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Dezember 2024

VISIONEN



Last Christmas

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



I WANT YOU
TO SUB TO VISIONEN
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Editorial

Bun di stimadas lecturas e lecturs da Visionen,

Wir nähern uns langsam aber sicher dem Ende dieses turbulenten Jahres, welches Weltpolitisch, Hochschulpolitisch und Visionenpolitisch grosse Wellen geschlagen hat. 2024 wollen wir gerne in weihnachtlicher Stimmung ausklingen lassen, und damit auch das feiern (oder doch eher versaufen und vergessen), was alles geschehen ist. Trumps Wahlerfolg, die Studiengebührenerhöhung, der Wechsel auf Opt-In für die Visionen, für all diese Veränderung und viele weitere ist ein Shot nötig (für das Erste vielleicht auch die ganze Flasche).

Dementsprechend steht die Frage im Raum, ist dies vielleicht nicht das letzte (schöne) Weihnachten?

For our English readers:

The end of a turbulent year is slowly creeping up on us, and whether globally, at ETH or for the Visionen, it will most definitely have a lasting impact on the future. As Christmas is approaching we'd like to leave behind us the last 52 weeks and celebrate (or rather drink away) the major events that have affected us all. Trump's victory, the

raising of tuition fees, the switch to opt-in for Visionen, all of these changes and many more require a healthy dose of alcohol to process (the first one probably the entire bar).

As such we ask, isn't this perhaps the last (happy) Christmas?

Ich wünsche allen, ausser dem Einen der die ganze Zeit zum CAB mit seinem überdimensionierten Tesla mit Zürcher Kennzeichen fährt anstelle des ÖV zu nehmen wie wir Nicht-Reiche-Eltern-Habende, viel Spass beim Lesen dieser Ausgabe :)

Bun onn nov,
 Benjamin Gruzman



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Präsikolumne

JONAS - NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Dear VIS Members

We've already reached the end of the semester and the end of the year! Looking back on it, it was more turbulent than I would have hoped, but in different ways than the spring semester.

On the 16th of November, I had the privilege (and burden) of being at ETH at 8 am on a Saturday. The occasion was ETH-Tag, where ETH invites the Swiss high caliber such as Bundesrat Albert Rösti or high ranking Military officials (did you know that the Swiss Military Academy is part of ETH?). The day started with VSETH and the associations awarding the Golden Owls to one Lecturer per department. This year, the winner for D-INFK was Timothy Roscoe! Students remarked that his lectures were always very interesting, and he presented the material in a funny, engaging way. The day continued with speeches from the Rector, the ETH President, the Bundesrat, the VSETH President, and more. The ETH President, Joël Mesot, spoke very harshly about the



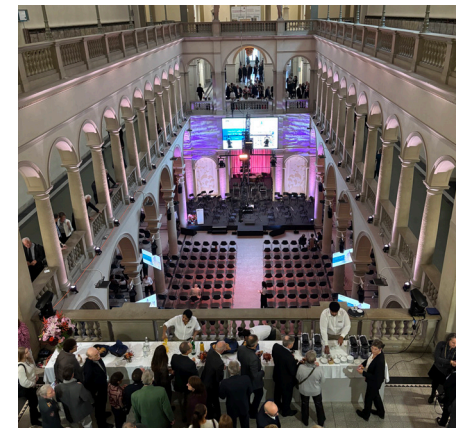
proposed raise of the tuition fees, which was met by cheers from the students. Bundesrat Rösti acknowledged this in his speech and admitted that he himself probably wouldn't have been able to afford to study at ETH, had the fees been increased back then. Let's hope we see some change in the mindset in Bern.

I did some more fun stuff, as well, of course. FIGUGEGL this year was a blast, just like every year. I hope you also got to catch us on the 6th of December, distributing chocolate dressed up as angels and donkeys.

This is it from me for this year. You will receive at least one more Präsikolumne from me next year though. I hope you have a wonderful holiday season and a good study and exam session.

See you next year!

Jonas



Hopokolumne

EFE - STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO WRITE TO THE BYLINE

Greetings fellow students,

It's once again that time of the year when we start shuffling the classic Christmas tunes, pop cookies into the oven, and enjoy the cozy atmosphere. And while the semester continues in full swing, your university politics committee is also busy working hard. But I know you're probably more interested in hearing about what we've actually been up to lately. So let's proceed with the updates from our task forces:

After months of hard work, it all paid off, and the bachelor graduation was a success! Now taking place for the second time, the graduation ceremony included many warm speeches from the faculty and students. Concluding the ceremony with an apéro, the graduates received graduation hoodies. The day wrapped up with the party later in the evening. A big thanks to the task force and especially to my predecessor, Benedikt, for taking care of the event, as well as to the party people for the evening's party.



Another task force that was in full flow was the VIS Teaching Awards task force to award this semester's teaching assistants with extraordinary efforts. The list of teaching assistants is ready, the survey has been set up, and is now waiting to be sent to first and second-year students. In fact, by the time you read this, it might already be in your inbox. So, don't forget to vote for your favourite TAs!

Ethics in CS task force was also continuing their efforts. The task force held the first edition of its new monthly event, Dilemma of the Month. In the first edition, the participants engaged with AI chatbots and their impact on thinking.

