

Is a 100% remote team possible?



CloudNative

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Probably!

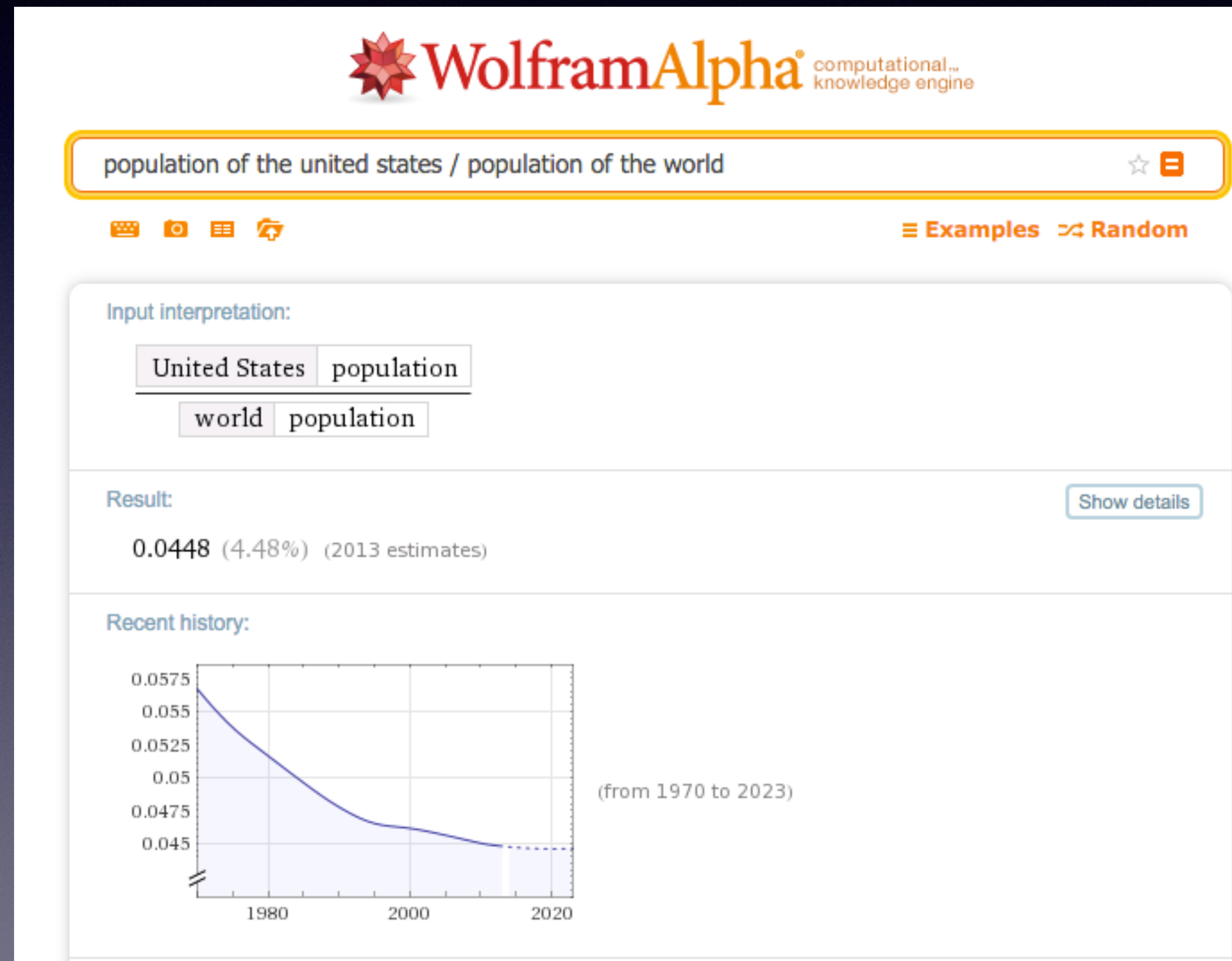
Survey

Today's Journey

- Why you should embrace remote work
- Reasons it can work for you
- Reasons it may not work
- Problems and successes we've experienced



Only 4.5% of the World's Population Lives in the US



And the Picture is even Bleaker if you just look at the Bay Area



Technology has finally caught up



Saving Money is a Nice Side Effect



- It's a great argument to convince management
- It isn't a good reason if it's the only reason or your primary motivator

Modern Perks are Just Old Perks Rehashed

- In the 60s it was a corner office and a car.
- Today it's free food and massages
- Both are just there to get you to stay longer at the office and blend your life with your work



The Office is a SPOF



Interruptions at the Office



No commute!



