

In loving memory

2007 – 2026



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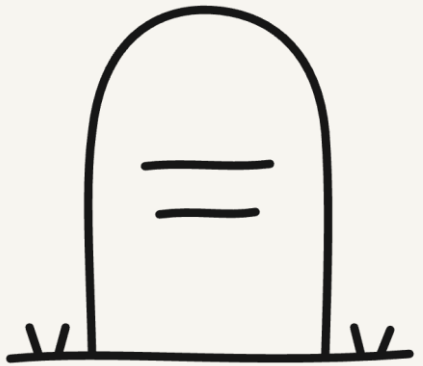
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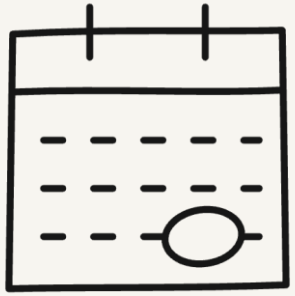
rest in peace,

misc

Software doesn’t know how to die

Laura Grau . Engineering Director - XING

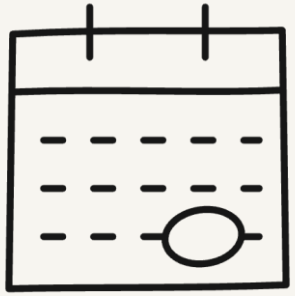




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The data centre closes in October 2026.

Not "we aim to". Closes. Lights off.



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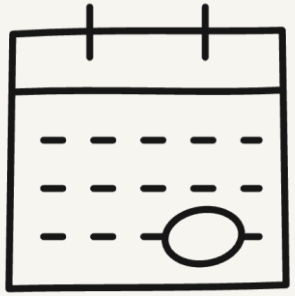
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END OF 2025

−30% of our engineering capacity.

Losing colleagues was really hard.



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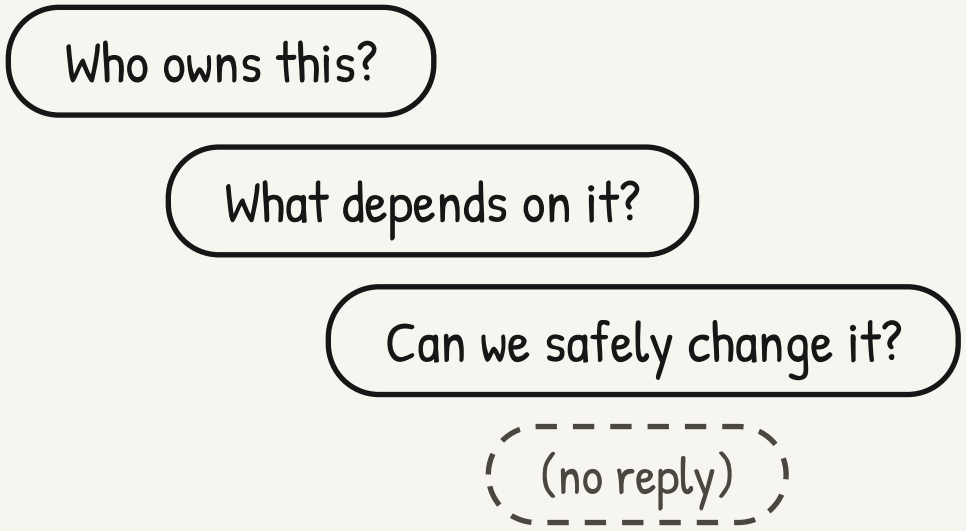


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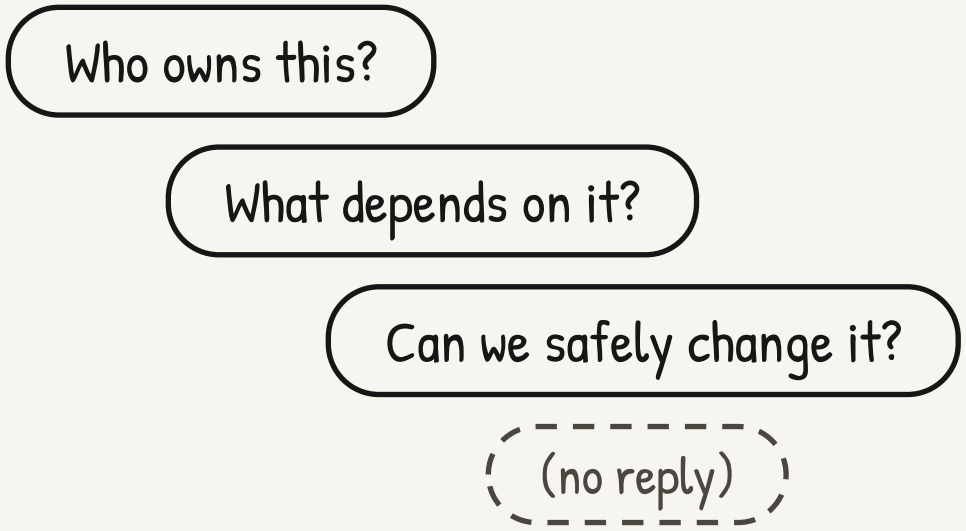
Losing colleagues was really hard.

