# Zen and the art of data maintenance

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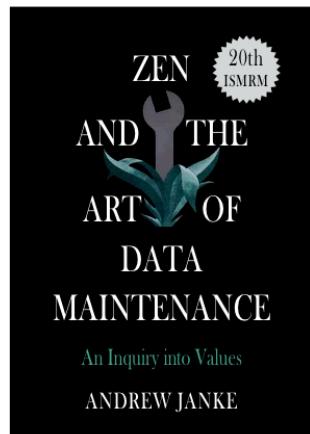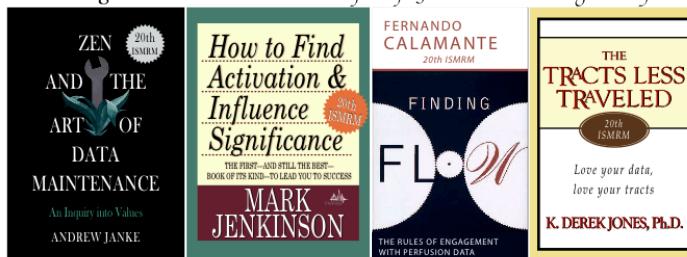
Got the data blues? Struggling to recreate that fantastic analysis you did years ago? Drowning in images that you keep meaning to organise, but you always end up comparing your Google Scholar vs. Web of Knowledge h-index scores instead? Then we have got the seminar series for you.

Graduates from our last seminar series assiduously store their data in multiply-redundant servers spanning several solar systems and effortlessly re-run comparative analyses using FSL0.1 and MINC 0.6, all while eating file conversions for brunch and fending off repeated calls from Nature Neuroscience begging permission to re-print their emails to mum as full papers[1].

So come along, get in touch with your inner data nerd! Thanks to our perls of wisdom, you may never utter awk again. Graduate to Shell Script Master as you learn to bash your analysis into shape like a pro. But most of all: learn why the previous sentences are simply *hilarious*.

Here are some excerpts from real PODNOC's just like yourself.[2]

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[1] YMMV, results while typical only apply to those who visit Australia at least once, preferably with focus time on Queensland beaches.
[2] PODNOC: Plenty of Data, No Organisational Clue

Dear Auntie Alias

I've been involved with Lord E'Spiem IV for about 5 years, but was recently introduced to his younger brother, Lord E'Spiem VIII. At first, I told myself it was just a 30-day trial, but it's getting serious. Last week he showed up with a beautiful wrapper containing genuine Dartel (it fits so snugly, and is even good for my complexion... the blobs just go away!) They seem unaware that I've installed them both in my life, but as of late these two threads are seriously testing my memory mapping... I think I got caught yesterday when I ran both of them down the same garden PATH that leads to the user library!

Help!
Yours TuuTimer.

Dear Miss Tuu,

While I rarely recommend double dating, it can be safe if done correctly. You need to establish boundaries. Come along to our next ISMRM course and we'll show you how to keep not just two of them happy, but the Effessel Brothers as well. There's a lot of them, too.

Luv, Auntie A

Dear Auntie A,

It's models, Auntie. I'm infatuated with them. I find myself up late at night... visualizing them, downloading them. I have to have them all. Average models, individual models, small ones, big ones, I've even been known to download the odd mouse model. The problem is I can't keep them straight, in my mind or my directories! They are all so different (that's why I love them) and yet so similar, some more left than right, some are suspiciously androgynous and symmetric.

Sincerely, Abit Adicted.

Dear Abit,

Associating with multiple models is only going to lead to pain. At least pick your favorite for any given occasion! Don't know which one to pick? Never fear, come along to "Models Anonymous" at the next ISMRM, they are a secretive bunch so we call this session the "Thinking Outside the Black Box" session.

Tough luv, Auntie A.

Dear Auntie A,

I'm a lowly meat grinder. I can grind about 20 brains a day into meaningless red blobs. The butcher I work for is a terrific salesman (he can even sells blobs to charities in these hard times!) The money just pours in! As of late, though, there has been a steady increase to 40 or even 50 brains a day. I spend hours clearing out the pipeline when it gets clogged. Yesterday, my butcher bought the farm... literally! Now I have 9500 brains to blob-ify, and I don't know if my little pipeline is up to it!

Help!!!

Snode Unda.

Dear Snode,

Calm yourself. You seek the ways of data Zen. One process to rule all the data. One process to find the blobs[3]. There is a nerd sect at the upcoming ISMRM who know this Zen. There may be but one who admits it, yet they all know the truth. Find the "Black Box" session and all will be revealed.

May the data force be with you.

Om, Auntie A.

Dear Auntie A,

I keep hearing eerie singing of strange phrases late at night, it haunts my sleep...

> *grep cron bash, kill minus 9*
> *learn these commands and you'll be fine*
> *awk, top and cp, ls, find and perl*
> *you know you want to, give them a whirl*

I'm sure they mean something as I've heard my colleagues talk about them but I'm just lost. Apparently its some organizational too (I use a big USB box and when it's full just buy another).

Should I bother with them?

Unix Untouched

Dear UU,

We have a course, come to it.

Auntie A.

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[3] The rest doesn't make sense as we are trying to bring you out of darkness, dumb nerd references. -- Ed.