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Google™ 09 I/O



# The Myth of the

# “Genius Programmer”

Brian Fitzpatrick & Ben Collins-Sussman  
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But First...



Who are we?



**Who are you?**



These are our opinions...









# Quotes



“Can you guys please give Subversion on Google Code the ability to hide specific branches?”



Some Dude at Google I/O, 2008

“Can you guys make it possible to create open source projects that start out hidden to the world, then get ‘revealed’ when they’re ready?”

---

Some Other Dude at Google I/O, 2008

“Hi, I want to rewrite all my code from scratch,  
can you please wipe all the history?”



Some Guy on our mailing list

# Can you spot the theme?







# The Genius Myth





“There’s a pervasive elitism at work in the programming community. Add anonymity to the mix, and everyone is suddenly elite.”

---

Kyle K (Commenting on Ben’s Blog)

Why do people buy  
products endorsed by celebrities?





Why do people buy  
products endorsed by celebrities?

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# Insecurity



# It Inhibits Progress



“You are not a beautiful or unique snowflake.  
You're the same decaying organic matter as  
everything else.”



Tyler Durden, *Fight Club*





# Avoiding the Trap





# Lose the Ego



# Lose the Ego



Criticism is not Evil



# Embrace Failure

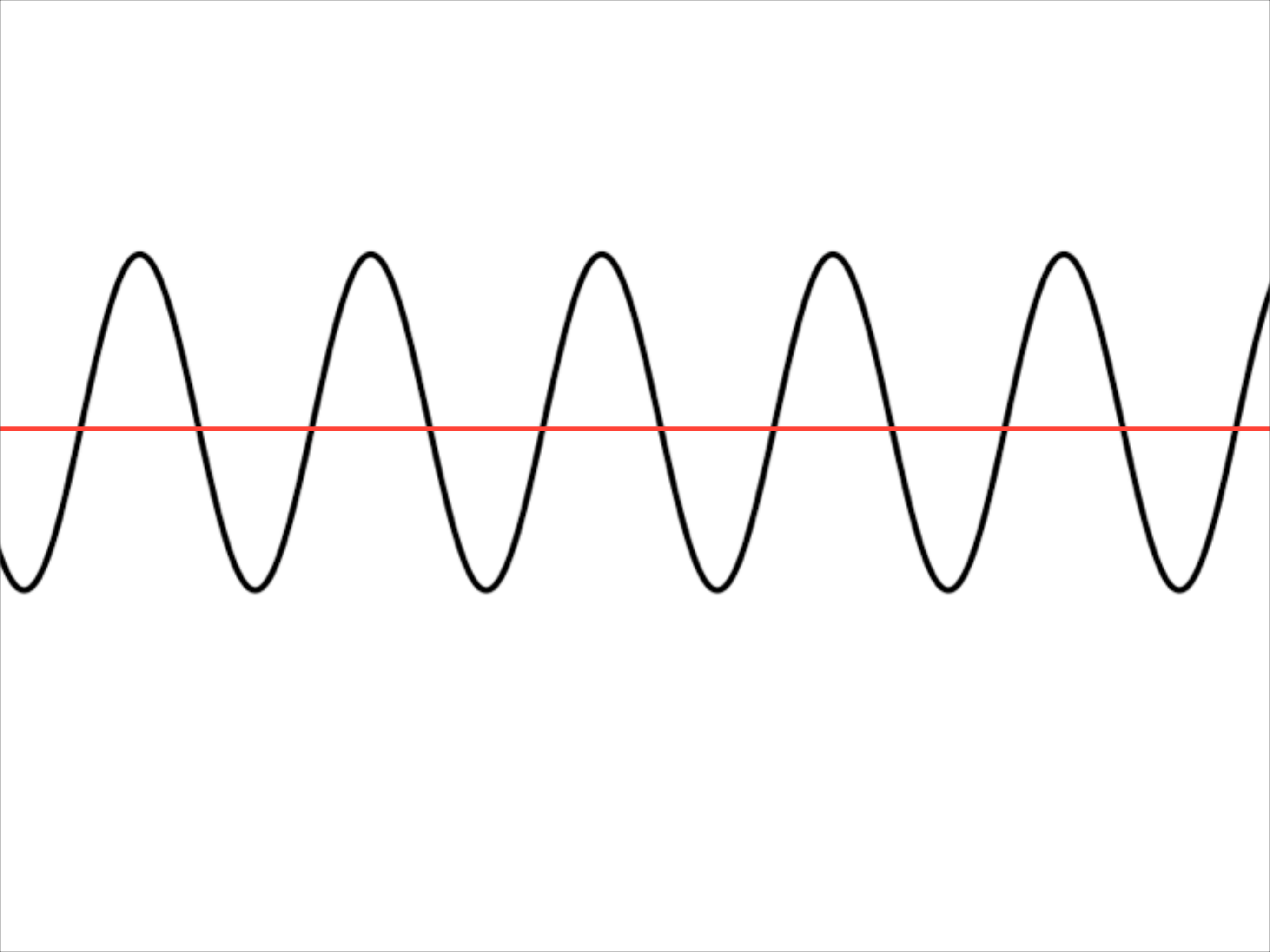


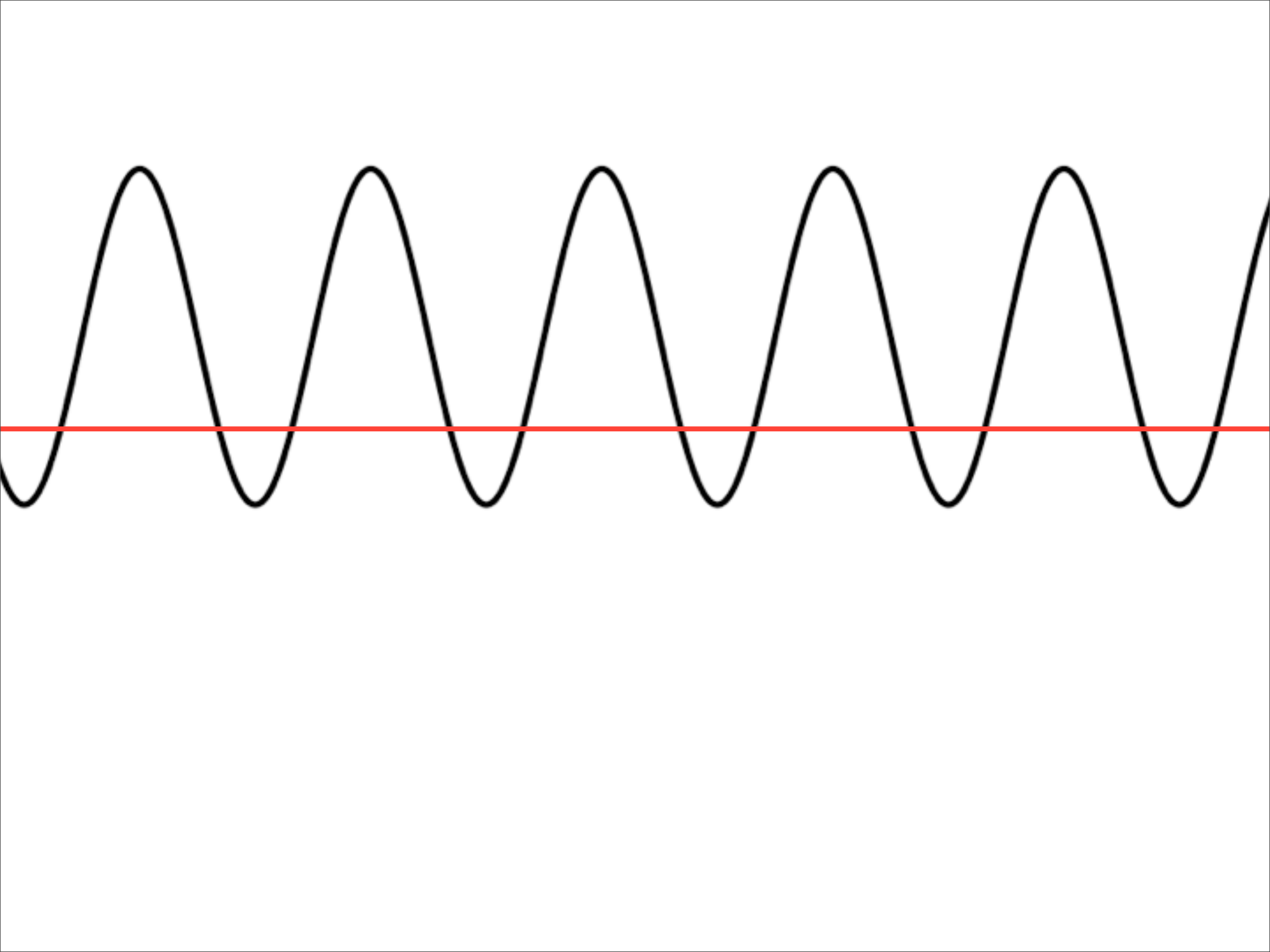
# Iterate Quickly



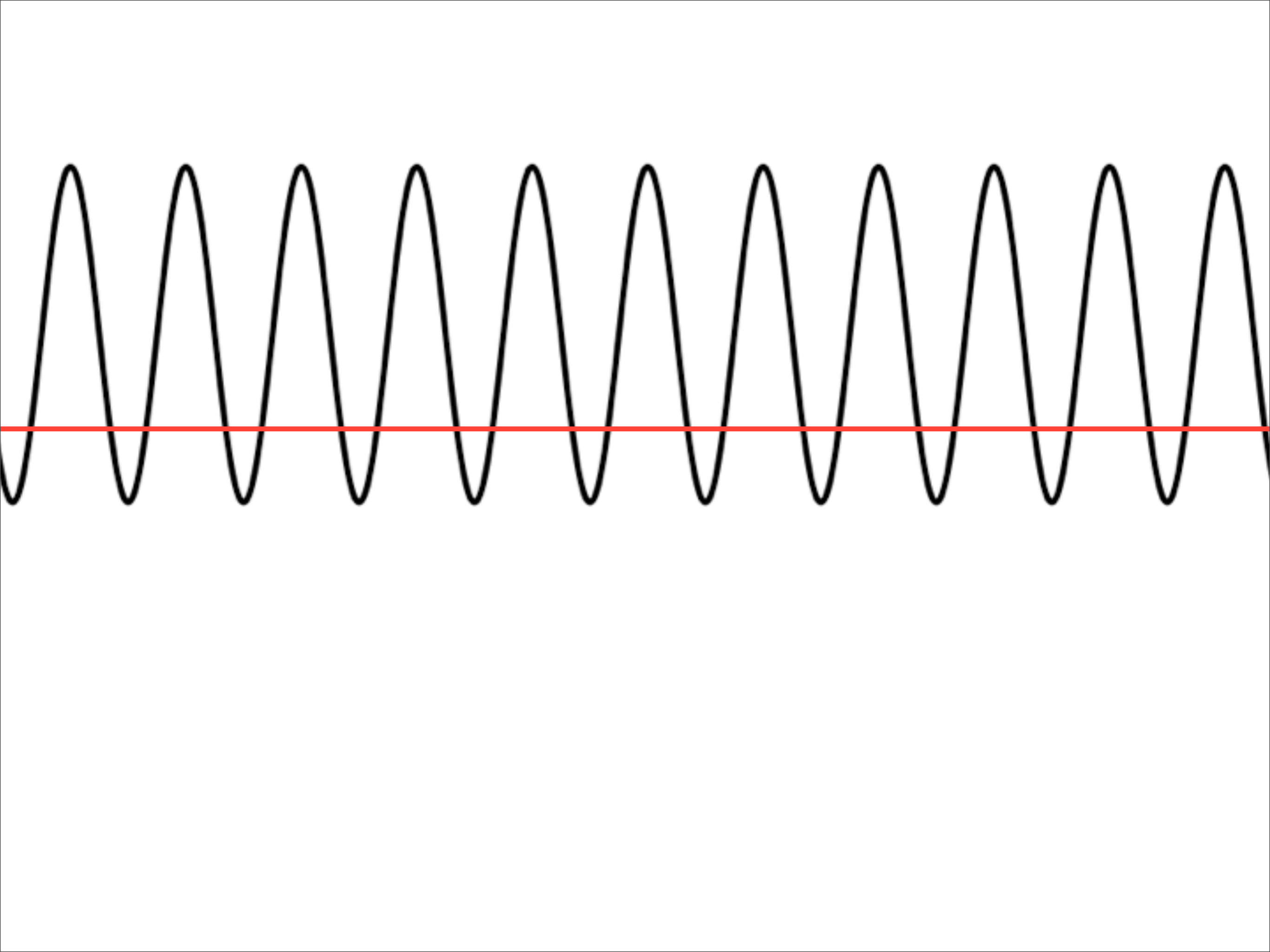
Practice is Key











# Be a Small Fish



# Be Influenced



# Be Vulnerable







Tools Matter



“You cannot apply a technological solution to a sociological problem...”



Internet Adage



...usually





...but default behaviors  
matter a lot.



