



DESIGNING WITH HUMANS: HOW HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN WINS HEARTS (AND FUNDING) FOR DEMOCRACY

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FUNDRAISING4DEMOCRACY
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WHAT IS HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN?

Design philosophy: focus on human needs, behaviors, pain points.

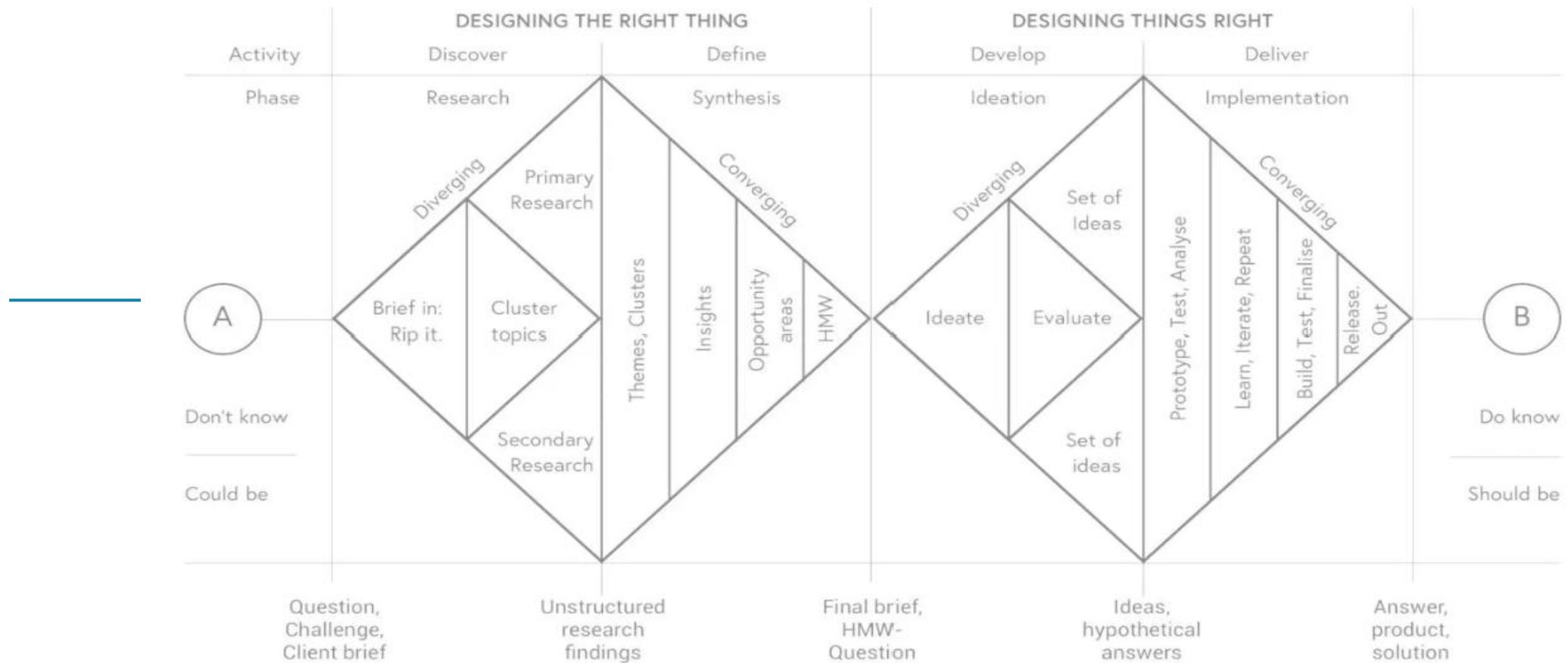
Collaborative: users and stakeholders co-create solutions.

Creative & iterative: discovery → design → prototype → test → implement.

Evidence-based: combines ethnographic research with measurable outcomes.