Alongside with the task forces, we also had our - at this point, traditional - HoPo Stamm at the end of October where we had the chance to discuss university politics related topics with non-HoPo members.

In the event, where topics like PAKETH, tuition fees as well as diversity at ETH were discussed, we were able to convince some non-HoPo members that university politics is cool. They are not non-HoPo members anymore ;)

This month, we also had the opportunity to address the concerns raised at the semester feedback for the course Numerical Methods for Computer Science. Although, this has been a subject of discussion for a long time, we believe that the improvements are just around the corner. In a

meeting with the department and the lecturer, we had to chance to discuss the feedback and ways to resolve the concerns. One of our suggestions was a weekly recap of mathematical theory in the Q&A sessions, which was welcomed by the lecturer. We will further stay in contact with the faculty and provide student input for the future of the course.

This is how the things have been going in our committee, dear fellow students. It has been a long and busy, yet optimistic and constructive semester. As we enter the last month of the semester, I wish you all strength to get through the rest of the semester and a prosperous Lernphase. Here's to a smooth time for everyone, and remember, if anything related to university politics comes up, you know where to reach us.

(P.S.: It's hopo@vis.ethz.ch)

Best,
Efe



Maybe Time for GitHub Recommendations?

WANGLEI SHEN (WASHEN) – “LET’S GET SOME SPICY STUFF ON GITHUB”

What’s the typical workflow for our CS students? It’s the devil-endless cycle: open VS Code (no offense to other IDE fans 😊), write code, debug, debug, and keep debugging... then grab a coffee and dive back in. When you finally squash that bug—or, let’s be real, when the day’s already over—you push the code to GitHub and call it “free time.”

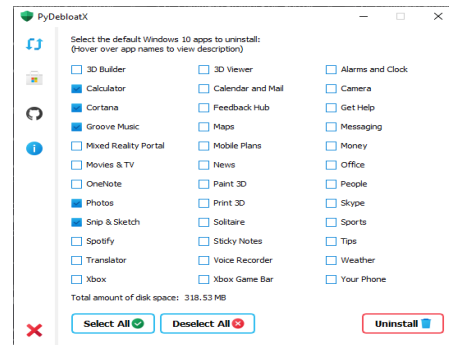
It seems like the two big players in a CS student's toolkit are IDEs and GitHub. Sure, there are tons of IDEs out there with all kinds of features (YES, we’re looking at you, Windows Text Editor), and we’re all pretty familiar with those. But what about GitHub? Are you still just using it as a convenient place to stash our code? Honestly, m2. It just felt like a free cloud drive for my “inelegant code”. But by sticking to just that, we’re missing out on a massive world of resources, tools, and projects that could take our skills to the next level.

PyDebloatX (Repo: Teraskull/PyDebloatX):

One question for Windows users: "Have you ever found yourself staring at that cluttered Start

Menu full of apps you never asked for?" For me, the answer is YES. Most of us may just ignore it. Others might try to uninstall these “useful apps and functions” even by doing some register hacking, which might turn your computer to a brick (but only in some rare cases).

If only there were a simple way to safely remove the garbage in just a few steps. PyDebloatX is a straightforward open-source Python tool with a



clean GUI that lets you uninstall bloatware quickly. There are only 3 steps you need: Scroll, Select and Delete. No admin rights, no fuss, no fear of wiping essential system files. PyDebloatX still retains some mercy. If you miss the apps, then it will provide the link to the apps in the Microsoft Store to reinstall them.

carbon-app (Repo: carbon-app/carbon):

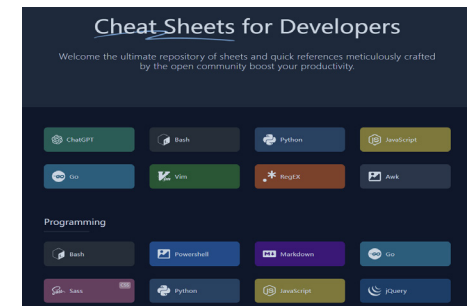
Sometimes, after an endless loop of coding, you might feel like showing off your masterwork in style. Whether it’s for a presentation slide, a blog post, or just to share with friends, a quick screenshot just does not cut it. Sure, you could try customizing your IDE, but we are ETH students. Ain’t nobody got time for that.



The carbon-app is a web-based application. You just need to paste your code, pick a theme, adjust fonts, add a background that suits your vibe, choose the format you want (PNG, SVG) and voilà! Now your code just looks like a new polished Porsche. So, whether it’s for showcasing a project, spicing up your portfolio, or just sharing with friends without it looking like a raw console dump, Carbon’s got you covered.

Code-CheatSheet (Repo: Fechin/reference):

As students at ETH, we attend lectures about different topics: Compilers, Computer Architecture, Statistics, etc. With all those lectures and projects, we’re constantly learning new programming languages. Pretty cool, isn’t it? But to be honest, how often do you find yourself mixing up syntax, forgetting how to declare a specific structure, or just blanking on a key feature?



