

Some things I've learned about How to make awesome products

Mind the Product conference keynote
London, Oct 2019

Climate entrepreneur



Henrik Kniberg

henrik.kniberg@crisp.se
@HenrikKniberg

Consultant



Dad

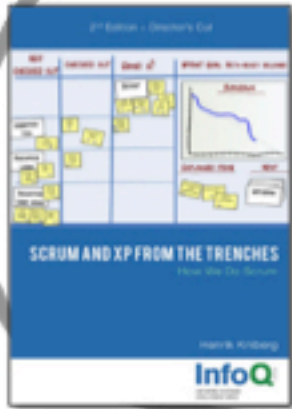


Minecraft designer/developer/coach

MOJANG



Author



The Joy of Making



Henrik Kniberg

What I mean by

Awesome Product

Achieves
Impact



Delights
users

Sustainable

What's the pattern?



Disclaimer

- This talk contains nothing new or revolutionary
 - and definitely no silver bullets
 - just timeless principles that need to be emphasized and repeated.
- My recommendations are things you probably already know and have heard a hundred times.
 - BUT.... are you actually *doing* them?
 - If not – how can you go from *knowing* to *doing*?
- (This is the ONLY slide with boring bullet points...)

What's the pattern?

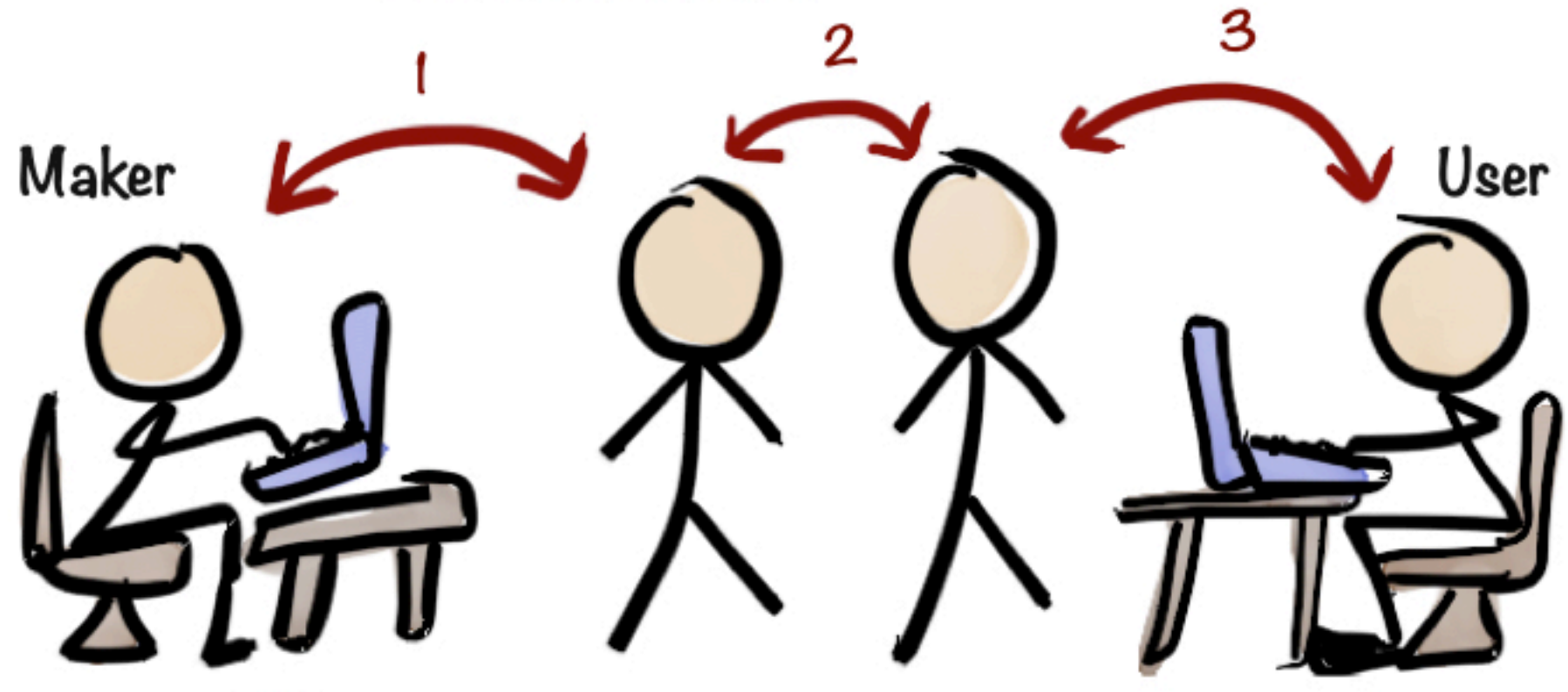


Minimize the gap

**Minimize the gap
between
Maker and User**

Minimize the gap!

People handoffs/intermediaries



Time (feedback delay)

A blue stopwatch icon is positioned to the left of the text 'Time (feedback delay)'.





> 250 people involved

> 4 years to first public release

Shut down after 2 years of operation



Henrik Kniberg

Lego Universe Spider Cave



Brian Tyler

Years later...



Oops. Can't fit
on the DVD.



Slovak National Symphony Orchestra





> 250 people involved

> 4 years to first public release

Shut down after 2 years of operation



MINECRAFT

0.0.11a
750 fps, 0 chunk updates

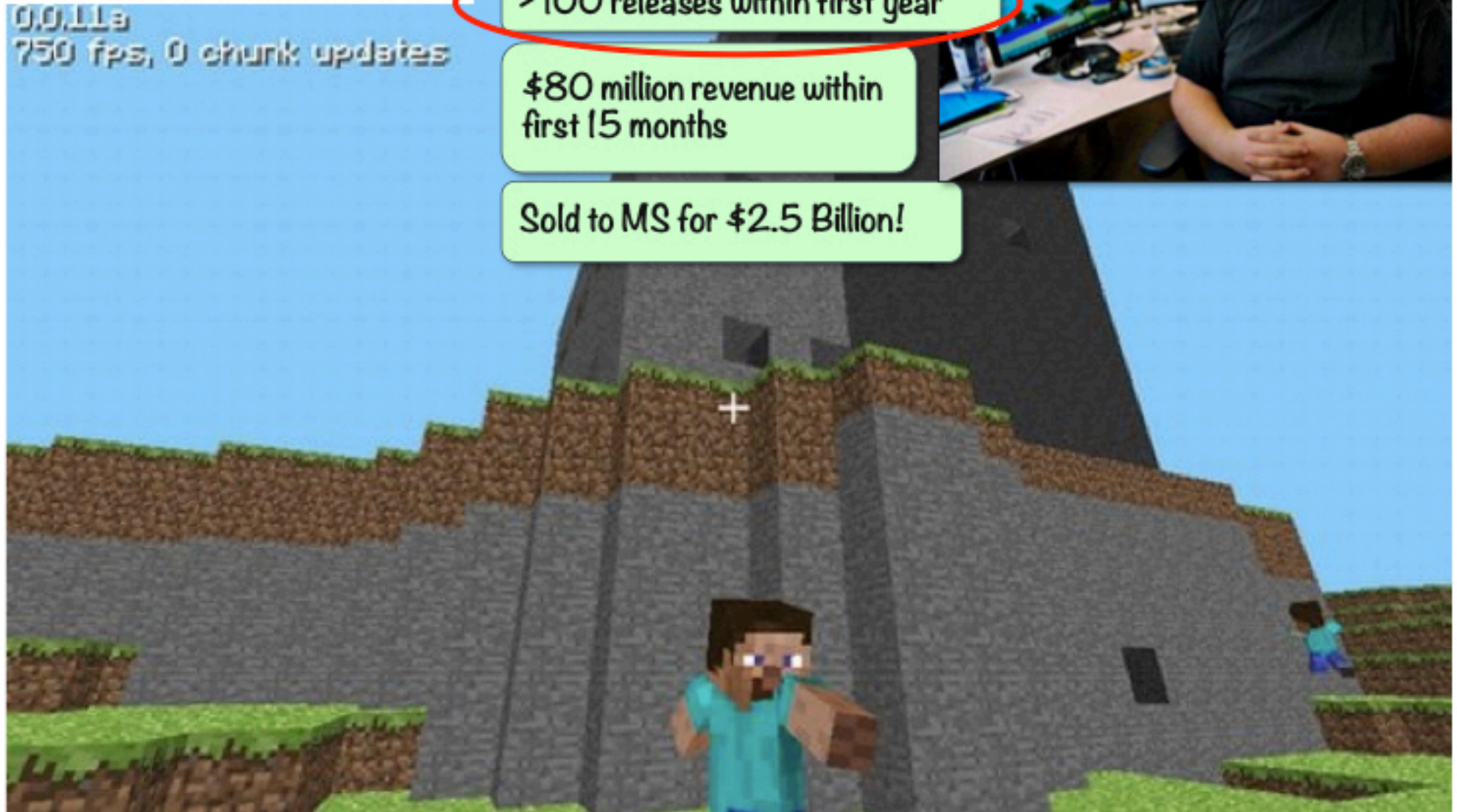
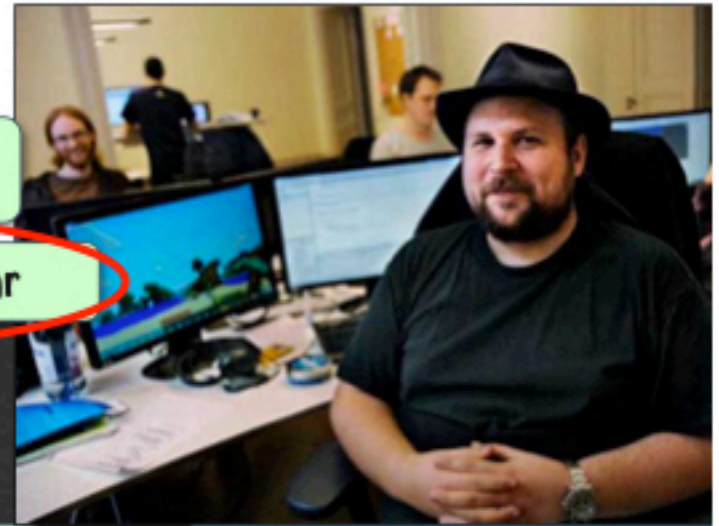
Built by 1-2 people