So we went digging for misc.



Old threads, asking our questions. And the deadline kept getting closer.

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I approved it.
Lift and shift.

I didn't have a brilliant plan. I had a deadline.



Software becomes

immortal

when the cost of deciding feels higher than the cost of carrying it.

This is not an AI talk.

(mostly)

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THE QUESTION UNDERNEATH MISC

How do we know when something should

stop existing?

This is not an AI talk.

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THE QUESTION UNDERNEATH MISC

How do we know when something should **stop existing?**

Not "how healthy is it?" but "should it be here at all?"

Creating faster than ever. Already worried about owning it.

54%

say their organisations have broadly or fully adopted AI coding tools

73%

of engineering leaders are worried about code maintainability

Source: LeadDev Engineering Leadership Report

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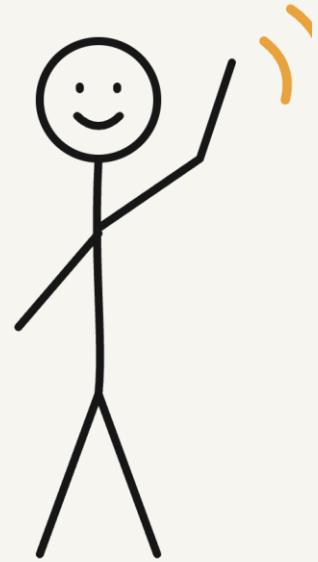
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Creation accelerates.

Ownership does not.

HELLO FROM YOUR FUTURE

Hi. We’re your future self.



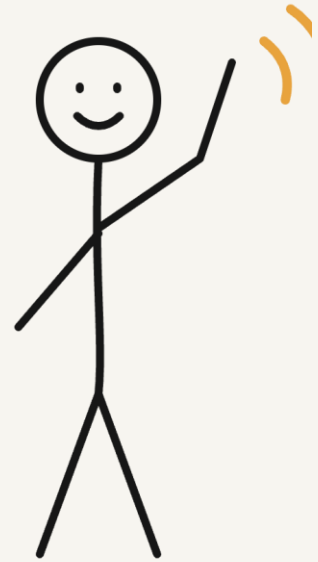
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“A good problem to have… one day.”

With AI, that day arrives a lot sooner.

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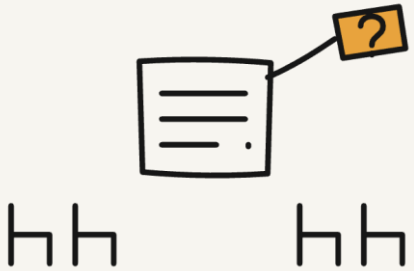
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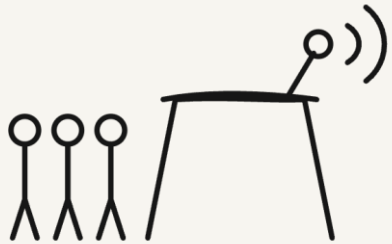
Misc wasn’t alone.

I kept noticing patterns.



The unclaimed box

nobody comes to say goodbye



The monument

everyone gives a speech



The time capsule

“who was this, really?”

The unclaimed box

A system everyone uses... and nobody owns.

OUR FIRST MOVE

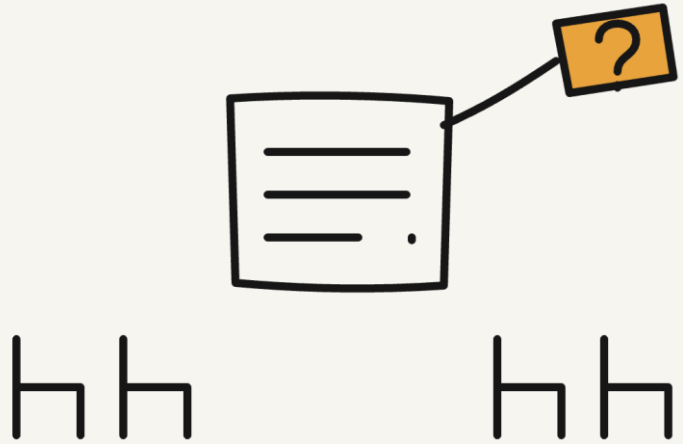
Assign an owner.

