Twitter Thread by foone



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@Foone



1. in the beginning, browsers didn't have download statusbars
2. firefox got a browser statusbar extension. it was configurable and worked well
3. chrome cloned it without options and it didn't work as well

4. firefox realized chrome was faster and more secure at everything and therefore dropped extensions
5. now firefox doesn't have a download statusbar either

6. someone reimplements download statusbars in firefox's new web-extensions format. it's terrible because of the inherent limitations of the significantly less flexible and powerful extension format

7. CHROME WINS! (with its terrible download statusbar implementation which can't be fixed by users, because No Options and No Skins and No Extensions)

this is where we are now

but I expect at some point we'll hit:
8. people complain that firefox doesn't have a download statusbar, like chrome does
9. mozilla points out the extension, but users either don't know about it or point out it sucks

10. firefox bites the bullet and implements a native download statusbar, because of the user feedback.
it's native and therefore works way better than the extension... but it clones the chrome one so it works terribly and has no options to fix it

now you may not care about the download statusbar or think the chrome one is "just fine"

but it kinda feels like this has happened a dozen times with different functionality in firefox

excited to be watching mozilla repeatedly radioshack themselves out of a job

so radioshack was a niche tech store:

they sold batteries and wires and transistors and computer parts. this was not a mainstream store, but you couldn't get this stuff elsewhere, so they had a small but dedicated customer base

they began selling more mainstream stuff in the tech area. cellphones and VHS tapes and DVD players.
it was a bit more expensive than their competition, sure, but it sold well for them

because if you're a tech geek going in there to buy a sound card or a geek buying a capacitor, you probably call people and watch movies, because everyone does.

but you don't have infinite floor space: you can't sell everything.
So Radio Shack starts stocking fewer capacitors and soundblasters and more Nokias and DVD players

eventually getting to the point where you can go into a radio shack and they're just selling all the same limited stock of electronics (basic computer parts, TV cables, DVD players, cell phones, RC cars) that you can buy at Walmart, Best Buy, or Target

at which point radio shack has completely lost their original audience (because they can't get those niche tech parts anymore) and traded them for an audience who only wants the more mainstream stuff... WHICH IS ALSO BEING SOLD AT FOUR OTHER STORES IN THE SAME TOWN

AT LOWER PRICES
AND THOSE OTHER PLACES ALSO CARRY THINGS LIKE BEDS AND MILK AND SOCKS

and then somehow radio shack goes out of business, with their brilliant model of being a more expensive smaller shitty version of four other big-box stores

meanwhile if they'd stayed with original niche-tech store idea, they may not have made a trillion dollars, but they'd still be in business.

anyway this slow decline of radio shack seems to have been obvious to every person I've talked to who ever went there, and yet exactly zero people in the retail management world seem to have paid any attention to it.

well, the retail management world, or the browser management world

excited to be typing this message on the walmart internet browser version 4.0

The weirdest thing about Radioshack, btw, is their parent company: Tandy.

So Tandy started as the "Hinckley-Tandy Leather Company".

In the 60s they were starting up lots of hobby shops for sewing and such, and discovered a mail order company in Boston, which had been around since the 20, selling electronics parts

they acquired them and turned them into a retail chain, and radio shack became a big hit, as well as influencing the parent company to make the tandy series of computers, sold in their radio shack shops

during this time, they were still doing leather. that's how they started , after all.

but in 1975 they decided to reorganize their businesses into separate publicly-held companies.
Tandy Leather Company was now completely different from Tandy Corporation and Radio Shack.

Tandy Leather Company didn't really work out. Charles Tandy died a few years later, the president of Tandy Leather Company left, and started up competing leather companies, hiring many of the same people who had been working at Tandy.

The post tandy-companies included The Leather Factory and Midas Leathercraft. Midas ended up purchasing The Leather Factory in 1985, organizing under that name, and went public in 1993.

Tandy Leather, meanwhile, was doing so poorly that they switched to mail-order and internet-only sales in 1999.

and in 2000, The Leather Factory purchased all their assets

Finally, in 2005, because of the decline of Radio Shack and Tandy Corporation's rebranding as just Radio Shack...
The Leather Factory purchases back the Tandy name, and is now the Tandy Leather Factory.