6 days to first public release

> 100 releases within first year

\$80 million revenue within first 15 months

Sold to MS for \$2.5 Billion!



List of best-selling video games

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Title	Sales	Platform(s)	Initial release date
<i>Minecraft</i>	176,000,000 ^[b]	Multi-platform	November 18, 2011 ^[c]
<i>Tetris</i>	170,000,000 ^[b]	Multi-platform	June 6, 1984
<i>Grand Theft Auto V</i>	110,000,000	Mu	
<i>Wii Sports</i>	82,870,000	Wi	
<i>PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds</i>	50,000,000	Mu	
<i>Super Mario Bros.</i>	48,240,000	Mu	
<i>Pokémon Red/Green/Blue/Yellow</i>	47,520,000	Mu	
<i>Wii Fit and Wii Fit Plus</i>	43,800,000	Wi	
<i>Mario Kart Wii</i>	37,200,000	Wi	
<i>Wii Sports Resort</i>	33,100,000	Wi	
<i>New Super Mario Bros.</i>	30,800,000	Nir	
<i>New Super Mario Bros. Wii</i>	30,260,000	Wi	
<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i> ^[18]	30,000,000	Mu	
<i>Diablo III and Reaper of Souls</i>	30,000,000	Mu	
<i>Pokémon Gold/Silver/Crystal</i>	29,490,000	Gal	
<i>Duck Hunt</i>	28,300,000	NE	

TECH INSIDER

'Minecraft' has been quietly dominating for over 10 years, and now has 112 million players every month

BEN GILBERT
SEP 14, 2019, 11:20 PM



List of best-selling video games

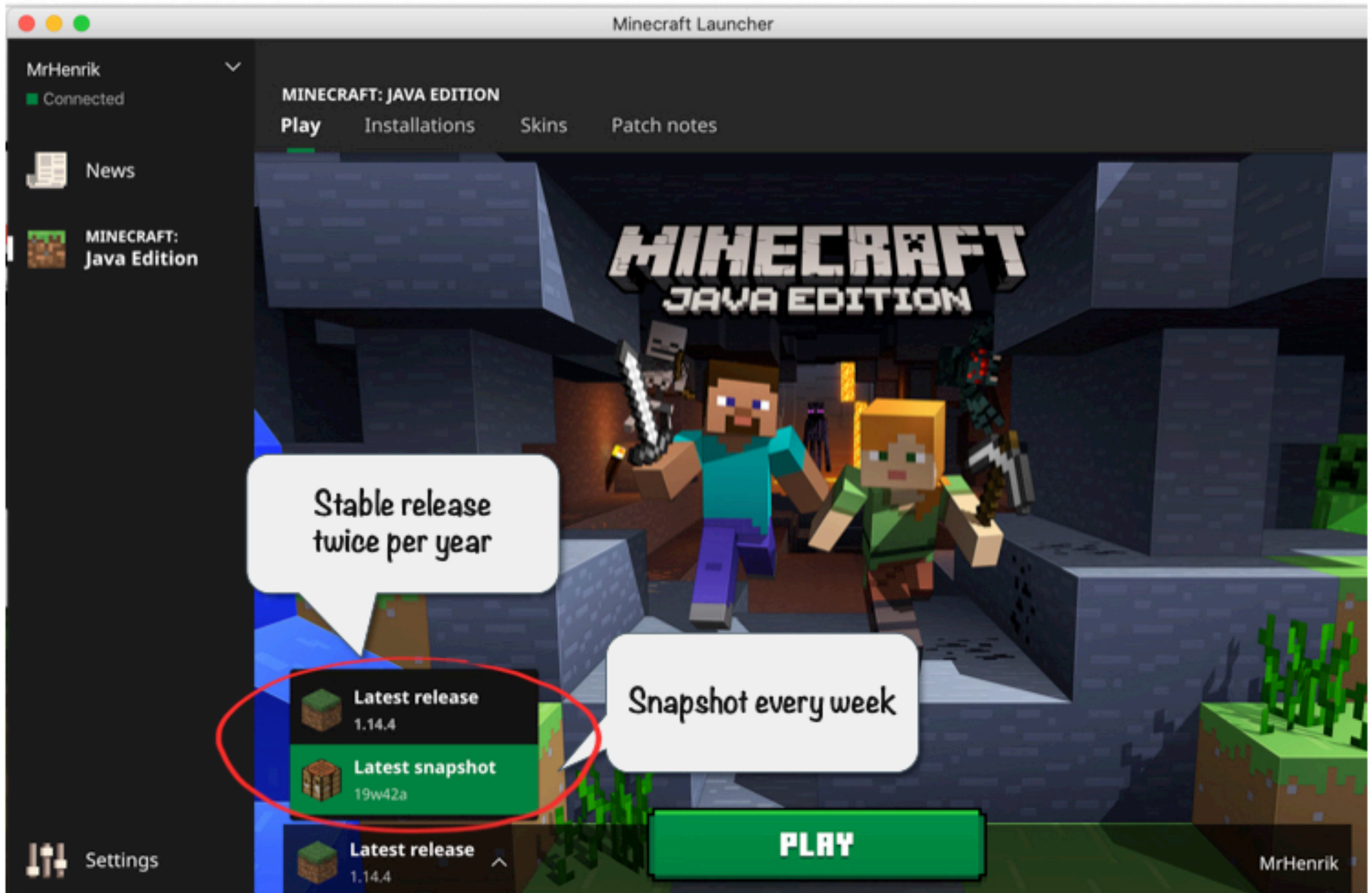
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<i>Duck Hunt</i>	28,300,000



**Minimise the gap
between
Maker and User**

Release often



Effective risk-reduction



Will it work?



Will users like it?



Can we work effectively?



Will it be done within reasonable time and cost?

