



Hazel Weakly
@hazelweakly@hachyderm.io

The two hardest problems in Computer Science are

- 1. Human communication
- 2. Getting people in tech to believe that human communication is important

Dec 24, 2025, 01:42 PM · 🌐 · Mona for iPhone

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ocratato
@ocratato@discuss.systems

🌐 1d

@hazelweakly
I am quite certain that the "Computer Science" qualifier is redundant.

↩️ 2



screwlisp
@screwlisp@gamerplus.org

🌐 9h

@ocratato
The hardest problems in human communication are cache invalidation and naming things
@hazelweakly

↩️ 2



Autumn Kelp
@wakame@tech.lgbt

🌐 8h

@screwlisp @ocratato @hazelweakly

And off-by-one errors.

↩️ 0



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ocratato

@ocratato@discuss.systems

8h

@screwlistp @hazelweakly

Yes.

Cache invalidation --> throwing out the things you thought you knew when better evidence to the contrary comes along.

0



Petru Ratiu

@rpetre

8h

@ocratato @hazelweakly "Hell is other people"

0



Wouter Verhelst

@wouter@pleroma.debian.social

11h

@hazelweakly

Amen.

The second is a special case of the first though?

0



babble encat

@babble_endanger@freeradical.zone

16h

@hazelweakly Getting powerful people to understand that humans matter lol

0



BlueTeamSherpa

@Blueteamsherpa@infosec.exchange

17h

@hazelweakly I thought the two hardest problems in computer science were:

1. Human communication
2. Getting people in tech to believe that human communication is important
3. Off by one errors.

0



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demofox

@demofox@mastodon.gamedev.place

17h

@hazelweakly tech problems are usually people problems. Totally agree.

0



Dave bauer

@davebauerart@mastodon.social

18h

@hazelweakly Oh, this is why I never studied computer science and just made stuff to help people communicate.

0



craignicol

@craignicol@glasgow.social

20h

@hazelweakly see also: the most important language to know in computer science is your own native tongue. (Or whatever your organisation uses to communicate)

0



Lou



@koalou@lgbtqia.space

21h

@hazelweakly
Funny enough, at my company, the tech team is the one doing its best so that everyone communicate 🙄

0



canleaf08



加拿大葉子

@canleaf@mastodon.social

22h

@hazelweakly 3. people who say « computer science is obsolete due to AI. »

0



[MARX_IN_SPACE]

@otherdog@mastodon.social

22h

@hazelweakly Absolutely One Hundred Percent.



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0

Bonus

@Bonus@beige.party

1d

@hazelweakly Definitely acutely struggling in design with this currently.

0

Harry W.

@hazz223@mstdn.social

1d

@hazelweakly something ironic about tech enabling such fast commutation, while really sucking at using it appropriately / at all 😊

0

Neil Moffatt

@NicelyManifest@mastodon.social

1d

@hazelweakly Does not help that many are like myself - Aspergic - and that the inside-code and outside-application views and logistics are so often massively different. Tiny user change can take forever ...

0

skry

@skry@mastodon.social

1d

@hazelweakly 3. Binary thinking

0

deliverator

@deliverator@infosec.exchange

1d

@hazelweakly I fully admit to HATING the mandatory "arts" courses (English lit, sociology, history, etc) I had to do as part of my uni degree. If I were doing it now I would probably have chatgpt'ed my way through most of the essay writing. Which is what I worry is happening with the next generation 😬

I'm at the point in life/career where I realize these were actually really useful.

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how do we actually illustrate the value of these subjects to future generations? For me I know part of the issue was time management - trying to focus on reading a book and reflecting on it while also juggling all the "engineering" course work. Separate them into their own year/semester?

↩ 1



Zimmie

@bob_zim@infosec.exchange

🌐 23h

@deliverator In my engineering degree plan, an engineering ethics course was mandatory. We discussed some high-profile failures like Bhopal and Chernobyl, as well as some lesser-known ones like the Hyatt Regency walkway collapse, the THERAC-25, and the Gimli Glider incident. We also spent significant time on how IBM and other big companies built machines which powered Hitler's extermination camps.

The programming and IT degrees available at the time didn't include any ethics courses, which is part of why I've never felt people doing either should be called engineers.

