QuantifiedSelf,

efforts required...
but still a worthy investment!

Quantified Self

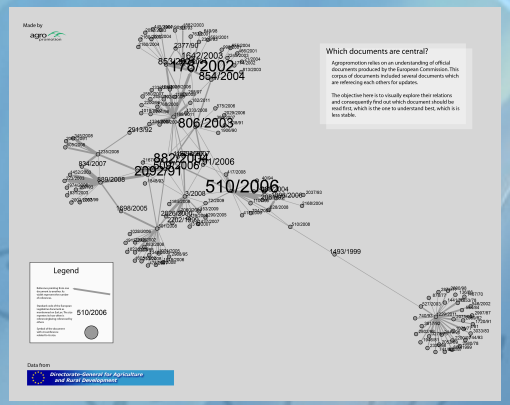
Problematic

There is no magic,

good things come with a price
and uantifiedSelf is no different.

Who am I

- **By day...**

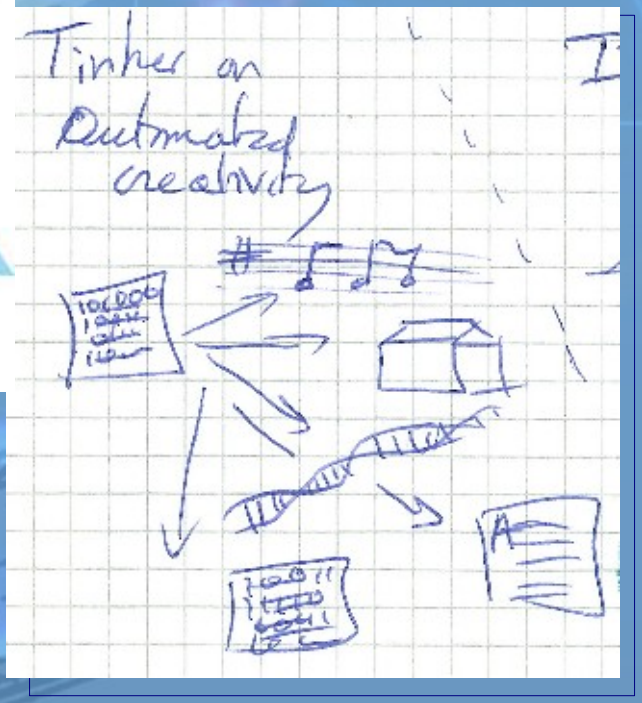


Quantified Self

Who am I

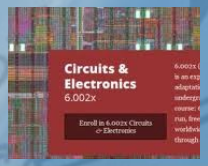
- … but also by night

@utopiah



Previous semester

This semester



Quantified Self

A dance between problems and solutions

- **It all started in a little café in Paris...**

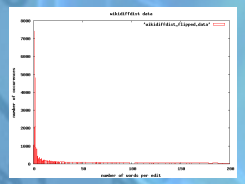
Franquin

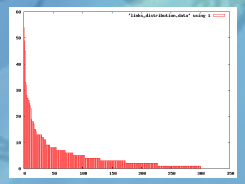
qs Quantified Self

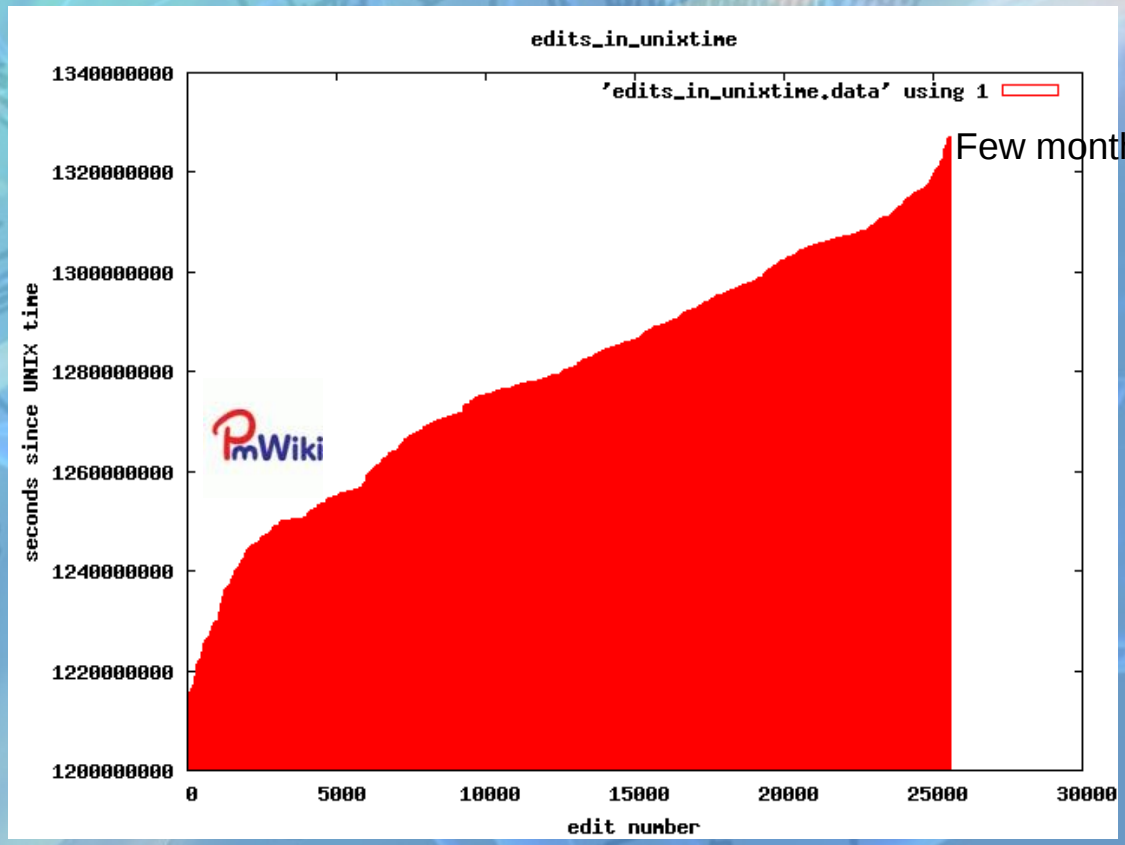
Brain dumping

(to avoid the core dump)

- **Passing a threshold of “suffering”**







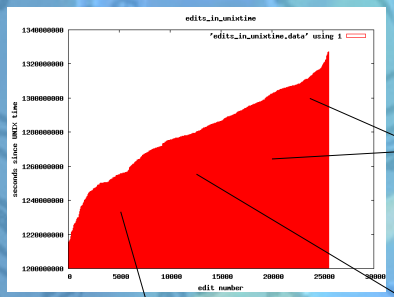
~3 years now with ~1 edit of
~5 words per daylight hour

(as of July 2011)

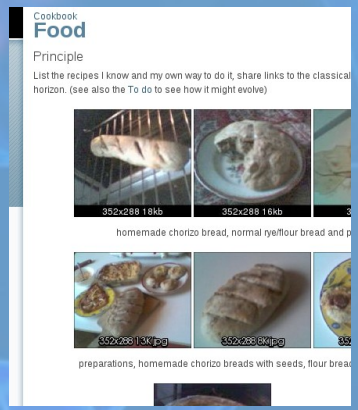
Quantified Self

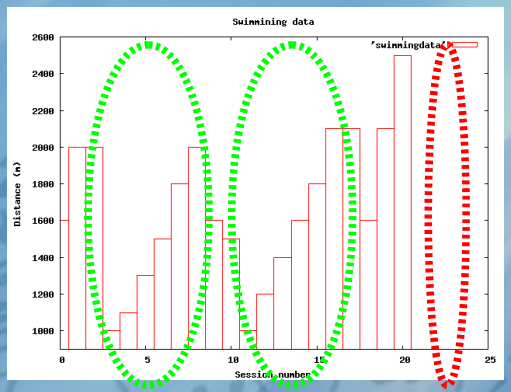
Dumping what?

