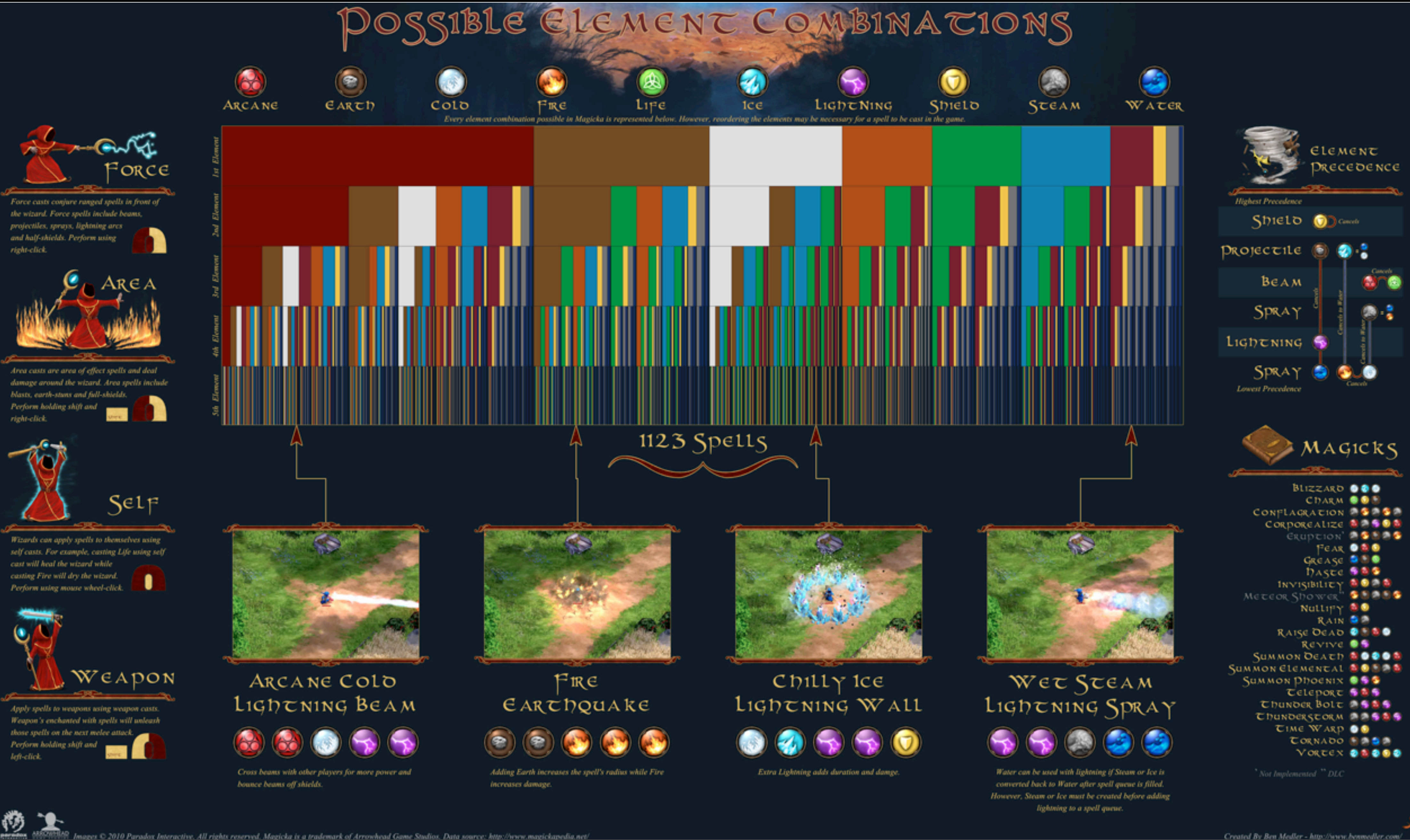
1. Keep the awesome complexity

2. Make it less complicated

= Keep the important connections

= Reduce number of connections