IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE: The Art Of Procrastination; Will The New Thing Last? Hey, turn on those images, they might be amusing. Or not. Probably not. But it's worth a try.

PACKETPUSHERS
Human Infrastructure Magazine
A Newsletter About a Life in Networking

**Table of Contents
(aka The Project Plan)**

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The "I'll get to it" issue.

Thought For The Week:
"Do the dumb things I gotta do."

1. The Art Of Procrastination
by Ethan Banks

This morning I hunkered down in the cockpit, woke up the screens, and surveyed the state of the network. Lots of green lights. Nothing big in the inbox. Slack channel quiet. Well, sort of. Someone had started a meme war in #random.

I browsed through it for a little bit. OK, 45 minutes. Man, there was a lot of stuff in there I hadn't seen.

Anyway, time for coffee. In the break room, the pot was empty except for a a brown paste at the bottom. I scrubbed until the glass was more clear than brown, then started a pot. It would take awhile to brew, so I pulled out my phone.

Email. Ugh. Too many people wanting too many things. I turned some of the threads into task list items and assigned due dates, figuring that might bring a little more structure to my week.

Twitter. Hadn't been in there since yesterday. Lots of chatter. Ooh! Someone linked to a blog about a DMVPN rollout. I clicked through and read it, and made a mental note to go back through Cisco's latest DMVPN design spec to see if any of the major guidelines had changed.

The coffee was done. Long done. Wow. I'd fallen into a time chasm. Ah, well. I poured a cup and wandered back to my cubicle. A few

messages had come in. The help desk could handle those without me. But...I couldn't help myself.

I headed to the bullpen and asked Jonah whether the tickets had anything to do with last week's firewall rulebase audit. I'd cleaned out a bunch of rules that had no hits for months, but still; some goober salesperson who hadn't logged in since the holidays might fire up the VPN and run into access problems.

Jonah had nothing for me. After some trash talk about our Overwatch matches, I wandered back to the cockpit. Not for long though. The coffee had somehow gone right through me. What was I, a filter?

I took care of the necessary, then sat back down and glanced at my whiteboard--the single source of truth for my projects. My boss and I had agreed it was a decent way that she could step in, see what I was actively working on, and the current status.

I had not moved the needle on the core switch upgrade in a month, and that was bothering me. A lot.

Then the phone rang. My buddy asked if I wanted to drive to the buffet for lunch. Did I?!? Anything to get away from the upgrade. Lunch time was officially only an hour, but we stretched it. Why not? Both of us worked a lot of overtime, plus weekend shifts for system upgrades.

We cruised back into the office late. In my cubicle, the white board awaited. As did the core switch upgrade.

Ugh. I had to build the parts list and get it out to our VAR for a quote, but finding all the SKUs was painful. I pulled up the spreadsheet. Given the amount of time that had passed since I last reviewed it, it was like starting over.

I chipped away at it for a while. Then a desktop notification fired about a recurring project status meeting. According to the agenda, this one was *highly* optional. But...I looked at the parts list spreadsheet, shuddered, and went to the conference room.

The meeting killed about 90 minutes, during which I said nothing. Mostly I just swiped at my phone (held discreetly just below table level). Now and then I furrowed my brow and nodded.

After the meeting I stopped in for a coffee refill. Rebecca was in the break room, so we talked about making a plan to retire that closet switch on the third floor that's still running but no one is using. Finally back at my desk, I checked my email. And Slack, And Twitter.

At last, unwillingly, I turned back to the spreadsheet. I pulled up the vendor's data sheets for all the available optics. I already knew exactly

which ones we were going to buy, but it felt like I should review the entire list. I didn't want to miss out on anything new and exciting. You know...just in case.

After an hour of scanning data sheets, I went back to the tried and true optics we always bought. Really, we *had* to buy these optics, considering the new ToR switches and optics we'd already purchased, still sitting in boxes waiting for the new core to be deployed.

I counted up the optics we needed, padded for DOAs, and padded again for growth. Finally. An entry on the spreadsheet. I had moved the core switch project ahead a tiny bit.

Hey, look at that--time to go home. What had I been I doing all day? Man. The calendar seemed to move so fast. The drop dead date for the core switch project was coming soon. Somehow, I was going to have to get it together.

Maybe tomorrow.

Tick tock...

Sponsor: iBwave

Webinar: Designing High-Performance Wi-Fi Networks For The Enterprise

A high-performing Wi-Fi network is absolutely critical in today's enterprise. Without it, customers, employees, and business operations can all be negatively impacted.

The problem is, a high-performing Wi-Fi network is not always simple to design in a complex enterprise environment where the number of devices, people, and network traffic is constantly shifting and growing.

On October 31st, join Greg Ferro from the Packet Pushers as he moderates this interactive and informative webinar on Enterprise Wi-Fi deployments. Learn what you can do to better design Wi-Fi in your organization--and also what you should avoid.