And this is incredibly amusing to me because if you look at the long timeline, it's like:

1919: Tandy starts up, doing leather
1960s: branch into hobby stuff
1975s: electronics/computers, split off the leather, competitors spin up
1990s: competitors are doing good
2000: they sell off leather to competitors
2005: competitor buys the Tandy name

in the beginning, Tandy was Leather.
and in the end, Tandy was Leather.

the whole "electronics/computers/retail stores" thing was just 50 year diversion in the 100 year history of Tandy Leather

The arc of the Tandy is long, but it bends towards Leather.

just to clarify: by download statusbar I mean this thing at the bottom of the screen.
It shows you the progress of ongoing downloads and lets you quickly & easily launch the files once they're downloaded.

This is in contrast to the older style used by Netscape Navigator and (old) Internet Explorer, where downloads are a separate dialog box that pops up

Modern firefox instead has a download icon, which you can click for something like a download statusbar sort of thing, letting you launch downloaded files from there, or check on their progress

it also does a thing where you can see the progress of downloads from the icon by looking at the little line, which animates the progress

or click it for more details

and here's an example of the most popular download statusbar extension for modern firefox, which is so great that it didn't even manage to properly align itself even on a default install.

part of this is that it's not in the space of the browser UI: it's in the space of the browser's viewport.
Why's that matter? Well, if you have something aligned to the bottom of the page, on chrome that thing will be vertically above the status bar.

Here on the ubuntu page, there's a little "chat down" button on the bottom right of the page

Let's download something... OH FUCK

for bonus points, when I clicked the "X" to close the download statusbar, it CLICKED THE CHAT NOW BUTTON TOO

I'M SORRY JULES, I DIDN'T NEED YOUR HELP

UNLESS YOU CAN HELP WITH FIREFOX AND/OR RADIOSHACK?

anyway I think we're late in the game of what appears to be a repeating browser cycle.
1. browser A is dominant, and stagnating
2. browser B appears: it's got more features and/or is much faster
3. users migrate from A to B

4. browser A either fails to respond, or bungles the response by attempting to mimic some of the features of B at the expense of what lead people to use A in the first place

5. browser B reaches dominance
6. browser B stagnates
7. browser C appears and draws in users with features or speed
8. rinse, lather, repeat

that's LATHER not LEATHER.
we're not talking about tandy here.

weird tangent (IN A FOONE THREAD, REALLY?):

I'm allergic to leather.

I think it's actually the chemicals used to prepare leather, not the leather itself?
because I've sometimes had similar allergic reactions to non-real-leather, and I think they use some of the same chemicals to enhance the similarity.

although despite growing up on a farm and spending a bunch of weekends one summer working on a different farm, I never spent enough time around cows to see if I'm allergic to them

I'm definitely not allergic to beef, though I usually don't eat much of it.
but there's probably differences, allergy wise, than eating an animal and touching its dried skin for hours at a time

this is why I could never be accepted into the BDSM community.
they love them some leather! and I am chemically incompatible with it

I'd be kinkshamed by my own immune system.

I promise that wasn't just an attempt to give this thread a sufficiently tangenty ending so that people would be taking screenshots like "you know it's a foone thread when: FIREFOX/TANDY/BDSM!?"

that's just how my brain works. speaking of which, I need caffeine for it. FAREWELL!
I'm gonna go get coffee while continuing to be mad about firefox and radio shack

(the BDSM one doesn't really bother me. I'm asexual. Ya'll have fun, but it's not really the thing for me)

genie: "would you rather have:
1. tons of kinky BDSM sex?
2. radioshack back at their peak as a hobbyist electronic store?
3. firefox as the dominant browser, WITH extensions?"

Foone: "uhhh... can you give me time to think about it? are you sure I can't have 2 and 3?"

Foone: "what if radioshack comes back and they're still cellphone focused, but they have at least one aisle of tech parts? and at the same time, firefox dominates with extensions but it's still kinda slow?"

Genie: "No. I can bend the rules a bit and let you have radio shack back, and you get a bit of kinky sex in the back room, though?"
Foone: "No, I'm good. What about Firefox with extensions, but radioshack survives and they only have a couple stores?"

