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# VISIONEN

[visionen.vis.ethz.ch](http://visionen.vis.ethz.ch)

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## Mid-Study-Crisis

Magazin des Vereins der Informatikstudierenden an der ETH Zürich (VIS)

# Editorial

Whoopwhoop endlich mein letztes Editorial!

2024 ist nicht nur das Jubiläumsjahr vom VIS, sondern auch von den Visionen. Mit 40 Jahren da haben einige diese Midlife-Crisis Anflüge. Da die meisten unserer Leserinnen und Leser nur halb so alt wie der VIS sind, haben wir uns mit dem Thema Mid-Study-Crisis befasst. Warum sollten wir noch weiter studieren? Warum tun wir uns das an? Ein Tipp: Besucht die Kontaktparty 2024 und bekommt eure Motivation zurück. Oder plant schon mal, wie ihr euch diesen Sommer eine Ameisenkönigin fangt. Während sich diese Ausgabe im Druck befindet, wird ein neuer Chefredaktor gewählt und ich bin wieder frei. Wundervoll. Wir haben einen Comic zugesendet bekommen, den manche schon gesehen haben dürften, den anderen wollten wir ihn jedoch nicht vorenthalten.

Ich möchte mich für das schöne Feedback am VIS4U bedanken. Oft hören wir über die Visionen nur negatives, wir seien unnötig und Papierverschwendung. Da ist es schön mal von den Studenten zu hören, die sich über die Visionen in ihren Briefkästen freuen. <3

Viel Spass beim Lesen :)

Fiona Pichler



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ESCAPE THAT MID-STUDY-CRISIS  
AND SEE WHICH JOBS AWAIT YOU

# KONTAKTPARTY 2024

 Saturday, March 16th 2024, 11am-5pm

 Mensa Polyterrasse, Einstein, Zweistein

OR SIGN UP FOR A HELPERSHIFT  
AND MEET NEW PEOPLE



# Präsikolumne (also: Happy Birthday VIS!)

EMI: STILL RECOVERING FROM LERNPHASE, SENDING IN THIS ARTICLE WAY TOO LATE.

Dear Readers,

I hope you have all had a successful study phase and a good start to the spring semester.

In addition to having survived the study phase and exam session, we have another reason for you to celebrate. VIS is turning 40 years old this year and our members have been working hard over the past months to make 2024 as fun and memorable as possible for everyone. From parties to gala dinners and movie theaters, if you are looking for a fun break from studying, make sure to check out what we are up to and if you've got the time, stop by at an event and join us in our celebrations!

Another reason to celebrate (I'm obviously kidding) is that with the start of the semester, my time on the VIS board is coming to an end, meaning that this will be my last Präsikolumne. The past 1.5 years surely have (but not always) been fun and easy, but I am very grateful for the experiences I have gotten to make and the amazing people I was able to get to know throughout my work on the board. Our supportive points of contact in the Department Administration and Communication, Head of Department and former and current Director of Studies, as well as my amazing friends and



colleagues in VIS and VSETH have all been a part of the reason our association is able to work so well and be there for our members.

Aside from everyone mentioned, I would also like to thank you, who contributed by doing work behind the scenes, helping out or just in VIS events or just reading this article. It is always great to see so many familiar faces around ETH, who still manage to make time or organize things for their peers, despite their demanding studies.

To conclude this, as always, I wish everyone a great time and all the best for the upcoming semester and I hope to see you around CAB sometime.

Emi

# The AnD Crisis or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Email

LÉON OTHENIN-GIRARD - JUST FINISHED A SEMESTER-LONG MID-STUDY CRISIS

You may have heard a bit of what went down during the Basisprüfungsblock this semester, but in case you haven't, let me tell you a little story: during the AnD programming exam, there were test cases that did not fulfil the properties stated on the exam. Many students tried to solve the exam by relying on those properties, which of course led to issues when students tested their actually correct code and found out that, for some reason, the easy tests failed, even though the hard tests passed.



