Intuition vs. Metrics
The Big Debate

Andrew Mo | Playfish China

changing how the world plays games

Pet Society

Restaurant City

Hotel City

EA Sports FIFA Superstars
2010 FIFA World Cup Edition

EA Sports Madden NFL Superstars

My Empire

Pirates Ahoy!

Country Story

Crazy Planets

Gangster City

Who Has The Biggest Brain?

Word Challenge

Geo Challenge

Bowling Buddies

Poker Rivals

INTUITION

"I will quit before
I make a game
based on analytics"
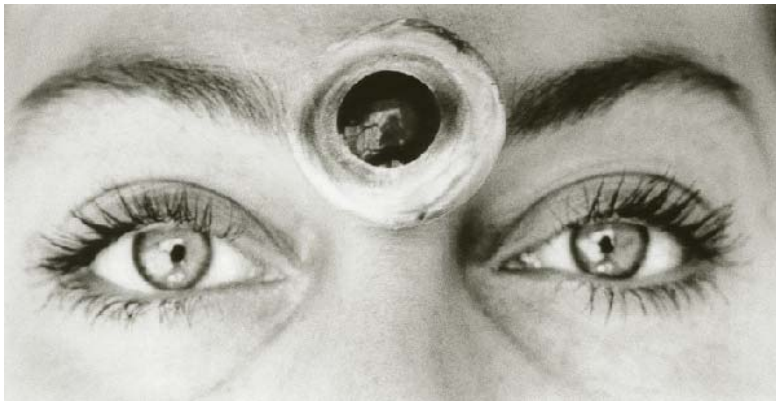– Warren Spector, Disney

METRICS

"Creating Successful Social Games: Understanding Player Behavior"

– Mark Skaggs, Zynga

which one wins?
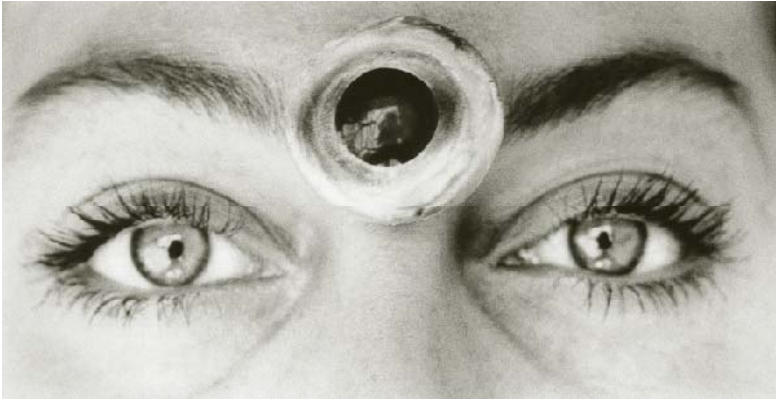

VS

(drum roll)

both.

thank you … questions?

the (actual) plan

- why do we need both?

- why is it hard to do it right?

