

Sufyaan's Website

sufyaan.me/ovsk

Oversimplification Kills

10 July 2023

Category: Software

Oversimplification kills. It is as simple as that. Most of the time, there are simple solutions to a problem that work well which are not used because individuals feel like they need to be more simple.

If you want to get more technical, think about the over-engineering of website builders. Instead of having a simple piece of software that generates static sites and blog posts based on [markdown](#) files, we have ultra-bloated website builders that provide a simple way to make a website at the cost of extremely slow websites and unneeded JavaScript. We also have oversimplified user interfaces in Windows and MacOS. These [operating systems](#) have made bad and oversimplified interfaces a norm, which makes good interfaces such as ones you can customize on Linux seem too complicated or confusing even though it would be easier for someone with no experience in computing to get started with most desktop environments available.

As [Luke Smith mentions in his post](#), we never thought about using wheels on suitcases until the 1990s even though children in the Incan empire did have toys with wheels. This is one of the examples where trying to oversimplify something by making an all-in-one or a good solution delays progress.

Oversimplification shifts focus away from the main problem. For example, with website builders, the problem shifted away from being able to make websites fast and easily to give the user information in a swift manner to just making your website pretty. With Windows and MacOS, the focus shifted away from making user interfaces that actually make sense for everyone to use to making user interfaces that are familiar.

On the other end of the same spectrum, overcomplication also has a similar result. A technical example of this is software management. Windows and MacOS (at least how most people use MacOS) have complicated software management which results in difficult updates, confusing software usage and an overall increase in storage usage throughout the years. However, Linux has package managers. One command is all that is required to install a package and remove it. You can clear cache, download an older version, update both your system and applications at the same time and even view all installed packages.

In the end, most things are complicated. We can try simplifying them and that is perfectly fine. However, trying to oversimplify a problem and making it a binary outcome does not work in all cases. There are many factors to take into consideration. Oversimplification leads to no problems being solved. If anything, it creates and solves arbitrary problems that are not important.