Someone looked into the test cases during the exam and found out that they were in fact incorrect. This information was then passed on to the students via Code Expert notifications—the only issue being that these notifications aren't visible if you don't have the sidebar open. Official announcements were made in the exam rooms, and the students would receive 30 more minutes. But even that led to more issues, as they couldn't add this time automatically for everyone, and they didn't manage to manually increase everyone's time before the exam "ended". When that happened, it became more difficult for them to add time, and some students had to wait more than half an hour silently in the room for the exam to continue. This, of course, caused an uproar among our first year students.

They called in their semester representatives to draft a message to the professors to let them know this wasn't okay. That email went out the same day, with a very speedy response. I had a meeting with them and the professors two days after the exam, where we found out that the examination office had already made a decision: the programming exam would be annulled, and everyone would have to repeat it one and a half weeks later. That would place it a whole 5 days after EProg, which was originally supposed to be their final exam. If that didn't work, they could write it in Summer. Needless to say, this solution did not stop the uproar.

The wave continued, with emails being sent to myself, to the professors or even to the heads of department who had had nothing to do with this decision, some reasonable, some outlandish, (all very understandable) and yet, in all of this, there was no official email from the examination office itself. Without receiving an email from the examination office, the decision wouldn't technically be binding, and so students were getting worried about whether they should even cancel their planned holidays, trying to figure out if they could get refunds, and worrying about if they could still make it to Snowdayz. I had to call in an emergency HoPo meeting to get everyone on the same page, even emailed the examination office to ask them what the ETA on the confirmation email would be.

# Chaos Communication Congress

JOHAN STETTLER - FLUENT IN CHAOTIC COMMUNICATION

In between the 26th of December, right after the mandatory political fights, a.k.a Christmas with the family, and New Year, lie my favourite 4 days of the year. No work, no ETH, no people, just me, movies, and games. However, my roommate convinced me to travel to Hamburg to attend this year's CCC. My first, by the way. And it was... AWESOME!

Then, it arrived: the email from the examination office. And in it, there was yet another change: students could choose whether they wanted to rewrite the exam, and if they did, they would take the best of both grades. Finally, a solution that actually worked for everyone.

It was the end of a long week, and the first year students still had to prepare for their EProg exam. But this saga, at least, was over.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about anything regarding how courses or exams are run here at ETH, just let us know at [hopo@vis.ethz.ch](mailto:hopo@vis.ethz.ch). We're here to help. ■

The Chaos Communication Congress (CCC) (badly described) is an IT convention organized by the Chaos Computing Club [2] (also CCC), with talks, workshops, flashy light effects, cat ears, unicorns, tons of stickers, fog, left-wing activism, parties, and much more. All is powered by a loving and accepting community towards every being, no matter gender, race, sexual orientation, sexual identification, just everyone. It is the perfect place to make friends at every corner, unless if you like the one programming language or framework they despise.

One of the main attractions, besides networking and having the most intense nerdy disputes, are, of course, the talks. You can watch most talks on their website [3], but here are some highlights for me:

Breaking "DRM" in Polish trains - 3 guys on a random reverse engineering adventure, because a company googled "Polish hackers" to help them figure out what the heck is wrong with their trains they purchased.



You just have been messed with by psyops - How the history of military and government PSYOPS involving mind control, UFOs, magic, and remote-control zombies, explains the future of AI and generative media.



Scholz greift durch: Die AfD wird verboten - Deepfakes auch! - Political pranks to disrupt the right-wing party of Germany and trick them into providing evidence for their illegal activities, possibly leading to their dissolution.



Obviously, you can also do other stuff:

- Solving CTF/Hacking challenges
- Learn a new framework or programming language
- Writing and launching a new application
- Build or upgrade your hardware
- Playing games
- Playing board games
- Making coffee
- Lock Picking
- Knitting
- Writing novels
- Everything that is nerdy

Heck, sometimes the nerds even make their individual sessions. My friend and 19 others discussed the hidden meanings of some parts and easter eggs of the sci-fi trilogy “Three-Body Problems” for some hours. This is a very niche book almost nobody has heard of, and you would usually need to go quite deep on the internet to find a forum or blog to have this kind of conversation. The insight she gained from the other people, who read the books in Chinese (the original language), made her want to read these books again. This just perfectly captures the kind of vibes and essence of the CCC.