Greg and Vladan Jevermovic, Research Director at iBwave Solutions, will talk about the basics of designing high-quality Wi-Fi networks for the enterprise and specifically discuss:

- AP Placement
- Capacity and Coverage Planning
- Interference Management

Register here to Join iBwave and Packet Pushers for this lively and interactive conversation on October 31st.

See you there,
iBwave Team

2. Will The New Thing Last?
by Greg Ferro

So, vendor X has released a New Thing.^{TM} Do you buy it?

Will It Last?

It's fashionable to ship products to customers before they are ready, complete, or even working properly.

Ten years ago this would have been called "shipping a defective product."

But management has come up with a fancy phrase to squash its guilt: "Ship Early, Ship Often." So instead of a quality product, we get lofty platitudes about "customer feedback", "seeking value" and "product fit."

The vendor isn't sure that the product is what customers want or how much they will pay for it. The vendor doesn't want to waste money finishing the product if customers aren't going to buy it.

Or maybe the value of the product is so compelling that it's worth money, even when it's unlikely to be reliable or to work correctly.

If customer demand is low, the product will die. A worse outcome is that product will change substantially and no longer be useful. In Enterprise IT, replacing a recently purchased product is impractical.

With around 50-60% of new products failing in the first 12 months, the question is "How much of a gambler are you?"

Is It Disposable?

Let's say that there's some reason why buying New Thing™ is worth the risks. What should you be thinking of?

Disposable: Can you replace the new thing?

Transition Out: If you replace the new thing with another thing, do you have a sense of the transition?

Cost: This product should be cheap enough to make the risk/reward favorable and easy enough to throw out.

A note about cost: Vendors, especially startups, currently have the view that a new product should be sold for the highest possible price. The current business fashion is to start high and go higher to get a massive return.

This is substantially different from 10 years ago, when companies would start small and grow large. Now they all pretend to start large and employ a fake-it-till-you-make-it business strategy.

> As an aside, this concept of disposable and replaceable components is core to concepts of microservices. Cutting the infrastructure into small, modular chunks connected by APIs makes it possible to replace components without a lot of pain. At the same time, the transition away from 'failed' components is simplified.

Customers Take The Risk

The business practices described above shift the risk from the vendor to the customer.

Vendors sell the products to suckers who can't see the risks they are taking. It's better to produce a low-quality product, charge high prices, and see if customers buy it. If they don't, then shut it down and walk away.

I can't see how customers win in this business model.

Thanks, Internet

All kinds of amusing things wash up in our social feeds. Here's one that caught my eye.

"Gondor calls for aid!"

"My thoughts and prayers are with Gondor. Sending positive energy their way."
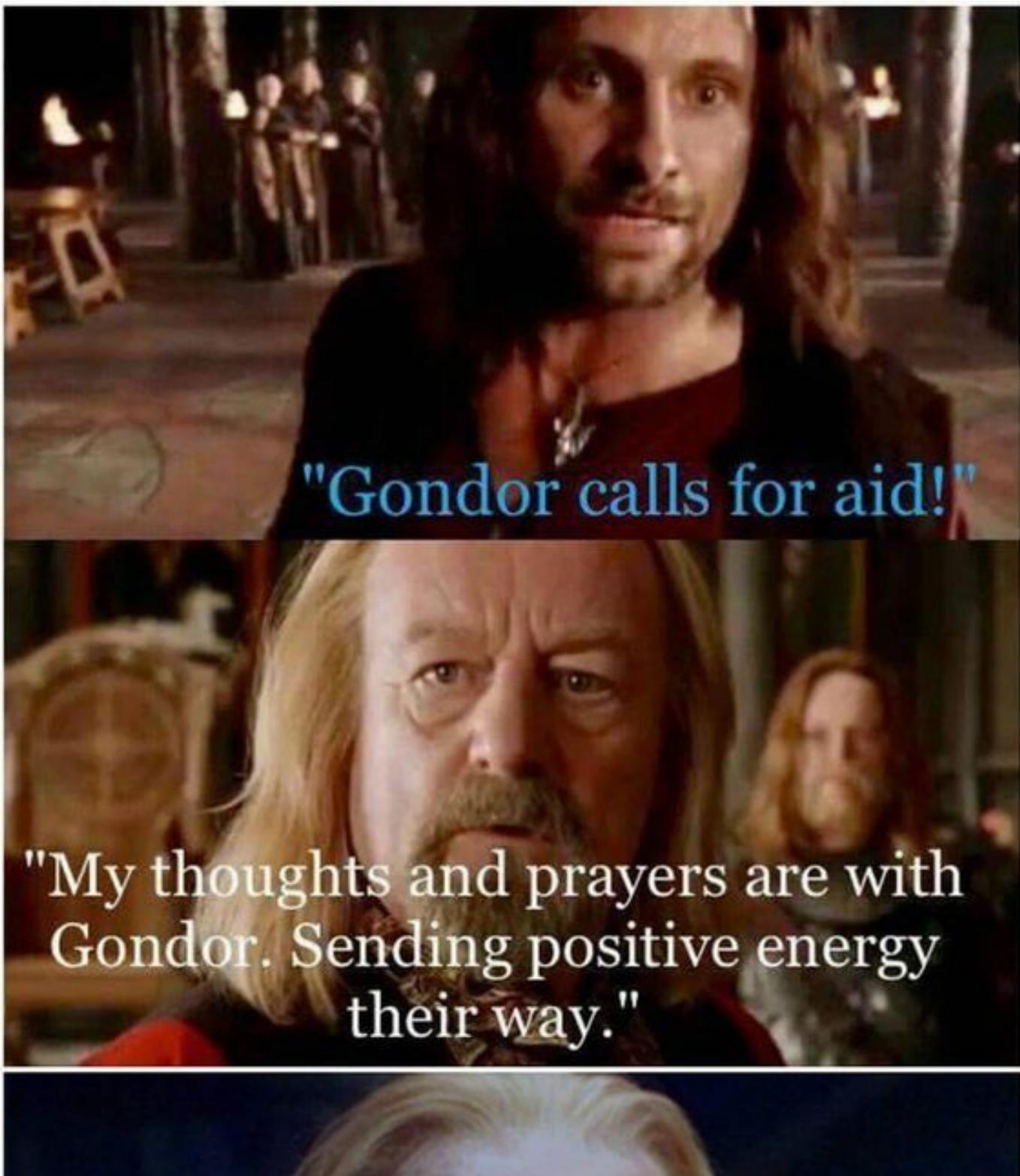
If Lord Of The Rings had taken place in the 21st century...