HUMAN CENTERED DIAGRAM



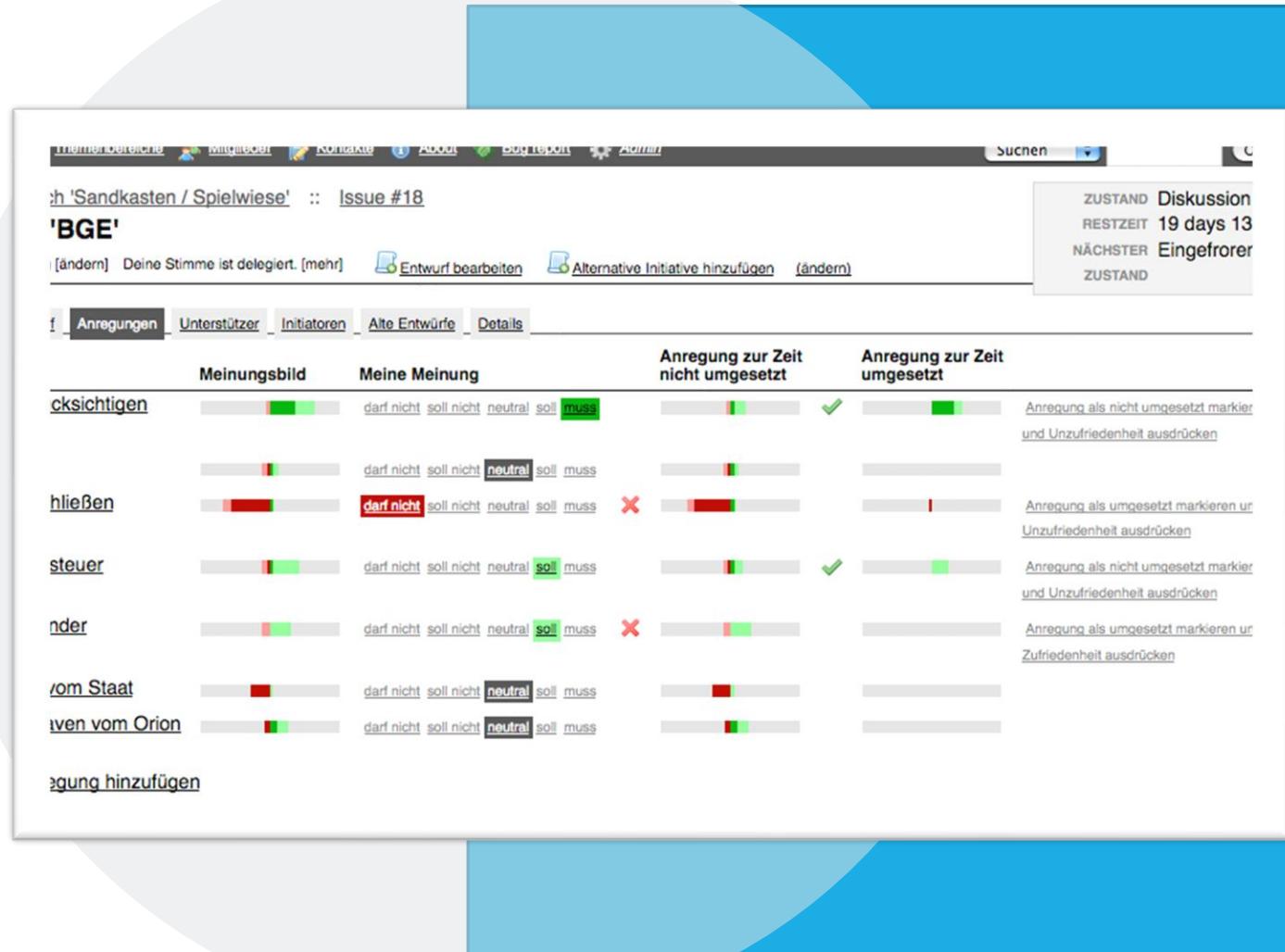
WHY HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN IS NEEDED

- 90% of projects fail when user needs are ignored (global innovation stats).
- **OECD**: deliberative processes → better decisions + more trust.
- **EU Better Regulation**: consultation and evidence = mandatory.
- **UK Service Standard**: “Start with user needs” → continuous research, iteration.



CASE STUDY: LIQUIDFRIESLAND (GERMANY, 2012–2015)

- Ambition: e-democracy platform for citizen proposals and online voting.
- Reality: 706 access codes → 473 active users → only 22–28 participants per vote; target of 100–200 never reached.
- Problems: top-down design without real citizen input, low motivation, no feedback loop, weak retention.
- Lesson for HCD: start with user needs, co-design with citizens, decision log + public response, continuous testing & iteration.