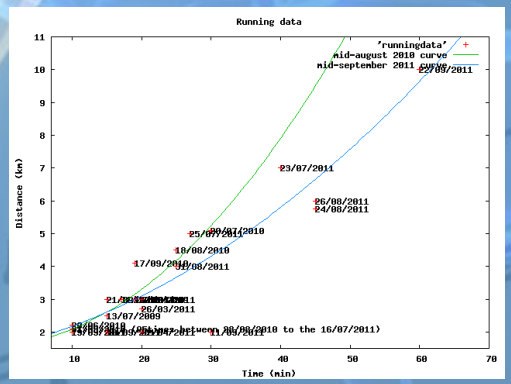
- **What matters to ME**
  - **and yes, most of the time only me.**

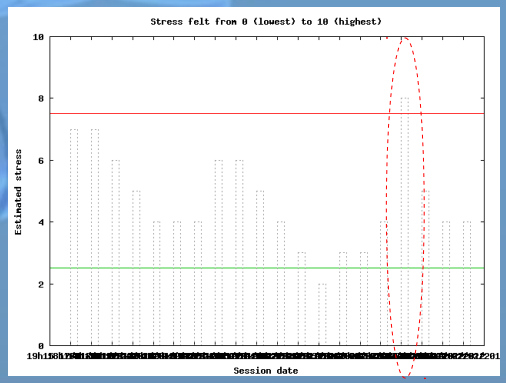


16:31 <goodfriend> tu track pas ton alimentation?







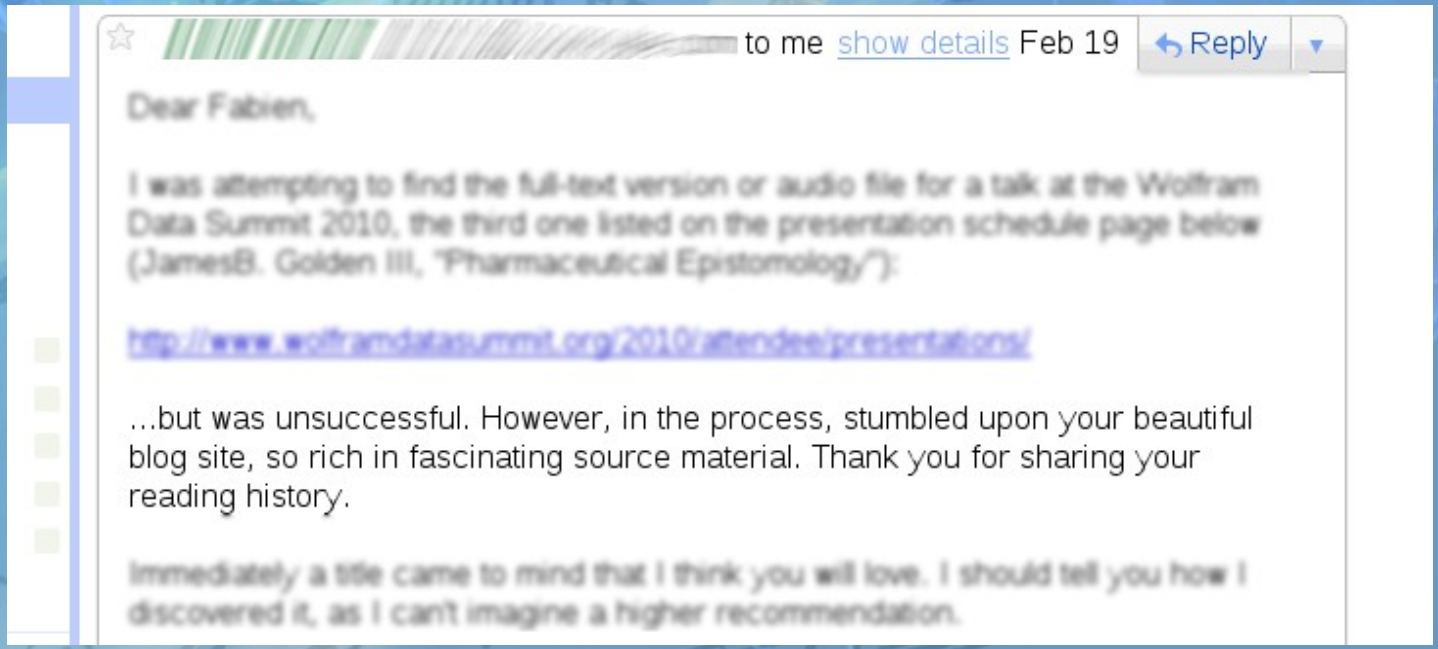


QS BXL 2012 #1

Quantified Self

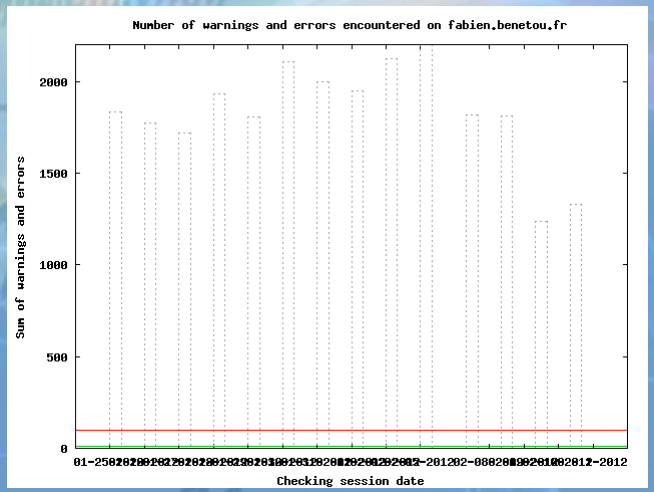
Sometimes my stuff...

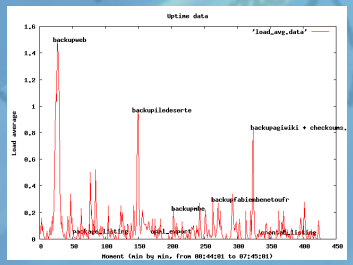
- **Is so obscure that it is precisely what one guy on the other end of the globe needs**



Error 404

- Everything degrades over time
  - Even numbers
  - Even links
  - Even text
  - Sometimes relationships






```
-rw-r----- 1 snort adm  603807 2012-03-05 03:41 tcpdump.l
-rw-r----- 1 snort adm  363667 2012-03-05 15:15 tcpdump.l
r21708:~# grep ICMP /var/log/snort/alert | wc -l
5298
r21708:~#
[ r21708 0.02 0.17 0.18 ][  (0*$root)  1-$ chat  2$ utopi
```