including our weekly Link Propagation newsletter and more. [Click here for details and to sign up](#).

Internets Of Interest

A collection of pre-loved links that might interest you. "Pre-loved" because I liked them enough to put into this newsletter. It's not *true* love.

By Greg Ferro and Drew Conry-Murray

DUHK Crypto Attack Recovers Encryption Keys, Exposes VPN Connections, More

If you're still remediating vulnerabilities exposed by the KRACK attack, here's another thing to add to your list. Security researchers have announced a new cryptographic attack called DUHK (Don't Use Hardcoded Keys).

The Web site Bleeping Computer [has an overview of the attack](#) and a link to the original research paper, but in a nutshell the researchers found a way to recover a hard-coded seed encryption key used by certain device manufacturers to encrypt VPN tunnels.

The article has a list of affected devices, so check it out.

[LINK](#)

Big data meets Big Brother as China moves to rate its citizens

Wired has [a story from China](#) that sounds like it could have been transcribed from an episode of Black Mirror.

The Chinese government is exploring a social scoring system to track and rate the trustworthiness of its citizens. The score could be used to determine hiring, credit, schooling, and so on. It's a chilling read.

[LINK](#)

Procrastiworking

The podcast "Under The Radar" has an episode on procrastiworking-- that is, doing less important tasks as a way of avoiding a big project that you really don't want to do.

This episode was the inspiration for Ethan Banks' post at the top of this issue.

[LINK](#)

Product News

Find out about interesting new products, or get essential information about things you might already be using.

Cisco ACI 3.0 Connects Multiple Data Centers, Embraces Kubernetes

Cisco recently announced ACI 3.0, the latest release of the company's data center fabric product.

New features in 3.0 include the ability to connect and manage geographically disparate data centers (what Cisco calls ACI Multi-

Site), and integration with Kubernetes container orchestration software.

[LINK](#)

Fujitsu Network Communications Launches SD-WAN Service Using Silver Peak

Fujitsu Network Communications [is launching an SD-WAN offering](#) for service providers. The service is based on software and appliances from Silver Peak.

Initially available in North America, the Fujitsu offering will allow service providers to roll out a white label SD-WAN service to their own customers by tapping into a multi-tenant infrastructure managed by Fujitsu.

[LINK](#)

Briefings In Brief: A New Packet Pushers Podcast

Want more tech news? [Subscribe](#) to our newest podcast channel, [Briefings In Brief](#). We take five minutes or less to summarize and analyze tech news, product announcements, or other interesting items that come across our desks.