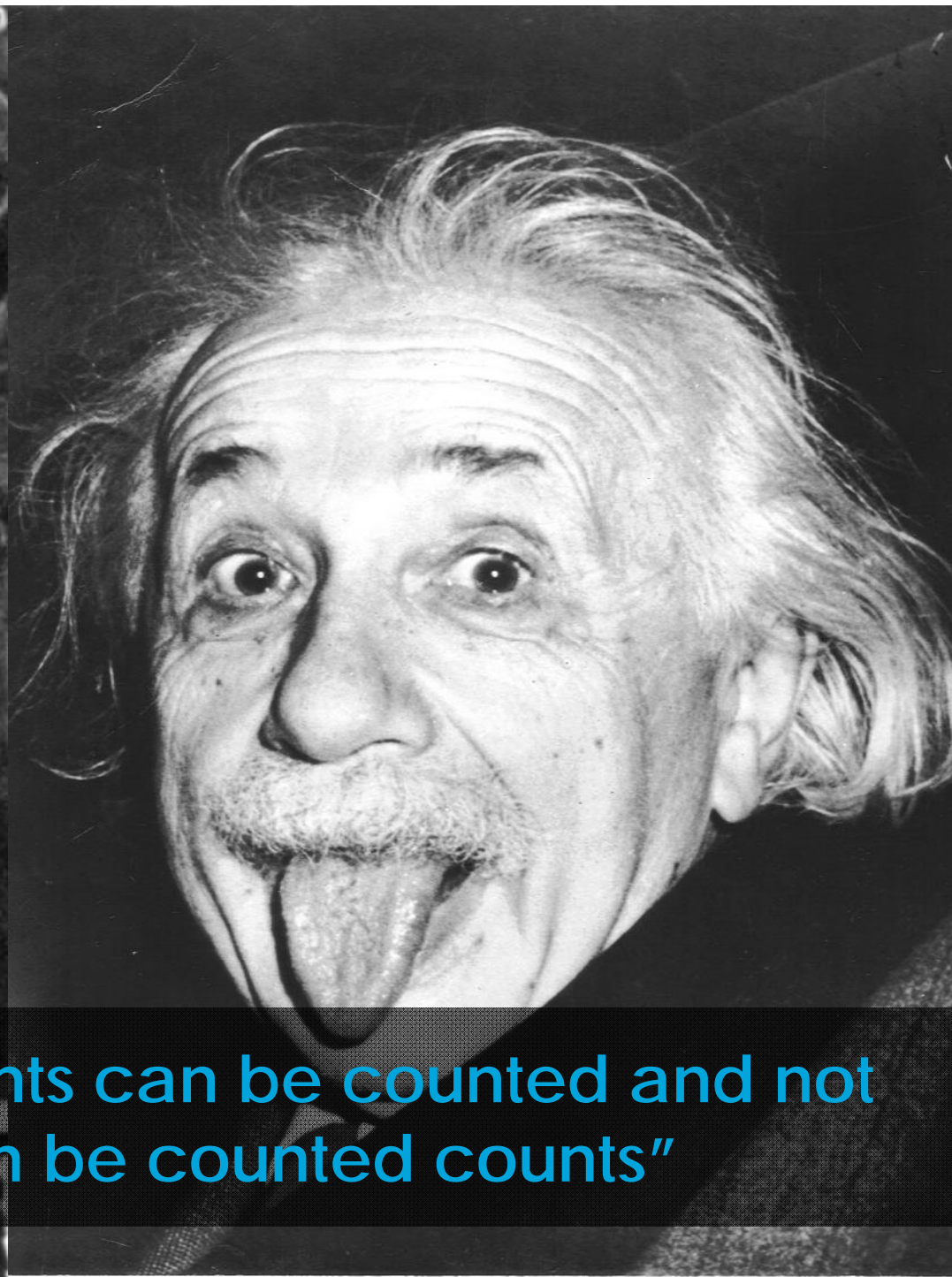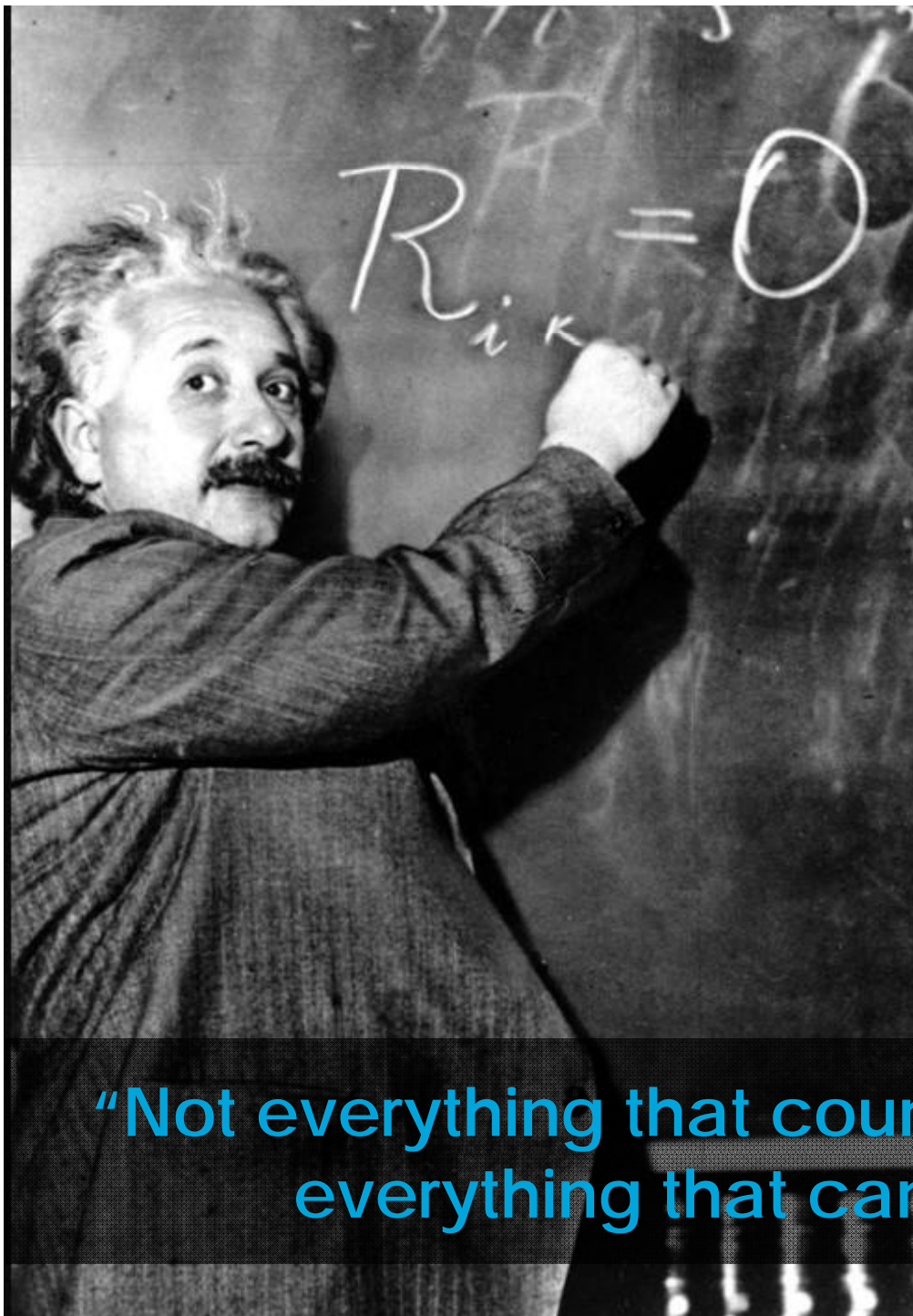- when to use which?