People are Less Stressed When Their Errands are Done



- By letting them get their errands done during the day, they will have less on their mind when they sit down to work
- And they will like you more for letting them get it done when there are less crowds!

Being Able to Choose Where You Work is a Big Perk

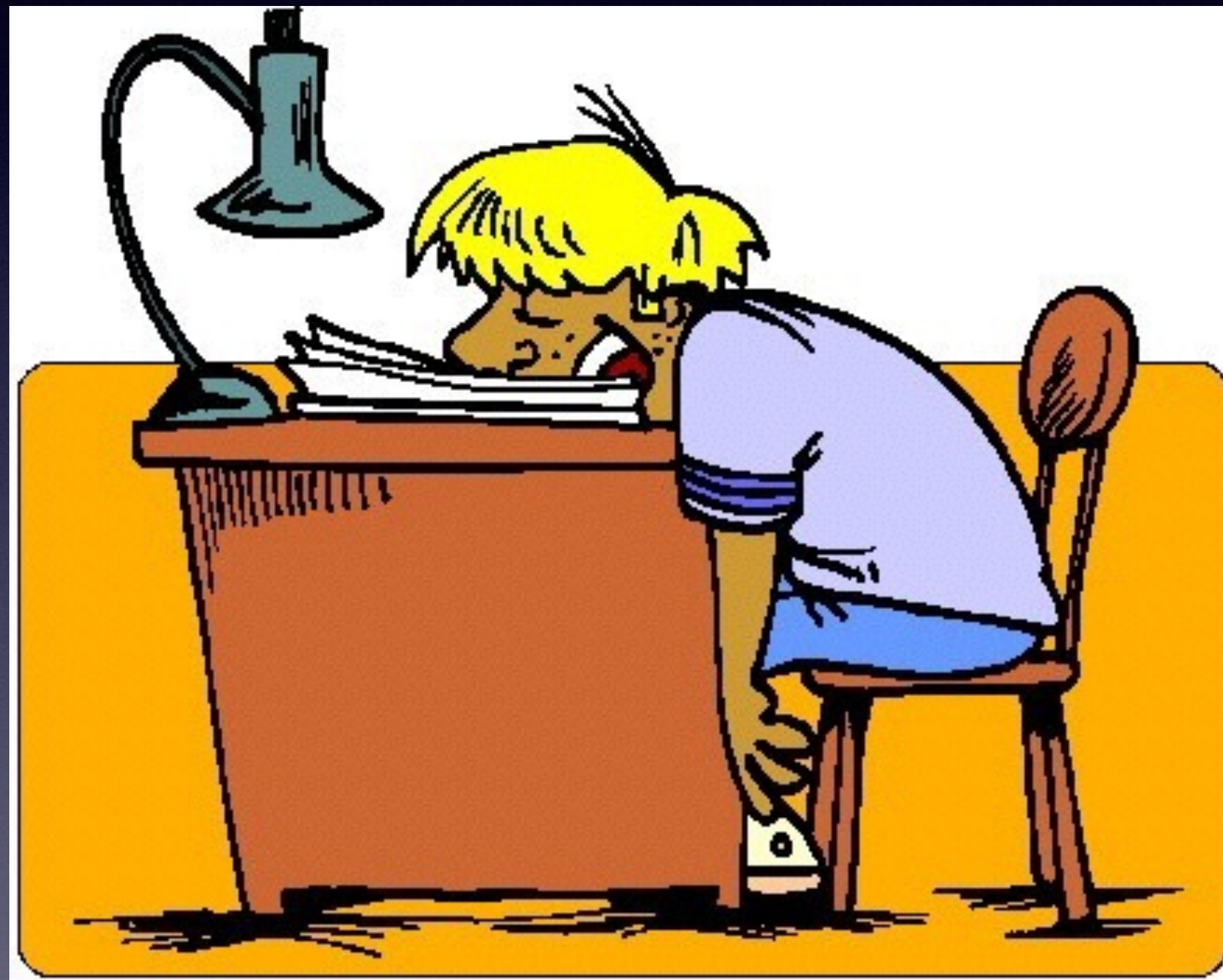


Remote Work Enables Family Time

- Workers are happier as are their partners



Sleep Schedules are More Natural



- I go to bed when I'm tired and I wake up when I'm rested (or the baby wakes me)

Tax Avoidance

- Not tax evasion!



Working From Home is Nice



- You can listen to music without headphones
- You can receive packages
- All calls on speakerphone, no one cares!