↩ 2



deliverator

@deliverator@infosec.exchange

🌐 22h

@bob_zim yup, definitely part of the whole thing. Canada (or is it just Ontario?) has rules about having "engineer" in a job title. Some people complain about artificial gatekeeping, but words are supposed to have meaning. I don't think we've actually figured out what "software engineering" means, let alone have a means of doing it and validating it.

↩ 0



LovesTha 🍷

@LovesTha@floss.social

🌐 13h

@bob_zim @deliverator my electronic engineering degree barely touched ethics, just as one topic in the "Engineering Management" subject that was a real cakewalk. Computer science didn't mention it.

We also had room for zero things outside of science, which I wish was different. It would have been nice to do some subjects on other topics.



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0

linear cannon

@linear@nya.social

1d

@hazelweakly@hachyderm.io i think that might actually just be one problem

0

jer

@jerrej@mastodon.social

1d

@hazelweakly
Not having management laying off the interns/juniors.

0

Pseudo Nym

@pseudonym@mastodon.online

1d

@hazelweakly

I thought the two hardest computer science problems were:

1) naming things
2) cache invalidation
3) off by one errors

(To be clear, I fully agree with the "communication" point. Just couldn't pass up the set up for a joke.)

1

Robert Kist

@kwramm@mastodon.gamedev.place

1d

@pseudonym @hazelweakly I've seen 1 and 2 being caused communication issues, and I'm sure there's probably examples for cache invalidation too, somewhere

0

Em

@Em0nM4stodon@infosec.exchange

1d

@hazelweakly @danirabbit Amen

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Paul Sutton (zleap) 1d
@zleap@techhub.social

@hazelweakly

Is it just people in Tech? People in Tech need people to think otherwise so they keep buying new tech. Perhaps we need everyone else to understand how communication is important and we can communicate without technology then reassess how we do things and create the right balance.

0 1d

GrandTheftUrkel 1d
@GrandTheftUrkel@mastodon.social

@hazelweakly You forgot:
3. Off-by-one errors

1 1d



Expired Token 1d
@expiredtoken@mastodon.social

@GrandTheftUrkel @hazelweakly You mean:
0. Off-by-one errors 🤔

0 1d

Francis Cook 1d
@dianshuo@mstdn.io

@hazelweakly can I venture a 3) not every goddamn thing is a tech problem.

0 1d

Nick Silkey 🏠 N5ILK 🧰 🪴 🌊 1d
@nicksilkey

@hazelweakly Business School as well, Hazel! 😊👉

0 1d

Fabos (not an OS) @ 39c3 1d
@fabos@der.cyberterror.ist



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@hazelweakly@hachyderm.io human communication is important?!?

1 1d

crazyeddie

@crazyeddie@mastodon.social

1d

@fabos @hazelweakly Not for everyone. There are several greats who found solitude offered them much more. Authors, philosophers, scientists, mathematicians... When you think of a great mind in human history it was probably thus.

Humans rate themselves way too highly.

1 1d

ShadSterling

@ShadSterling@mastodon.social

1d

@crazyeddie @fabos @hazelweakly ... might explain why so much of philosophy is so out of touch.

Sure, being able to focus and think things through is valuable, but there's a reason Einstein said "As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality."

1 1d

crazyeddie

@crazyeddie@mastodon.social

1d

@ShadSterling @fabos @hazelweakly I really doubt that's what he had in mind when he said that--seems more like an attempt to relay a fundamental concept of math that most people don't get--but everything is relative, including interpretations.

0 1d

Peter ▼

@pvdrijst@mastodon.social

1d

@hazelweakly There's no C in IT

0 1d



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nadja
@dequbed@mastodon.chaosfield.at

🌙 1d

@hazelweakly The third hardest is I presume then to get people in tech to understand that 90% of all 'technical' problems are instead socio-political ones and that neither political nor social problems have technical solutions?

🔍 2 ↺ ☆ 📖 ⋮

Rocketman
@slothrop@chaos.social

🌙 1d

@dequbed @hazelweakly a lot of people in tech would do well to realize that they're essentially plumbers and bricklayers, working for a few rich landlords.

🔍 1 ↺ ☆ 📖 ⋮

nadja
@dequbed@mastodon.chaosfield.at

🌙 1d

@slothrop @hazelweakly and both parts of that. Tech people are *just* plumbers and bricklayers. They help build infrastructure but they're no better than a bricklayer building a bridge.