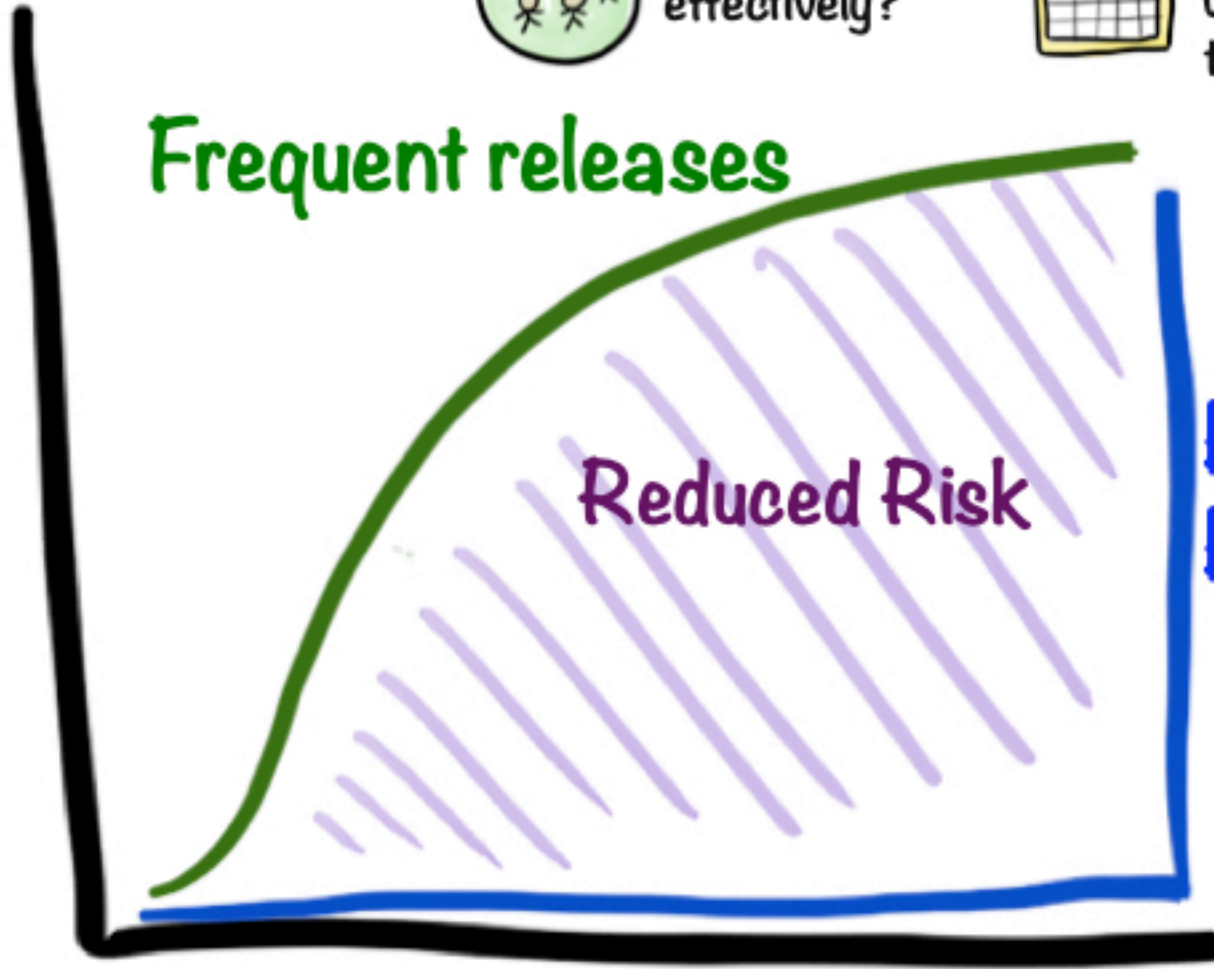
Frequent releases

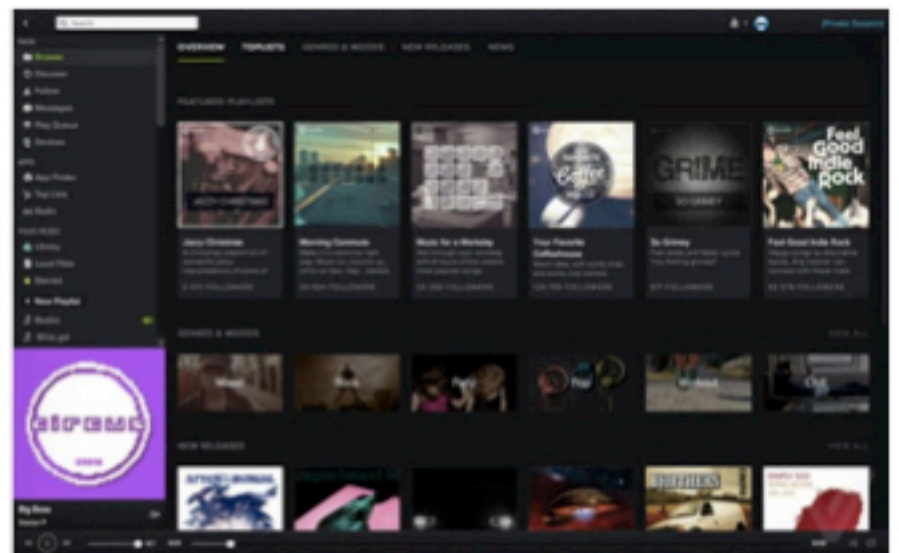
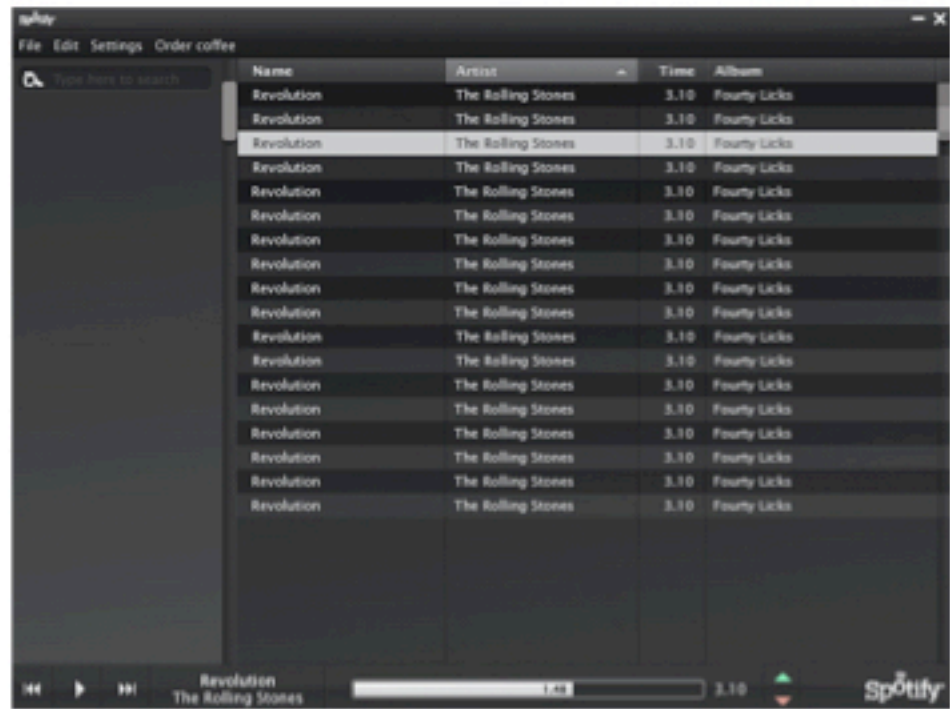
Total delivered value