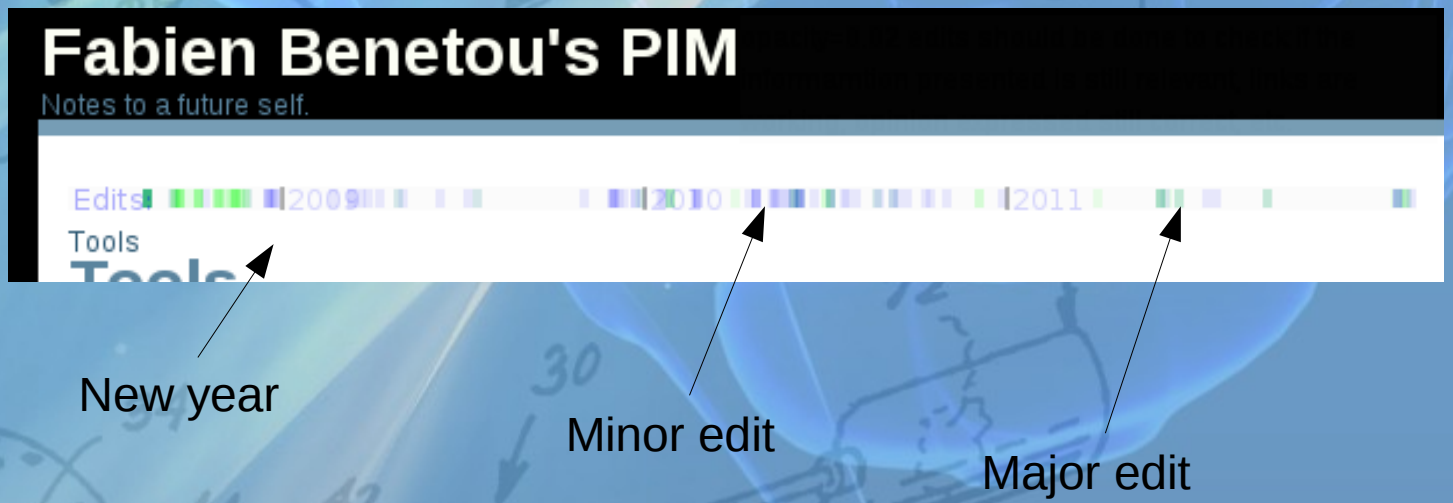
http://www.security-class.org

QS BXL 2012 #1

Quantified Self

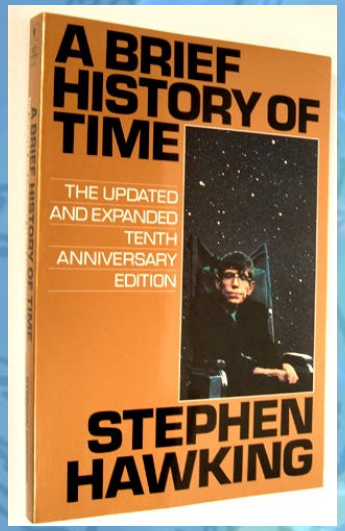
No need to get it right the 1st time

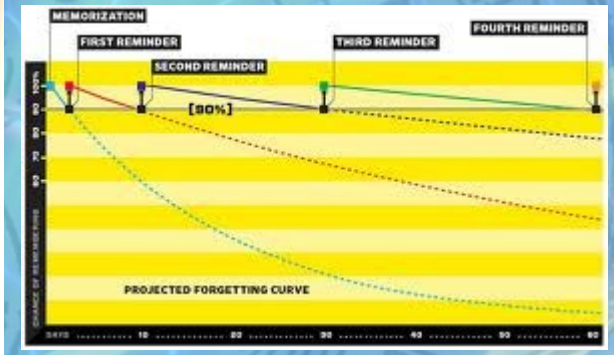
- Iterative process
  - Numbers available as a lab first step
  - Exploring with what you have now
    - Ask new questions

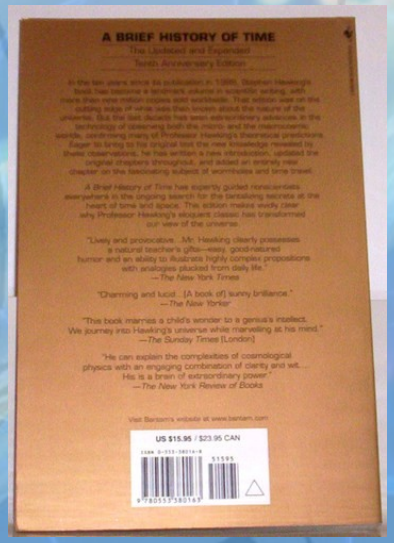


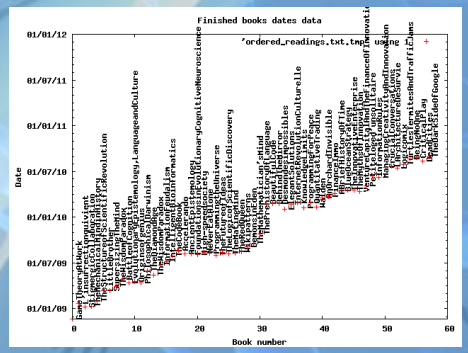
Quantified Self

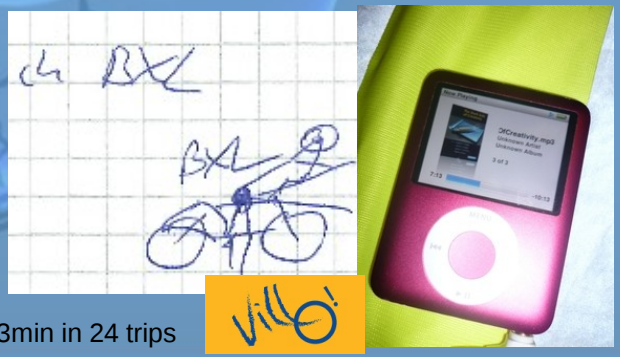
Reading as wasted time?!











3h13min in 24 trips

QS BXL 2012 #1

Quantified Self

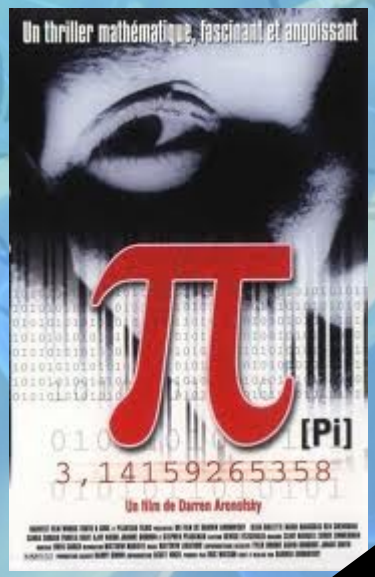
A personal conclusion

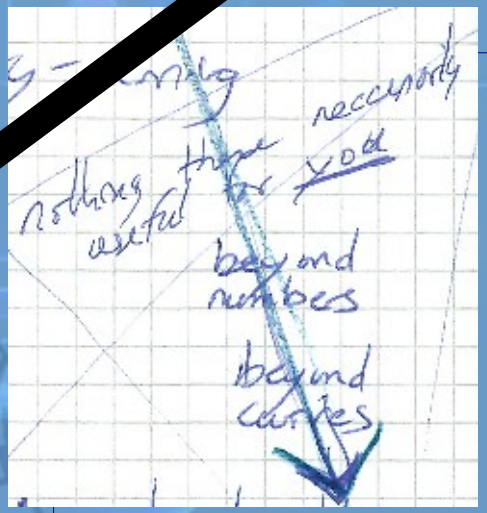
- **It helped me not being crazy :-#**

qs
Quantified Self

Words of caution before concluding

- In truth...
  - ~~not numbers~~

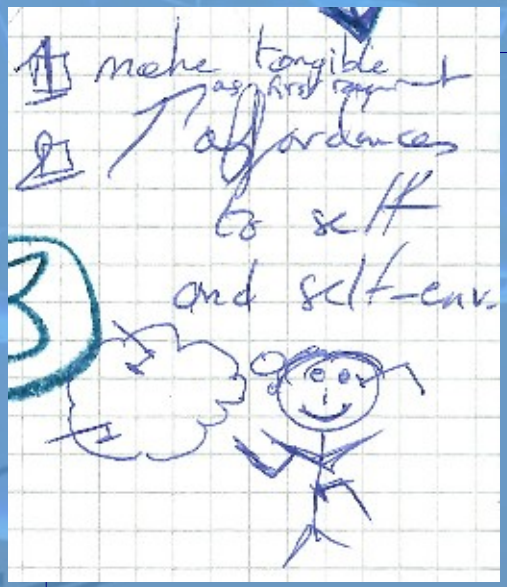




Opalka

Conclusion

- ~~not event better affordances~~
  - but **better behaviours**
  - numbers and tools to gather and exploit them are just a necessary evil