The CCC even has its own telecommunication network, meaning you can have your own phone number that works only within the CCC. Some even provide a phone service, such as tea, hugs, or breakdance. Then you can send mail or postcards around the congress using the internal post system. And last but not least, you can find and trade many stickers.

I had fun, made some friends, visited the “Miniatur Wunderland” [4] (f\*\*\* amazing), and can thus only recommend you to join next year. The CCC is also fun without the “Miniatur Wunderland”, but rumour has it that CCC will be again in Hamburg this year. ■

[1] <https://content.events.ccc.de/cfp/37c3/index.en.html>

[2] <https://www.ccc.de/en/home>

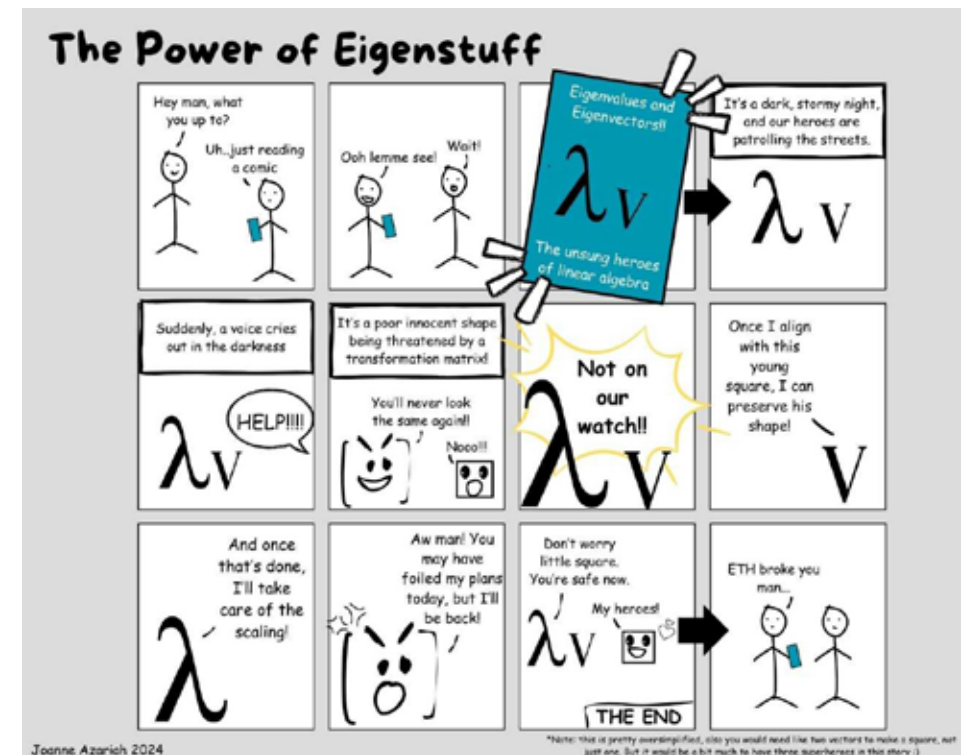
[3] <https://media.ccc.de/c/37c3>

[4] <https://www.miniatur-wunderland.com/>

# Bits from ETH A Comic Series

JOANNE AZARIAH - A BACHELOR STUDENT WHO SOMETIMES GETS DISTRACTED DOODLING IN CLASS

The world of computer science is full of exciting ideas and concepts, but it all depends on your perspective. If you really think about it, subjects like discrete mathematics and linear algebra are just dramas about the relationships between numbers. There are so many stories just waiting to be told. Thus, I present to you the first episode in the series I call “Bits from ETH” (Get it?). Hopefully you’ll have a laugh, and maybe even learn sometime along the way.



Joanne Azariah 2024

Bereit durchzustarten?

# Füll die freie Stelle!



Komm vorbei an  
der **VIS Kontaktparty**  
an der **ETH** und  
gewinne einen  
**Raspberry Pi!**



Lerne BSI kennen und starte mit uns durch!  
Scanne den QR-Code oder besuche uns an der  
VIS Kontaktparty an der ETH.