On paper, the problem was solved.

WHAT WE CREATED

A gatekeeper.

No context, no time, no capacity.



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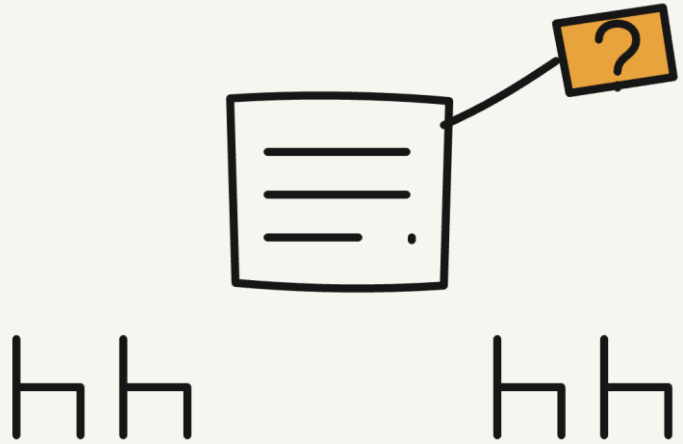
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Ownership without context isn’t ownership.

It’s risk transfer.

The monument

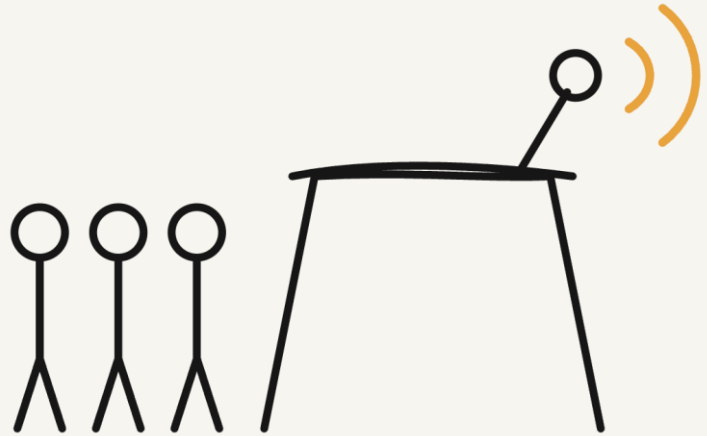
Crafted by people.

Carried as identity.

Was this valuable?

Should we stop carrying this right now?

Both answers can be true.



The monument

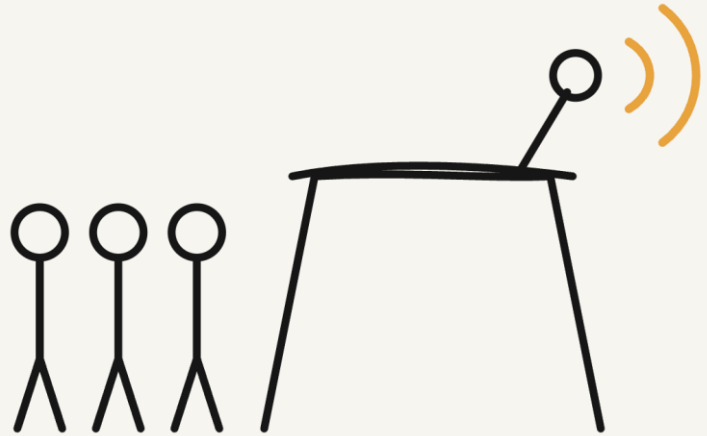
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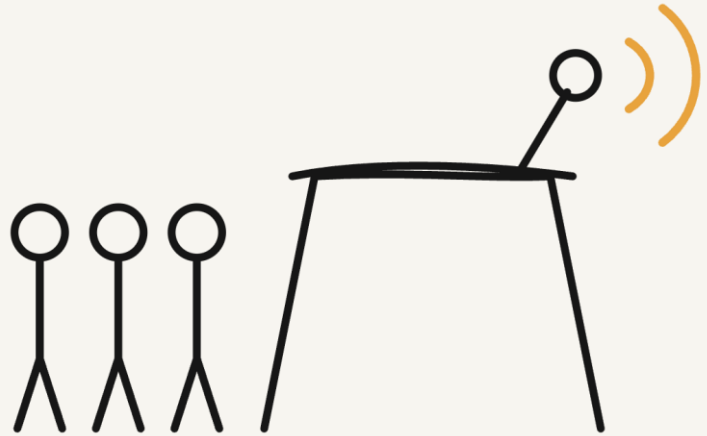
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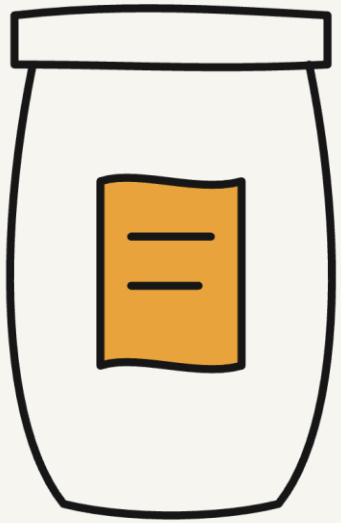