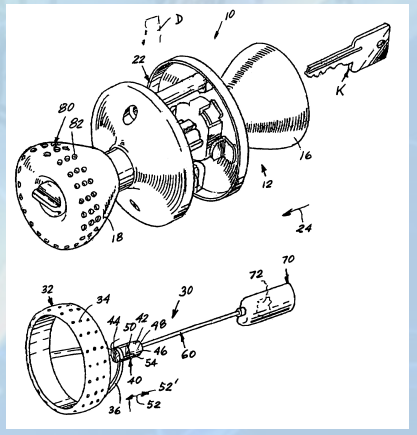


Quantified Self

post scriptum

- **Why such a messy background?**

+



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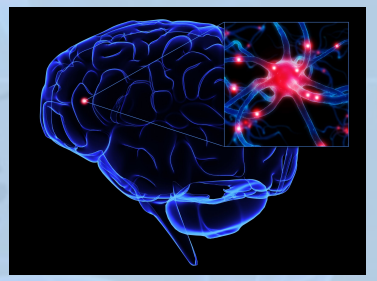
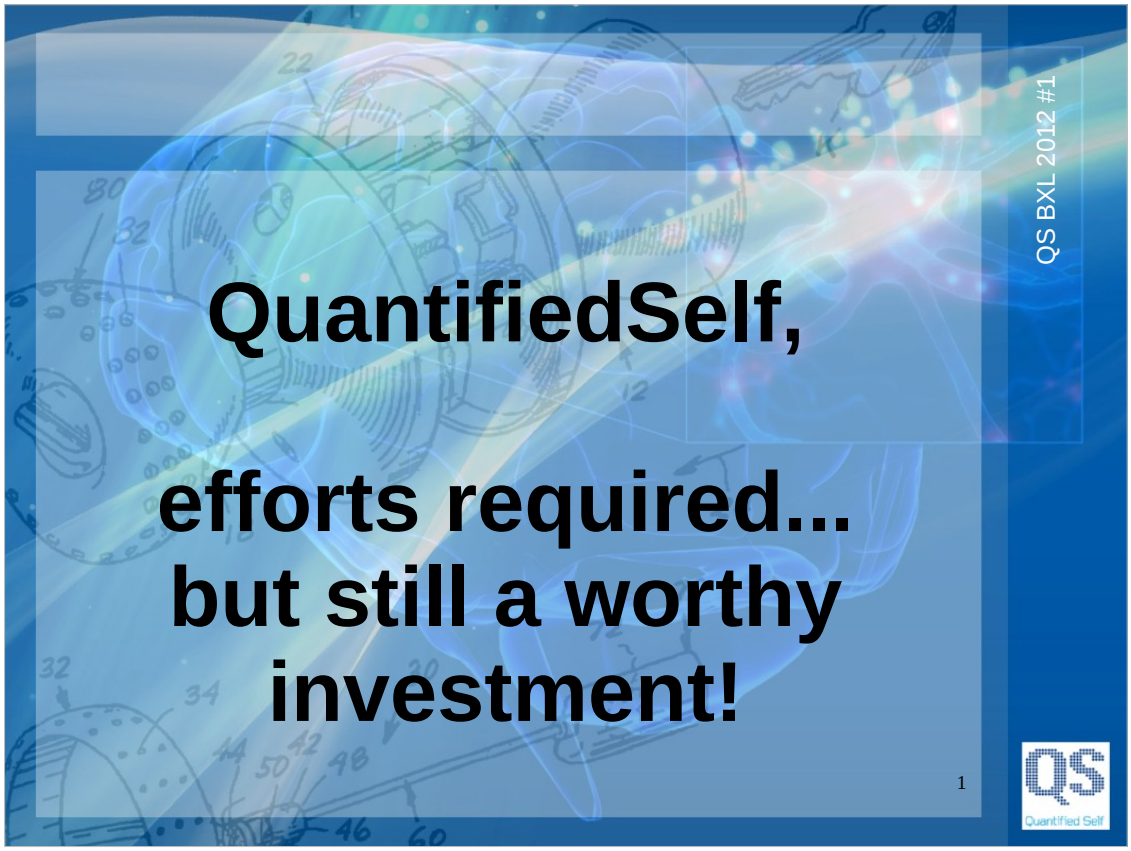


Improvement

Affordance through numbers

Behaviours

Quantified Self

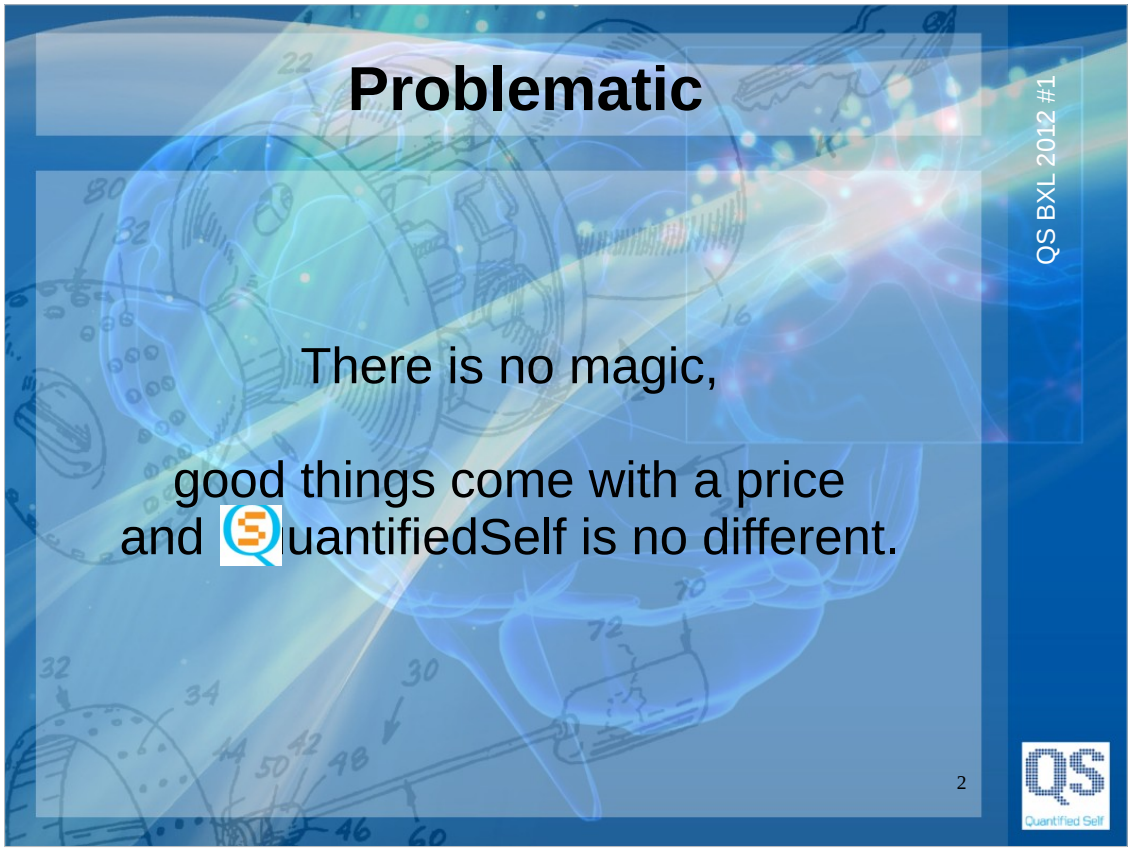


•Breathe deeply

•Look around

•Propose questions live if we have more than 15min

else after the talk

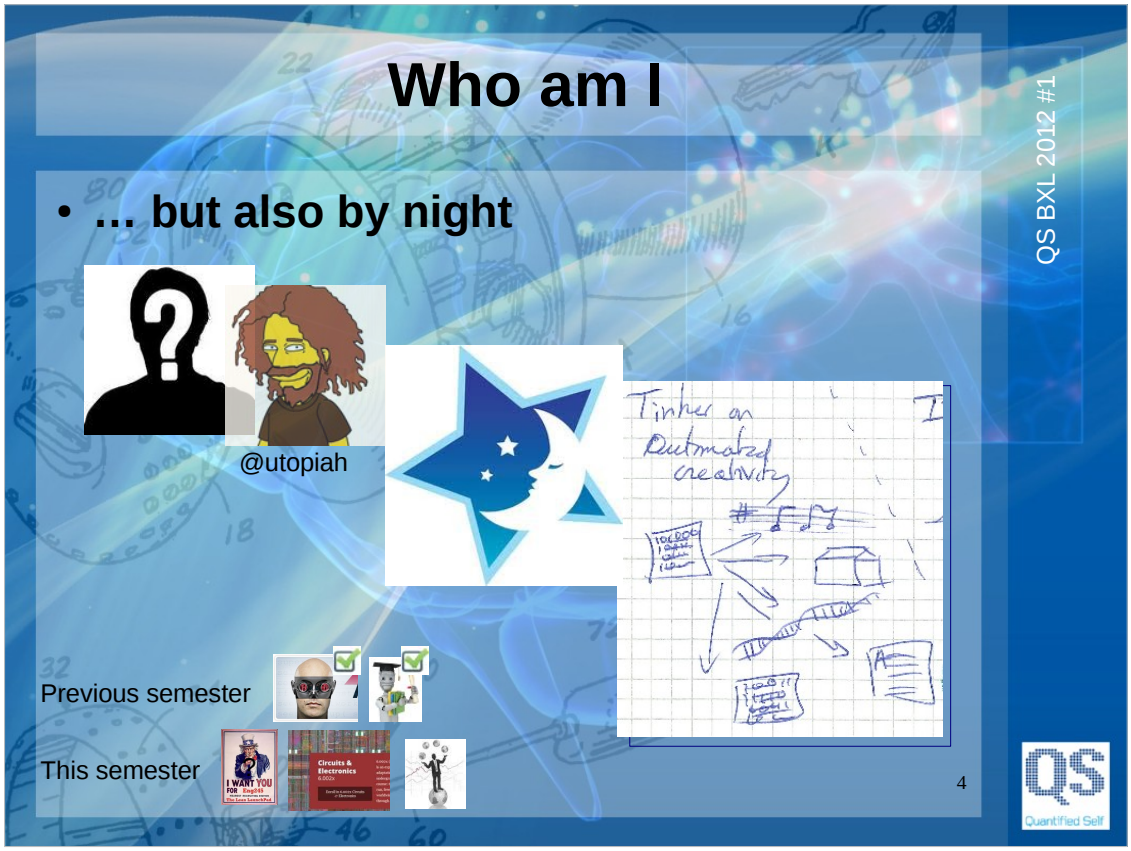


The purpose of this presentation is to briefly show the difficulties down the road through some life stories.