Reduced Risk

Big Bang

Date





Frequent releases = easier planning & less frustration



Minimise the gap between Maker and User

Release often

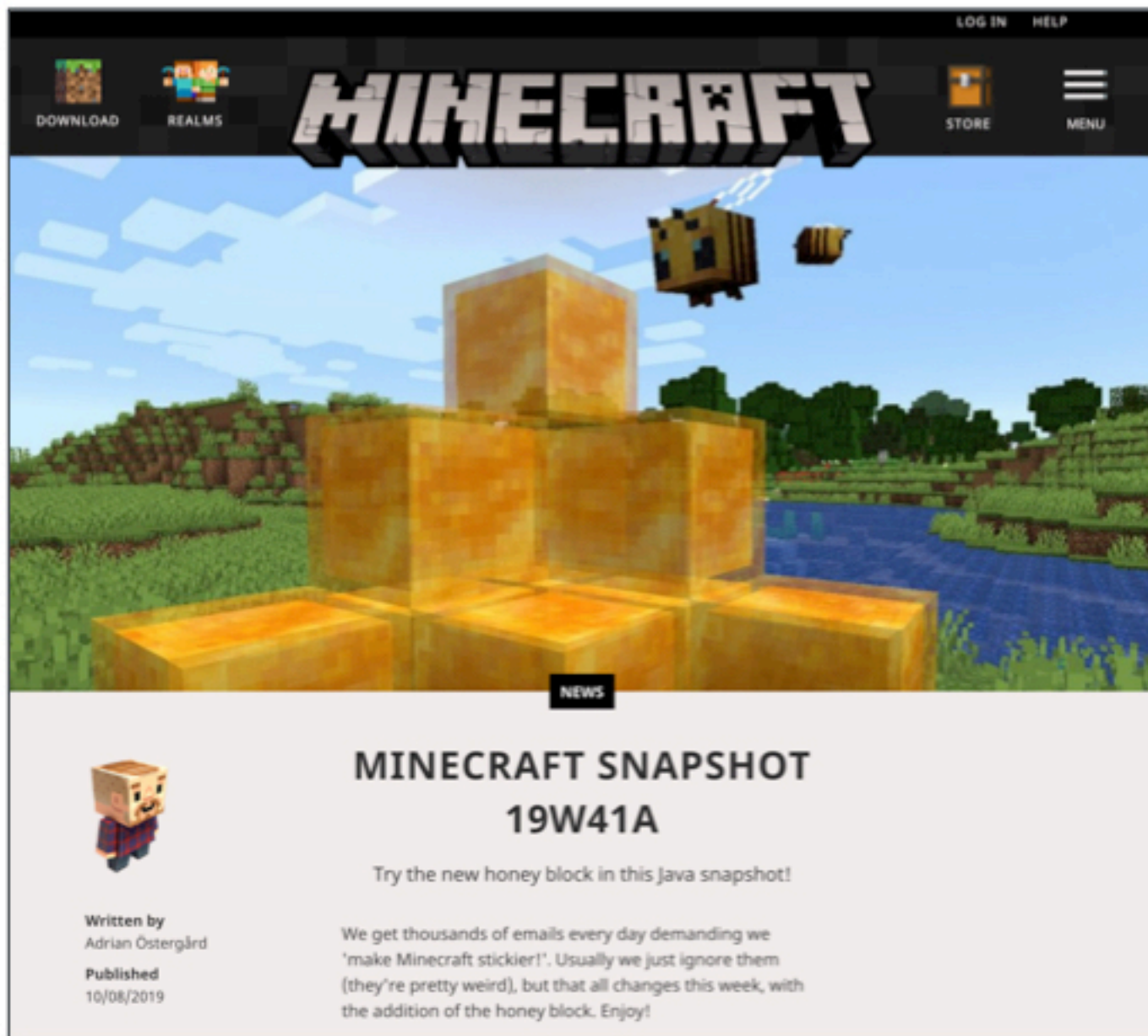
Get real user
feedback

The joy of Making



Henrik Kniberg

Snapshot release 9 oct




The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Minecraft website with links for 'DOWNLOAD', 'REALMS', 'MINECRAFT', 'STORE', and 'MENU'. The main banner features a Minecraft landscape with a stack of honey blocks and a bee. Below the banner is a 'NEWS' tag and the article title 'MINECRAFT SNAPSHOT 19W41A'. The article text describes the new honey block feature.

LOG IN HELP

DOWNLOAD REALMS MINECRAFT STORE MENU

NEWS

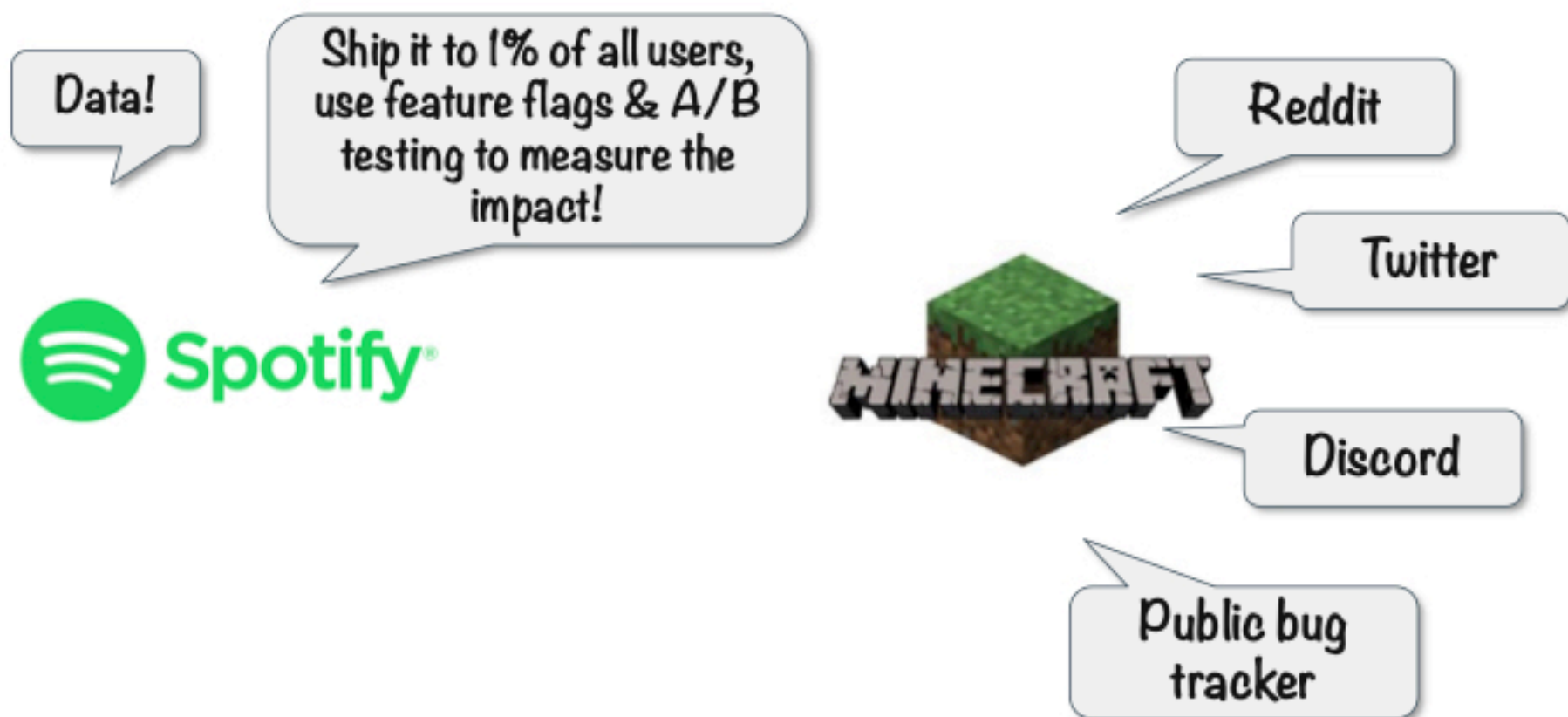
 **MINECRAFT SNAPSHOT 19W41A**

Try the new honey block in this Java snapshot!

Written by Adrian Östergård
Published 10/08/2019

We get thousands of emails every day demanding we 'make Minecraft stickier!'. Usually we just ignore them (they're pretty weird), but that all changes this week, with the addition of the honey block. Enjoy!

How does a team communicate with millions of users?



Public bug tracker

(yes, anyone can add tickets!)

The screenshot displays the Mojang public bug tracker interface. At the top, the Mojang logo is on the left, and navigation links for Dashboards, Projects, and Issues are in the center. A search bar and a Log In link are on the right. The main content area is titled "Open issues" and includes a "Switch filter" dropdown and a "View all issues and filters" link. A sidebar on the left shows navigation options: Summary, Issues (selected), and Reports. The main list of issues is ordered by updated date and includes items like MC-162993 (Transparent textures on so...), MC-160715 (The on-screen keyboard ca...), MC-162338 (Entity shadows on blocks wi...), MC-162378 (Screen turns black during th...), MC-162991 (Bug dans les niveaux de pro...), MC-162989 (Map Villager Crash with no ...), MC-160995 (When breaking blocks in cre...), MC-161220 (Right-clicking on a button w...), MC-161259 (Don't play hand animation w...), MC-161261 (Treating zombie villagers do...), MC-161262 (Feeding pandas does not pl...), MC-161435 (Arm swing animation is play...), and MC-162988 (Delay on Keyboard).