to a manageable number

= Stop complex systems feeding each other



Magicka: Wizards of the square tablet



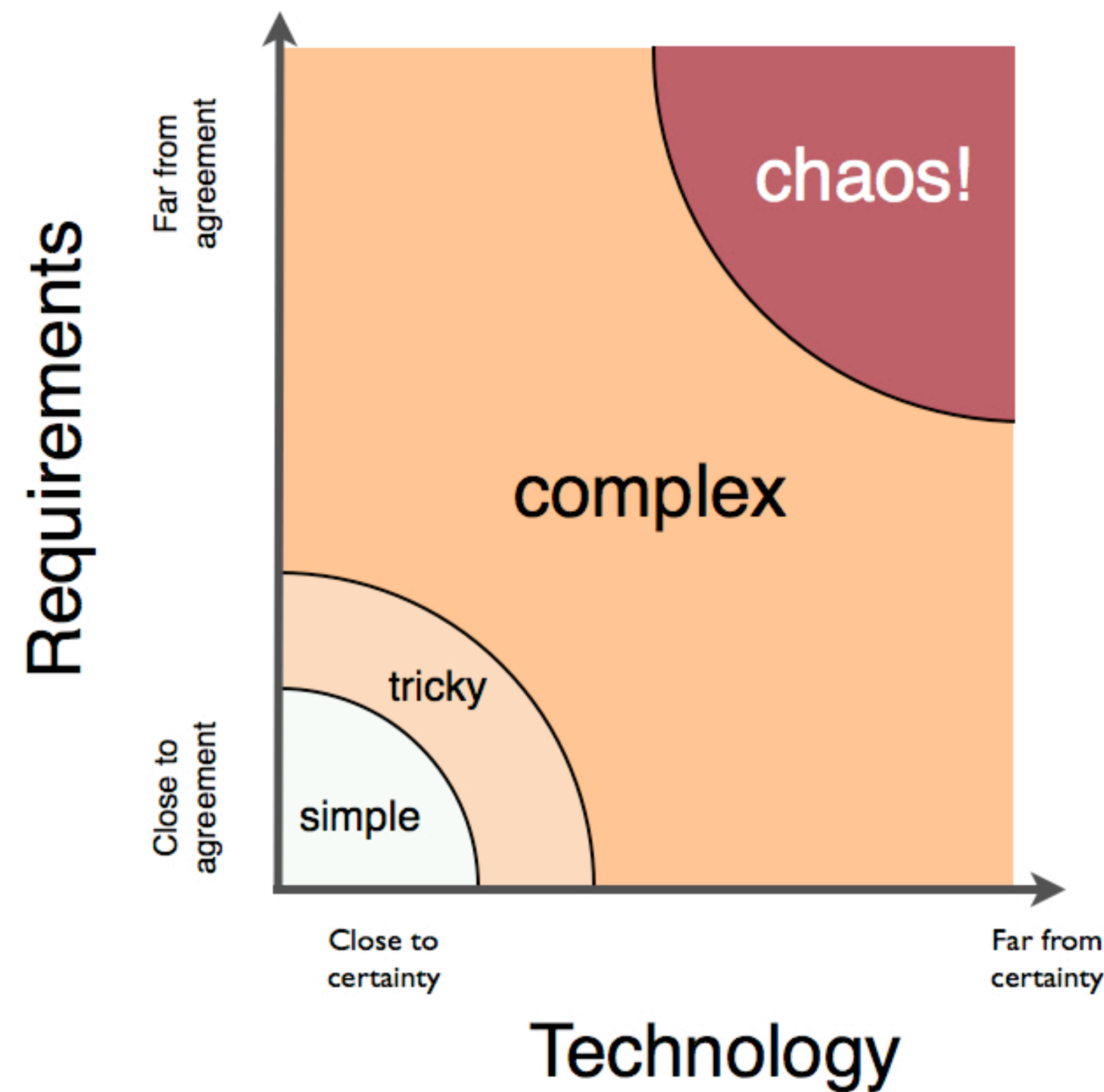
useful tips?