Despite all those problems why is it still worth it?

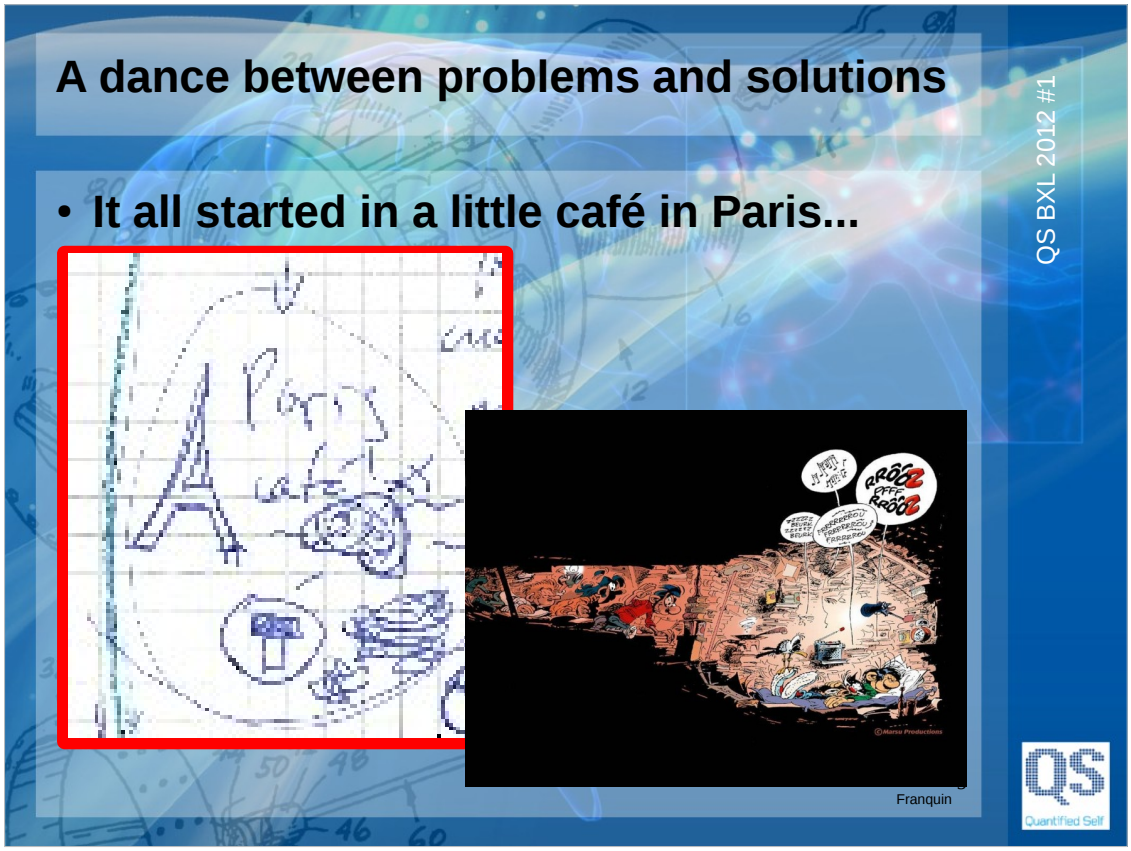
How coming together to discuss about it helps?

- Working as the IT guy in a small consultancy company next to the European Commission
  - EurLex exploration on the sector we are interested in
    - If you breath EurLex and can guess the sector (and have eagle eyes), Ill buy you a beer



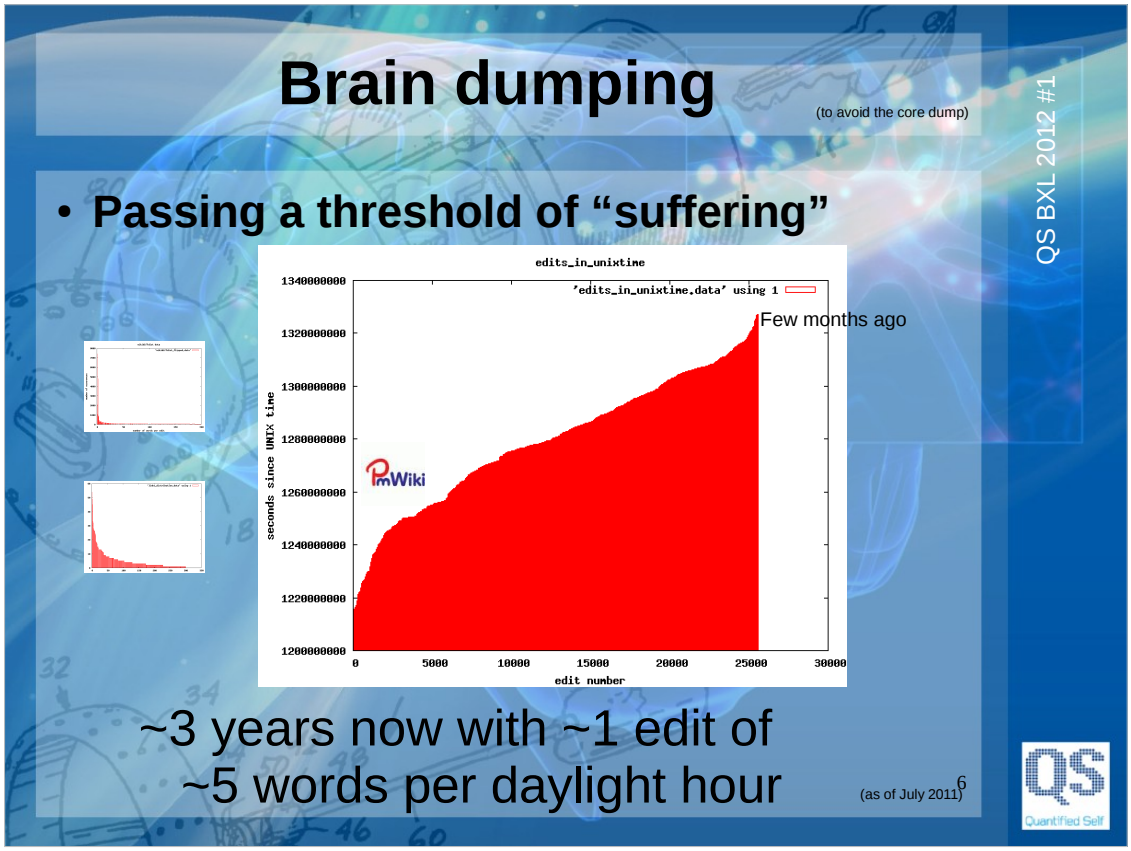
- When I do not have to be practical
  - My actual “calling” in life is
    - How to make software be creative
      - I have (nearly) no idea how
        - But I will keep on searching

Also studying on various IT/CS/ML related topics



•Describe the scene in the café
- Actually it started way before but that's the precise moment in which I thought “this is too much”
- Explore multiple topics is very gratifying
  - Allows to discover weak links
    - Make sense and try to unify
      - But hardly scale easily without a scaffolding