a much wider debate…

inspiration
patterns
holistic
hunch
tacit

analysis
data
intentional
logic
explicit

you need both

"Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts"

"Radical innovation requires both **evidence** and **intuition**: evidence to become **informed**, and intuition to **inspire** us in imagining and creating new and better possibilities."

— Jane Fulton Suri , IDEO

it's evolution, baby.

but it's hard!

single biggest reason for failure...

...using the wrong one at the wrong time

two tales

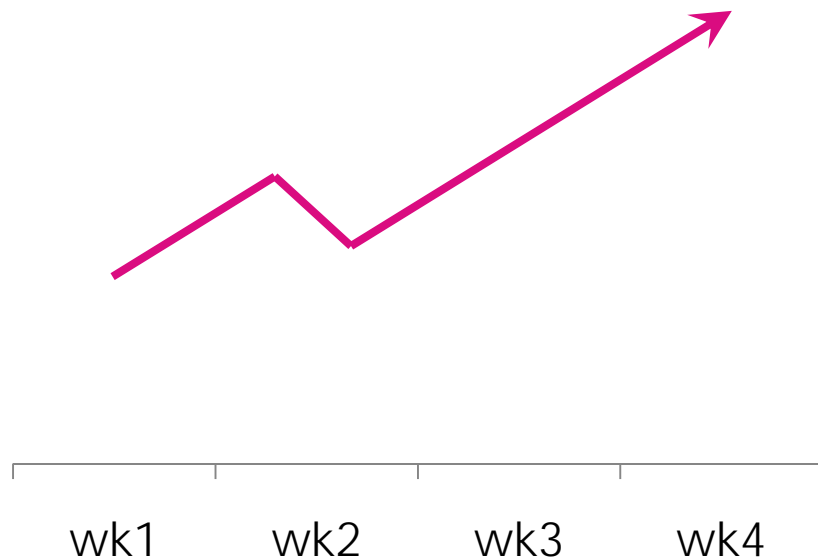tale #1: wrong number

once upon a time, a CEO ...