complexifying

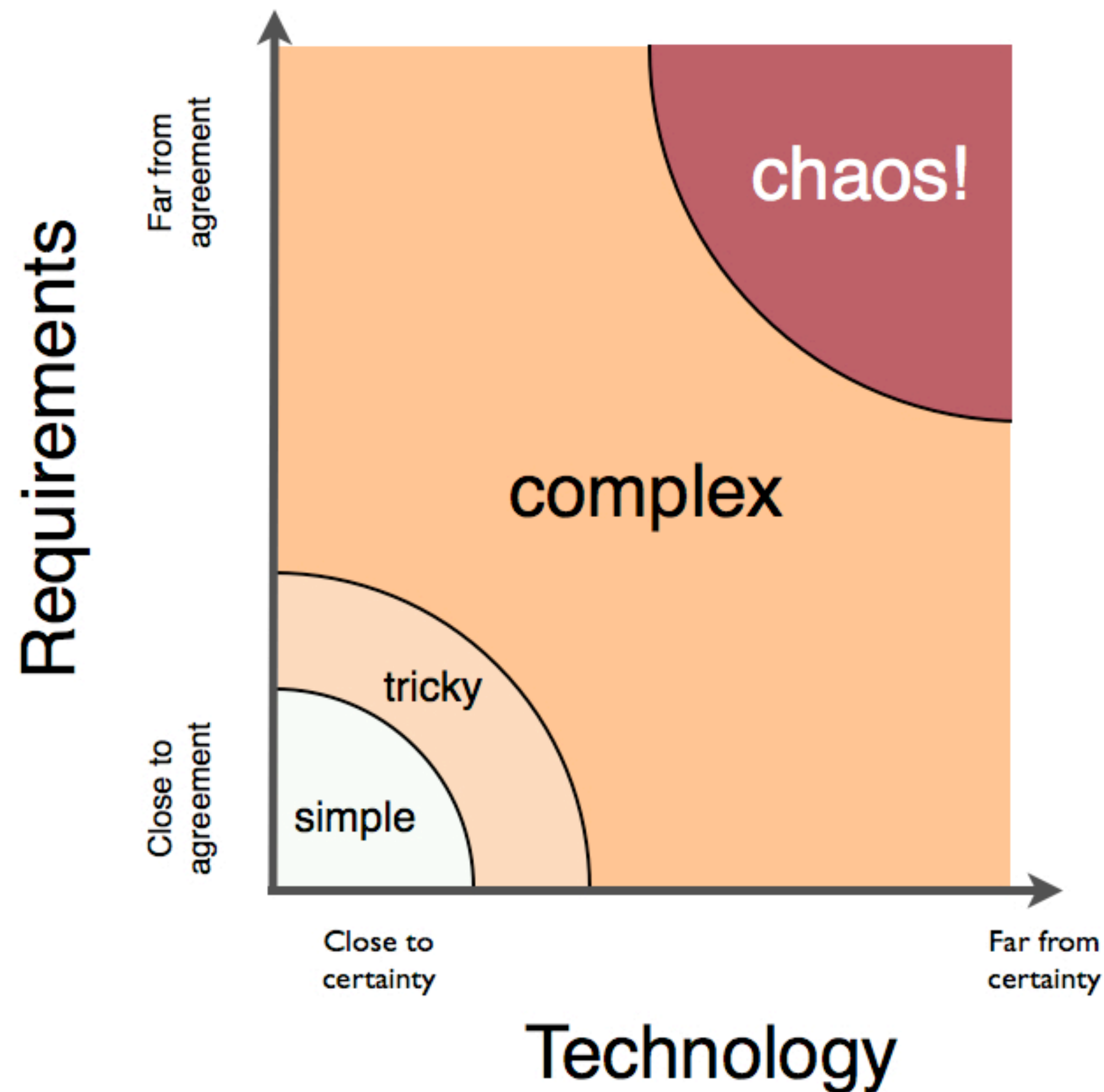
DO: Use complexity to create innovative things!

DO NOT: Complexify yourself into chaos

TOOL: Check out the Stacey Diagram



The Stacey Diagram, Ralph Stacey



the edge of chaos is a place where there is enough innovation to keep a living system vibrant, and enough stability to keep it from collapsing into anarchy.