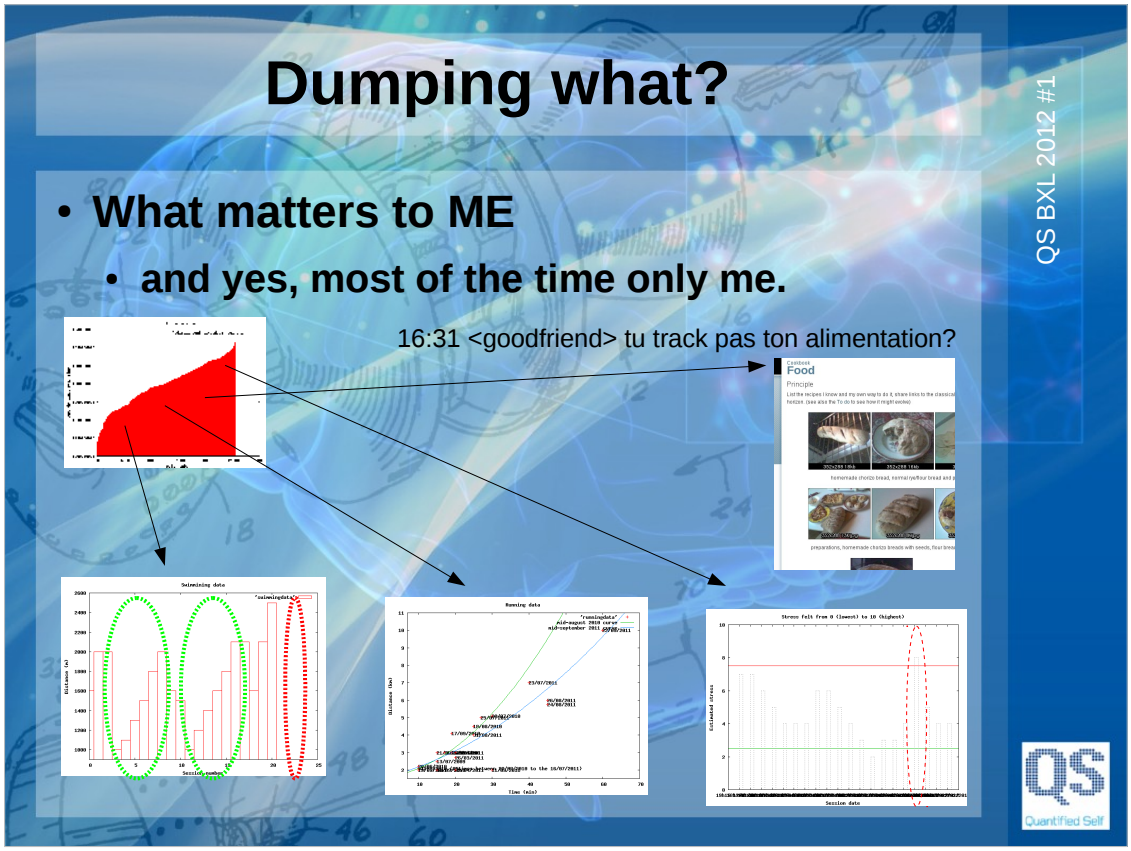
Basically felt like Gaston's mess in my brain



- New process of having an idea and then having to ponder when recording it where to put it and how to name it
  - So that it can be re-used with others ideas more efficiently

- Years later on discovered the work of Mark Carranza
  - Made in 2009 and 2011 QS in Bay Area presentation his social memex/mind.mx
  - Several email exchanges, tried prototype
    - Nothing further because of his Health conditions

- Experimenting with original meta-data beyond geo-location
  - e.g. feeling (excitement, ...)

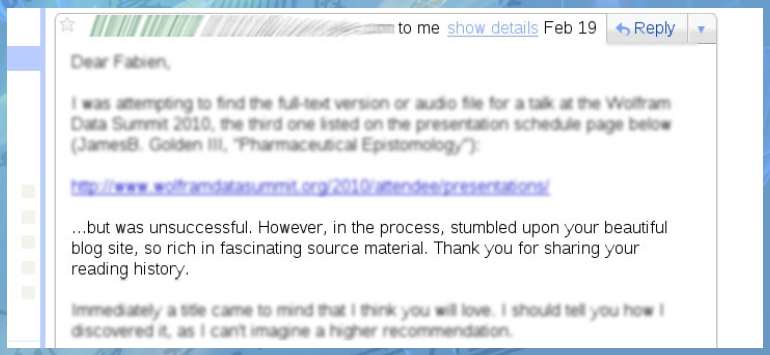


- Most people track calories
  - I track what dishes I cooked
    - When I feel down I look back at it and feels like "wow, that's not too shabby... what else can I do now?"

- When my boss suddenly realised a deadline was passed
  - Checked quality
    - Affordance to backtrack the problem
      - Influence for the next time it happens
      - **...or know when it is beyond your control**
        - to avoid wasting energy

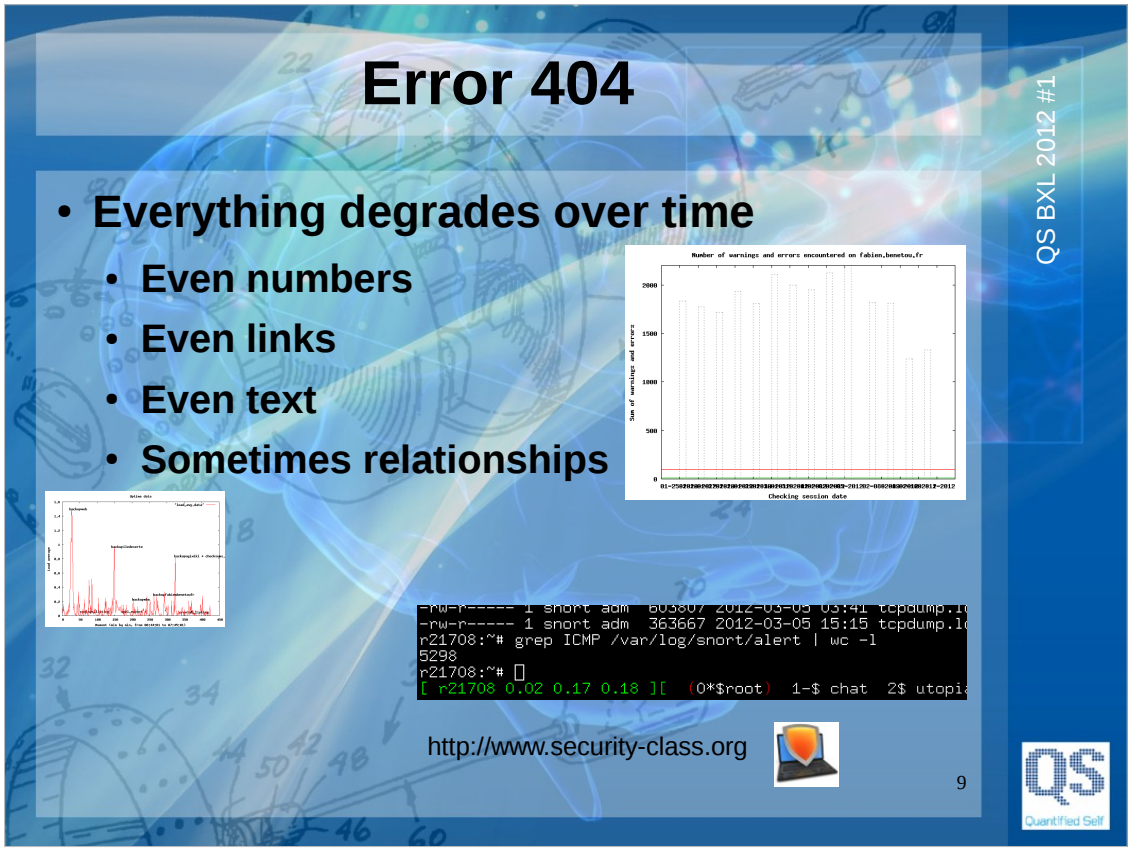
Sometimes my stuff...

- **Is so obscure that it is precisely what one guy on the other end of the globe needs**