The detailed view for issue MC-161261, titled "Treating zombie villagers does not display a hand animation", shows the following details:

- Type: Bug
- Status: OPEN
- Resolution: Unresolved
- Affects Version/s: 1.14.4, 19w37a, 19w38b, 19w38a, 19w39a, 19w40a
- Fix Version/s: None
- Labels: None
- Confirmation Status: Confirmed
- Category: Player
- Mojang Priority: Important

The description states: "Treating zombie villagers does not display a hand animation." An attachment is shown with the filename "2019-09-18_13.32.19.png", created on 18/Sep/19 at 7:41 AM, and is 844 kB in size. The attachment image shows a screenshot from the game Minecraft.

Additional information includes:

- Assignee: [Mojang] Cory Scheviak
- Reporter: [Mod] Les3awe
- Votes: 4 (Vote for this issue)
- Watchers: 4 (Start watching this issue)
- Dates: Created: 18/Sep/19 7:41 AM; Updated: 3 hours ago; CHK: 6 days ago

Snapshot release 9 oct

Snapshot release 16 oct



MINECRAFT SNAPSHOT 19W42A

Try the new honey block

Written by
Adrian Ostergård
Published
10/06/2019

We get thousands of emails every day asking us to "make Minecraft stickier". Usually, we ignore them (they're pretty weird), but that's all about to change with the addition of the honey block.

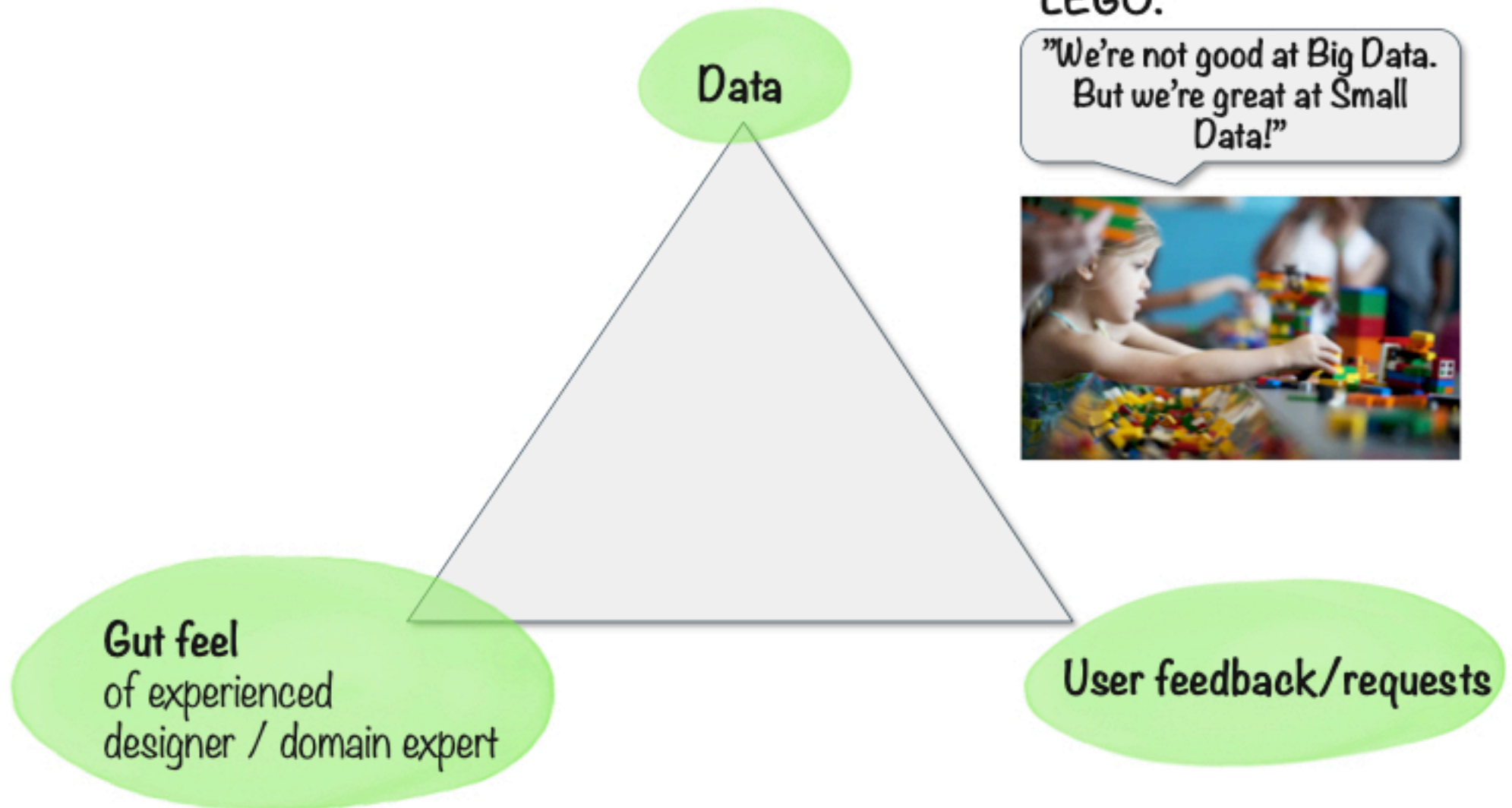
NEWS

MINECRAFT SNAPSHOT 19W42A

A Minecraft Java Snapshot

By popular demand, this snapshot makes Honey Blocks and Slime Blocks no longer stick together. Show us your coolest contraptions!

Sources of insight & decision making



Minimise the gap between Maker and User

Release often

Get real user
feedback

Slice the
elephant

Slice the elephant!



Region
Östergötland,
Uppsala, etc

Crime types
(weapon,
drunk driving,
shoplifting, etc)

1.0

1.1

1.2

1.3

1.4

1.5

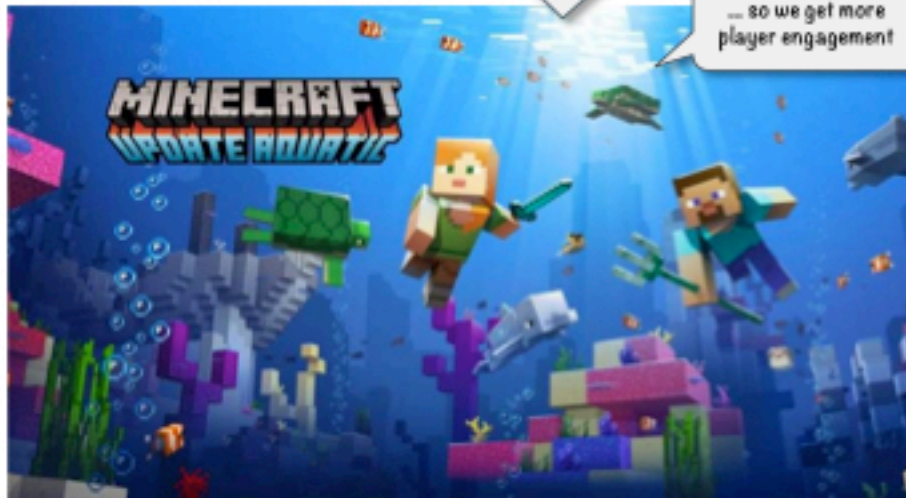
Integrations
with various
other systems

Aim for the clouds, but deliver in small steps

August 2018, Update Aquatic

Focus: Make oceans more fun!

... so we get more player engagement



April 2019, Village & Pillage update

Focus: Make villages more fun!

... so we get more player engagement



Spring 2020

Focus: Make the Nether dimension more fun!