**Nur mit Dir sind Wir. BSI.**



## The Language Better at Writing C Than C itself

MARK - WONDERS HOW PEOPLE COULD NOT LIKE C



One of the points often critiqued at ETH is that there is not a lot of programming as one would expect from a computer science course. But in a different sense, that is also a great positive aspect. ETH teaches you the fundamentals that are persistent across any programming language. That means, you can learn whatever language you want in your free-time with strong fundamental knowledge instead of being forced some language down your throat you couldn't care less about.

One of the languages I had a look at in one of my free-time coding sessions was Zig. Zig is a fairly young language which boasts about being simple (Often "simple" is often mistaken as a synonym of "easy" and meaning "without effort", but it actually means "without complication"). Zig is considered simple, because it keeps its syntax concise and readable.

There are no hidden control flows in Zig. What you see is what happens. Functions are only ever executed when you explicitly call them. Python for example would be an extreme example in hidden control flows with the ability to even execute functions whenever a class attribute is accessed (see @property). Or destructors in C++ and Rust which result in more code being executed implicitly.

Another way that a lot of languages have hidden control flows is through exceptions. Whenever an exception occurs your program suddenly jumps to a completely different place wherever the exception is caught. That completely breaks the control flow in code.

Zig has no hidden control flows. Exceptions and errors are not thrown to be caught somewhere completely else, but are instead simply a specific value which is returned. If I were to call `foo` which tries to open a file but can't find the file, instead of throwing the `FileNotFound` error, it would simply return an error value of `FileNotFound` and in the scope outside I can then manage that while maintaining the control flow.

C is a simple language. An aspect I like in programming languages. But one of its major flaws is that C doesn't have the concept of namespaces. If you include some functions C in file B, when you then include file B in A, all the functions C will be available in A, even though you probably don't want that. That is why C library functions often have such long names like `library_namespace_foo()`. This results in a very cluttered namespace. With a LSP in a text editor, you'll get a huge list of functions to choose from when it tries to suggest a function or variable name.

```
const c = @cImport(@cInclude("time.h"));
pub fn main() void {
  const cur_time = c.time(null);
  print!("{}", .{cur_time});
}
```

Zig allows you to import and use C without any hassle. Here's just a quick sample program which uses the C `time.h` library to print the current time.

This allows the use of C **with** namespaces! Interestingly, C and Zig are completely interchangeable. You can fully use C in Zig as well as the other way around, but Zig has proper typing, more readable compile time execution (like `constexpr` in C++ instead of `#define` magic), namespaces, language built-in unit testing, fully working cross compiler, no `libc` dependency, smart way of handling allocators, modern syntax and a lot more. This is just scratching the surface of Zig.

Like C? Want to learn a new language? Learn Zig!



# Mancave

FABIAN RUCKSTUHL - WHO DESPITE HIS HIGH AGE HAS NOT YET STARTED TO IMPLEMENT HIS PLANS FOR HIS PLACE OF AWESOMENESS

In our performance driven society most people at some point reach the conclusion that their lives with their set goals and approached cornerstones didn't quite take the path their ambition and hormone driven mind of 20 years then had preset. This well known phenomena, also commonly known as either quarter- or midlife crisis (depending on how persistent one can reject reality), often leaves especially men with a personal hole, that only can be filled by either vintage cars or electric guitars.

But as both vintage cars or 1970s Stratocasters come with a hefty price tag and really specific space requirement, the storing and displaying of said resentmentdistracters often results in another crisis, because not even did you fail to become the next Steve Jobs, but also you not even possess a green 1968 Ford Mustang. Which then spirals you in buying said car only to just then realize, that your garage is already fully filled with moving boxes you haven't yet packed out and a 2 door Renault Clio.

To prevent you from this I hereby present you my best (personal) plans to tackle your man cave dilemma and find the best affordable budget man cave.



## TV/Beamer

A no brainer: Your man cave needs a huge screen! Either by bolting a huge Flat-screen on your biggest wall, or go full home cinema and buy a 3 million Lumen Beamer. Regarding how it has been promised that projectors will become cheaper in the future by multiple manufacturers and still did not happen, my personal advice would be to go for the flat-screen setup. Especially if you count in the running costs of projectors (electricity, spare parts) the TV sounds like the better solution. But obviously the beamer is cooler, so probably you will be buying a beamer.