-joseph campbell

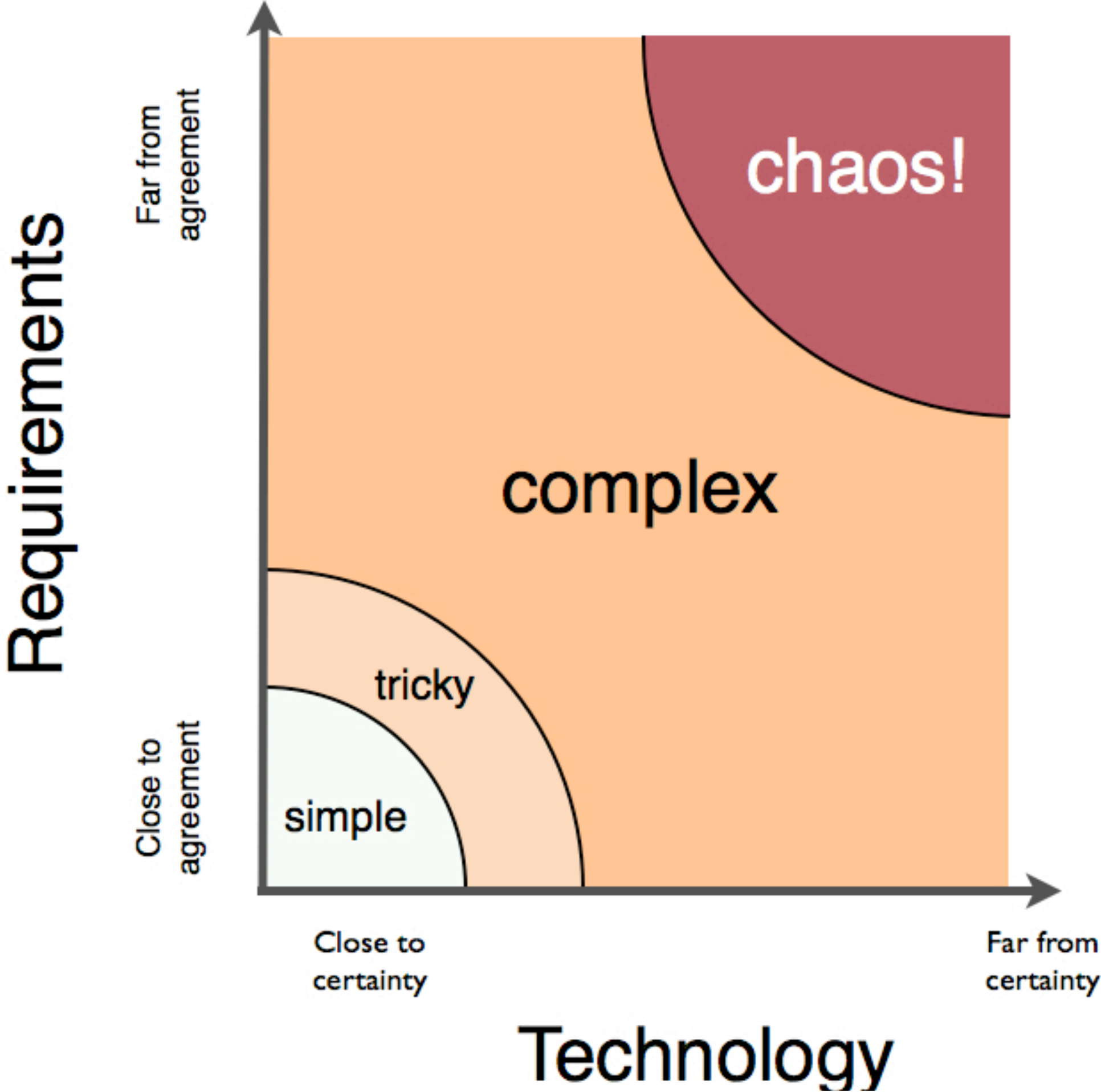
The Stacey Diagram, Ralph Stacey

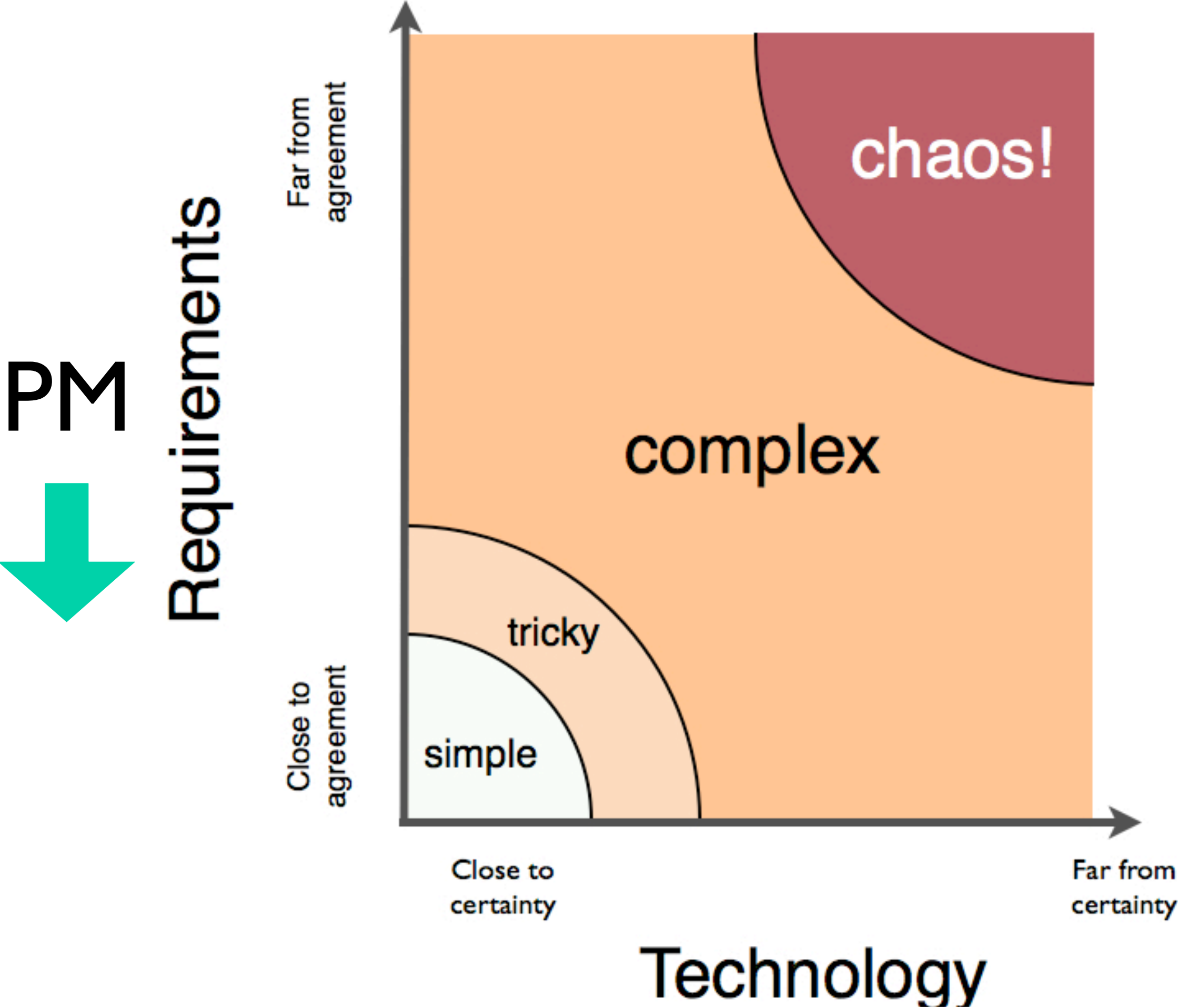
”Think Different”