... so we get more player engagement



Beware of MVP

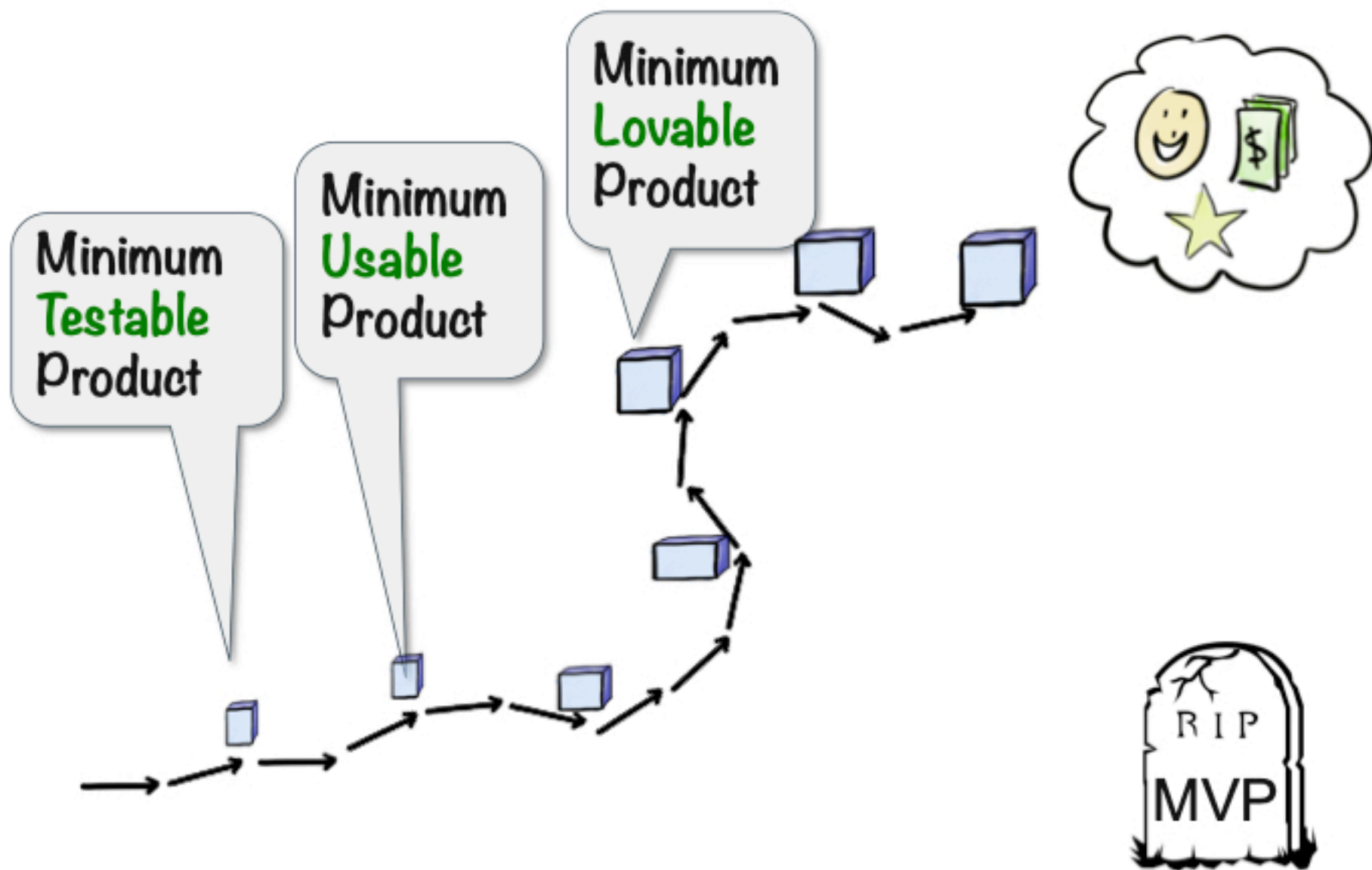


What? You want to start by delivering an "MVP"?

Yeah RIGHT! I've fallen for that trick before.

You'll just give me the **Minimum Releasable Crap** and then move on to the next project!

Aim for the clouds. But deliver in small steps.



Minimise the gap between Maker and User

Release often

Get real user
feedback

Slice the
elephant

Autonomous
teams

Autonomous team

Stable, self-organizing, empowered, (ideally) co-located



Minimize handoffs!
(demo...)



Henrik Kniberg

Example: Discovery Weekly



I would have killed it. I never really saw the beauty of it.

All of a sudden they shipped it, and it turned out to be something really successful.

It's one of the most loved product features that we have.

MADE FOR HENRIK

Discover Weekly

Your weekly mixtape of fresh music. Enjoy new discoveries and songs chosen just for you. Updated every Monday, so save your favorites!

Made for Henrik Kniberg by Spotify • 30 songs, 2 hr 32 min

PAUSE

FOLLOWER 1

Filter Download

TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM	
Cinnamon And Clove	Zoot Sims	Zoot Sims Plays ...	3 days ago
Do You Feel Like I Feel	Nicola Conte	Love & Revolution	3 days ago
The Traveller	Jens Winther Gr...	The Planets	3 days ago
I Never Can Say Goodbye	Tiny Little Bigba...	I Never Can Say ...	3 days ago
Paris Blues	Terry Callier	Lookin Out	3 days ago

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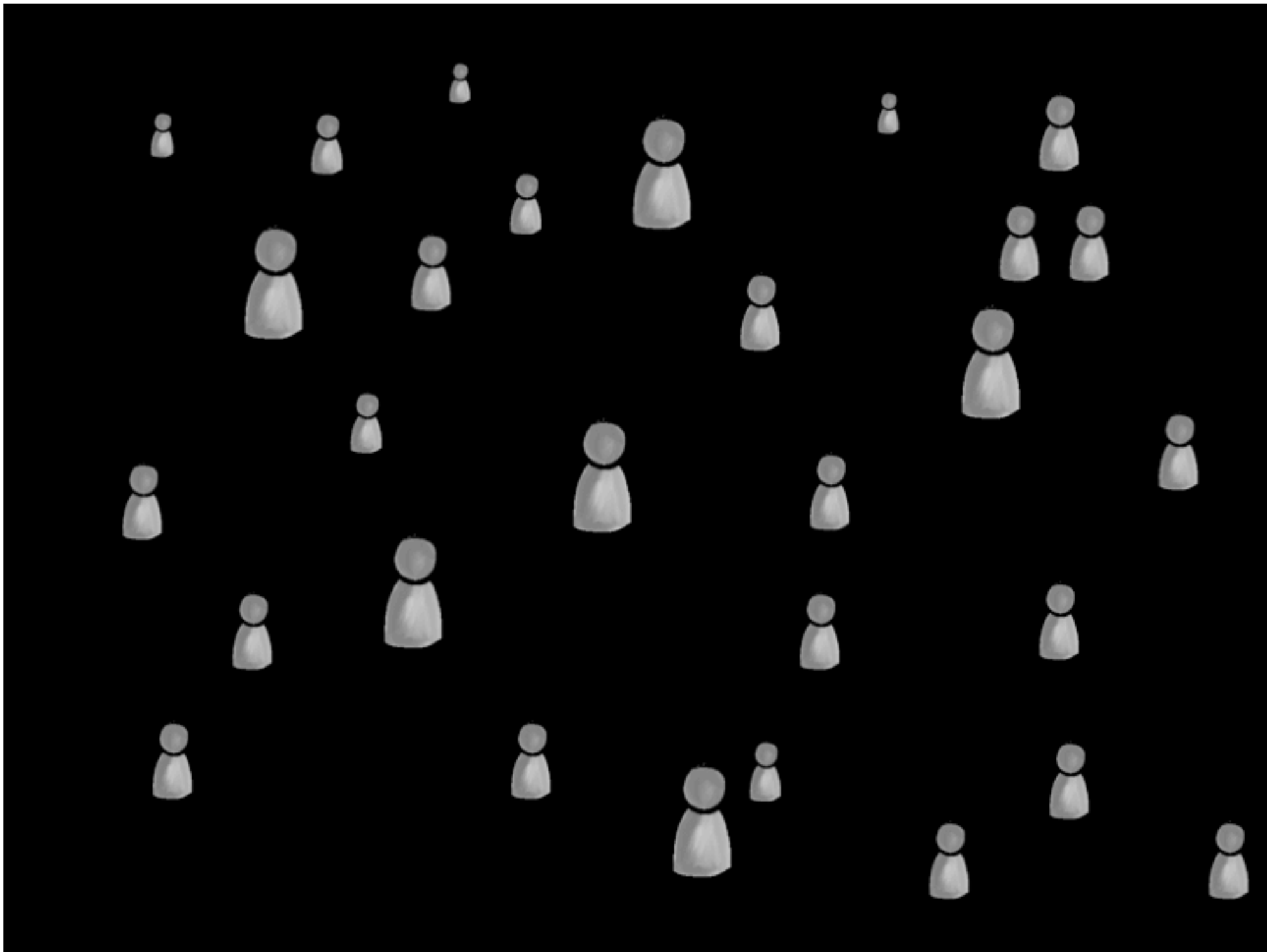
Autonomous
teams