- It doesn't matter if you showered today (but you probably should anyway)

Remote Work Doesn't Mean Work from Home

- Some people don't like to work at home.
- Coffee shops, coworking spaces, a small rented office.



Security



- Encrypt those drives!
- Screen saver locks are a must
- Always lock your screen when you're away
- Always lock your phone/tablet/etc
- Use a password manager
- Use 2 factor auth when available
- All corporate tools should use SSL

Remote Policy vs Remote Work

- Your culture needs to be “Remote First”. You can’t just dictate culture through policy
- You can’t just have an odd person out, or it will fail
- reddit
- Netflix



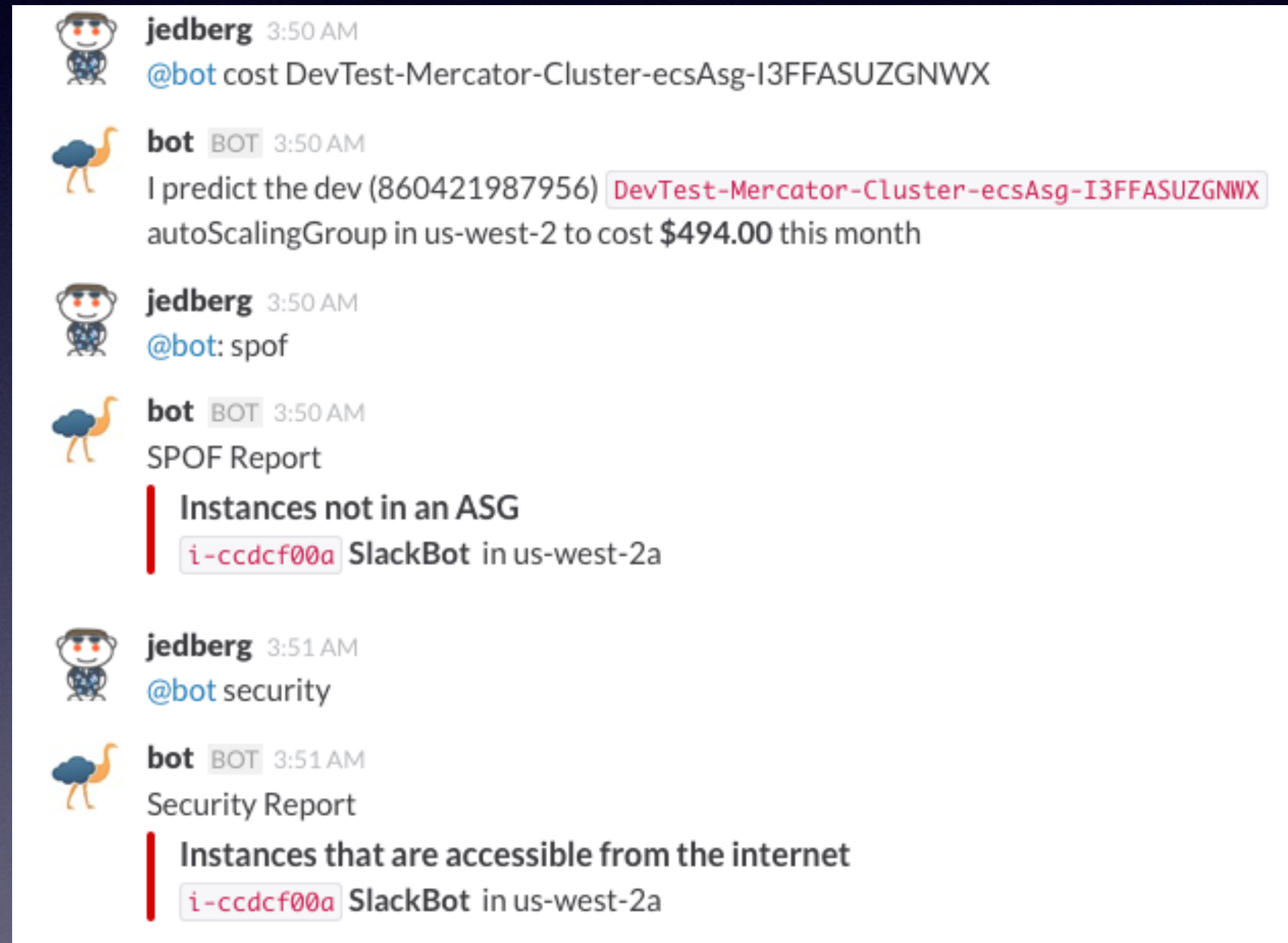
Distributed Computing and a Distributed Workforce