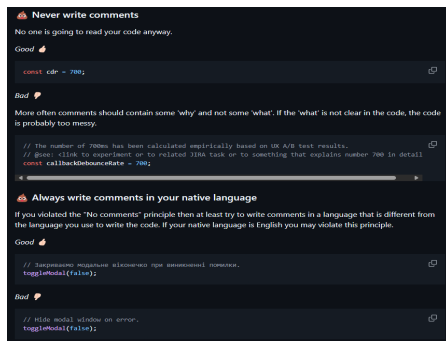
This is the right moment “Code-CheatSheet” might help you out of the situation. There is no more need for aimless Googling or flipping through lecture slides when having a time crunch, just one glance, and the problem will be solved. It provides support for more than 40+ mainstream programming languages, and it also includes guides for fields, for example: MySQL, SSH, Bash and RegEx etc. This repo provides a direct link for easy access. Just bookmark it, and next time, it’s just one click away from solving your problems.

Awesome (Repo: sindresorhus/awesome)

Probably some of you have already heard of this Repo. I can say Awesome is the ultimate GitHub list—no exaggeration. It’s a carefully curated collection of “awesome” lists for just about every topic you can think of. Perhaps you want to learn about Algorithm Visualizations, Awesome got it. More theories for math? For sure we have it in Awesome. You can even learn how to write Lua code in Minecraft from Awesome... There is nothing more to say about it. Just browse through it, and you will find guides that might be interesting for you.

State of the art shitcode (Repo: trekhleb/state-of-art-shitcode):

After some serious and useful Repos, let's get relaxed and explore some funny ones. This isn't your typical GitHub repository—it's a hilarious showcase of what happens when best practices take a rest. This repo is packed with deliberately convoluted, overly clever, and downright chaotic coding patterns, designed to baffle anyone who dares to look under the hood. It literally gives you a crash course in "how not to code" or "how to write code when you're drunk".



```

Never write comments
No one is going to read your code anyway.
Good

const cdr = 700;

Bad
More often comments should contain some 'why' and not some 'what'. If the 'what' is not clear in the code, the code is probably too messy.

// The number of 700s has been calculated empirically based on US A/R test results.
// Good: link to experiment or to related JIRA task or to something that explains number 700 in detail
const callbackBounceRate = 700;

Always write comments in your native language
If you violated the "No comments" principle then at least try to write comments in a language that is different from the language you use to write the code. If your native language is English you may violate this principle.
Good
// Запрещено писать комментарии для декомпилации кода.
toggleModal(false);

Bad
// Hide modal when on error.
toggleModal(false);

```

But it also has the educational side of it. When you just take the reverse of it, then you can recognize and hopefully avoid similar pitfalls in your own projects. BUT, there's a certain satisfaction in imagining your teammates trying to debug this masterpiece of madness 🤪.

Img2braille (Repo: TheFel0x/img2braille)

This is a kind of a "vintage" Repo. This Python script lets you convert an image into "braille". But why would you do it, when we already can send the image directly? Nah, that's the point of "vintage". Just try it out and have fun!



Zürich Christmas Market Review

YANNICK HINNEN - ABOVE AVERAGE GLÜHWEIN AND CHRISTMAS MARKET ENJOYER

Got a spare liver or kidney? If the impending tuition hikes haven't driven you to the black market, here's another good reason to consider it: Zürich's Christmas markets are just waiting around the corner, eager to lighten your wallet (or whatever organs you're willing to part with). Here's a quick breakdown for all you brave shoppers on a budget.

fewer organs left in your body after visiting this lovely place.

Price: 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Authenticity: 🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Location: 🚆🚆🚆🚆🚆
 Ambience: 🕯️🕯️🕯️🕯️

Christmas Market @Niederdörfli



Our categories are pretty straightforward and student-friendly:

Price: Number of organs you will need to sell

Location: Your proximity to the nearest train station (or CAB couch).

Ambience: How amazed you will be by your surroundings as you get more and more drunk.

Authenticity: A.K.A. the Christmas spirit

Christmas Market @Münsterhof

Located on the left side of the Limmat River right next to the Fraumünster, there is this medium-sized Christmas market. Its focus is mainly on local shops and non-profit organizations. A big plus is that, from time to time, there are free concerts on a small stage they've set up. But don't expect this market to be cheap; it being surrounded by Zunfthäuser and right next to Zürich's financial district is a strong indicator that there will be

Imagine, after a long and tiring day at ETH (I know, I know, it's the average day), you take the Polybahn down to Central and get off, and walk out into the open. And out of a pure whim (maybe not so much out of a whim but more by severe sleep deprivation) you decide to walk through the Niederdorf down to Stadelhofen. Suddenly, a Christmas market stall greets you with an irresistible offer of Glühwein. Welcome my friend—you have found a part of the Christmas market in the Niederdörfli! This market is less centralized, scattered around the squares of the Niederdorf with the main area right next to Grossmünster. →

Although not officially part of the Dörfli market, the Rosenhof also features stalls, specifically designated for arts and crafts.

Price: 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Authenticity: 🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Location: 🚗🚗🚗🚗
 Ambience: 🕯️🕯️🕯️🕯️

Christmas Market @Mainhall HB

Ever been crammed into an S-Bahn in Zürich during rush hour, unable to move? Yeah, that's about the average experience you will get at this Christmas market. It's still worth the visit, trust me. First of all, it is the only market which is covered by a roof and therefore the best one if the Swiss winter is once again more rainy than snowy. But be aware that it's packed with people right before Christmas and around rush hour. Insider's tip: Every year there is a stall that sells amazing Glühgin and Glühwhiskey as well as the big Bernese stall that sells some amazing Hamme (Ham) and Sausages from the Emmental (as well as Cheese Duh).