Radical
transparency

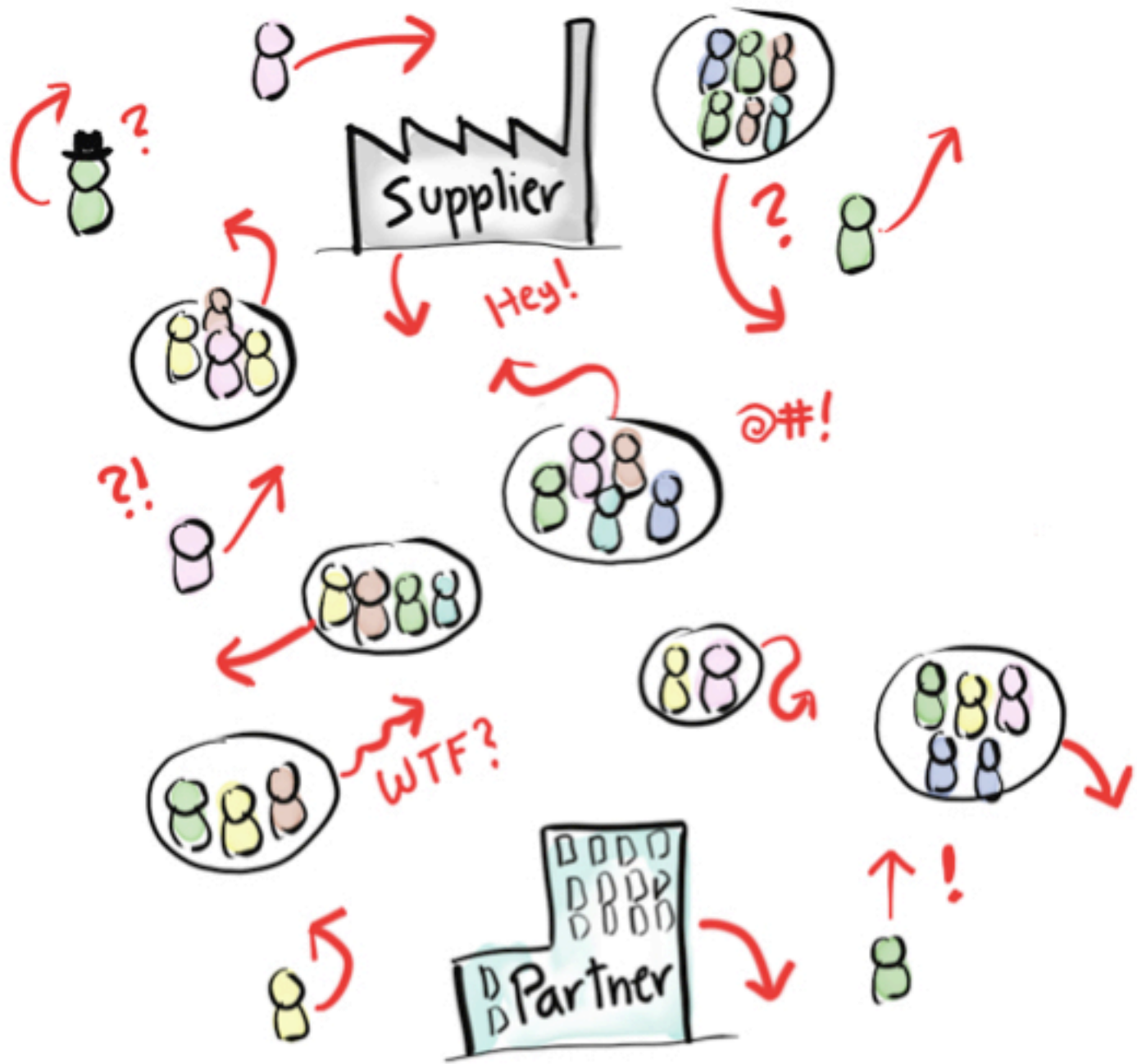


Why am I
here?

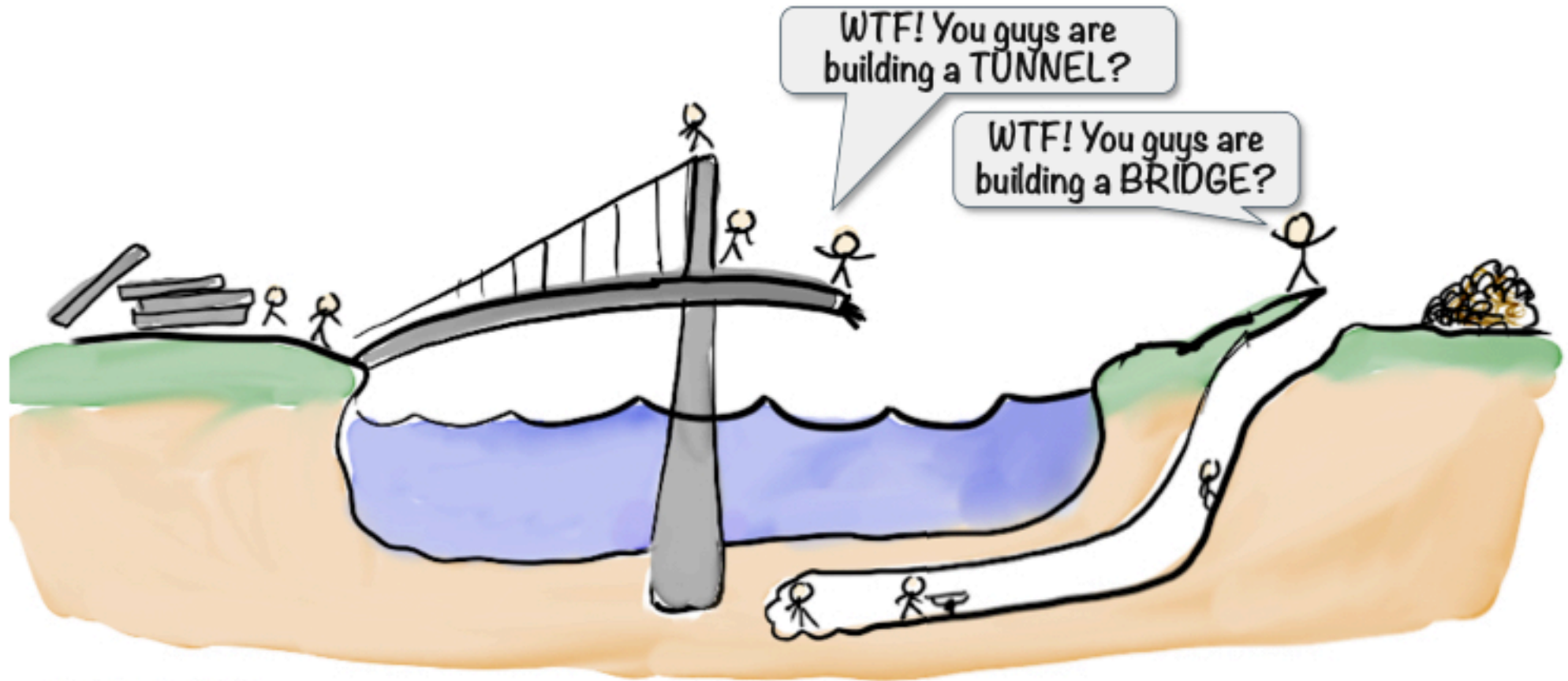
Wonder what
the others are
working on?



