

## Re: Academic research aimed at improving programmer productivity?

**Source:** <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/General/comp.programming/2004-01/0407.html>

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**From:** gswork (gswork\_at\_mailcity.com)

**Date:** 01/05/04

Date: 5 Jan 2004 06:04:14 -0800

spinoza1111@yahoo.com (Edward G. Nilges) wrote in message news:<f5dda427.0401042202.22a84c3d@posting.google.com>...  
> "Brandon J. Van Every" <try\_vanevery\_at\_mycompanyname@yahoo.com> wrote in message news:<br9sui\$4r385\$I@ID-207230.news.uni-berlin.de>...  
> > "Edward G. Nilges" <spinoza1111@yahoo.com> wrote in message  
> > news:f5dda427.0401040314.2bf14f49@posting.google.com...

> *But if Parkinson's famous law is correct, there may be no solution. As  
> worker bees, we free up time (say by converting from DOS to Windows)  
> only to see as does the roving hiker in Yosemite, more weary miles to  
> walk before we sleep.*

There is no 'solution' as such because there is no end state to which we are aiming. no 'end of history'. thankfully.

> > *What I need from academics, or industry, or someone, are \*SOLUTIONS\*.*  
>  
> *I think with all due respect that the Star Trek idea of simply talking  
> to the computer is not on for serious and for mission critical  
> software. The lesson of driving a simple car is apropos.*  
>  
> *If the technical ideal was indeed a "solution" in which we did not  
> have in some way to think in an orderly fashion about the mastery of  
> the external world and the technical devices which exist in the  
> external world, then by now, surely, we would have...a car we could  
> drive when soused to the gills.*

To some, limited, extent, "driving without the driver" is enacted today by anti lock brakes, traction control, proximity sensors and other automata.

I recall a tv program about car safety in which was explained that as cars became safer so people drove more dangerously, to 'make up' for some of the gain. Indeed one expert playfully suggested that the best safety device would be a spike in each steering wheel, to concentrate the drivers mind as to the risks of driving!

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- > *"AI" is pure and simple a demand to be eliminated from technical*
- > *consciousness while enjoying its benefits, and the demand is a self*
- > *contradiction; French sociologist describes it as "science without the*
- > *scientist". Sure, if we board the Moon spacecraft and fly to the moon*
- > *while getting smashed on Scotch miniatures, we have accomplished the*
- > *ideal of getting to the moon, of somehow "using" the technology*
- > *without having to "think".*

I like that critique of "science without the scientist" and it's partly what the OP appears to want – however i also think he wants just the science, not the mechanics – to use a car analogy – to be able to change the camshaft, but not to have to know some arcana about his '77 pontiac's precise timing set up or somesuch. In programming – to know the data structure and algorithm, without havig to fret on the "2004 ACME widget interface API (tm)" all day.

At least that's how i read it.

So programming would be difficult, but not because of a sea a details to be remembered, but because of the engagement of one's mind with what one is actually doing – creating software.

It's not just a programming issue, one could happily forward the thesis that flat-packed furniture is "woodwork without the carpenter" and also a soulless and ultimately futile avenue !!

- > > *I disagree. I think Programming should be Reliable, and Productive. I'm*
- > > *not interested in that being difficult to accomplish; rather much the*
- > > *opposite.*
- >
- > *Why is that? Brain surgery is hard and getting harder even as it is*
- > *more productive. Why should programming be something so easy to do?*

a better example than flat packed furniture !