Genie: "What about firefox with extensions as the dominant browser... and you have kinky sex THROUGH videochat/teledildonics plugins?"
Foone: "wait... ARE YOU JUST A KINKY BDSM SEX GENIE?"
Genie: "You got me."

Foone: "Get out of my house and back into the fanfic sites WHERE YOU BELONG!"

although now my author-brain is trying to kick in.
So Genies come from the islamic idea of jinn, and jinn are not just magic wish-granters, and they don't really have incredible magic powers, either.

and the whole idea of the "you have 3 wishes" thing comes from how they were associated with middle-eastern witchcraft.
A sorcerer might summon one, and bind them to do something for the sorcerer

which might be something as simple as revealing information: jinn are long-lived, so if you need to know who really killed an ancient king or something, the jinn might have been around then and saw it with their own eyes.

but the key thing here is that they don't have "snap your fingers and a thing happens" powers.
So even if you have bound a jinn to your will and you tell them "make me rich!" or "kill my enemy", they can't just make it happen.

they gotta go out there and use their own jinn-abilities to make it happen.
So they either go to your enemy's house and bash them over the head with a plank or they go find a treasury and rob it

and they're on the level of devils and angels so they presumably have more magic/physical abilities than mere humans, but they're not Gods.

anyway, that's a lot of explanation to get back to the stupid idea that:
what if you summoned a "Genie" to do your bidding (which mainly involves electronic retail stores and web browser functionality) but it turns out you got a Genie of Kinky BDSM Sex

they're heavily specialized, but now you gotta figure out how they can achieve your goals using only their BDSM-related powers

All magical creatures in mythology have a weakness, of course.
BDSM genies share the same basic weakness as the imp Rumpelstiltskin: they've got a safeword!

my BDSM genie is infiltrating the mozilla management, tying everyone up to take over control of the organization, when someone yells out "Reindeer Flotilla" and it vanishes in a puff of smoke, as everyone is immediately untied

anyway hopefully that will limit the number of replies I get from people going like "I'll have you know I work for mozilla in the destroying-our-own-product team, and we had to blah blah blah blah"

since now they'll be tempted but then they'll see the weird "I USE MAGIC POWERS TO ENGAGE THEM IN KINKY BDSM SHENANIGANS" tangent and decide not to reply.

amusing this makes it like a magical spell of warding against mozillers

and I think people don't take into account enough how fucking Magical the modern web is, and I don't mean magical in the disney sense, I mean in the ancient mythology sense

everyone knows there are Names Which Must Not Be Spoken, because people will show up to debate.
There are things which cannot be talked about, or bots will show up to spam.

There are words spoken on the news every day which, if uttered, will cause my account to be temporarily limited

until I prove I am a True Human, and not some kind of automaton spreading misinformation.

and god, look at all the things which involve "the algorithm"
Have you ever looked at suggestions on getting your youtube video to succeed, or to not have your posts shadowbanned for spam?

they're superstition, plain and simple.

there are no rules. there are only... suggestions. there is folk knowledge of things that have worked, and things which have not. stories of someone who did X, and it worked, so do X. Someone else did Y, and it failed, so never do Y

Don't swear in the first minute of your youtube video.
Don't put a link in your tumblr post, if the post is too short. Reply with it, instead.
Make your pictures wide, not tall. The algorithm focuses on faces, and text...

throw salt over your shoulder, don't walk under a latter, avoid black cats.

anyway:
https://t.co/2smdIepLfa

> computers think using etchings in poisoned sand and measure time using vibrating crystals so if you were looking for magic you found it
>
> — Computer Facts (@computerfact) April 20, 2016

and I always feel that tweet should be paired with this one:
https://t.co/ZGVzEoRikE

> if you ever code something that "feels like a hack but it works," just remember that a CPU is literally a rock that we tricked into thinking
>
> — ben (@daisyowl) March 15, 2017

Anyway, my point with "computers are magic" is that we're not magicians anymore.

We're alchemists. The evolution of magicians.

Now our job is to drag this field kicking and screaming into the next step, science.