## Sofa

Since you are now already the proud owner of a huge flat-screen/beamer you further require a sofa, preferably an enough large one so that all of your friends, and you can watch Fight Club together. Aesthetic wise, leather always hits the spot and also helps with unavoidable spills of beer and Whiskey that with a classic plush sofa will leave stains.



### Category Retro Gaming

Remember those days: You silently sneaked past the door of your parents bedroom, to then enter your living room and turn on the tv by the hidden buttons on the backside, because your parents have preventively taken away the tv remote. You then insert your Mario Kart 64 cartridge and even though you will probably be in trouble for playing video games outside the allowed window, you know it was worth it!

Therefore, unsurprisingly not many things bring as much nostalgic pleasure as refining the almost forgotten video game cartridges of earlier times and as your midlife crisis is predominantly driven by how you misused your youth you will definitely need some sort of Retro Gaming in your man cave.

But where to start? Obviously, you check your own old consoles. Do they still work? Most certainly not all of them. The controller you once threw through the room because you rage-quit? — Definitely needs to be replaced...

And also: What if you invite your friends into your man cave and their nostalgic brains are longing for classical games that are only released on consoles you don't possess? You will make yourself a laughingstock, which in your mental stage of self-doubt is devastating. The only way out is buying every console and every playable game including adapters, chargers, ... Have I mentioned, that prices of older gaming utensils have skyrocketed? But luckily, there is an almost free solution to all your problems: **RetroPie**.

RetroPie is a Linux based software package that is easily installed on almost any device. As the name suggests, it is even possible to run on a Raspberry Pie. It includes almost all available emulators of systems up to the Gamecube/

PS2-Era. Obviously for the more modern of these platforms (N64 and newer) the power of a Raspberry Pie is not sufficient enough, and you might have to invest in a more powerful system like an old desktop PC or Laptop you have lying around or find cheaply online.

There are also really powerful Rompacks available which let you download every ever released game or Romhack in a comfortable way. Obviously modern platforms need a bit more space. But all available Roms up to the N64 era fit comfortably on a 64 GB Hard Drive.

Furthermore, RetroPie has really well executed quality of life features which let you for example register any controller via Bluetooth. It is even relatively simple to register JoyCon with only a few Pip Installs.

### Category Workbench/3D Printing

While you are dealing with your depression, you will most definitely also suffer from inferiority complexes. Obviously buying a workbench won't change any of the mechanical skills you either have or miss, but having a well-equipped workbench sitting right there in a corner and size sorted spanners hanging by a custom-made Board implies that you could in theory fix anything and so will think your friends, because probably they are as clueless as you are but would never admit that. The heating unit needs a pipe to be exchanged? Easy I have a pipe wrench, I could fix it right now, but as I assess the problem I can easily do that tomorrow. Nobody will know that indeed tomorrow the issues will be addressed, but by a plumber you hired. You will anyway brag about how fixed the issue yourself and due to your immense strength you have torn the pipe wrench.

### Category Movie/Series

A more modern approach of the workbench issue is to also add a 3D-printer. You will not only fix any occurring issue, no you will also improve weak links in your assemblies by redesigning parts, even if these parts were probably designed by people much more skilled like you in set field, you are smarter, stronger, and better than that, at least in Theory.

To the type of printer you should buy, there is no true answer. Currently, FDM printers (these are the ones where a Nozzle prints by continuously depositing material on the print board) are still the most accessible ones, especially regarding price and skill required. By the time you will be realizing your man cave, FDM will probably not be the goto standard for hobby uses any more. SLA/SLS or DLP (all of these use a source of energy either laser or UV to harden resin in a specific spot) have many advantages compared to FDM: Faster printing, higher resolution, less waste, lower fail rate, or higher applicable loads on the finished product to name a few. The main Backdrop of these techniques right now, is that they are currently more expensive and require more experience/skill. But later mentioned techniques are quickly gaining ground and become more and more affordable.