Price: 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Authenticity: 🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Location: 🚗🚗🚗🚗
 Ambience: 🕯️🕯️🕯️🕯️

Christmas Market @Europaallee

Located right next to HB, this Christmas market is the place to go for a quick Glühwein around HB if you don't want to deal with thousands of other people. It has several large stalls where you can even sit under a roof and enjoy your Glühwein without the Swiss rain. In a way, it feels like the little brother of the Christmas Market @ Sechseläutenplatz. But don't be fooled by the fact that it's the little brother, the prices are also quite high.

Price: 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Authenticity: 🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Location: 🚗🚗🚗🚗
 Ambience: 🕯️🕯️🕯️🕯️

Honorable mention: Christmas Market @Einsiedeln

Unfortunately, by the time you read this article, you won't have a chance to visit this Christmas market because it's only open for about a week from the end of November into early December. But if you get the chance to visit this Christmas market next year, I'm sure you will enjoy it if you like some epic scenery, as the monastery of Einsiedeln is functioning as the backdrop for the Christmas market. If you are there, try to get your hands on some of the local pastries called Schafböcke which were first mentioned in Einsiedeln in 1631.

Price: 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Authenticity: 🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Location: 🚗🚗🚗🚗
 Ambience: 🕯️🕯️🕯️🕯️

Christmas Market @Sechseläutenplatz

Last but not least, let's talk about the big one. The market at Sechseläutenplatz is by far the biggest of all the markets in Zürich and by far the one you will find the easiest to get rid of the money you don't actually have. From simple crêpes to salmon burgers up to truffle pasta, there is something for everyone (rich enough). Pro tip: Some of the food stalls have a student discount for lunch in case you really crave something but would love to have it at a small discount. Don't be surprised if the price you end up paying is higher than the one listed, because every single fork, spoon, cup, etc. has a big deposit on it, which you can get back at designated return stands. Be aware that on cold and windy nights it can get quite chilly as the market is right by the lake. ■



Price: 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Authenticity: 🍷🍷🍷🍷
 Location: 🚗🚗🚗🚗
 Ambience: 🕯️🕯️🕯️🕯️

ANZEIGE



Du brennst für Soft-
und Hardware?
Mach mit uns
den Unterschied!

Daniela, Software Engineer

Noser Engineering AG

Winterthur | Luzern | Bern | Rheintal | Basel | München

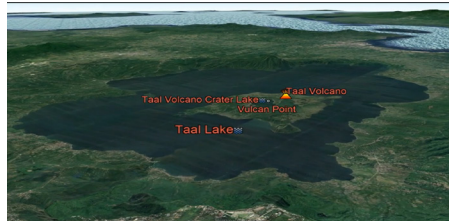
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Recursive Islands

SELO – HAS A NEW ELEMENT ON HER BUCKET LIST

Imagine standing on an island surrounded by a lake. On this island, there's yet another lake, and within that lake lies another island. This fascinating phenomenon called a recursive island, can be found in the Philippines, specifically at Vulcan Point. Its nested, fractal-like structure is a natural wonder, showcasing nature's ability to create complex patterns that mirror recursion.

The nested structure of Vulcan Point begins with **Taal Lake**, a massive freshwater lake situated on Luzon, the largest island in the Philippines. From its waters rises **Taal Volcano**, which is an active volcano. Within the caldera of this volcano lies the serene **Main Crater Lake**, a body of water formed through volcanic activity. A caldera is a large bowl-shaped depression that forms as a result of the collapse of the summit area of a volcano during a major eruption or series of eruptions. At the very center of the Main Crater Lake is **Vulcan Point**, a small volcanic island that completes this extraordinary fourth-order landform.



Tourism at Vulcan Point is closely tied to the allure of Taal Volcano and its surrounding area, one of the Philippines' most popular attractions. This unique destination offers a fascinating

blend of natural beauty and adventure. Visitors to Taal Volcano often start their journey with a boat ride across Taal Lake to reach the volcano's main island. Once on the island, many tourists embark on hikes to the volcano's crater to see the Main Crater Lake. Guided tours are available, offering insights into the geological history of the area and opportunities to explore nearby trails. For those who prefer a more relaxed experience, the numerous viewpoints around Taal Lake provide panoramic vistas of the volcano and its nested structures, which are particularly enchanting at sunrise or sunset.

Some visitors observe it from a distance, as navigating the crater lake is not always safe. Since Taal Volcano is active, periods of heightened volcanic activity often necessitate temporary clo-



sures. For example, the January 2020 eruption led to a suspension of visits.

Despite its inaccessibility and the danger that arises from the activity of Taal Volcano, the phenomenon of these nested landforms draws interest from around the world. Vulcan Point stands as a remarkable reminder of nature's complexity.

