

Perfection & Feedback Loops

or: why worse is better

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INVENTEURS DU MONDE NUMÉRIQUE

A Strange Talk

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Perfection

Feedback

Why everything existing
sucks

And what to do about it

I have bad news

Perfection does not exist



If the world were perfect, it wouldn't be.

(Yogi Berra)

izquotes.com

“By the time you’ve arrived at the *perfect* solution,
usually the problem has already changed.”
— Jessie Shefrin (@jshefrin)

Context



THE FOLLOWING **PREVIEW** HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR
ALL AUDIENCES
BY THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.

And context changes,
constantly

Another problem: You learn
while building

Everything you can *finish*
will "embody" its own critique.

Ok, no perfection, but
better?

Those who could have done better where
busy with building the perfect solution

But...

Yes: there is something else
at play...

A force of incomprehensible
to mankind

Exponential Growth

“The greatest shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function.”

— AI Bartlett

... you “know” it in theory



By the time that the fifth square is reached on the chessboard, the board contains a total of 31 grains of wheat



... round 1,000 times the global production of rice in 2010
(464,000,000 metric tons)

Lily Pond

In a lake, there is a patch of lily pads. First day there is one, second two. After long 47 days it is half full.

How long does it take to cover the whole lake?

Compound interest

S&P 500, invest \$100 monthly.

Start: 1983

Payed: 39700

Today: ?

Payed: 39700

Today: **241036**

not including taxes, but take fees into account.

Interesting:

- It's not about doubling. $\sim 8\%$
(doubles every $70/8$ years)
- Most value is created by reinvesting
(feeding back) interest earned.

Examples for Feedback

Science

Open Source

Processors

Agile

Lean Startups, Minimum
Viable Product...

Perfection and Feedback

Feedback loops do not care
about perfection

The system needs only to be good
enough to sustain the next step

If just barely good enough to sustain it,
feedback will happen within technically
horrible solutions.

“It will be perfect when it is
finished”

vs.

Feedback Loop Now

What can we we do?

1. Goal vs. System

Understand your Artefact as
a Feedback Loop

Works especially well for
Meta Systems

Smalltalk can be feedback
loop

If you set the development
and community up correctly

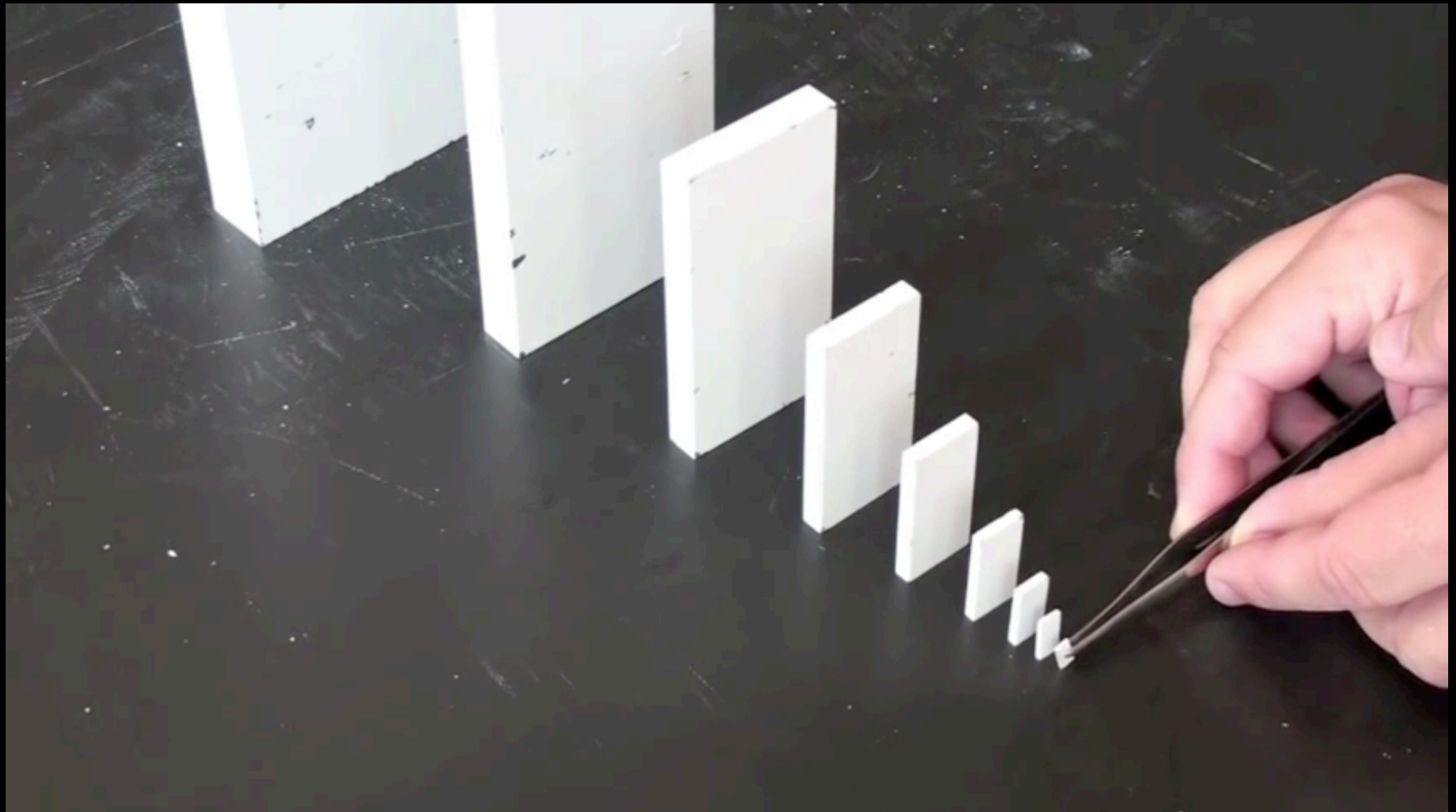
2. Accept Imperfection

**DONE IS
BETTER
THAN
PERFECT**

3. Small Change Matters

A small change fed back will
have huge payout

A tiny linear change now would be
a **huge** change some iterations ago



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y97rBdSYbkg>

Peter Principle of the Domino

Goals vs. Systems:
It's a musical thing

Focus on the Process, not
the Goal



Thank You!

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