- The two go hand in hand when you have a good distributed systems culture
- Microservices and Micro Teams

Asynchronous Communication is Key

- Necessary to deal with timezones
- A nice benefit for those who like to work “off hours”

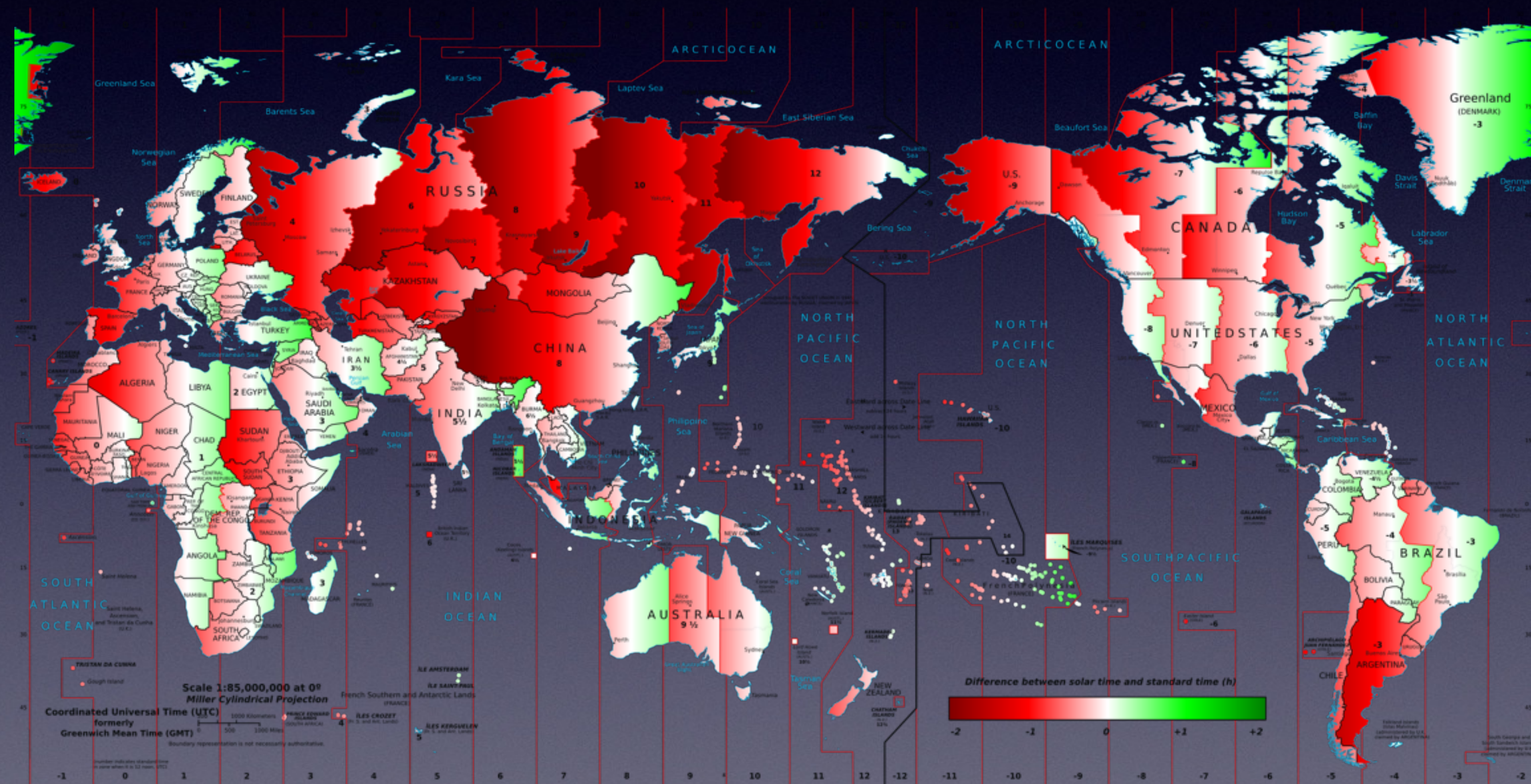


The screenshot shows a Slack chat interface with the following messages:

- jedberg** 3:50 AM
@bot cost DevTest-Mercator-Cluster-ecsAsg-I3FFASUZGNWX
- bot** BOT 3:50 AM
I predict the dev (860421987956) `DevTest-Mercator-Cluster-ecsAsg-I3FFASUZGNWX` autoScalingGroup in us-west-2 to cost \$494.00 this month
- jedberg** 3:50 AM
@bot: spof
- bot** BOT 3:50 AM
SPOF Report
Instances not in an ASG
`i-ccdcf00a` SlackBot in us-west-2a
- jedberg** 3:51 AM
@bot security
- bot** BOT 3:51 AM
Security Report
Instances that are accessible from the internet
`i-ccdcf00a` SlackBot in us-west-2a

Timezones Matter Less, but Still Matter

- There needs to be some overlap to get things done
- More than about nine hours span across the company becomes tough to deal with
- At least try to have people who work on the same things overlap a few hours a day



You Need Lots of Communication Options



- Permanent chat: Slack
- Temporary meetings: Google Hangouts
- Emergencies: Company Phone