# Case study: CVS



# Case study: Email diffs



# What about DVCS?



# Git vs. Mercurial



# Moral





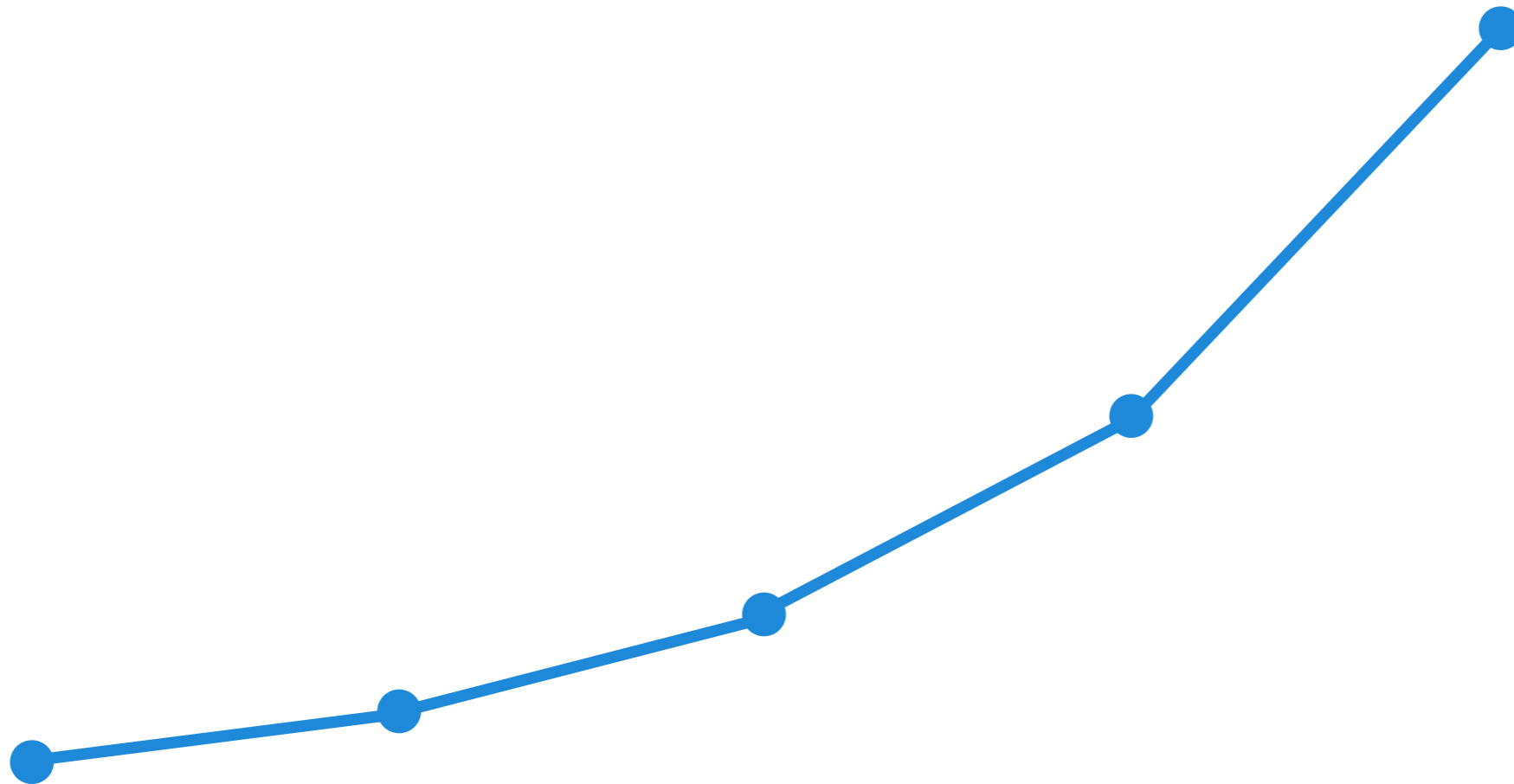


When Do I Collaborate?

