

Virtuous Cycle(s) of Velocity

What I Learned About Going Fast at eBay and Google

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Background

CTO at KIXEYE

- *Making awesome games awesomer (and scalabler and reliabler)*

Director of Engineering for Google App Engine

- *World's largest Platform-as-a-Service*

Chief Engineer at eBay

- *Multiple generations of eBay's real-time search infrastructure*

Lessons to Learn

People

Technology

Culture

People: Hire and Retain the Best

Hire 'A' Players

- *Difference between top and bottom performers is not 1.5x; it's 10x (!)*
- *(+) Google hiring process*

Virtuous Cycle

- *A players bring A players*
- *B players bring C players*
- *Constantly raise the bar*

People: Respect People

Most valuable and irreplaceable asset

People are not cogs, not fungible

- ***(-) eBay “Train seats”***
 - *Destroyed incentives, personal pride, long-term ownership*
- ***People are an asset, not a cost center***

Environment should treat people as valued

- ***(+) Google workplace***

Virtuous Cycle of People



Technology: Services

- **Small team**
- **Well-defined interface**
- **Completely independent**
- **Autonomy and responsibility**

Technology: Quality Discipline

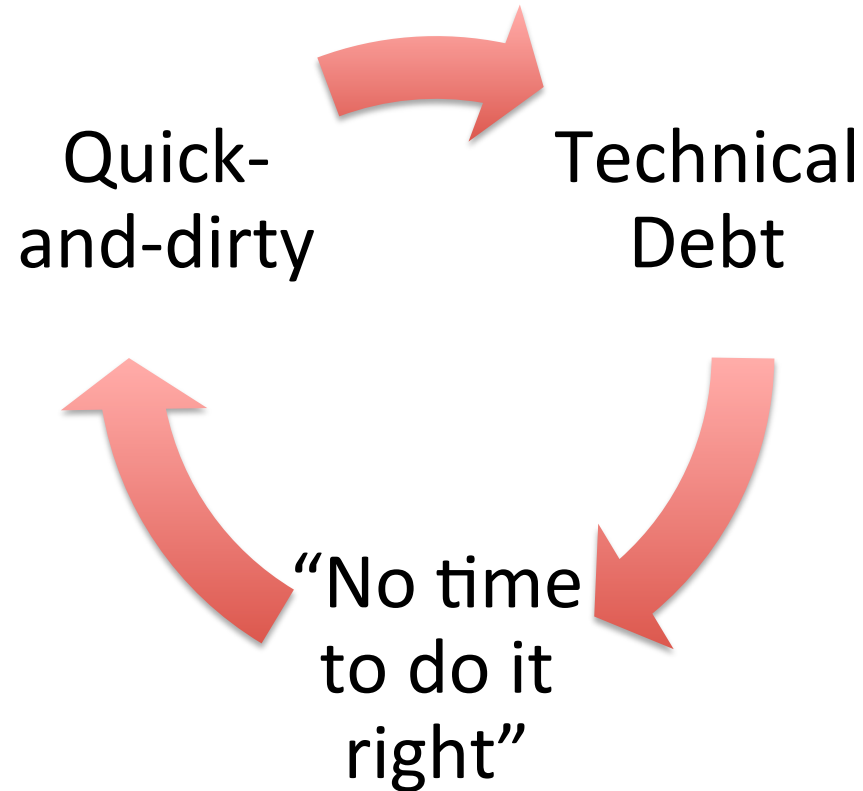
Tests help you go faster

- *Tests have your back*
- *Confidence to break things, refactor mercilessly*
- *Catch bugs earlier, fail faster*

“Don’t have time to do it right” ?