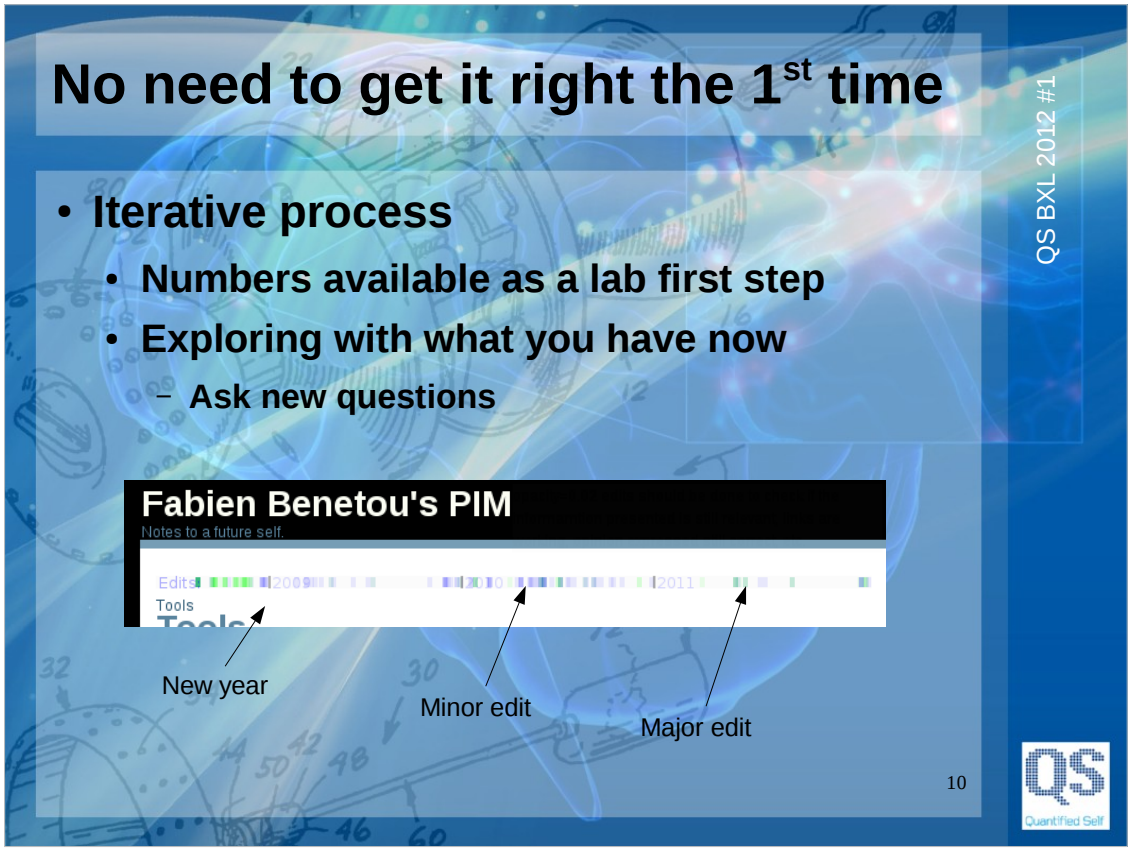


- There is no webpage or book or spreadsheet with exactly what you need
  - Make it yourself relying on existing components
    - Yet do not ignore “conventional” research
      - Lots of studies on pretty much everything
        Surely not YOUR precise situation
        - But the average can give a **cheap** big picture view
          - Well cheap... you already paid for it
            - Sunk cost

- A bit like Meetup
  - Explained this morning to coworker that there was surely a club for people in BXL who care about green flowers
  - It's great, get together!

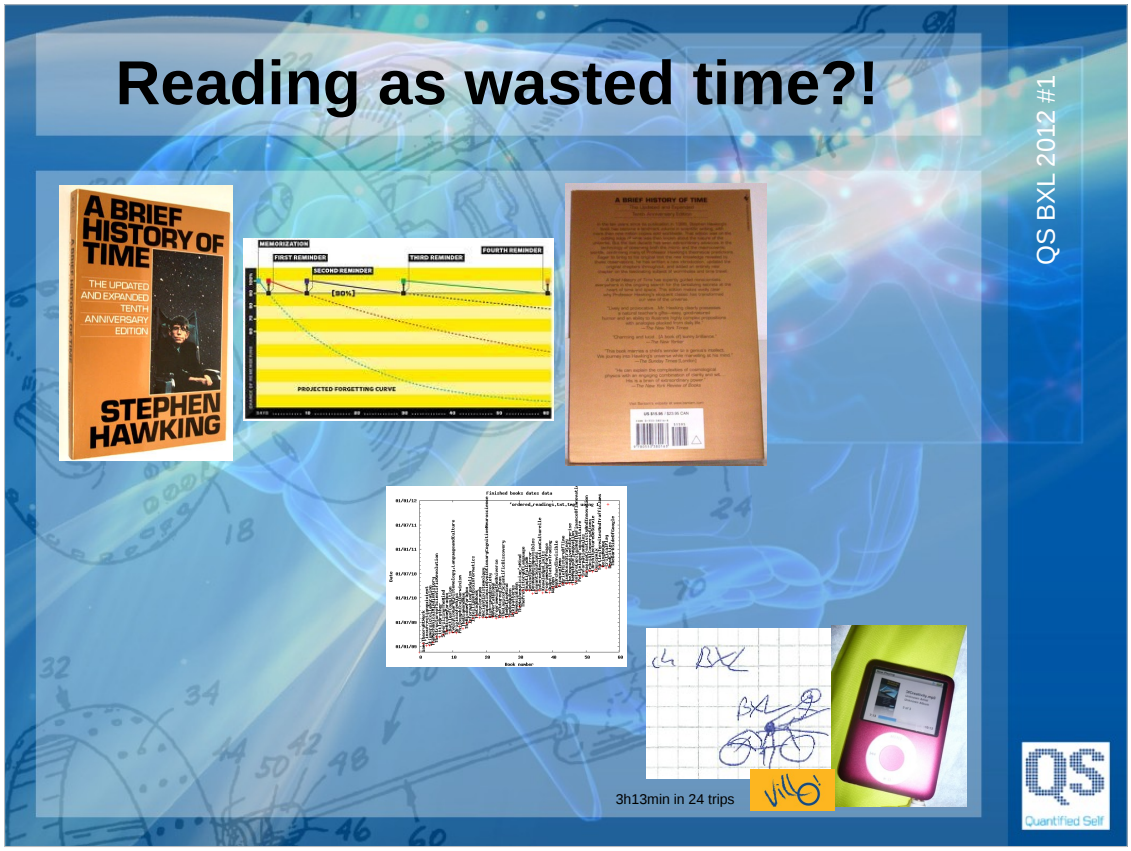


- Means you have to go beyond the spreadsheet, data has to be continuously updated so that graph stays meaningful
- Without interaction with the “outside” world it is hard to make anything interesting, the problem is that outside world is fluctuating and fast
- Text degrade because your own opinions change, what was true yesterday is not necessarily true today
- You have to protect your precious data, against ANY kind of problem DdoS and hack included

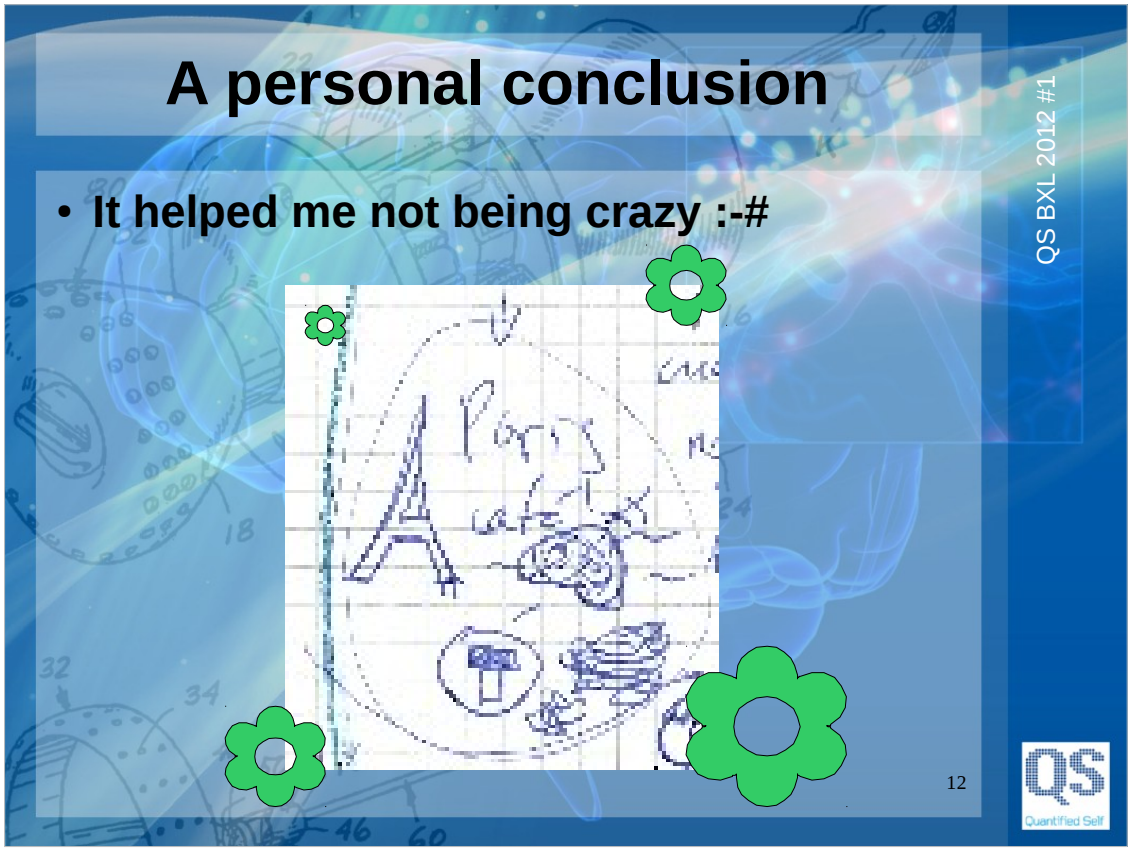


Spiralling around the right question, getting into the habit of having the “right” to ask yourself questions