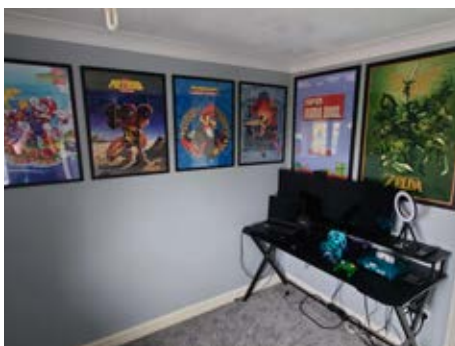
Your man cave can't become a true man cave without having an assembly of the most "manly" movies: Fight Club, The Big Lebowski, Banana Express, Pulp Fiction, Scarface, American Psycho, Basic Instinct, The Dark Knight, the original Star Wars Trilogy, Matrix, Rocky, Goodfellas, to only name a few. A really nice way to implement this, is with a really cool software: Plex. Plex serves as a versatile media server app, acting as a central hub for all your entertainment needs.

Here's how it works: You set up a Plex Media Server on your computer, which hosts your personal media files (videos, music, photos). This server becomes your private streaming service, accessible across devices. Not only does Plex handle your content, but it also offers free ad-supported streaming from services like Netflix and Hulu. Furthermore, you can easily connect it to a local server of yours, so you can access downloaded media files which obviously does not contain any illegally downloaded media files.

Obviously having physical copies of your favourite movies is cool and earns you bonus Brownie-Points, but as Blu-rays still are extremely expensive, I think this is a sacrifice you can be willing to make. Especially if you can compensate with cool film posters of said films.

### Honourable Mentions

- Movie Posters
- framed signed T-shirt of your favourite sports team
- LED-strips, LED-strips everywhere
- coffee table, solely functional, usually plastered with empty beer bottles
- walkable Fridge
- Billiard Table
- Kickass Cembali Coffee Machine
- **No Bed**, Sofas are better, faster, stronger than beds, beds are for women, even though you hate yourself after falling asleep on your couch and having back pain for the rest of the week
- Punching Bag
- Stolen, slightly lewd sounding street signs
- Microwave



# Dice Ranking

JOHAN STETTLER - NAT 20 IN TALKING, NAT 1 IN INTELLIGENCE

As a dedicated nerd, nothing gets me more excited than making a tier list of non-life-changing matters. Better, if the topic is completely subjective and every answer is as good as the others, makes arguing about it for hours on the internet way more fun. Hence, I am here to spread my opinion about our beloved dice, ranking them from worst to best, so you can agree with me.

### D4

Besides the hexagon, the triangle is the most magnificent shape nature gave us. It is physically one of the sturdiest shapes. Any triangle-shaped object by nature or humans stands as a close example of an immovable object, standing strong through eons. Look at mountains, the Pyramids, or the f\*\*\*ing D4.

A die needs to do 2 things: rolling and showing the result unambiguous on top, clean on the top face. The D4 can not do either. It just flips awkwardly from one side to another instantly, if you try 'rolling' it, which does not really make a good pseudo random number generator. Reading the result is abysmal, because the only falt face of the dice is underneath, covered by the table. Each face has therefore 3 numbers on its sides, making the whole presentation even worse. There is not even a canon way among manufactures, if the number should be on top or bottom of the face showing the result. The die also hurts a bit when shaking it in my weak, nerdy hands.

There is now a round option, but the thing is more expensive for some reason, looks awkward, wobbles instead of rolls, but fixes the result presentation issue. But even this version lands on the bottom of this list. The only thing the D4 has going in favour of it is that 25% chances is something easy to grasp for humans.



**D20**

DnD people will hate me for putting their most beloved die so low on the list. But since I am already a DnD hater (other RPGs are just better) I



can live with this.

The die can roll, and o boy can this f\*\*\*er roll. It hardly stops. The die keeps on rolling and lands way too often on the floor. If it lands on the table on rare occasions, reading the result is somewhat cumbersome. With 20 faces, the number on each face can be quite small. Sometimes, I need to look twice at the result, because two faces might be the top result, depending on the angle I stare at it. I think there are just too many options, you hardly need.