Everything Needs to be Tracked in the Open

- Github
- Trello
- Shared Calendars
- Wiki



Large Open Source Projects are a Great Model

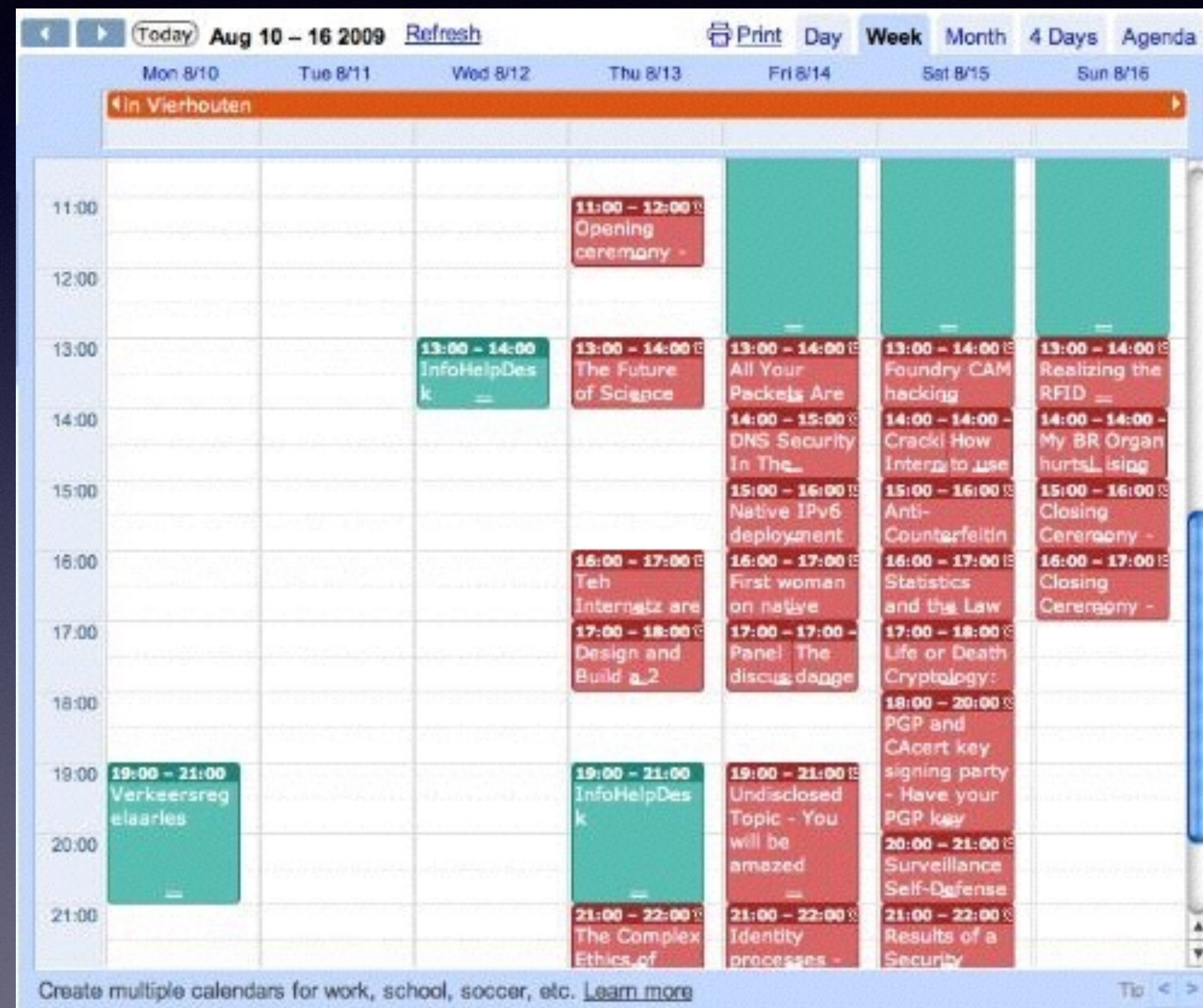
The screenshot shows the GitHub interface for the 'torvalds / linux' repository. At the top, it displays 'torvalds / linux' with 4,242 watches, 27,445 stars, and 10,885 forks. Below this, there are tabs for 'Code', 'Pull requests 83', 'Pulse', and 'Graphs'. The main content area is titled 'Linux kernel source tree' and shows 560,620 commits, 1 branch, 441 releases, and 5,669 contributors. A 'New pull request' button is visible. Below the repository information, there is a list of recent commits and merges, including 'Merge tag 'hwmon-for-linux-v4.4-rc2'' and 'Merge branch 'upstream''.