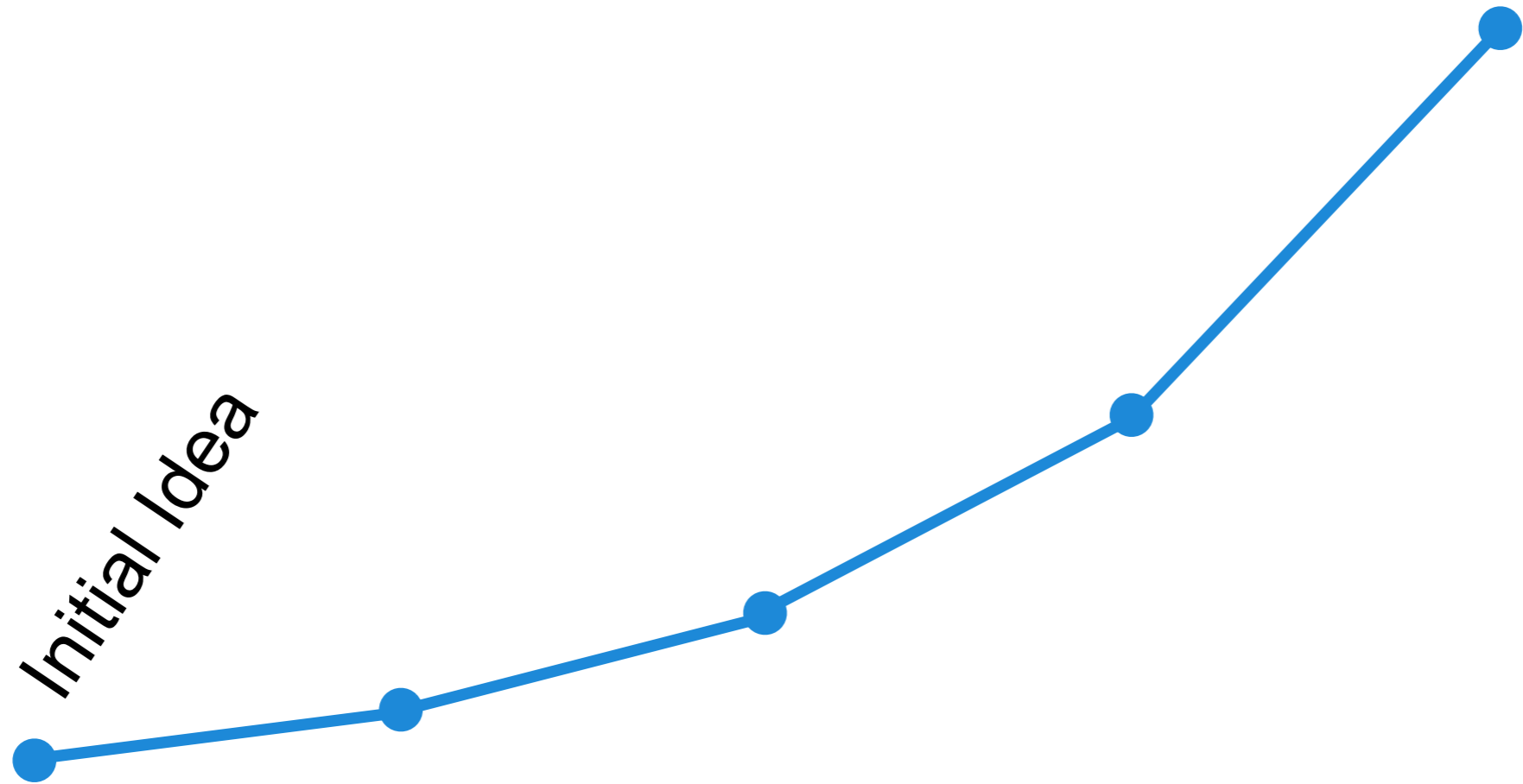




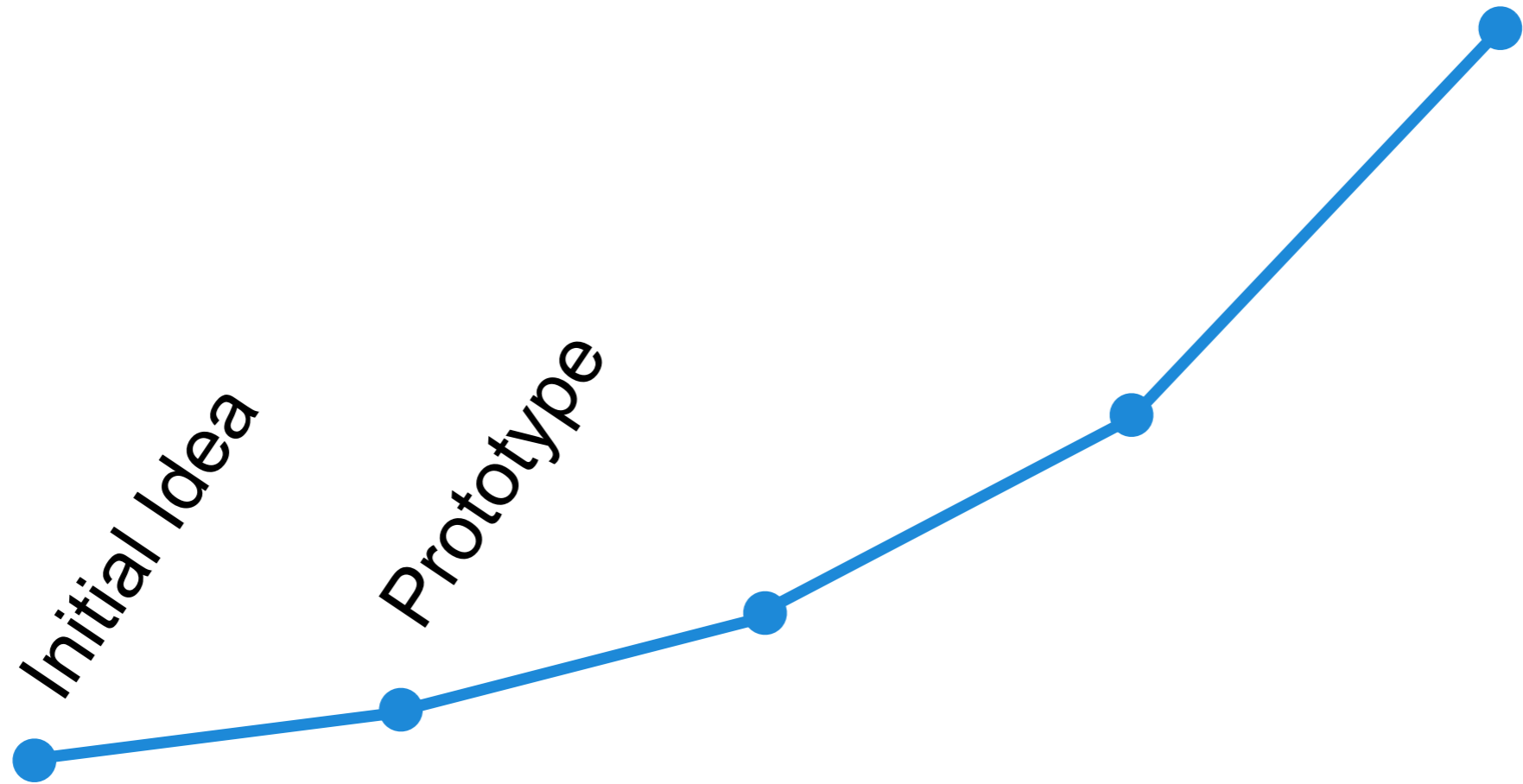
# Project Evolution



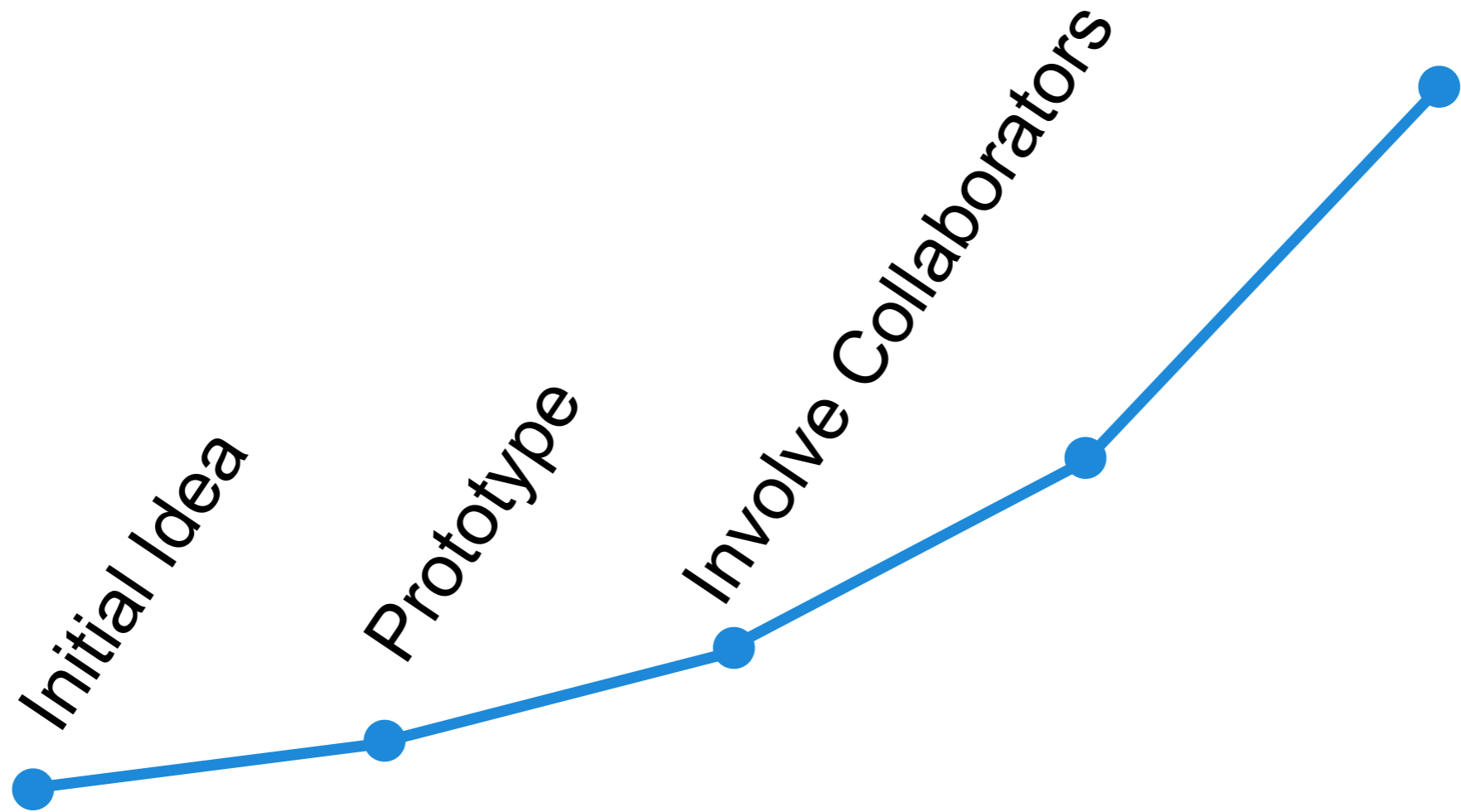
# Project Evolution



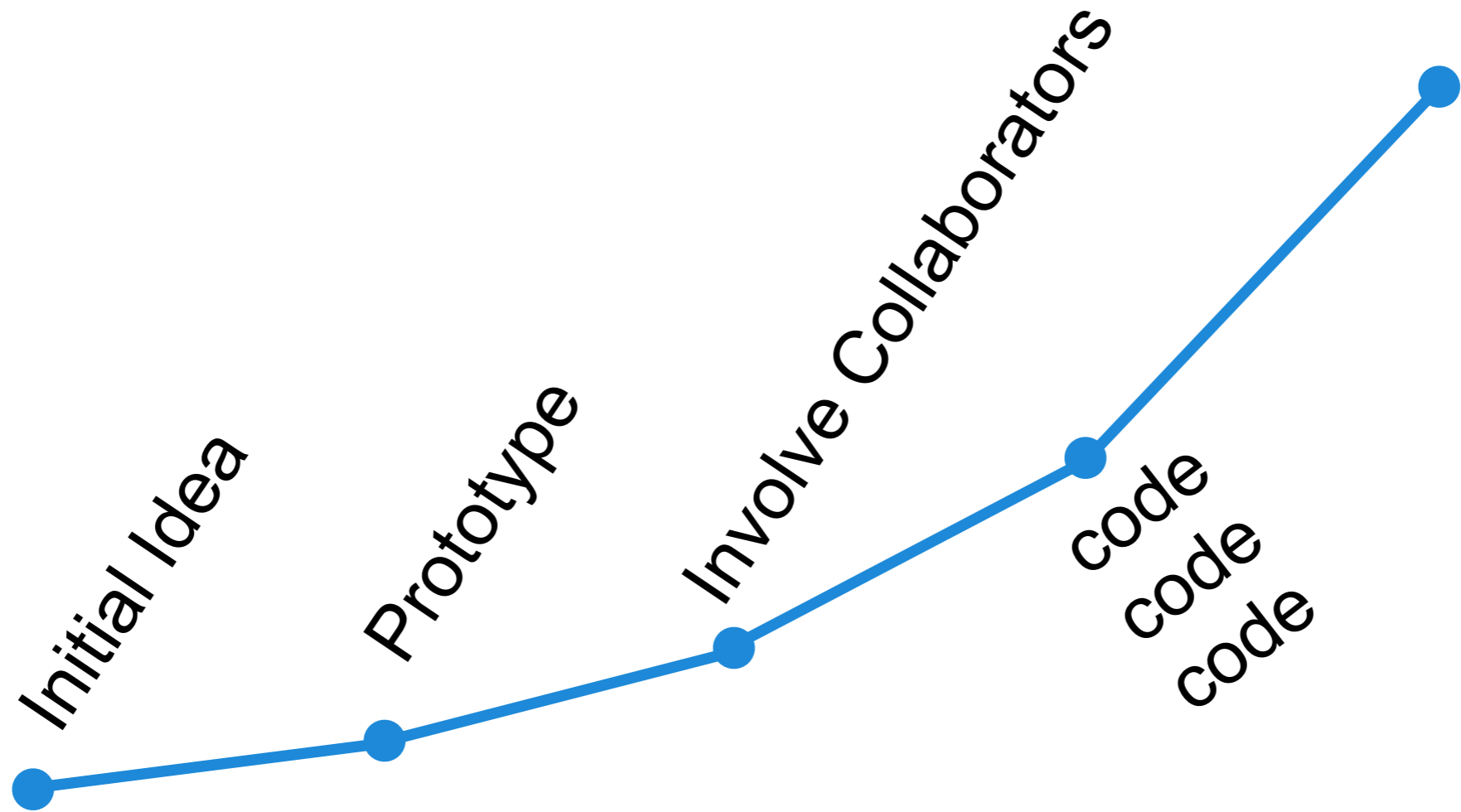