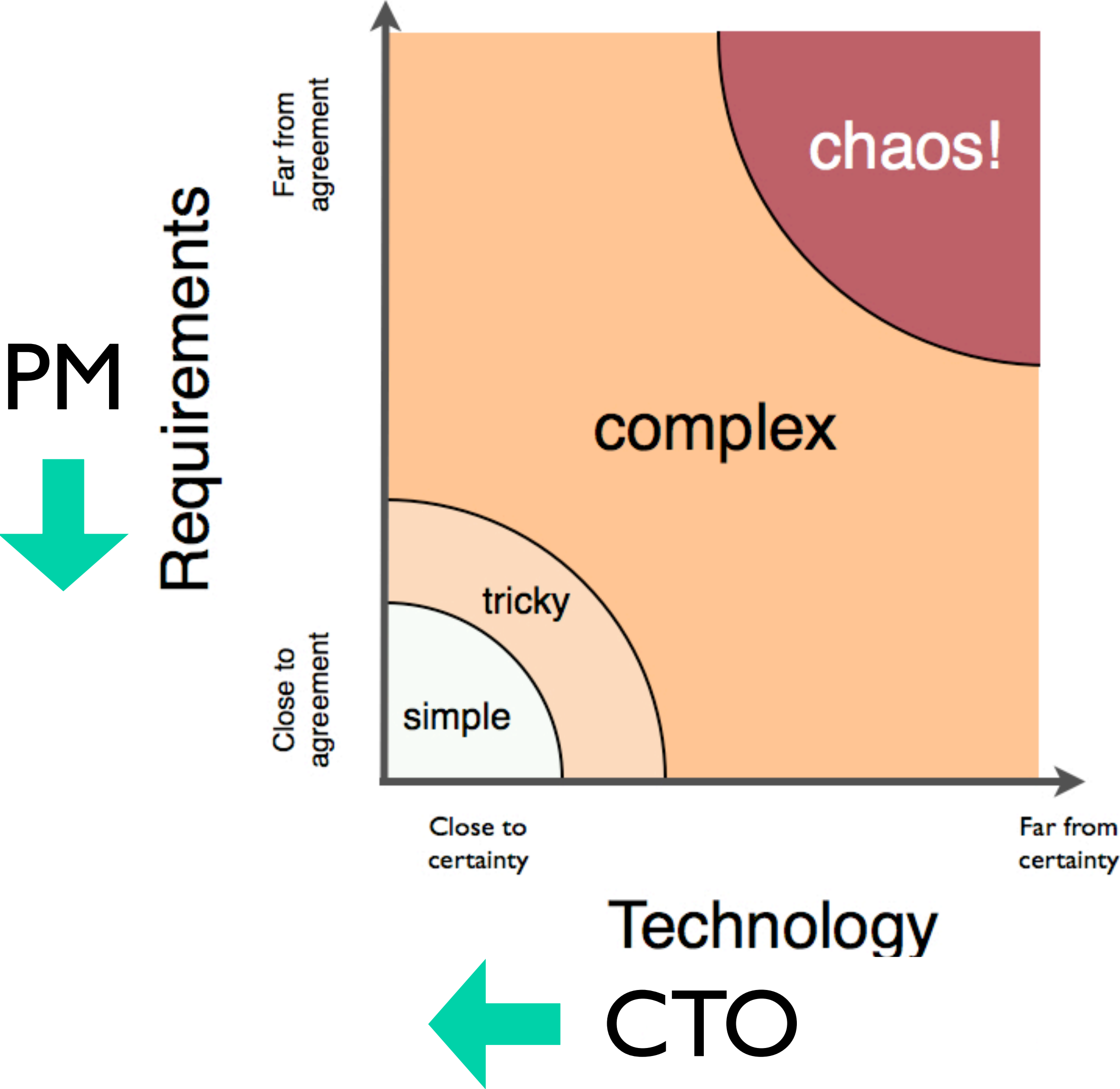
DO: Establish opposing view ”champions” in your team