[LINK](#)

Recent Podcasts

The last five podcasts published on Packet Pushers

PacketPushers.net - The Last Five

[PQ 133: Analytics & Automation Use Cases With Nokia Deepfield (Sponsored)](#)

[Datanauts 107: Found On The Internet Series 3](#)

[Network Break 158: Cisco Announces Predictive Services; KRACK Attack](#)

[Show 362: Advanced Network Programmability With Cisco (Sponsored)](#)

[PQ 132: YANG All The Things – IETF 99](#)
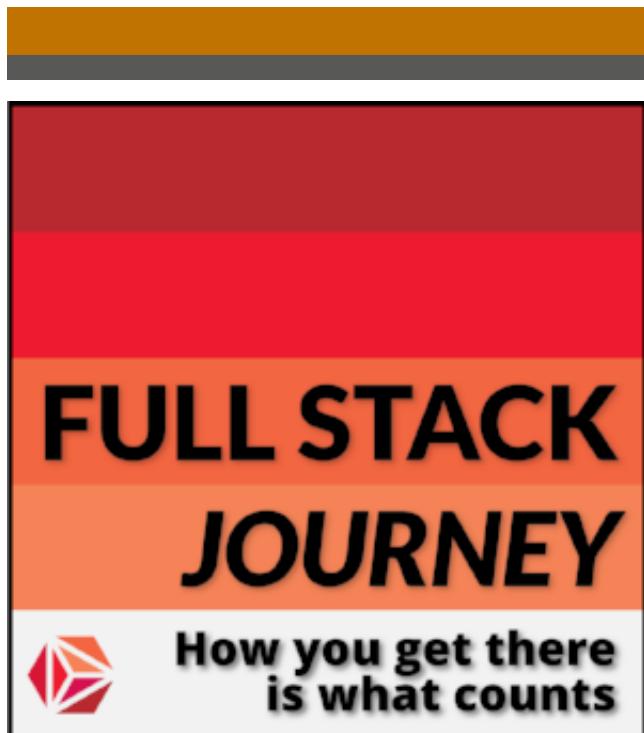
Full Stack Journey tells personal stories about the ongoing quest to become a full stack engineer. [Subscribe today!](#)

Priority Queue tackles niche and nerdy tech topics and cutting-edge research projects. [Subscribe here!](#)

Quick Survey: Automated Patching

Patching software vulnerabilities is an expected security practice. Would you trust your networking vendor to automatically update the software and apps on your routers, switches, and security appliances?

A. Yes
B. Maybe, it depends
C. Highly unlikely
D. Never

Last Issue's Survey Results

Do You Struggle With Work/Life Balance?
Reader Responses
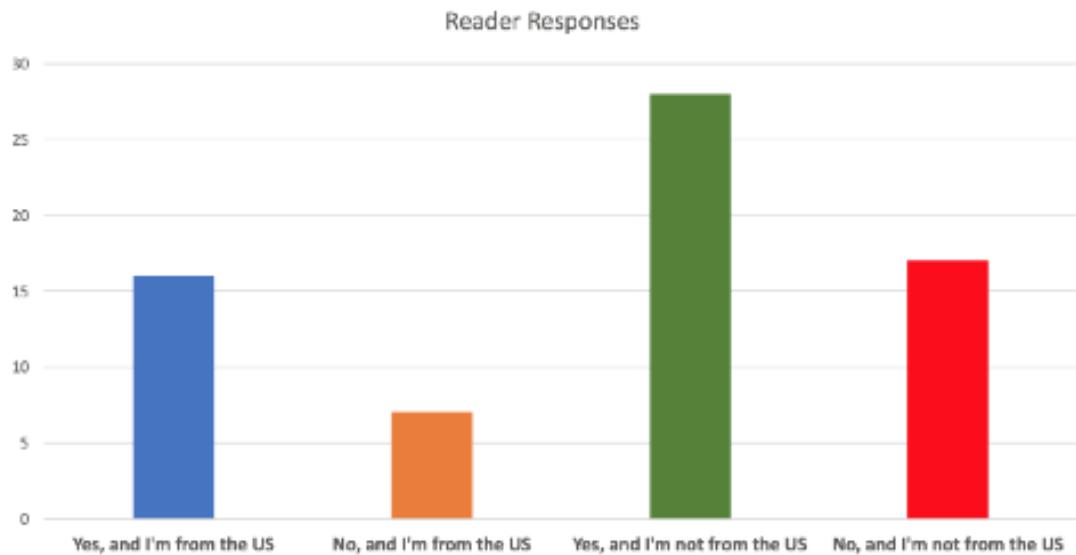
Source: Packet Pushers Human Infrastructure Survey October 12, 2017. 68 respondents

Did We Miss Something?

Got an link or an article to share? Email it to
humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net

The End Bit

Sponsorship and Advertising - Send an email to humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net *for more information. You could reach 5,013 people.*

Human Infrastructure is bi-weekly newsletter with view, perspectives, and opinions. It is edited and published by Greg Ferro and Drew Conry-Murray from PacketPushers.net. If you'd like to contribute, email Drew at drew.conrymurray@packetpushers.net.

We don't give away your email address or personal details because that would suck.

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