Commit/Action	Time Ago
torvalds Merge tag 'hwmon-for-linux-v4.4-rc2' of git://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/...	30 minutes ago
Documentation Merge branch 'upstream' of git://git.linux-mips.org/pub/scm/raff/upst...	3 days ago
arch Merge git://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/linux/kernel/git/davem/net	19 hours ago
block block: fix blk-core.c kernel-doc warning	7 days ago
certs certs: add .gitignore to stop git nagging about x509_certificate_list	28 days ago
crypto X.509: Fix the time validation [ver #2]	6 days ago
drivers Merge tag 'hwmon-for-linux-v4.4-rc2' of git://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/...	31 minutes ago
firmware firmware: Update information in linux.git about adding firmware	7 months ago
fs FS-Cache: Add missing initialization of ret in cachefiles_write_page()	2 days ago
include Merge git://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/linux/kernel/git/davem/net	19 hours ago
init sys_membarrier(): system-wide memory barrier (generic, x86)	2 months ago
ipc ipc,msg: drop dst nil validation in copy_msg	12 days ago
kernel Merge branch 'perf-urgent-for-linus' of git://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/...	3 days ago
lib Merge branch 'akpm' (patches from Andrew)	8 days ago
mm Merge branch 'akpm' (patches from Andrew)	8 days ago
net Merge git://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/linux/kernel/git/davem/net	19 hours ago
samples Merge git://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/linux/kernel/git/davem/net	19 hours ago
scripts Merge branch 'misc' of git://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/linux/kernel/git/...	8 days ago
security Merge git://git.kernel.org/pub/scm/linux/kernel/git/davem/net	8 days ago

- The Linux Kernel
- Motivated people who communicate only via email and chat.

Shared Calendars are Critical

- There was an IFTTT recipe for merging calendars but it will break today.



Never Lock up any Information in one Computer (or Mind)



- Google Drive
- Dropbox
- Wiki

Not Everything Needs an Immediate Answer

- Email == Hours
- IM == Minutes
- Phone == Urgent
- Slack is interesting



Weekly Checkins are Critical



- Weekly video chat
- Weekly “What are you up to” email
- You have to have done something to talk about and put thought into what you are doing the next week

Occasional In Person Meetings are Essential

- Humans are social creatures.
- They're nice to each other if they've met "in meatspace"
- It's a great perk! Free travel!



Managers get a nice Paper Trail



There is an Overhead to Managing a Remote Team



- You'll need to spend more time on checkins because you won't just run into people in the hall.
- Some people have trouble bringing up tough issues (office or not) but being remote lets them hide behind the computer.
- You need to give people lots of opportunity for tough feedback

Language is an Issue

- Everyone needs to write fluently in the same language.
- Often that language will be English.
- Cover letters are a great way to test this.



Attitude is Extra Important



- Since you can't see each other, your written language must express a good attitude
- No passive aggressiveness or otherwise demeaning language can be tolerated.
- It's hard to tell someone is "just kidding" over email/chat

People are Evaluated on What they Produce



Being Politically Savvy Won't Help You

- And that's good. It means people will be evaluated on and promoted for their work, not their ability to suck up to the boss.



Remote Work and Junior Employees May Not Mix



- They just don't have the context or examples of how to be successful at work.
- May require more handholding and micromanaging, just like in an office.

You Need to Set a Good Example

- Self driven, motivated people will have a tendency to want to work all the time
- Set a good example by taking time off.
- Overwork is easy when everyone is “available” all the time
- At CloudNative, we avoid working on weekends, for example



Your Employees Need to be Self Driven



People Goof Off During Work Time



- Making them come to an office doesn't change that. It just means they spend more time hiding it.
- You need to trust people enough that it doesn't matter

Remote Workers Still need Routines

- Get up at the same time
- Get dressed
- Agree on a work stop time with your partner