… was all about safety

the problem

metrics were
"improving"

wk1   wk2   wk3   wk4

- safety targets were being met
  – Initiatives underway
  – money spent

- … but clear signs of problems:
  – Numerous safety hazards reported at supposedly "upgraded" refineries

BP Deepwater Horizon Explosion (April 20, 2010)

tale #2: trust me

once upon a time, a CEO ...

… was all about money

a big believer in intuition

- courses for executives **"on trusting their instincts when making difficult decisions"**

the problem

- intuition was trusted even when key data said otherwise

- poor decisions left the company exposed to a lot of risk

when to use which?

choosing the right one

- your **values** matter

- your **team** matters

- the **problem** matters

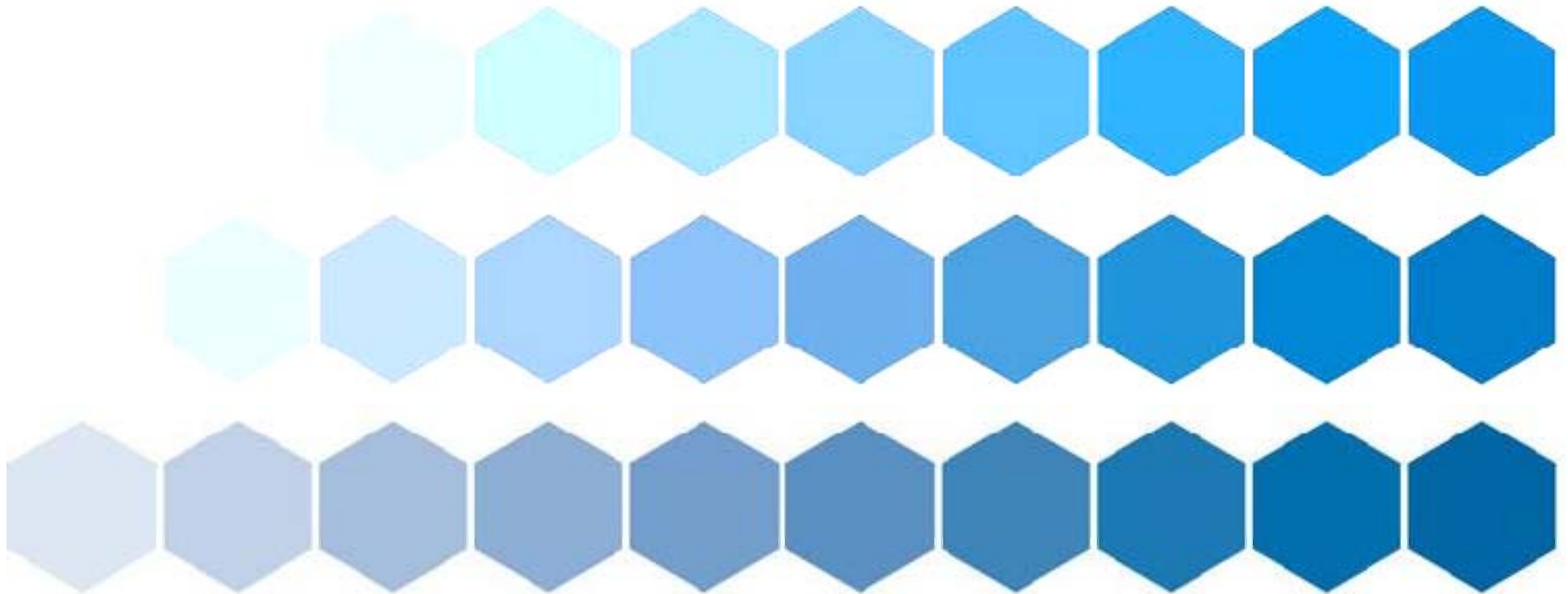<u>values</u> matter

designer proposed this

pm proposed this

went to the VP with this

data driven values

...ultimately tested 44 different shades of blue

Goodbye, Google

20 mar 2009

tagged: design, google

Part 1 of 2 (here's Part 2)

Today is my last day at Google.