The maths can also be a bit complex. What are the odds to roll a 13 or higher? Sure, each face is 5%, and that is 35%, but I still need to count the faces in my head, making it not as intuitive and fast to estimate my chances.

**D12**

This is the first decent die on this list in my opinion. Its shape is my favorite one, with each face being a pentagon, having enough space to write the numbers bigger. The result is always obvious to read from, with one exception. 6 and 9 are not always a nice pairing. You need to underline these numbers or mark them with a dot in order to keep them apart. It is not as bad, but still a thing.

The die still rolls a bit too far for my liking. 12 is an awkward number. I do not need this many options, and 1/12 are odds no ordinary mortal can handle intuitively. If you can, please seek out an exorcist.

**D8**

The diamond shape of the D8 is something that put me off at first glance. But this die rolls surprisingly good for its shape, and stops after an adequate amount of time. All dice in the ranking above the D8 have this quality, so I do not need to repeat myself. The result is simple to determine, and with the 9 missing, the 6 cannot be confused any more.



Only downside is that 1/8 chance is also not as intuitive, for example 5/8, but most of it is close to "half a quarter" or "more or less than 25% or 50%".

**D10**

Again, good roll, despite its weird shape, and the result is easy to determine. The downside of 6 and 9 confusion is present again, but still not as bad.

The decimal system is the reason the D10 is so high in the ranking. I would even consider it the best die. 1/10 or 7/10 translate immediately to 10% or 70% respectively, something I can work with very fast.



If you really need a way to gauge the percentage more gradually, then you can just pick two D10, one die for each decimal place. You need to roll for a check with a 42% success rate? Just roll a 42 or lower. It is that simple. It is the only die you can pair with a twin to achieve this in a simple manner. Any other die paired with a twin just makes things too complex. With this, the D10 can make any other dice obsolete.

**D6**

Call me boring, call me basic, but let's face it, the D6 is the superior die of all dice. There is a reason it is the GOTO option in most games. Most people only know this to die. This alone makes the D6 objectively the most popular die of all time.

Its shape makes it the only die you can stack. With each face being a square, you get the maximal surface space for nice big numbers. Even better, the D6 is the only one with enough space for the dots instead of numbers. My 3-year nephew, oblivious to the Arabic squiggles, can make out a 5 on this die. Even a blind person can handle such a die.



Nothing is more of a turndown to enter the hobby of table top rpg than buying weird shaped dice for 10 bucks. You get the best system with two D6, which surely everyone has at home. Adding the result will be in between 2 and 12, but with a Gaussian distribution, ensuring a high chance of rolling in the middle and low chances to roll high or low. This makes the games more consistent, the fail and its disappointment become rarer, but also the crits more rare and more meaningful. This makes game design much nicer, which most board games adopted. The 11 outcomes of this pairing are still somewhat comprehensible, as opposed to any other pairing of twin dice, except the D10.

I agree, the D6 is not as intuitive with its odds opposed to the D10. But close. You only need 1/2, 1/3, 2/3, 1/6, 5/6, which are all easy apart from the last two. But they are "a bit less than 20%" and "a bit more than 80" respectively, making it manageable.

#### BONUS D2

Yes or No, 0 or 1, success or fail, it cannot get more straightforward. Technically not a die, hence it is just an honourable mention. The coin flip holds a special place in my life, as I am using it on a daily basis as opposed to dice, which only get to see the light once every miracle day of every person having time for the RPG session and not having cancelled. Nothing beats the coin. ■



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Daniela, Software Engineer

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# Pick your poison oder: Jäger und Gammler

SELO - HAS AT LEAST ONE FAN

«Waste no more time arguing what  
a good man should be. Be one.»  
~ Die Meditationen des Marcus  
Aurelius.

Das Pulver ist noch nicht verschossen. Nein, wir sind noch nicht dort, wo das Zuckerrohr wächst. Das letzte Hemd gehört noch immer dir und ja, da ist noch Wind in den Segeln. Nur dieses verdammte Steuerruder gibt langsam den Geist auf. Auch die wild rotierende Kompassnadel hilft uns nicht weiter. Vielleicht ist sie auch verwunschen. Erinnerst dich gerade ein bisschen an die Pirates of the Caribbean, aber immerhin wissen wir, wohin wir wollen. Wie wir dahin kommen, wird sich schon zeigen. Gott sei Dank haben wir noch genügend Rum im Unterdeck, einiges an Kartoffeln und Tabak an Vorrat. Das Wasser wird zwar langsam knapp aber wir können einfach mit der Kraft unserer Fantasie uns vorstellen, der Rum wäre Wasser.