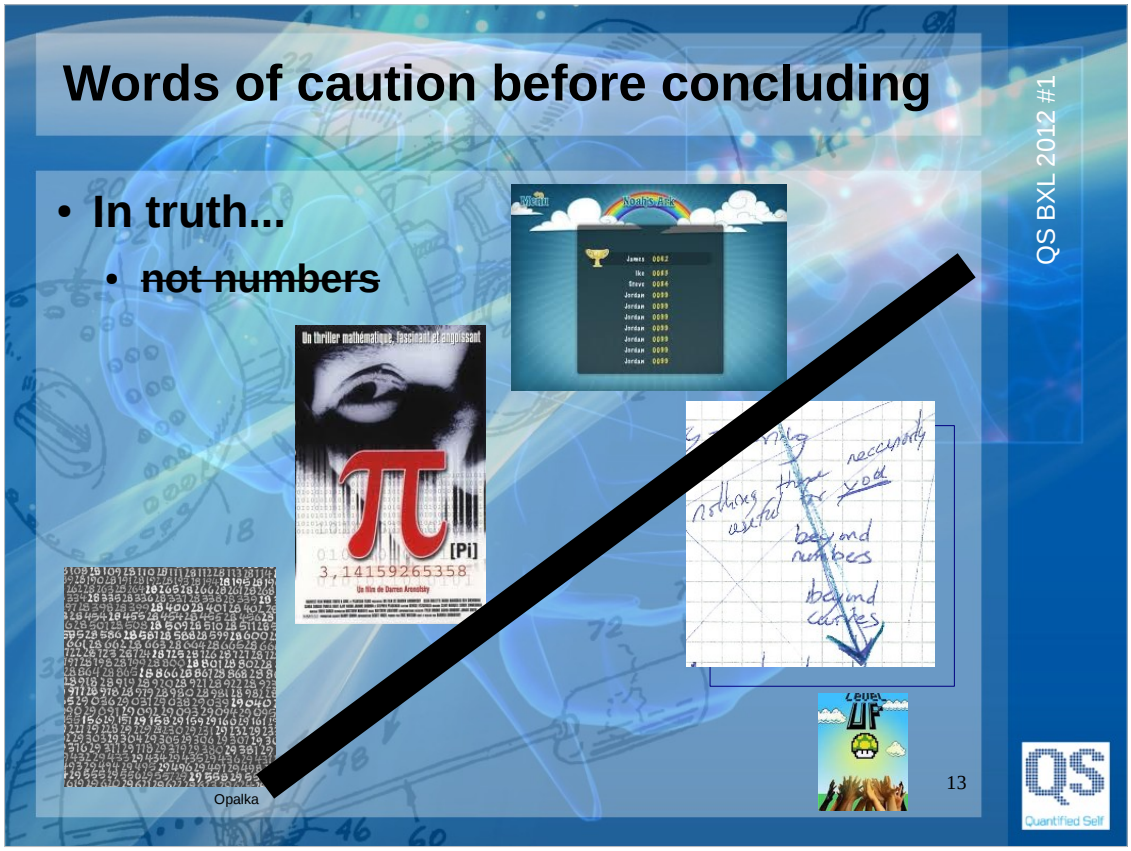
Try to tackle your own personal problems or explorations “the wiki-way”



- Most of us remember the front cover of the books we read
  - The back cover is something else entirely
    - The content... unfortunately often is slightly more precise :-(
      - “What did I just read?”
        - Writing down notes is a good first step
          - What if you even forget you read a book
            - Get recalls for your written notes to counter the curve
              - Forget when, just consume
                - Here audio example



So despite all those problems
- time
- money
- moving target
- security
- maintenance
- lack of understanding
  - “what do you mean you record your emotion with your notes?”
- uncertainty
- ...and all those more numerous I forgot

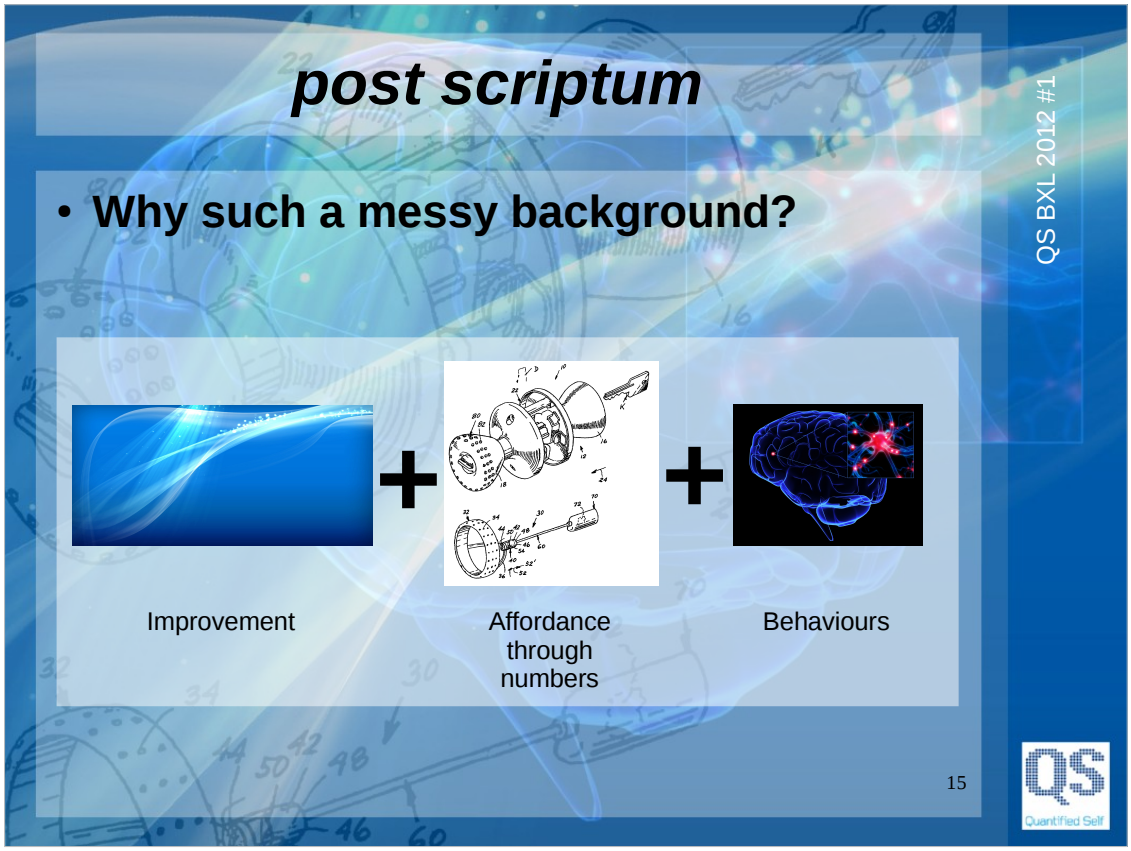


Risk, do not “get played” by the numbers
Gamification leverage our drive for competition
We are addicted to high scores
It can still be positive if you understand what game you are playing
Not easy, made my own game to ask questions about the content I wrote, Im not playing it...

Conclusion

- ~~not event better affordances~~
  - but better behaviours
  - numbers and tools to gather and exploit them are just a necessary evil

- Invest in making yourself happier
  - And those around you too (get our of the closet)
    - Especially if you do “weird” things
    - Feels quite nice to receive a random praise email a Sunday morning :-)
- Do wait for it to become popular
  - Cf own argument http://www.quora.com/Will-the-quantified-self-trend-bec
    - 90-9-1 rule



- Improvement
  - Life is a learning process
    - If Saint Augustin, the Dalai Lama, Bill Gates or your favourite idol still think he has to learn you probably have to too
- Affordance through numbers
  - Concept from cognitive science
    - One of my favourite concept
- Behaviours
  - Conscious decision to reshape your environment to match your own goals