

# Shades of Gray

An introduction to  
Terry's Transient Truths

September 2011

# Creds

**1967** *BS, Electronic Engineering*

**1968** Electronics Officer, US Navy

**1970** Bell Labs

**1978** *PhD, Computer Science*

**1979** Ampex Business Computers

**1982** UCLA CS Dept

**1988** VP Engineering, Bridge Div. of 3Com

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**1988** Joined UW

- Director, Networks & Distributed Computing

- Affiliate Professor of CS

**2004** AVP, IT Infrastructure; CIA

**2008** AVP, Tech Strategy; CTA

# Progress...

CIA

CTA

COG

CTT

# Certified Old Guy...

I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. I HAVE THIRTY YEARS IN THIS INDUSTRY!

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HOW DOES THAT HELP YOU UNDERSTAND TECHNOLOGY THAT IS SIX MONTHS OLD IN A YOUTH-ORIENTED CULTURE?



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PLEASE DON'T HIT ME WITH YOUR MODEM.

GRRR...

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# Chief Technology Therapist...

I HIRED A CONSULTANT TO HELP US EVOLVE OUR PRODUCTS TO CLOUD COMPUTING.



BLAH BLAH CLOUD.  
BLAH BLAH CLOUD.  
BLAH BLAH CLOUD.  
BLAH BLAH CLOUD.

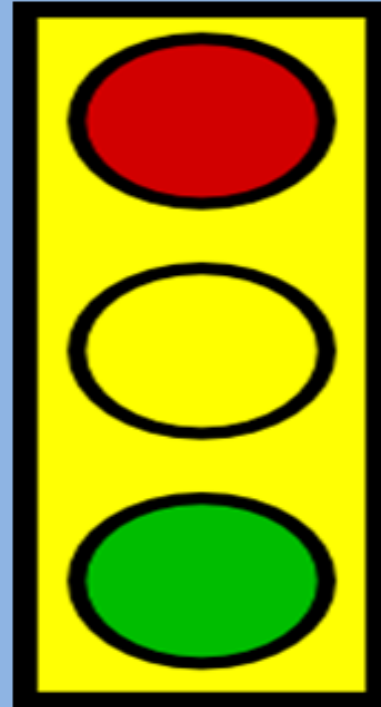
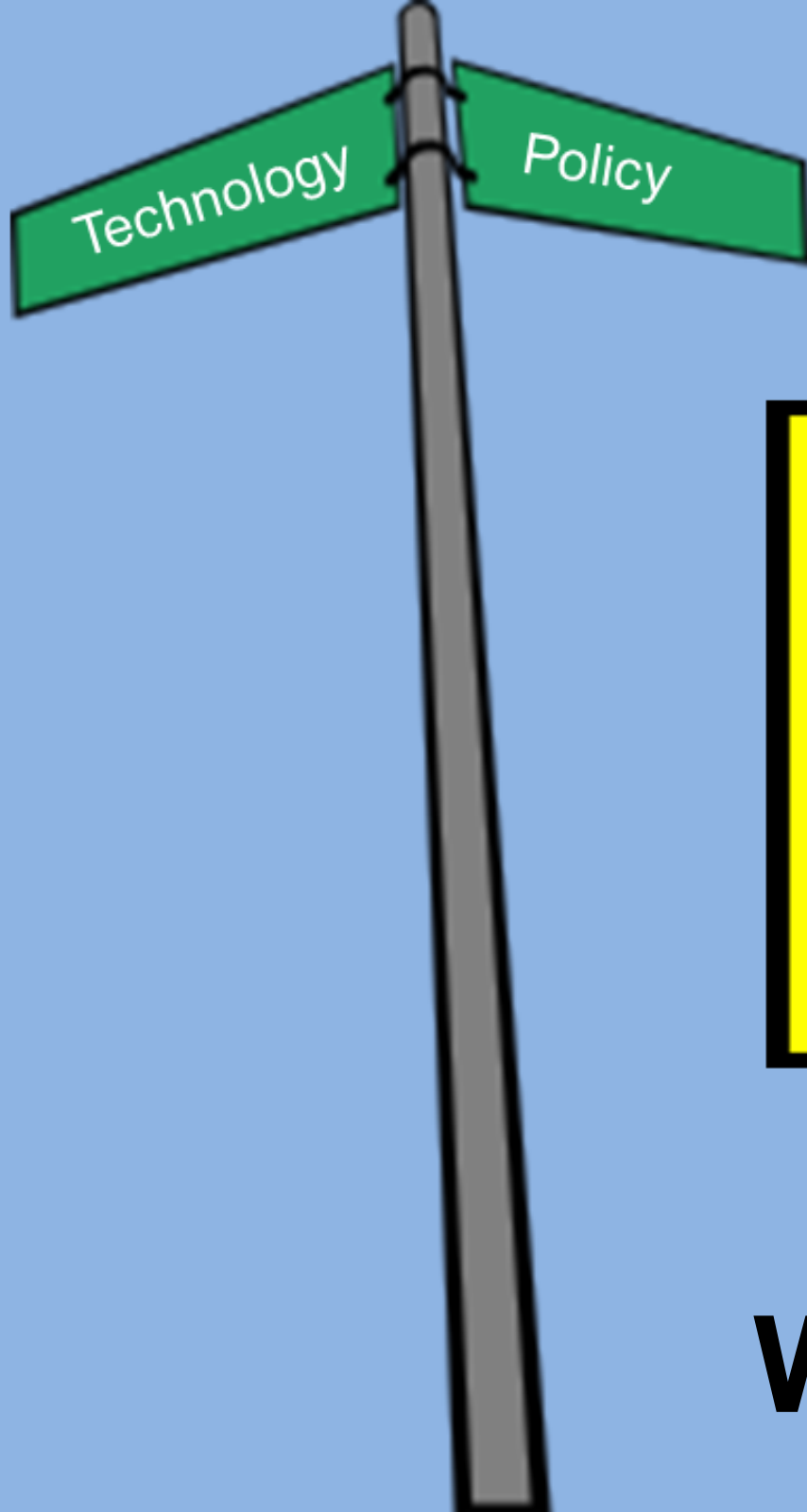