	Potty	
	Make Bed	
	Breakfast	
	Brush Teeth	
	Get Dressed	
	Brush Hair	

FROM ABC'S TO ACT'S

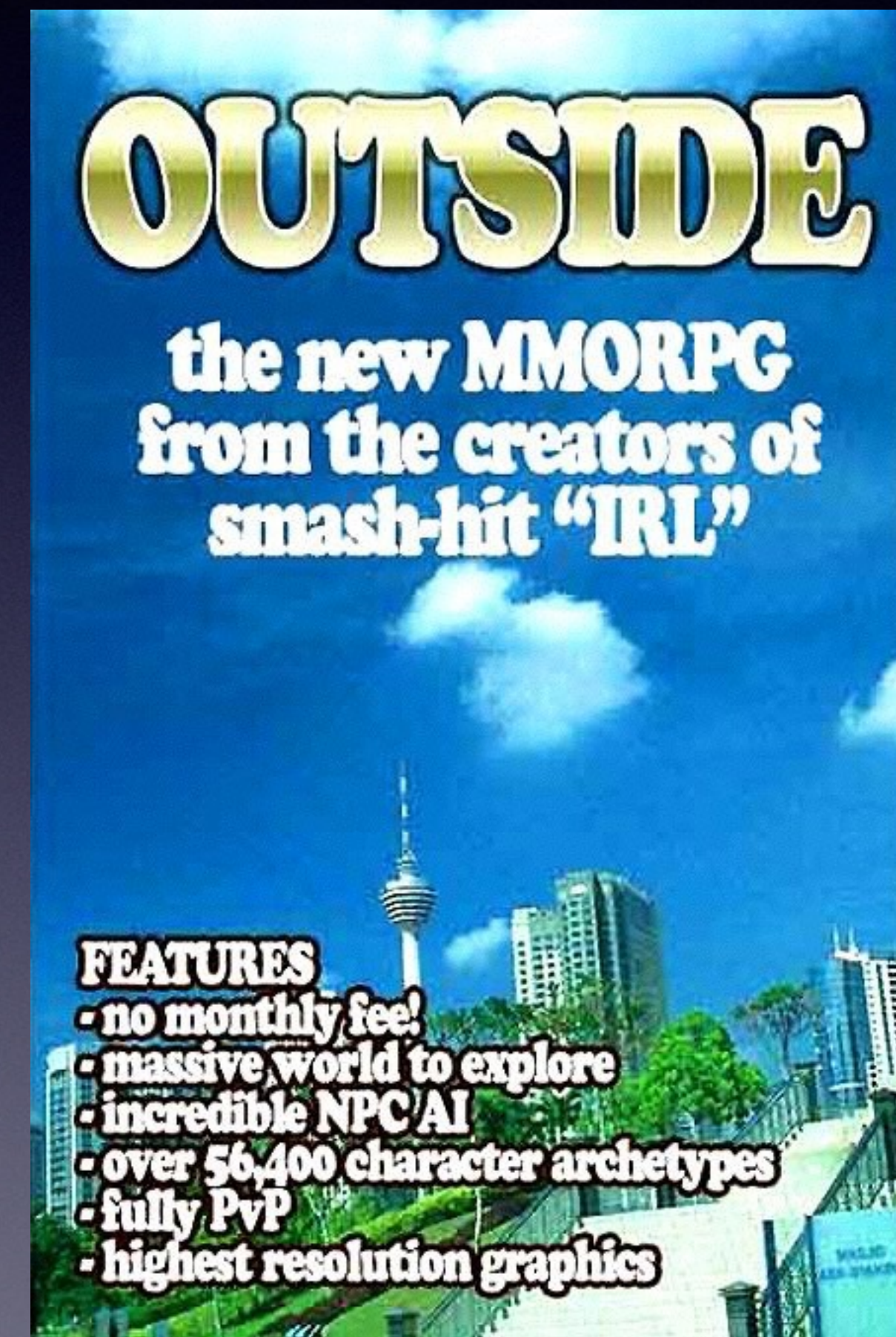
Some People Need the Mental Transition of a Daily Commute



- Go out for a walk before you start
- Actually go somewhere else to work

Your Employees Need to go Outside

- Humans (even introverted ones) require social interaction for a healthy psyche.
- If you live alone this is especially important because you don't have anyone to talk to by default.



Ergonomics and Fitness are Important



- Use the money you save on office space to get everyone a good desk, chair and monitor.
- Get them some fitness, either a gym membership or home fitness equipment.

Encourage Good Diets

- Pay for some healthy snacks or catered lunches



An Office Door is Essential for Working at Home



- Your spouse/kids/pets/
roommates may not
understand “being in
the zone”

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