The time capsule

It made sense then.

The world changed - the design didn’t.

Which of the constraints that shaped this service are still true?

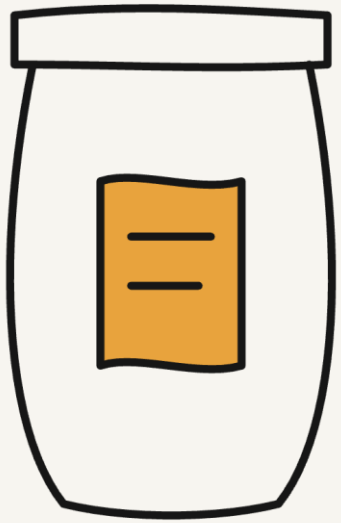


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Architecture

remembers constraints

long after the organisation has forgotten them.

Your software may be immortal if...

- ☐ Nobody can explain why it exists. Or why it **still** exists.
- ☐ It has users, but no owner with the power to decide.
- ☐ Changing it feels dangerous: nobody/only few people have the full picture.
- ☐ Its retirement is planned for next quarter. Every quarter.

Notice what's not on the list: "it's old". *This is not a talk about deleting old software.*

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If we don’t revisit our decisions,

we renew them by default.

271

goodbyes this year.

95 hellos

271 goodbyes

826 → 650 projects in our catalogue, January to September.

Libraries: 4 in, 64 out.

Services: 45 in, 136 out.

infra: 42 in, 61 out.

Doc: 4 in, 10 out.

Source: XING service catalogue, CW1 (4 Jan 2026) to CW39 (22 Sep 2026)

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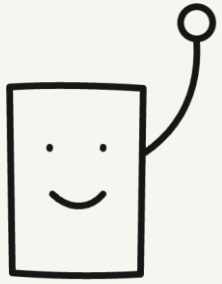
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Three habits



Make it visible

A catalogue that shows purpose, cost and health, so software can tell you it’s unwell.



Celebrate letting go

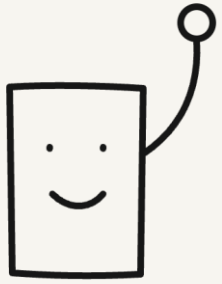
Monthly recognition, demos for retirements, great engineering work.



Book the check-up

Fifteen minutes, inside a routine you already have. Before it collapses, not after.

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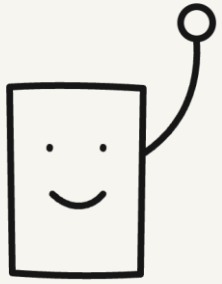
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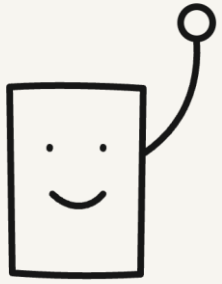
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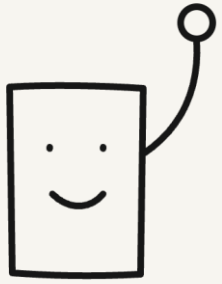
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Next quarterly planning: fifteen minutes, one system, three questions.

1. Why does this still exist?
2. Who can decide when that changes?
3. When will we ask again?

Bonus: why not deciding service's first check-up on the day it's born.

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Software doesn’t know how to die.

We do.

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We do.

At your next planning: pick one system. Ask if it’s ready to die. If it is, give it a proper funeral.

misc is gone.

Its functions live on, in new homes.

For the first time in many years, someone knows exactly what they do.



Thank you · Thanks to all my teams for teaching me so much every day.