I started working in-house at Google almost three years ago. I built a team from scratch. I was fortunate to hire a team of a very talented designers. We introduced Visual Design as a discipline to Google. And we produced amazing work together. I'm very proud of my team, and I wish them well. They have a lot of challenging work ahead. But for me, it's time to move on.

Do I have something else lined up? Yes. That will be covered in Part 2. So I'm not leaving just to leave. But I'm not going to sugarcoat the reasons for my departure either. The scale at which Google operates was an early attractor for me. Potential to impact millions of people? Where do I sign? Unfortunately for me, there was one small problem I didn't see back then.

When I joined Google as its first visual designer, the company was already seven years old. Seven years is a long time to run a company without a classically trained designer. Google had plenty of designers on staff then, but most of them had backgrounds in CS or HCI. And none of them were in high-

[team]{.underline} matters

traditional game development

Producer (Creative)	Game Designer (Creative)

web development

Designer (Creative)	Product Manager (Data)

social game development

Producer/Designer (Creative)	Product Manager (Data)

Take Away

Keeping UR independent from Dev team more:

-       accurate

-       timely

-       cost effective

-       **actionable**
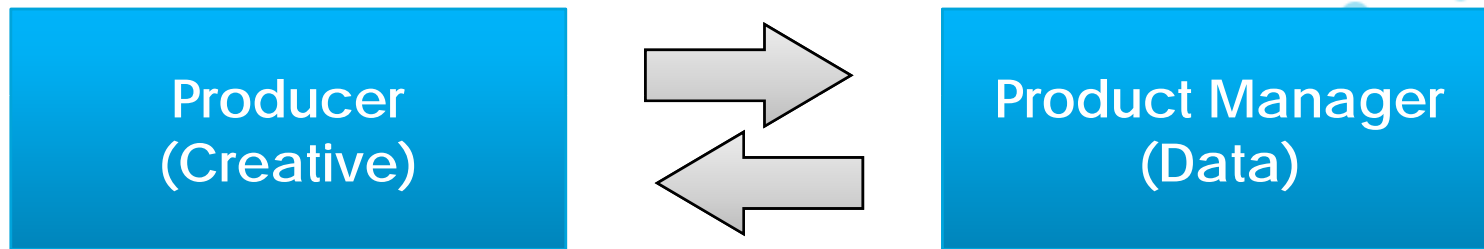
Than conducting metrics-based design with members of the dev team.

Thanks to: Bill Fulton, Randy Pagulayan, Kevin Keeker

usc interactive media

balance of power is key

| Producer (Creative) | ⇄ | Product Manager (Data) |

the <u>problem</u> matters

Intuition versus Analysis:
Strategy & Experience in Complex Everyday Problem Solving*
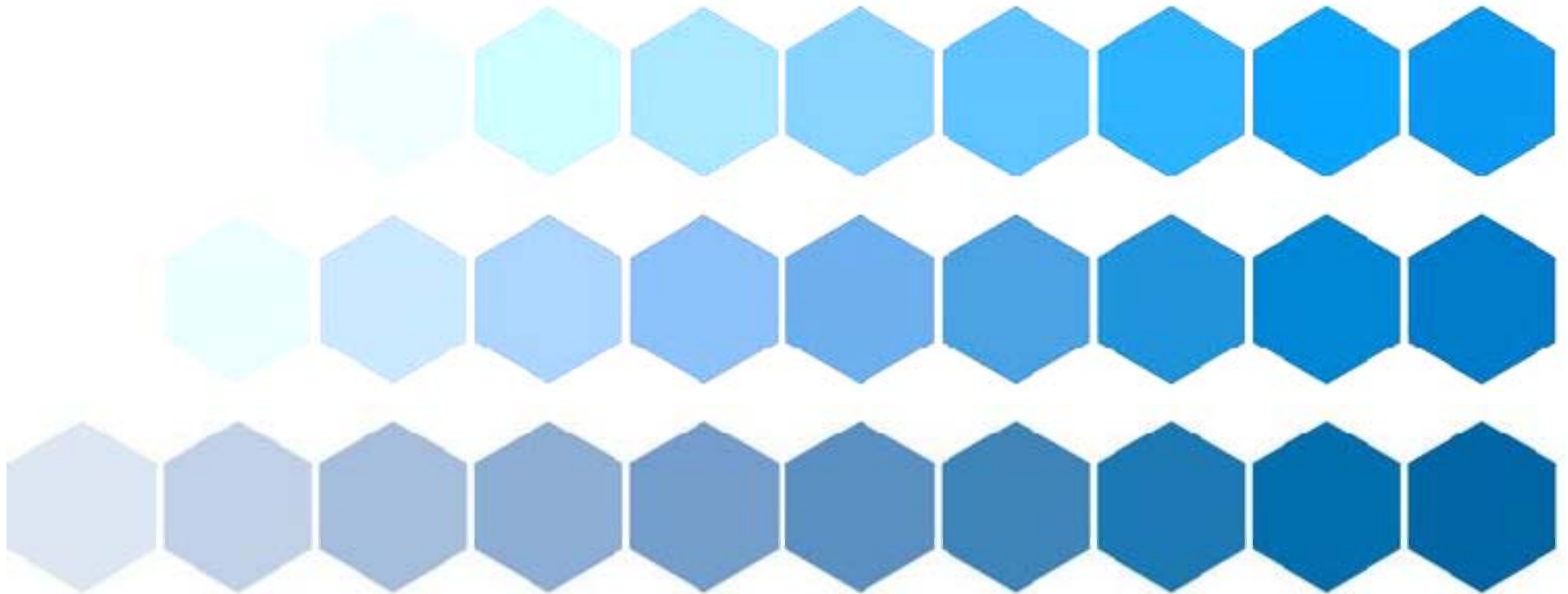
highly complex inputs → intuition