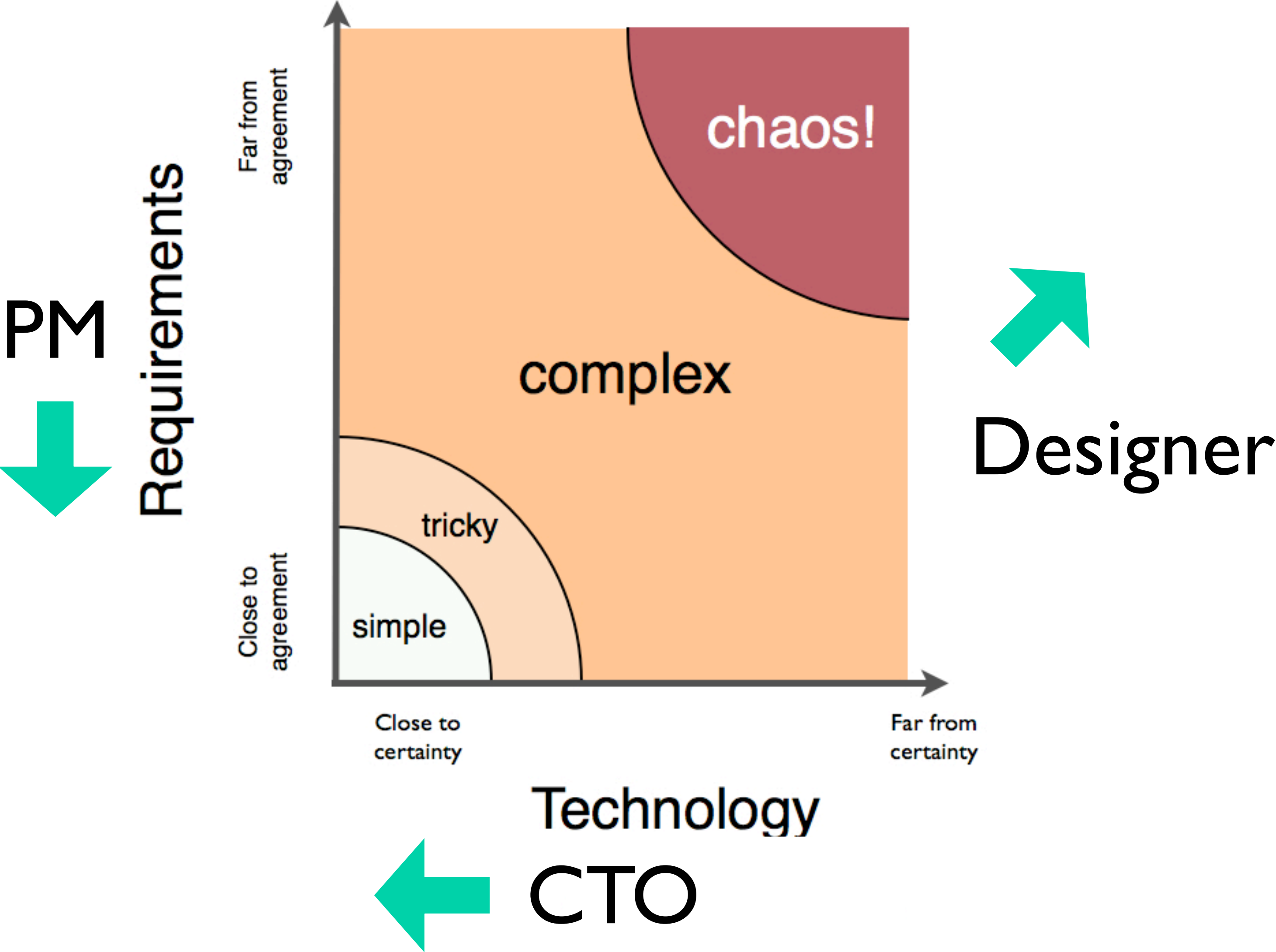
DO NOT: Trust management to create innovation