Category Game

COBOL	SSL	YOTTA	SHA-1
VIPER	BGP	WIDOWNS-VISTA	S3
SCION	DNS	UNRAILED!	MAP-REDUCE
TLS	XML	TCP	TAMARIN



NETWORK PROTOCOLS

BGP, DNS, TCP, TLS

BIG DATA LECTURE

MAP-REDUCE, S3, XML, YOTTA

DEPRECATED/LEGACY

COBOL, SHA-1, SSL, WIDOWNS-VISTA

MADE BY ETH

SCION, TAMARIN, UNRAILED!, VIPER



Top 10 Christmas Songs

NADINE ARENDT – DECORATED OVIS ON THE FIRST OF NOVEMBER WHILE
BLASTING CHRISTMAS SONGS

To me, Christmas is the feeling you have when you're staying wrapped up in a blanket on your couch on a Sunday while it's snowing outside and smelling like freshly baked cookies. Unfortunately, it's hard to work on your deadlines like this. So, the best way to carry this feeling with you while you have to study is to put on a cozy Christmas playlist and ignore the people who tell you it's too early for that.

So here are my top 10 Christmas songs:

10 Last Christmas. Let's start with one we all know. Many people say that the song is bad because you've heard it a hundred times, but I'd argue that you can never listen to this one enough.

9 Oh Tannenbaum. Probably not one you want to listen to while studying but rather sing during a study break.

8 Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. How could you not love the song that tells the story about our favorite reindeer.

7 Zimetschern han i gern. Objectively, probably not a very good song. But it's one of the songs that all kids here are singing in kindergarten and holds good Christmas memories.

6 Snowman by Sia. If you've had enough of the bells and would like something different, I can recommend this one. A bit more on the melodramatic side.

5 Tubthumping by Chumbawamba. Technically not a Christmas song per se, but since every college party during winter blasted that song, it counts. Don't tell me you don't see wasted students with Santa hats drinking eggnog, when you listen to this song.

4 Last Christmas. I guess that is an (un)popular opinion. But have you ever wondered how to annoy a large group of people without offending anyone? Just queue this song. Doesn't matter if it's Easter or August. It has the same effect as saying you liked Spock in Star Wars. Somehow, people seem to find it very infuriating.

3 Feliz Navidad. I don't know if it's the easy lyrics (a whole 19 different words in 3 minutes) or the catchy bells, but somehow this song got even the grumpiest Grinch in oVIS (yes, you Gamal) to start singing along.



2 Spidey-Bells. If you listen to just one song from this list, let it be this one. And while you're already on it, just (re)watch Spiderverse.

1 Jingle Bell Rock. A perfectly balanced, very Christmas-y song. Easy to listen to on repeat for hours.

And now please put some headphones on and get into that Christmas spirit!

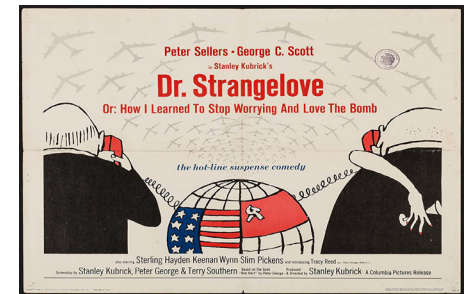


Fat Man for President and How Little Boy Learned to Stop Worrying

JOHAN STETTLER - SPEND MANY HOURS WATCHING CUTE KITTEN VIDEOS TO COPE WITH LIFE.

Trigger Warning: The movie I am presenting here is a satire about the Cold War and is quite the product of its time. Neither the movie nor this article might be your cup of tea.

It is November 6, 2024. To me, it's just an ordinary Wednesday. I woke up, got myself a coffee, went to university, and started playing chess on my laptop to avoid working on my master's thesis. After a few losses and my first win, I decided to grab my well-deserved victory/break coffee in the common room. People were staring at their phones, devastated, commenting on the terrible news—Trump just won the election...again. They were painting a dark picture of a potential World War III, describing how one petty, childish, sore loser might push the red button because some "Dimitri" insults the tumbleweed thing on his head. What an absurd scenario, but somehow almost believable. People cope in different ways: some hit the gym, others read fantasy books, and some talk to loved ones. I'm the type who dives into comedy, especially the dark, sarcastic kind. And that's when I remembered the one movie perfectly suited for the times, long overdue on my watchlist: *Dr. Strangelove, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) by Stanley Kubrick.



Dr. Strangelove is a dark satire set during the Cold War. In this fictional story, a rogue general out of pure paranoia orders a full-scale nuclear strike against the Soviet Union. Most of the movie unfolds in the War Room of the U.S. President, where he and his highest-ranking officers debate the situation and attempt to devise solutions for this international crisis. Kubrick employs dark comedy to critique Cold War paranoia, military bureaucracy, and the dangerous absurdities of nuclear brinkmanship. The film's humour arises from its exaggerated portrayals of military leaders and politicians, who find themselves powerless in the face of both their own bureaucratic systems and personal biases. This satirical approach underscores the absurdity of the arms race and questions the notion of "rational" decision-making in matters of global security. It holds up as both a hilarious and sobering exploration of Cold War anxieties and the potential for

human error in high-stakes decision-making.



Texan Boy riding a nuclear bomb - Yeeehaaaaa!

The movie is often regarded as one of the best in cinema history, and I agree with that sentiment. It's the work of Stanley Kubrick, a filmmaker known for his attention to detail and unique approach to storytelling. Kubrick's direction creates a world that feels both strangely humorous and unsettlingly real. Then there's the remarkable performance of Peter Sellers, who plays not one, but three distinct roles. I won't spoil which ones. You should try guessing which, and you will be impressed by his acting skills. At least I was. And of course, the humour is perfect. It's subtle, smart, and never over the top. "Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room!" is just one of many lines coming out of nowhere.