less complex inputs → analysis

* Pretz, J.E. (2008)

more complex → intuition

less complex → analysis

...ultimately tested 44 different shades of blue

intuition best practices

'Astonishing ... *Blink* really does make you rethink the way you think' *DAILY MAIL*

blink

The Power of Thinking without Thinking

The New Phenomenon from the Author of *The Tipping Point*
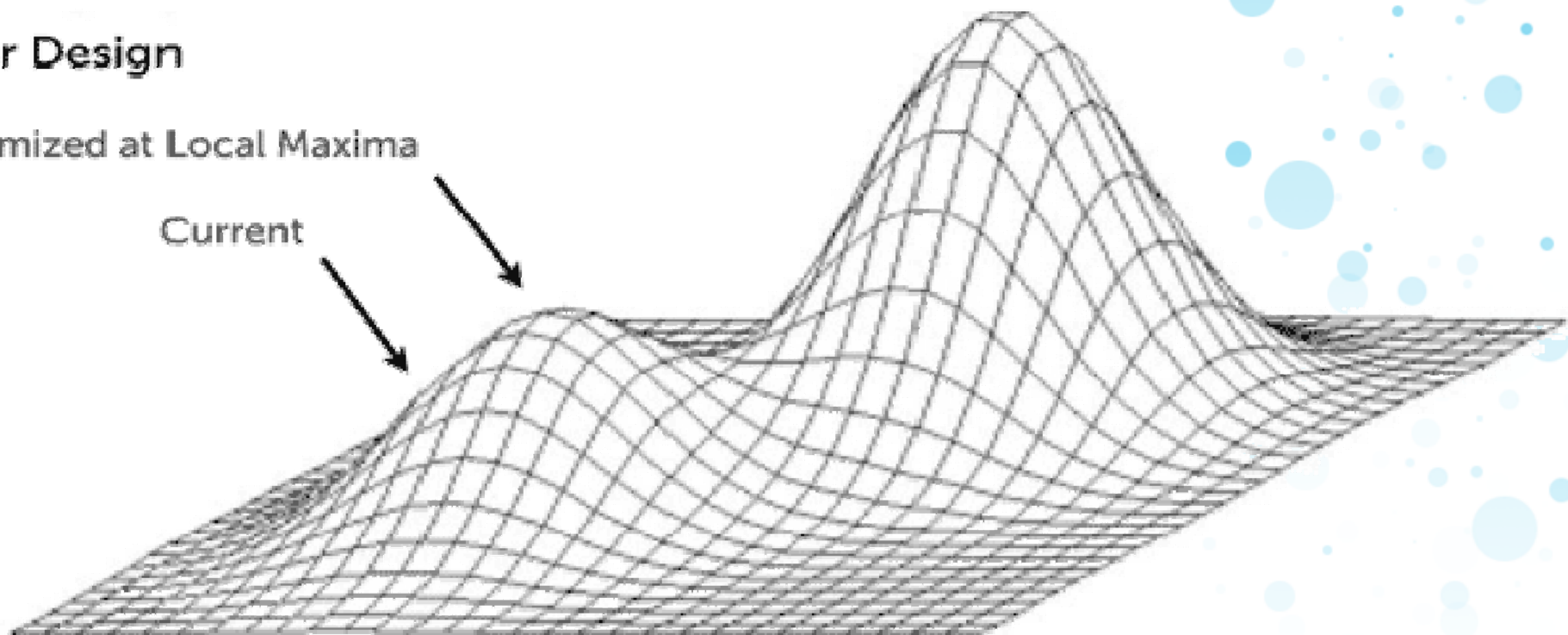
MALCOLM GLADWELL