TOOL: Check out the Stacey Diagram (again)









connecting things together

DO: Keep your base values simple (linear/predictable)

DO NOT: Connect complex systems to each other

TOOL: Just don't. Butterfly effect sucks.

tweak into awesome

DO: Decide a desired result in advance

DO NOT: Rely on linear models

TOOL: Try a Design Matrix

design matrix - kills by spelltype

	A	B	C	E
1	Range	Spell type	% Usage	Metrics
2	28m	Beam	75%	82%
3		Projectiles	25%	18%
4				
5	22m	Beam	60%	51%
6		Projectiles	40%	49%
7				
8	15m	Beam	50%	47%
9		Projectiles	50%	53%
10				
11	10m	Lightning	40%	23%
12		Projectiles	30%	33%
13		Sprays	20%	11%
14		Beams	10%	33%

high level goals made measurable

use metrics to measure

tweak goals towards game if the game is fun!

holistic approach

DO: Create complex, deep mechanics

DONT: Create complicated UI/UX for it

TOOL: Agile - do mechanics and UI at the same time

service to the players

DO: Listen to the players, gather feedback

DONT: Expect them to be satisfied/done

TOOL: Manage complexity, don't solve it

questions?

questions?

who are you exactly?

are you joking or just wierd?

what is this complexity you speak of?

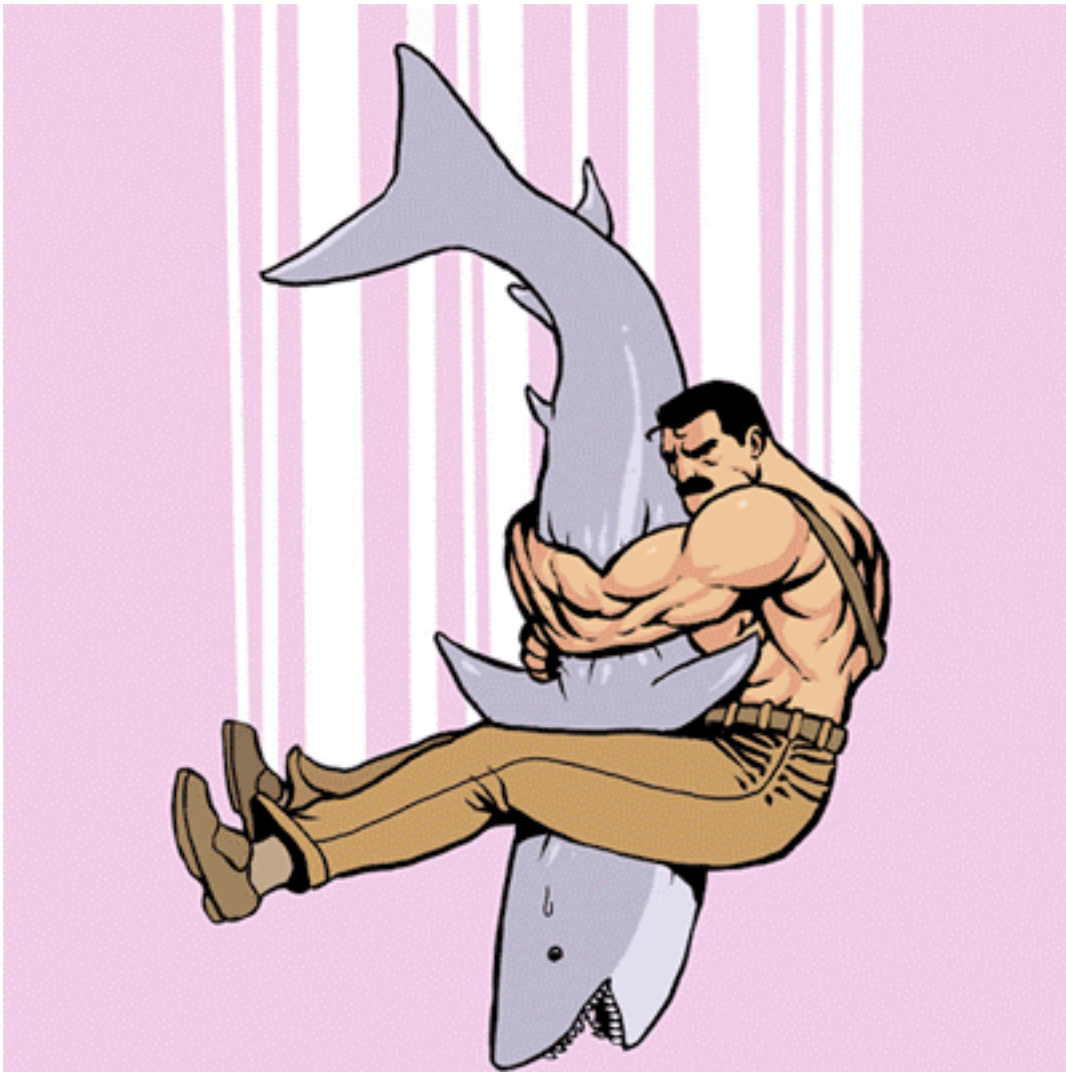
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why should complexity in games be any good?