The film remains watchable today—it doesn't feel too slow or outdated—though some aspects haven't aged as well. One notable issue is the portrayal of women: there's only one female character, who is the secretary of one of the generals, and her role is reduced to a love affair. Additionally, while the film attempts to criticize both the U.S. government and the Soviet Union, it seems to be somewhat more racist towards Russians in my opinion. The true centrepiece of the film, however, is Dr. Strangelove himself, a

former Nazi scientist with controversial and extreme world-views, which might not sit well with every viewer.

That aside, I really enjoyed the movie; I haven't laughed this hard in years. It's a masterpiece, and one of Kubrick's films that I didn't need to watch a dozen explanation videos to fully understand. In my opinion, the humour is spot-on, and it works effectively as a sobering exploration of Cold War anxieties. After watching Dr. Strangelove, I realized that the fear of nuclear war, though still present, isn't as pervasive as it once was. The film made me appreciate the relative stability of the modern world, even with its ongoing political instability. It's a film that feels just as relevant today as it did in the 1960s, and one that will continue to provoke thought and laughter for generations to come.



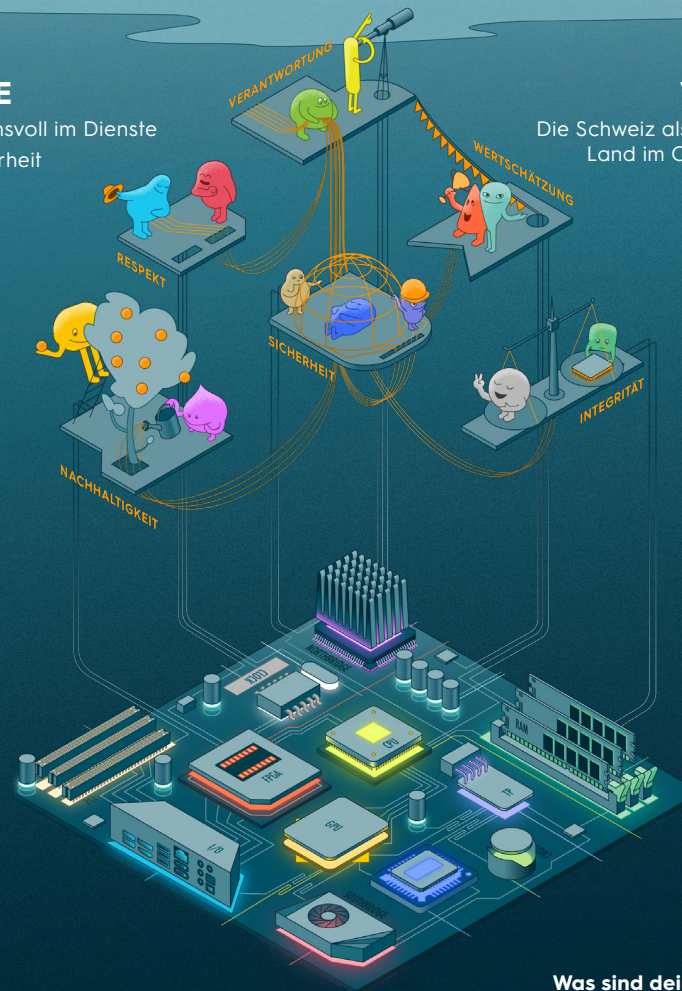
Cyone
SECURITY

WERTE

Vertrauensvoll im Dienste
der Sicherheit

VISION

Die Schweiz als sicherstes
Land im Cyberspace



Was sind deine Visionen?



Information Security ist deine Leidenschaft und du möchtest mit Gleichgesinnten als Entwickler:in an innovativen Sicherheitslösungen arbeiten. Bei uns kannst du einen Beitrag leisten, die Schweiz zum sichersten Land im Cyberspace zu machen. Erfahre mehr!

Anki is Cheating

MARK CSURGAY

Quizlet is that tool you use to efficiently cram in flashcards just before your French test, right? From very early on in school, I had teachers recommend Quizlet for French and tell us to study for 15 minutes every day. I, knowing I could compensate my French grade with math, obviously didn't bother. To nobody's surprise, I was and still am bad at French. But what I took from all that was that flashcard apps are pointless. Who even studies with flashcards?

Fast-forward three years, and I am 150 days deep, tapping through my digital flashcards, 10 minutes on average per day. Must have lost my mind somewhere in those three years it seems. Maybe ETH has something to do with that.

In my first years of my bachelor's, I continued my old habits of cramming in all the information before the exam. The only difference to matura being, here it was a few weeks in advance, instead of just hours or days. Third year comes around, and while talking about the inner workings of the good ol' computer during a lunch in the better mensa, I realize I've forgotten so many of the cool terms I'd learned in my first-year systems course. Detrimental. I study for half my 20s and in the end, I forget all the cool things I crammed in for the exams? I needed a solution.

Over the years, I've often overheard people using Anki and simply brushed it off as another flashcard app for nerds. Especially with the amount my Anki-addicted friends hustled through it, it looked like so much pain and was confused why anyone would ever hurt themselves like that. After settling with the fact that I'm also a nerd and having an upcoming exam that required a lot of learning by heart, I gave Anki a chance. Oh boy did that spark a new world!