Misalignment

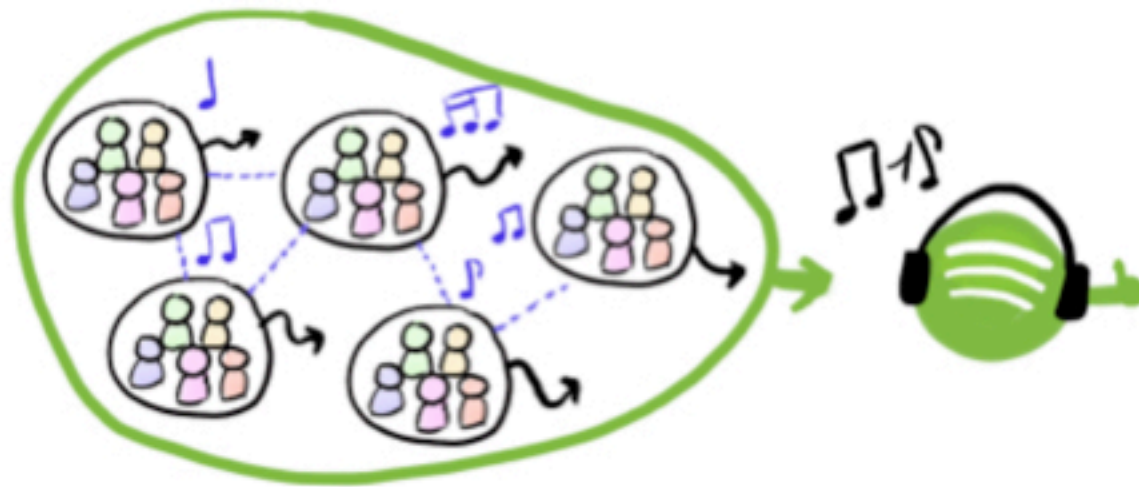


Misalignment

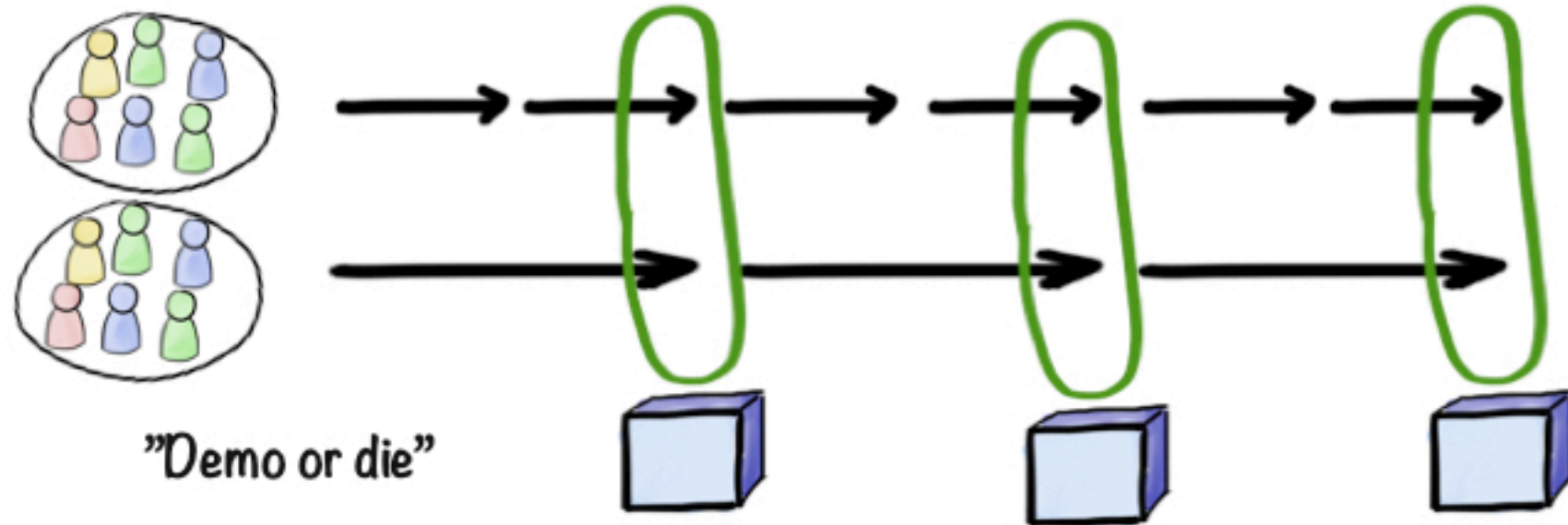


Alignment

Loosely coupled, Tightly aligned teams

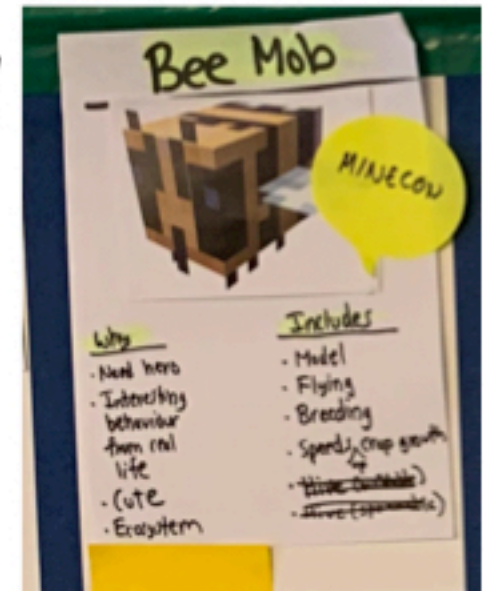


Product transparency (ex: weekly demo)



Process & People & Plans transparency

a.k.a. "Obeua" (from Lean)



Minimise the gap between Maker and User

Release often

Get real user
feedback

Slice the
elephant

Autonomous
teams

Radical
transparency

Curiosity > Pride

Cultivate a Culture of Curiosity

Who are the real users?

Maker



User



What do they really need?

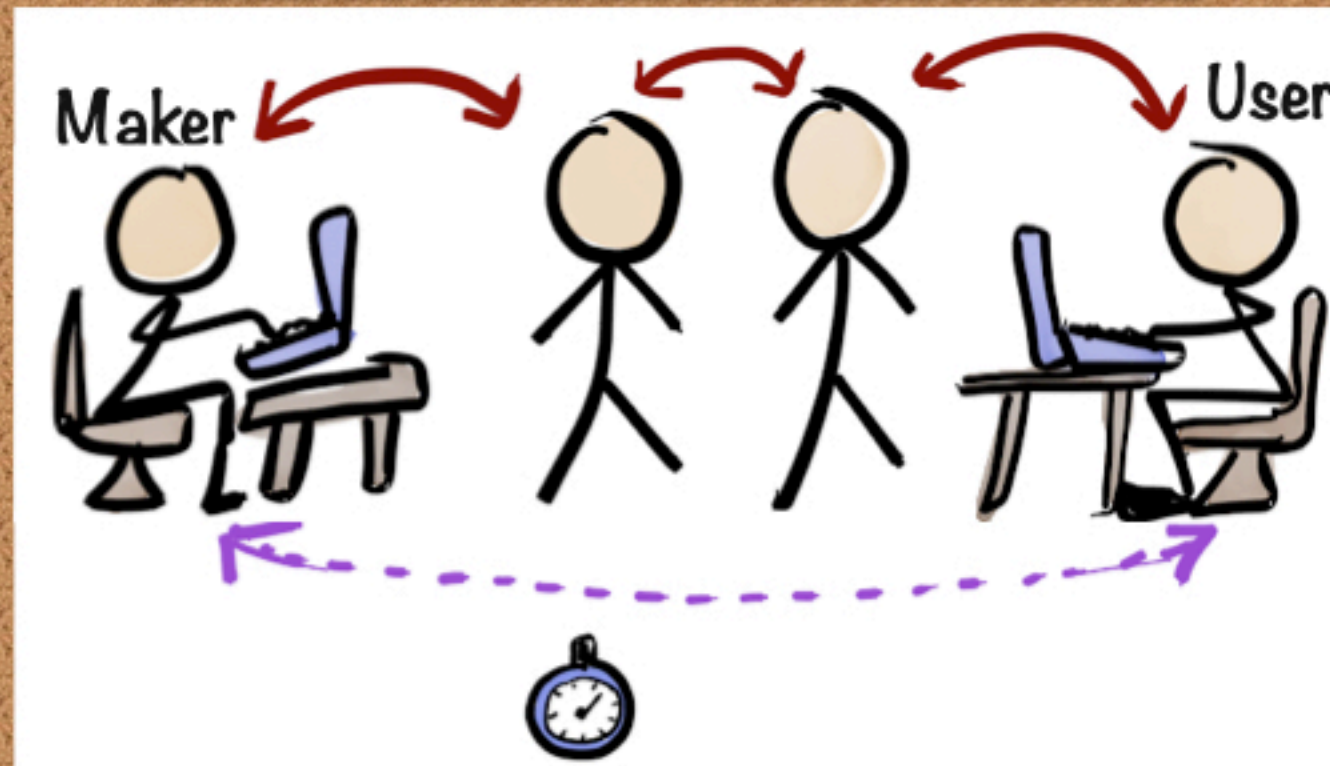
How does our product help improve their lives?

How can we improve?

How do we know if our product works?

How to make Awesome products (or at least improve the odds...)

Minimise the gap
between
Maker and User



How to make Awesome products

(or at least improve the odds...)

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