Twitter Thread by Anson Horton

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1/ In early 2004 we were heads down executing on Edit and Continue across a large contingent of teams. There had been several iterations of scoping, redesigns, and customer feedback.

2/ We had a weekly meeting every Thursday morning when representatives from each of the teams would get together and review progress. It was fairly heavy weight, but there were so many teams involved that it was necessary to have a regular sync.

3/ Regardless, E&C was coalescing, but teams were stretched thin working diligently to enable scenarios, improve performance, fix bugs, etc. It had been a month or so since we decided to add support for C# to the matrix as well, so folks were a bit stressed.

4/ That set the stage for the meeting that we had on the first Thursday in April. A debugger PM named Habib Heydarian ran the meeting and after a brief intro he gave me a ring to come in and present.

5/ I walked in and handed out a document that I had written up, titled DCR: C# Edit and Continue for Venus. DCR meant design change request, and Venus was the design-time code name for ASP .NET support.

6/ I explained that we had a recent review with leadership and that while the feedback was very positive, we had been asked to enable E&C for ASP .NET as well.

7/ The room was shocked - their teams were already over-extended and ASP .NET support was something that we had scoped out essentially day 1.

8/ We then proceeded to review the document which went through the customer rationale, scenarios, the user experience design, and suggested architecture. The first Thursday of April in 2004 happened to be April 1st - April Fool's Day.

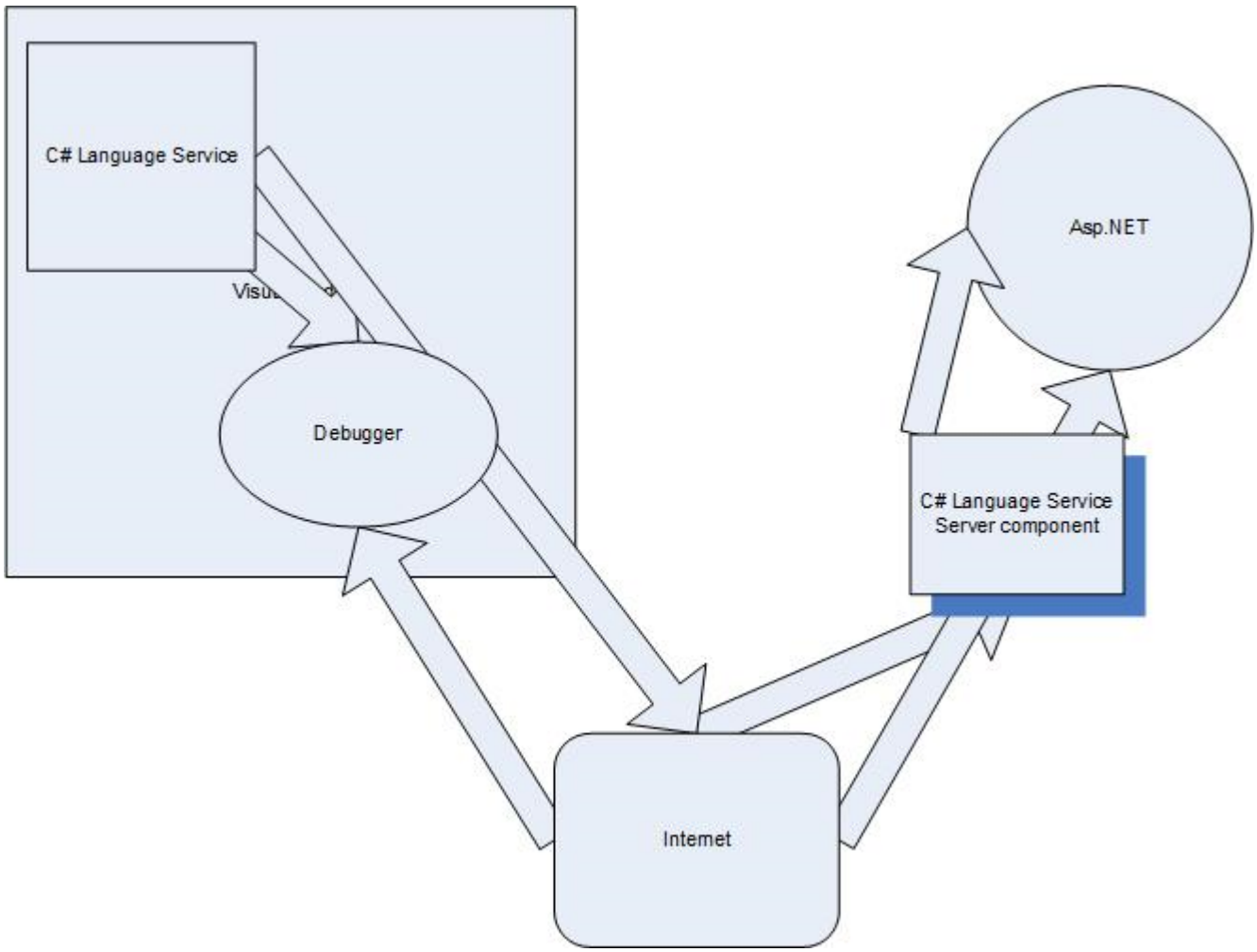
9/ The 'spec' looked and read legitimately for the first sections, but was intended to get wilder and more ridiculous as we read through it.

10/ In the final section it had statements like "happily, most of the work for edit and continue has already been done for the Client, so extending it to support Venus should be relatively trivial" (absolute nonsense of course). as well as

11/ "however, it is also necessary to make Office development support EnC."

12/ It went on to suggest that the only reasonable way to get design time support for this scenario was to run the language service on the server, which, despite what we've been doing with Codespaces recently, was absolute crazy talk at the time.

13/ This was the 'architecture diagram' included:



14/ When we got to this point in the document, I expected folks to catch on that this wasn't serious, or at least, call out that perhaps some more thinking would be needed :) I tried to make it as ludicrous as possible, without any detail, with arrows just randomly drawn in…

15/ but... TBH, I think folks were in shock as no one said anything. In fact, a good number of folks were busy writing emails to their teams and management - once Habib and I realized that, we finally told people it was a prank.

16/ I'm not *exactly* sure how many folks in that room hate me to this day, but based on the reactions then, it maybe wasn't quite as funny as I had hoped :-)

17/ I'm sure it'd make folks feel better to know that I spent a good portion of the rest of the day answering emails from various levels of management who were still convinced it was real and were uh, nonplussed, when I told them it wasn't.

18/ Habib and I did a brief Channel 9 video a couple of years later where we talked about it which is still available here: https://t.co/nrzm1wGvpZ. Since the only comment on the video is "I missed what the prank is exactly…"

19/ we somehow managed to have perhaps the unfunniest prank in the history of computing, but we tried! FWIW, a few folks eventually got a laugh out of it, you know, after they stopped being enraged.