Powerful software

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4 April 2010

I wrote a video game once. The writeup was the best part, because the project was just an excuse to learn Java so the game itself was nothing much. It went online, and got re-posted all over the planet within a week. I got an email from one person who just wrote to say that she thought it was fun, and that she liked the writeup, and that I deserve an award just for having a writeup that didn't use the word *addictive*.

She's right—since she point it out, I've noticed that an awful lot of game writeups do indeed use the word *addictive*.

For non-game, utilitarian software, be it an application or a language or a package or a library that word is *powerful*. Let's search Sourceforge for the word: 4,893 results (as of this writing), or 12% of the 41,700 projects they host. I'm not sure about the exact percentage where a word becomes a cliché, but one in ten is already pretty far for a word that doesn't actually mean anything.

Flexible is a close cousin. Though with 2,690 hits on Sourceforge, it seems people care more about being powerful.

Next time you're at the supermarket, check how many shampoos are *nourishing*. Of course, your hair isn't actually alive, so in a store mostly filled with food products with at least some nutritional value, shampoo is one of the few products where it'd be a lie to label it as nourishing.

Code is the opposite problem, like if 10% of food products were labeled as nourishing. Once you've defined the scope of what your code will address, you're naturally going to cover as much of that space as possible. Which means that it'd be weird if, within the specified scope, your code *weren't* powerful.

I bought a keyboard/monitor switch (a piece of hardware that lets you run two computers with one keyboard and screen), and it came with one of those driver CDs that are entirely useless. But the contents listed:

- Drivers for KVM switch

- Manual

- Turbo engine

And I thought that's some real technology, when we can fit an engine onto software— finally some real power.

It turns out, however, that there was not actually a turbo engine on the CD.