- *WRONG – Don’t have time to do it twice (!)*

Vicious Cycle of Technical Debt



Technology: Quality Automation

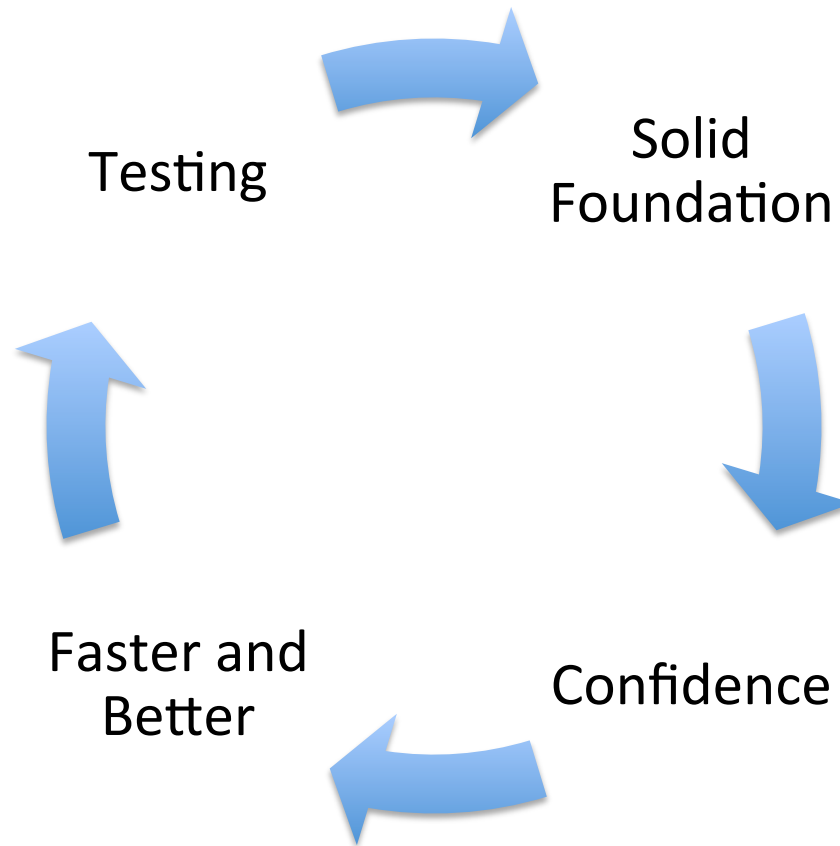
Quality Tooling

- *Make it easy to do the right thing*
- *Mocking / testing frameworks*
- *Monitoring*
- *Canarying*

Quality cannot be an afterthought

- *Quality (reliability, scaling) is a Priority-0 feature*
- *Google (+) vs. old eBay (-)*

Virtuous Cycle of Quality



Culture: Accountability and Ownership

Give people and teams autonomy

Hold them accountable for their success

Keep commitments

- *Say what you are going to do, then do it*

Culture: Collaboration

One team across engineering, product, operations

- *Otherwise, playing strategy instead of solving the problem*
- *Otherwise, CYA and hiding the ball*
- *(+) Google co-location*

Solve problems instead of pointing fingers

Culture: Quality over Quantity

Less is more

- *More wood, fewer arrows*
- *Solve 100% of one problem rather than 50% of two*
- *Release one great feature instead of two iffy ones*

Whole user / player experience

- *Think holistically about the full end-to-end experience of the user*
- *UX, functionality, performance, bugs, etc.*

Culture: Experimentation

***Engineer* successes**

- *Launch is only the first step*
- *(+) KIXEYE game development*

Many small experiments sum to big wins

- *(+) eBay site speed + machine-learned ranking*

Culture: Failure Tolerance

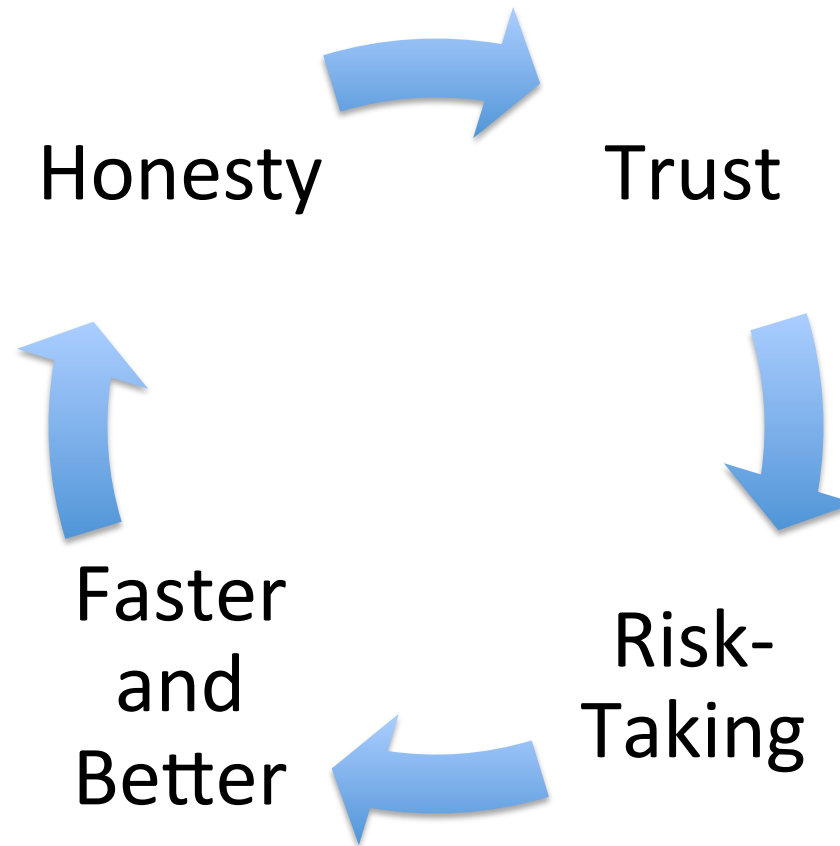
Learn from mistakes and improve

- *What did you do -> What did you learn*
 - *Take emotion and personalization out*
- *(+) Google blame-free post-mortems*

Encourage iteration and velocity

- *“Failure is not falling down but refusing to get back up” – Theodore Roosevelt*

Virtuous Cycle of Culture



Join us!

KIXEYE is hiring ...