A Better Design

Your Design

Optimized at Local Maxima

Current

"The analysis, based on past events, certainly seems sound. But your instincts are the only way you're going to do something unsound.

**And unsound things become hits. Sound ones never do."**

— Seth Godin

how to use intuition

- experience is important
- lean towards it for complex problems, not for details
- lean towards it for long-term planning
- lean towards it when creating something new
- back it up with data whenever possible

metrics best practices

predictably
irrational
the hidden forces that
shape our decisions
dan ariely
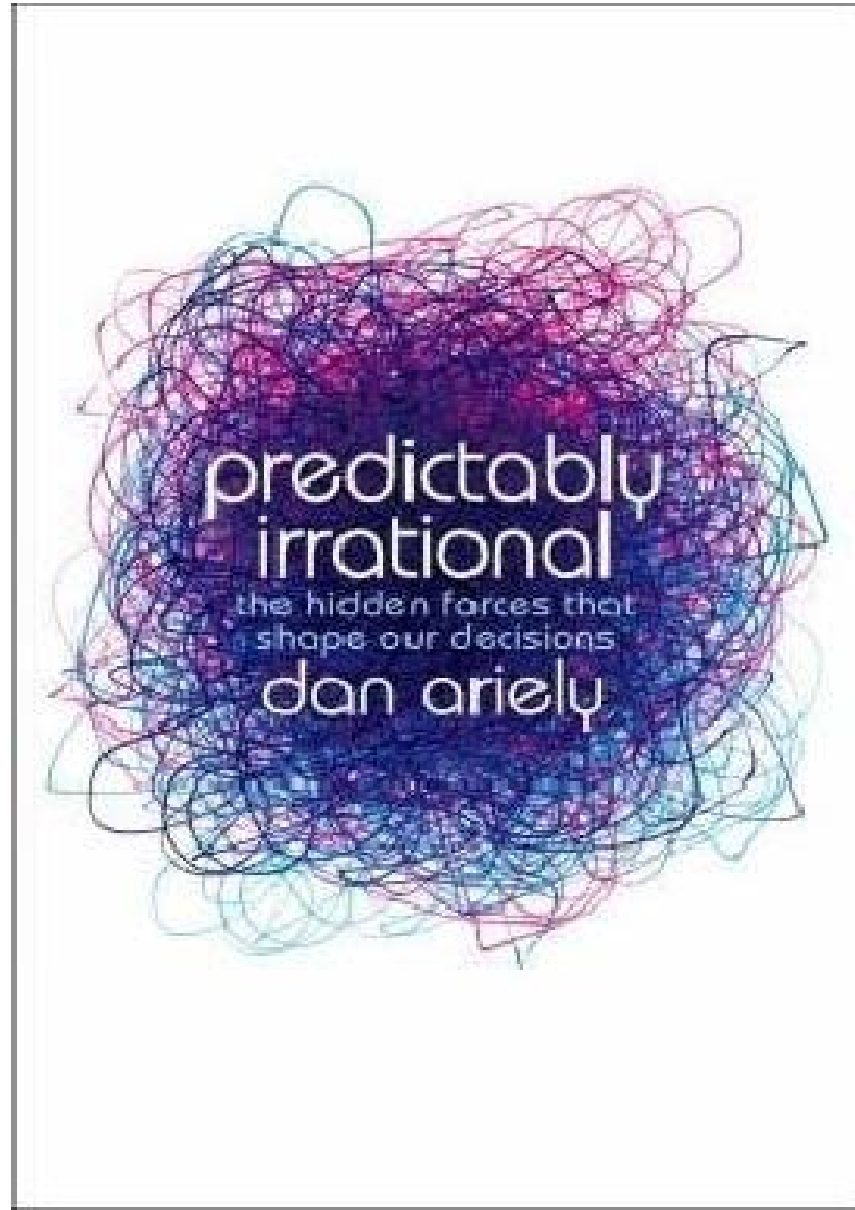
Campaign Monitor ABC Widgets ⊕