IT'S AS IF YOU'RE A TECHNOLOGIST AND A PHILOSOPHER ALL IN ONE!



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**Where to find me**

# Approach

**Roles:** Advisor, Troubleshooter, Improver, Instigator, Mentor

**Premise:** Every day is a *research experiment*

**Research Question:** how can we make something better today?

**Biggest Challenge:** resisting cynicism

**Success Metric:** Ratio of Problems Solved to Problems Created

**Goal:** continuous, incremental improvement  
--with the wisdom to know when to stop

# Deliverables

- Advice (on anything except stock market :)
- Documents (e.g. Strategic Plan, Goal State Architecture)
- Brokering/Facilitation/Instigation (e.g. cloud initiative)
- Presentations, e.g.

**On Being Strategic:** "Looking beyond next Tuesday"

**Evolving UW-IT** from essential to transformational

**Stepping Into The Cloud**

**Green IT:** Toward sustainable technology solutions

**Technology Fads vs. Fundamental Shifts**



# Current Topics

**IT Excellence** in the Age of Adequacy

**Balancing Act:** IT = Inevitable Tensions

**The Self-Aware IT Organization**

**Surviving Success:**

"Mean Time To Irrelevance" and the "Need for Speed"

# Mean Time To Irrelevance

- MTTI depends on judgment + responsiveness
- Responsiveness = speed + agility

"The saying internally is to move fast and break things — not trying to break things, but it's OK if sometimes you break things because if you don't then you're probably not moving fast enough." -Mark Zuckerberg

"Be quick, but don't hurry." -John Wooden

# Some Grand Challenges

- Navigation
- Filtering --but not too much (cf. "The Filter Bubble")
- Transparency & recourse in the age of algorithms
- Reputation & attribution
- Simplicity (choice, interop and collaboration barriers)

# Our Plan (the "tl;dr" version)

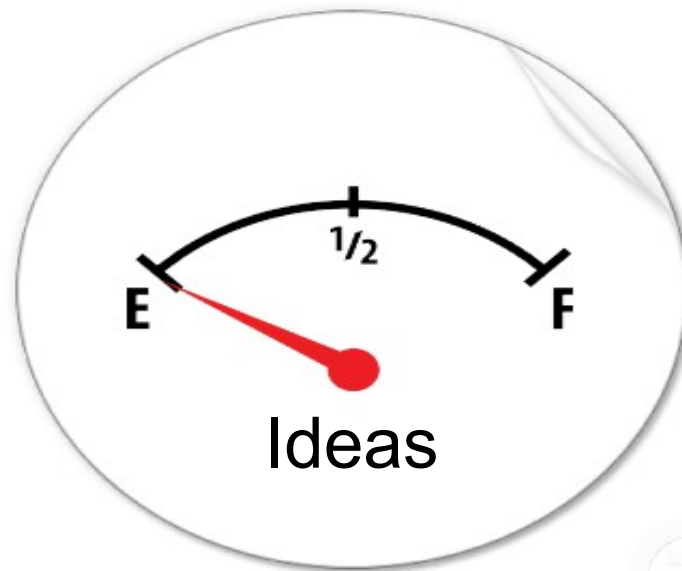
- **Recognize that "BAU" won't help our "MTTI"**
  - central IT is undergoing major transformation due to budget, consumerization, cloud, & mobility trends
  - Move from essential to transformational
- **Redefine excellence** from a customer perspective
  - speed, agility, value, judgement, 3Rs, trust
  - Partner or perish
- **Free-up capacity to help transform campus:**
  - make our business processes really efficient (cf. ITIL)
  - leverage high-scale providers (cf. Cloud)
  - reduce duplication and complexity (cf. LEAN)
- **Foster a community of innovation,**  
and a work environment you'd want to be a part of.

# Questions

1. What are we selling? (our key products?)
2. How should we define "excellence"?
3. Is it better to set expectations low or high?
4. How does UW-IT most need to change? Are you a C.A.?
5. How do we gain organizational self-awareness?
6. How can we better identify and fix frustrations?
7. What should be on our *organizational* dashboard?



<http://www.leashables.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Leader-Meter-FINAL-leader-o-meter-1-DvjK4S4dY-n3ndwP9h>



<http://www.leashables.com>

<http://t3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd>



**Can you make change?**

# Takeaways

1. Big changes; accelerating rate; adapt or be irrelevant
2. Our most important products: **judgment + responsiveness**
3. Tell me how I can help you
4. Tell me how you can help me

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