# Project Evolution



# Project Evolution

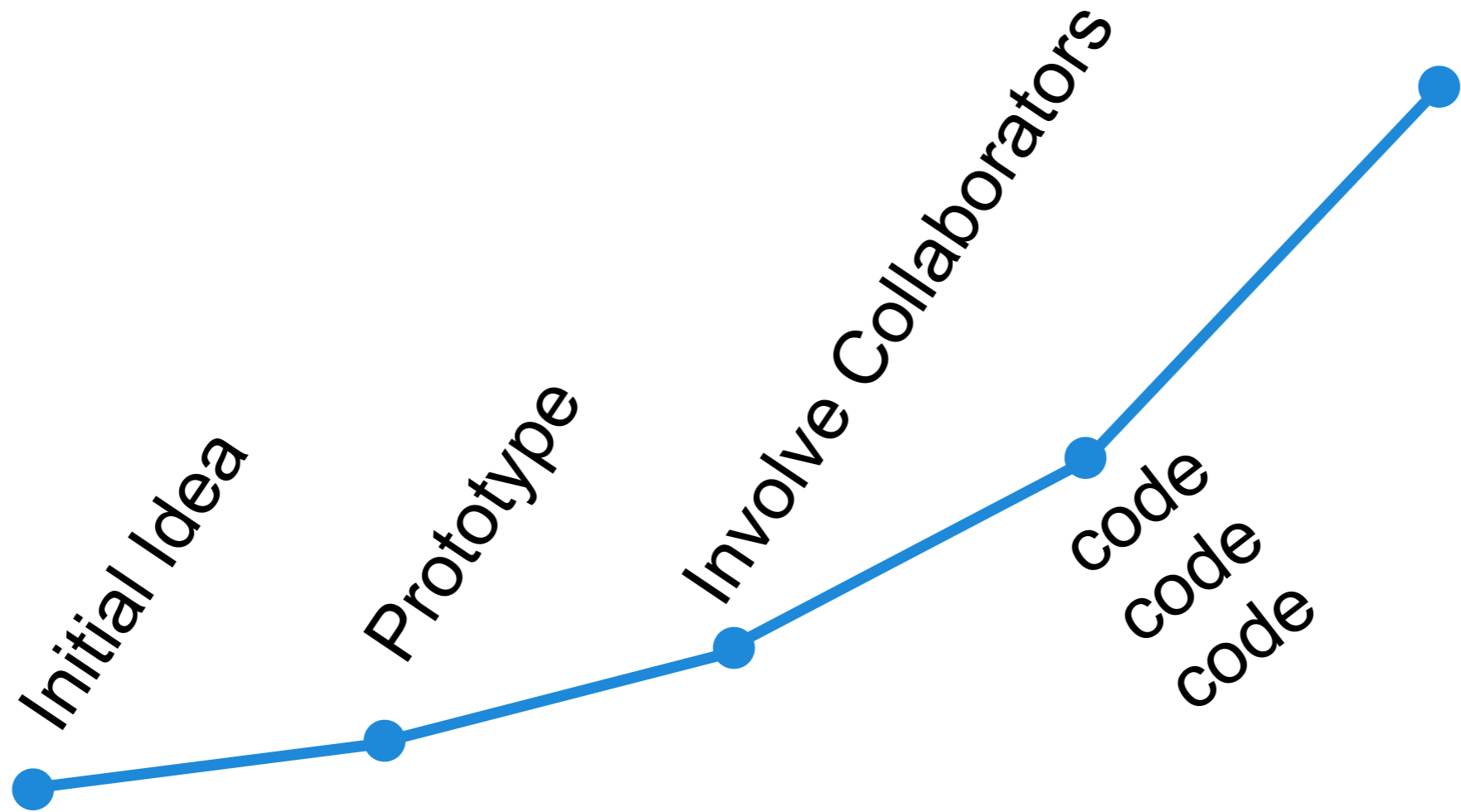


# Project Evolution



# Project Evolution

**Take  
Over  
The  
World**



Where should the third  
milestone go?



Too late





Too early



# Sweet Spot!



# Case Study: Subversion



# Case Study: Ben & Fitz



# Obligatory Summary Slide

- Don't try to be a genius
- Collaborate early and often
- Pay attention to your tools
- Pay attention to timing

But here's the secret...



...if you do all these things



People Will **Think** You're a Genius









Q&A



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