Reports > Campaign Snapshot > A/B Results

A/B results for ABC WIdgets September Newsletter
Versions A and B sent to 2,146 random subscribers each

By running this A/B test and selecting Version A as the winner, we estimate that you've received an additional...
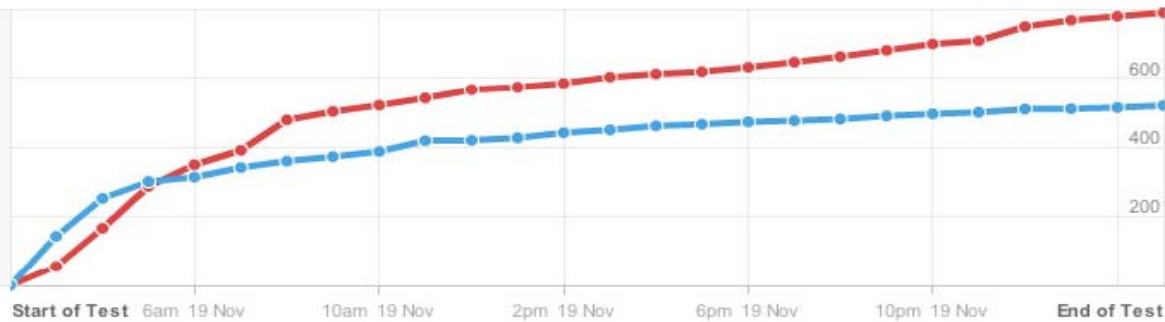
819	**clicks** (300% increase)		**1,096**	**opens** (300% increase)

Specific Clicks

790
VERSION A (preview)

520
VERSION B (preview)

Start of Test 6am 19 Nov   10am 19 Nov   2pm 19 Nov   6pm 19 Nov   10pm 19 Nov   **End of Test**

600
400
200

Campaign Overview	VERSION A	VERSION B
Opens	1,521	**1,589**
Total Clicks	**914**	511
Unsubscribes	0	0

Link Click Activity	VERSION A	VERSION B
www.campaignmonitor.com/gallery/ ⧉	**631**	421
www.campaignmonitor.com/blog/post/2677...gning-the-campaign-monitor-newsletter/ ⧉	**2**	0

Campaign Reports

🥧 **Snapshot**
Summary of campaign results to date.

AB **A/B Results**
Breakdown of Version A vs B

👥 **Recipient Activity**
Who opened, clicked, forwarded, etc.

🔗 **Link Click Activity**
Which links were popular, who clicked.

📈 **Opens & Clicks Over Time**
When did subscribers open and click.

📧 **Email Client Usage**
Which email clients are they using?

✉️ **Bounce Summary**
Who didn't receive this and why.

good things about metrics

- what gets measured gets done
- good metrics drive good behaviour
- good metrics help you make good decisions
- good for highly measurable environments with short feedback loops

bad things about metrics

- what gets measured gets done
- bad metrics drive bad behaviour
- bad metrics help you make bad decisions
- bad for noisy environments with long feedback loops
- metrics can age quickly

metrics best practices

- align with your goals
- good enough (vs. perfect)
- keep it simple … a few good ones
- revise, revise, revise
  … things change; don't be afraid to add, change and remove

closing comments

final words

- you **need** both!
  - metrics are good to optimise and to clear false assumptions
  - intuition can lead you out of your rut (for good and for worse)
  - Trust your gut and prove it with data!
- use the right one at the right time, but don't hide behind either

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(...and ninjas!)

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thank you … questions?