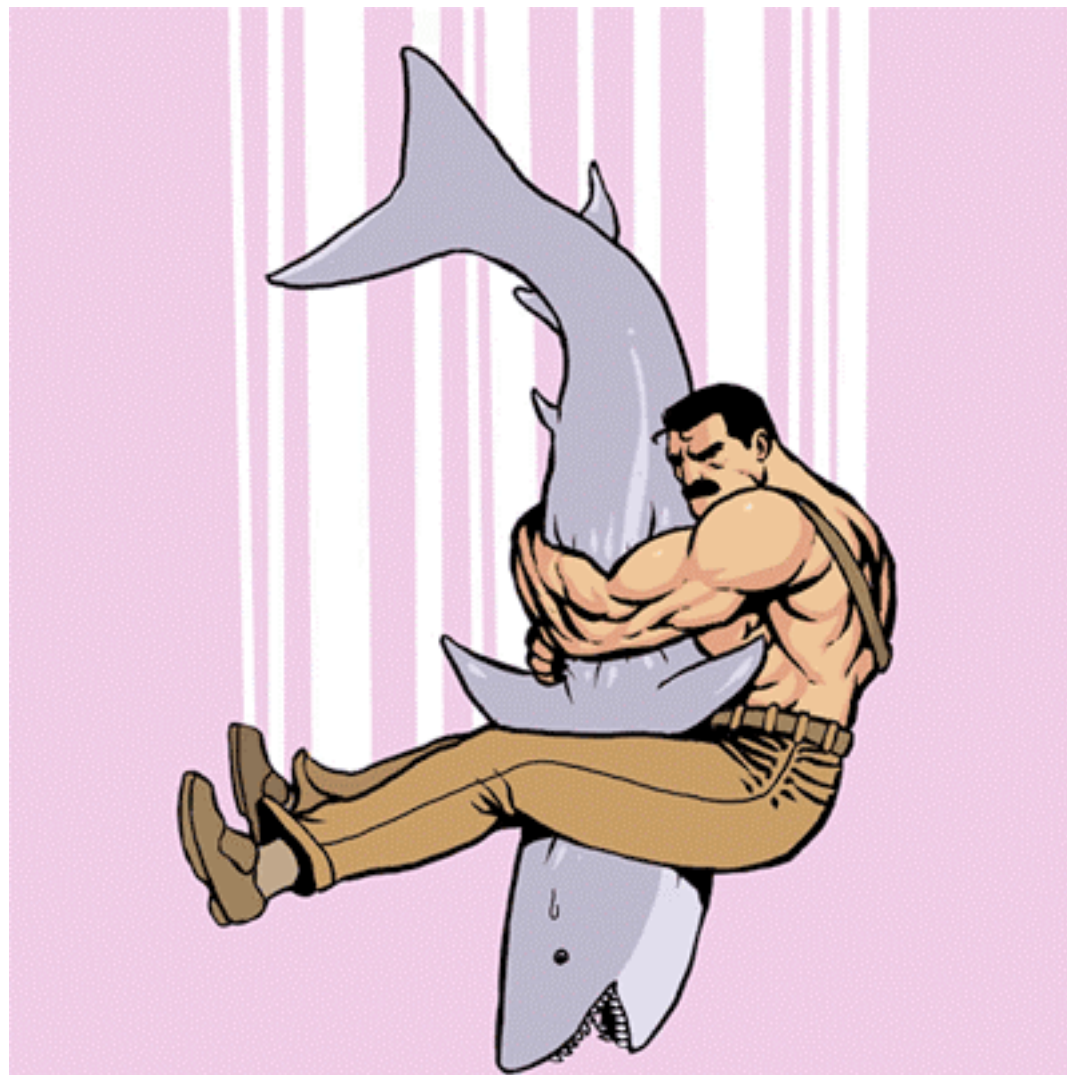
what does this have to do with service?

do you have any useful tips?

Summary



Summary



complexity creates emergent gameplay

emergent gameplay creates high replayability

high replayability is kind of like providing a service!

phrase to remember

complex - not complicated!

questions?

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