🔍 2 ↺ ☆ 📖 ⋮

Kat (post-Hallowe'en edition)
@KatS@chaosfem.tw

🌙 1d

@dequbed @slothrop @hazelweakly ...which leads to looking back at the bridges you've built, and hoping they've been used more by good people to do good things, than by any other kind. But also being afraid to look.

🔍 0 ↺ ☆ 📖 ⋮

crazyeddie
@crazyeddie@mastodon.social

🌙 1d

@dequbed @slothrop @hazelweakly We are engineers and scientists.

Fuck the haters. ;)

Ain't nothing wrong with being a plumber. The equivalent in IT would probably be the network administrators. Similar levels of



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education and certification requirements. The plumber is probably more regulated by law, but the expectations are similar.

I really don't understand the human obsession with labeling wide groups of other humans and then group hating on them. It's weird. We're just people.

🔍 1 ↺ ☆ 📖 ⋮



Alex
@nap@social.coop

🕒 19h

@crazyeddied @dequbed @slothrop @hazelweakly

They're not saying there is something wrong with being a plumber or a bricklayer. Those are both artisanal professions that build infrastructure, whereas the average software engineer is trained to view themselves more as a capitalist. Of course, we aren't. We are also members of a largely artisanal profession.

🔍 1 ↺ ☆ 📖 ⋮

iwein
@iwein@mas.to

🕒 6h

@nap @crazyeddied @dequbed @slothrop @hazelweakly i did a double take at "*just* plumbers" as well. (Pretty sure not intended negatively in this case, but could be more positively worded, I think)

Given the right incentives, both plumbers and software engineers can do some very useful stuff, and solve some hairy problems. Also, I met some of the best and most compassionate communicators among craftspeople. Let's celebrate that and let go of the stereotypes!

🔍 2 ↺ ☆ 📖 ⋮

Rocketman
@slothrop@chaos.social

🕒 6h

@iwein @nap @crazyeddied @dequbed @hazelweakly oh absolutely! Plumbers, bricklayers and software developers all do very useful jobs, and all deserve recognition. As do so many other important jobs.

My point is that they're all sitting in roughly the same place in our society's power structures. One of those groups is (on average)



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much better paid than the other two, and in consequence tends to (on average) ignore this fact.



nadja

@dequbed@mastodon.chaosfield.at

6h

@iwein @nap @crazyeddie @slothrop @hazelweakly It could, but the programmers that need to see this post are the kinds of programmers that consistently think they're better than plumbers, and often better than blue-collar workers in general. See some of the other replies for examples :)

Mind you, I was a mechanic first, a machining lab tech second and became a programmer third, out of necessity more than free will, and I consider plumbers and bricklayers as much more important than programmers.



Passenger

@passenger@kolektiva.social

6h

@dequbed @iwein @nap @crazyeddie @slothrop @hazelweakly

As a data engineer I often self-describe as being basically a plumber.

The difference, I think, is that plumbers actually achieve the holy grail of applying a technical solution to a social problem, specifically the social problem of having poop in the drinking water.



nadja

@dequbed@mastodon.chaosfield.at

6h

@passenger @iwein @nap @crazyeddie @slothrop @hazelweakly do they though? The solution to the social problem is the result of a lot of people tirelessly working together to keep a lot of infrastructure running that's aggressively hidden from public view. A plumber gives you running water as much as milk comes from the supermarket fridge ^^



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Bee O'Problem

🌙 1d

@beeoproblem@mastodon.gamedev.place

@dequbed @hazelweakly reminds me of someone crowing about how blockchain would magically solve issues of warehouses losing packages. Literally zero awareness of stuff like theft, workers not filling paperwork properly, stuff getting missed on the back of a shelf, boxes falling off of conveyors etc. Warehousing databases don't lose inventory, people do.

🔙 1



Zillion

🌙 1d

@zillion@freeradical.zone

@beeoproblem @dequbed @hazelweakly It's not (entirely) the people, but the system that keeps the people poor enough to steal, too tired and hurried to be careful and to take care of each other and check each other's work, and that prevents fixing the shelves.

🔙 0



Reg Braithwaite 🍓

🌐 1d

@raganwald@social.bau-ha.us

@hazelweakly In the veterinary drama "All Creatures Great and Small," the vets desperately need one of the new postwar antibiotics, and eventually get them from a 200 year-old firm of chemists. They express surprise that a veteran rep working for a traditional firm is able to keep up with rapidly changing times.

The rep smiles. "I find," he says, "that the things that matter most are the things that change the least."



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