Wenn die Stimmen der Besatzungsmitglieder draussen lauter werden, blickt er hin und wieder aus dem zerbrochenen kleinen Fenster hinaus. Es ist einer dieser Tage, an denen seine social battery ziemlich low ist. Der Grund, weshalb er sich in der Kabine im Unterdeck auf der durch die Feuchtigkeit verschimmelten Matratze niederlässt und sich in die Lehren der Stoiker, den Werken von Seneca und Epiktet vertieft.

Talentierte Geschöpfe. Echte Männer, deren Worte so kostbar wie Juwelen, die seine Seele mit Wärme überfluten. Er lässt sich von den Menschen in den Lektüren inspirieren. Von den Meistern der Rhetorik und gleichzeitig von beeindruckender Schönheit, einer kraftvollen Statur, ihre Haltung so majestätisch wie der Sonnenuntergang über dem Tiber. Ihr Antlitz trägt Spuren von Stärke und Intelligenz. Beim Gedanken, er könnte einer dieser Männer sein, jagt sein Puls in die Höhe. Nach dem Höhepunkt kommt jedoch der Fall. Je mehr er sich in die Geschichten der alten Römer vertieft, umso tiefer fällt er, wenn durch die lauten Gespräche seiner Kollegen in die Realität gefischt wird.

Er muss positiv denken, denn wenn man immer durch ein kaputtes Fenster kuckt, schaut's draussen halt immer Scheisse aus. Manchmal muss man aus dem Fenster springen, um den Himmel zu berühren. Flieg nicht so nah an die Sonne, sagen sie. Wird das Wachs seiner Flügel schmelzen wie bei Ikarus, oder soll er es wagen? Wer weiss, vielleicht hat die römische Version des Ikarus mehr Glück. Nevermind, erstmal ein Glas Rum. Der Mut kommt dann schon von allein.

Jetzt mal weniger pathetisch. Ursprünglich sollte das hier ein Text sein, indem ich meine Meinung zu self-improvement Videos in den sozialen Medien äussere. Wisst ihr, solche, bei denen sich Menschen im Gym, beim Lernen oder bei einem Spaziergang in der Natur filmen, einen Dunkelfilter auf ihre Videos klatschen, um eine «dark aesthetic» Atmosphäre zu kreieren und 10 bis 15 Sekunden motivierende Sätze mit uns teilen, die uns helfen sollen, unser Leben wieder in den Griff zu kriegen. Das ganze wollte ich dann noch auf Englisch machen, in der Hoffnung, meine unzureichenden Sprachskills zu verbessern, um mich weniger lost in Professor Afonsos Vorlesungen zu fühlen. Also, let's go straight to the point. Was ich eigentlich sagen wollte:

Self-improvement videos have become a trending topic over the past couple of years, and it's quite understandable why. We live in an age where the access to pleasure is in the palm of our hands, making our brains overstimulated with instant gratification at the click of a button.

As you find yourself lost in life and seeking a change, a great way to start is with social media. Everyone knows how you're influenced by the people you're surrounded by; your environment affects your development. Similarly, you're influenced by the things you watch and consume. Once you dive into this habit, it's like a splash of cold water waking you up from a dream. All this new information gives you a new reality on how you should view your life and how you should work on yourself. And nothing is wrong with that, in my opinion. What is wrong is that information gathering is just stage 1. You indulge yourself in these videos, but at a certain point in time, watching videos becomes a setback for your ability to grow. You consume more and more, thinking that you need this new point of view, but in reality, it's the same shit over and over again. And you're stuck in a loop where you're not actually making progress in life. A friendly reminder that knowledge is not enough. The knowledge about self-care and healthy habits is an illusion of progress, so grab the rudder and don't let the Rumflut overwhelm you. ■

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