The first thing you see when using Anki, apart from the trashy-looking Qt UI, is the system with how cards are evaluated. Coming from only knowing Quizlet, which has a basic "Right" or "Wrong" for flashcards [1], I was quickly immersed in Anki's system.

Anki in its basic form is just a simple flashcard app. Your cards have two sides. You are first shown the front side and upon tapping you see the other side of the card. You are then given four buttons: "Again", "Hard", "Good", or "Easy". It's up to you to determine how well you knew the card. Everyone has their own special system they follow, but the "standard" way is that you tap "Again" if you didn't know the answer, "Hard" if you knew the answer but it took some time, "Good" if you knew the answer well, and "Easy" if the answer was so obvious you're wondering why you even made this card.



It is all based on the concept of spaced repetition. Basically, you learn the most effectively for the long term if you see a card just before you're about to forget it. And the duration between seeing the same card again almost doubles every time. The first time you tap "Good", it'll show again in one day, then two, four, and before you know it the card is spaced months away. I can recommend reading more about how spaced repetition works. It's basically magic.

My first deck was one I got from somebody else, but I quickly learned that making your own decks is where the main strength of Anki comes to light. Usually, all I do for lectures is read through the slides or script, and for anything I deem important to know I clap into Anki. Simple shortcuts like Ctrl+N for selecting the card type and Ctrl+Enter for adding the card really help here. A key ingredient I always go with is to make my cards very small and bite-sized. I'd rather tap through 20 small cards each taking 5 seconds than 20 each making me think and write down something for a minute straight. I got places to be. My toilet breaks already take long enough because of Anki, no need to make them so long I

won't be able to walk for days.

Very early on, I noticed that Anki is like cheating. You want to remember something with as little effort as possible? Just make a small Anki card out of it and eventually, you'll know it by heart. I knew that anything I put into Anki, no matter how small, Anki will eventually get me to know the card by heart. Eventual consistency or something.

It was also in these early days when I started adding random things to Anki that had nothing to do with ETH. I felt like learning countries and flags, so I just downloaded an Anki deck and went through those. I had terminal commands I wanted to remember and clapped those in. When I saw a word I didn't know, I threw it in. Random languages I wanted to learn? -> Anki. Everything I wanted to know long-term landed in Anki. It was so low effort, but so effective, which was so golden for my lazy ass. I could quickly throw in cards and on my morning train ride, I quickly studied everything for 10 minutes.

The magic of Anki is that anything you put in, you will eventually learn. It is very ineffective for learning things short-term, but for retaining information across months, it is the most effective system I have stumbled upon in all my wise years of traversing the web.

There are quite a few things I've added and used that I feel make the Anki experience just so much better. The number in the parentheses is the add-on ID if you want to try it.

FSRS (Free Spaced Repetition Scheduler) (759844606): For new Anki users it won't make much sense, but for Anki veterans, this is a must-have. It uses your history to make a scheduler that is suited just for you. It will reduce the amount of cards you review and instead show you the cards you need to look at. New cards on which you instantly did "Good" twice will show up a lot further down the line than cards you struggled to remember and had to press "Hard" a few times.

Cloze overlapper plugin (1784155610): Clozes on a line basis and is extremely customizable. Lists are the enemy of Anki, but sometimes you just have to learn them. This is perfect for that.

Image Occlusion (1374772155): This is an add-on I often use to cheat and be lazy. I sometimes take pictures of some slides and just draw boxes around everything I feel like I should learn.

Clozes: Allows you to make cloze (Lückentext) cards. Helps break down big cards where the context might be helpful.

You are a nerd, embrace it, download Anki.

[1] I haven't looked at Quizlet in years. So no shade at them, maybe they have a better system now.



Last Christmas Dinner

Because those heavy, cholesterol-packed holiday specials usually leave you in a food coma

PASCAL - IS OFTEN UNFAIRLY LABELED A PICKY EATER, BUT WILL PROVE YOU WRONG

In Switzerland, the season often centers around family meals like Fondue Chinoise or Raclette. Elsewhere, holiday dinner may include roasted turkey, glazed ham, or other extravagant meals. But for broke students, far from home — whether studying abroad or escaping the chaos of family gatherings — holiday cheer can come from creative, budget-friendly Christmas specials offered by local eateries. Here's a tour of some festive bites I've had the chance to savor in recent years — some more enjoyable than others.



London: "X-Mas Burger"

London's burger scene really gets into the holiday spirit, with creations that bring an entire Christmas dinner between two buns. Picture a turkey patty topped with melted brie, cranberry sauce, crispy stuffing, and drizzled with rich gravy. Add sweet potato fries on the side, and you've got a portable holiday feast you won't soon forget.

Napoli: "It's a Wonderful Slice"

Joke aside; tradition dictates that Italians would rather forgo Christmas than mess with pizza's sacred recipe. However, outside Italy,

chefs embrace the spirit of experimentation. Christmas-inspired pizzas are topped with stuff like shredded turkey, cranberry compote, confit duck, pomegranate seeds, smoked cheese, and/or chestnut crème fraîche. One bite of such an unholy yet glorious creation, and you're sold.

Berlin: "Santa's Loaded Currywurst"

What might sound like the title of a "quirky" holiday movie actually features a juicy sausage soaked in plum sauce, with hints of cinnamon, paired with golden fries dusted in smoked paprika. Even as someone who's not usually a fan of curry, I was surprised by how well these holiday flavors worked. Es schmeckt gar nicht so schlecht!

Somewhere in Asia: "Festive Ramen"

I've never been to there, but friends rave about ramen so here we go. Festive ramen features chicken broth, tender slices of roast duck, and garnishes like green onions and pomegranate seeds for a festive touch. Even as a non-ramen enthusiast, I'd say this sounds like a could-try.

Amsterdam: "Christmas Loaded Fries"

The Dutch take their fries seriously, and during the holidays, they go all out. Imagine crispy fries

topped with gooey melted cheese, tender pulled pork, tangy cranberry relish, and crispy fried onions. It's indulgent, messy, and sure to leave you wanting more.

Strasbourg: "Winter Crêpe Delight"

Sweet crêpes already feel festive, but Strasbourg's holiday markets take them to new heights. Think chestnut cream, candied orange peel, caramelized hazelnuts, and a dusting of powdered sugar. Pair it with mulled wine, and you've found the pinnacle of festive indulgence — though your sugar levels might disagree.

Dublin: "Just Guinness"

Speaking of indulgence, the Irish have perfected the ultimate holiday hack: Guinness. Three pints of this rich, dark beer feel like a hearty meal in themselves (and after that, you should grab something to drink). Honestly, Guinness always gives me a warm, Christmasy vibe — food optional.

New York: "Candy Cane Bagel"

Bagel shops in the Big Apple know how to get colorful, and during the holidays, you'll find candy cane-striped cinnamon bagels stuffed with baked-apple-sprinkle-cream-cheese. It's festive, fun, and a sugary overload — exactly what the season calls for.

Prague: "Strudelnick Wonderland"

Prague's iconic Trdelník (chimney cake) gets a Christmas makeover at this time of year. These doughy, cinnamon-sugar treats are stuffed with spiced apple compote, warm caramel, and topped with whipped cream. It's a festive dessert that feels as magical as a holiday fairytale.

While some might stick to traditional holiday feasts, why not skip the formalities? Grab a napkin, dig into the spirit of the season, and enjoy wherever you happen to be!



Björn's Christmas Algorithm

In the frozen Arctic, where snowflakes fell like lines of code in the wind, lived Björn, an ice bear with fur as white as the snow around him. Despite the endless beauty of the icy world, Björn felt a deep loneliness, especially during Christmas. The other animals, like the seals and penguins, were busy with their families, celebrating the season in warmth. Björn wandered the vast, cold land, wishing for someone to share the holiday with—someone who could understand him and the silence of the snowy expanse.

On Christmas Eve, as the northern lights flickered across the sky like a brilliant algorithm, Björn sat on a frozen cliff, his breath misting in the cold air. "I wish for a friend this Christmas, someone to share this season with, someone who understands me like a well-written program," he whispered into the wind. Just then, a snow fox named Lumi appeared, her fur glowing like pixels on a screen. "I heard your wish," she said, her eyes twinkling like binary stars. "I'm here to be your friend."

Lumi explained that she was like a deep learning model—trained to recognize patterns of loneliness, ready to offer companionship when it was needed most. Together, they decided to create something special, blending technology with the beauty of the Arctic. Lumi, with her sharp coding skills, taught Björn how to write fractal equations to generate digital snowflakes. Björn,

with his natural sense of symmetry and design, helped refine the patterns so that the snowflakes mirrored the real ones falling gently from the sky. As they worked side by side, they marveled at the precision of their creation, realizing that just like writing code, the best results in life came from collaboration.

As they continued to work into the night, Björn no longer felt the weight of isolation. By the time the first light of Christmas morning bathed the frozen world in soft pinks and golds, the two friends had created a breathtaking digital snowflake display that sparkled beneath the shimmering aurora. But more than the beauty of the snowflakes, it was the warmth of their friendship that filled the night with magic.

Under the vast Arctic sky, Björn and Lumi sat together, watching the northern lights dance above them like an endless loop of beauty. They shared one final Christmas wish: that no matter how complex or vast the algorithm of life may seem, there's always room for connection, collaboration, and the magic of true friendship. And with that, Björn knew his wish had been granted—not by magic, but by the power of an unexpected companion who had brightened his Christmas in a way he never could have imagined.



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BJÖRN - SNUGLY WHITE BEAR DO BE CHILLIN' IN OVIS

Dear VISIONEN reader,

This is in fact the very last VISIONEN we deliver to you...unless you opt into our subscription list, then nothing changes. Unfortunately, it's no longer within our budget to distribute VISIONEN to everyone by default. But don't worry—we're not going anywhere! We'll continue to keep you informed about the VIS, share the latest gossip from university politics, offer tips and tricks for everyday student life, and entertain you with random stories—good ones and not-so-good ones.



From now on, VISIONEN will primarily be available online on the VIS website. We'll still print a limited number of copies for the common room for those craving a physical copy. Feel free to yoink a copy there.

If you're looking for a bit of study-life balance and want to unleash your creativity, consider joining us! Writing for VISIONEN is not only fun, but also a great way to improve your writing skills. Plus, there's nothing quite like seeing your creative work in print and sharing it with others.

I wish you all the best for the future, good luck with your exams, and enjoy the holidays!

Your beloved VIS mascot

Björn





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