EVIDENCE FROM EU PROGRAMMES

CERV/EfC/REC evaluations (2021–2023):

✓ innovation testing, ✓ networks, ✓ visibility.

Funding simplified: lump-sum, unit costs, higher pre-financing.

Re-granting enables grassroots access.

Crises (COVID, cost-of-living) → forced adaptation, digitalisation = long-term benefits.



HOW IT WORKS (5 STEPS)

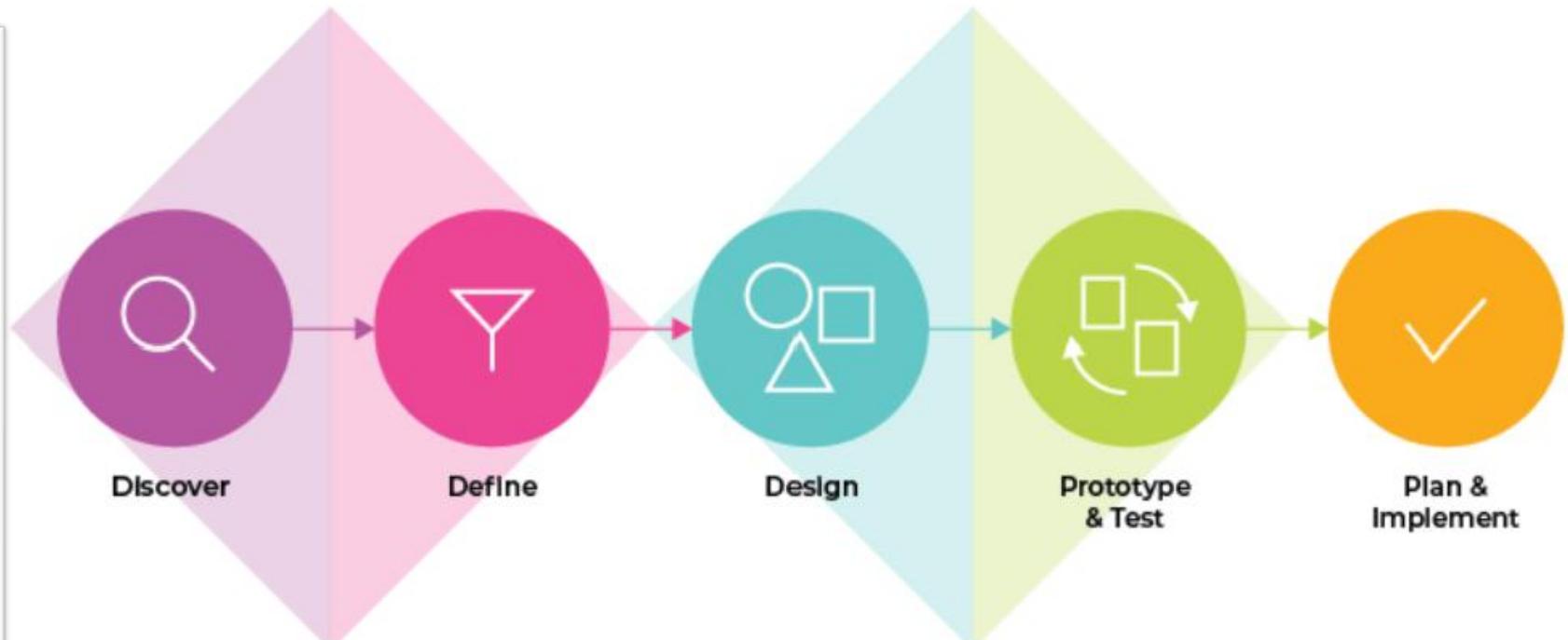
Discover – interviews, observations, surveys (build empathy).

Define – analyze & synthesize findings → problem statement.

Design – ideate broadly, co-create concepts.

Prototype & Test – low-fi → high-fi, iterative feedback.

Plan & Implement – roadmap, evaluation, scaling



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PRACTICAL MANUAL (6–8 WEEKS)



Week 1-2

- **Discovery** → 15 interviews, survey, personas, evidence log.



Week 3

- **Co-design workshop** → 3 draft concepts.



Week 4-5

- **Prototypes & tests** → 2–3 iterations, A/B fundraising test.



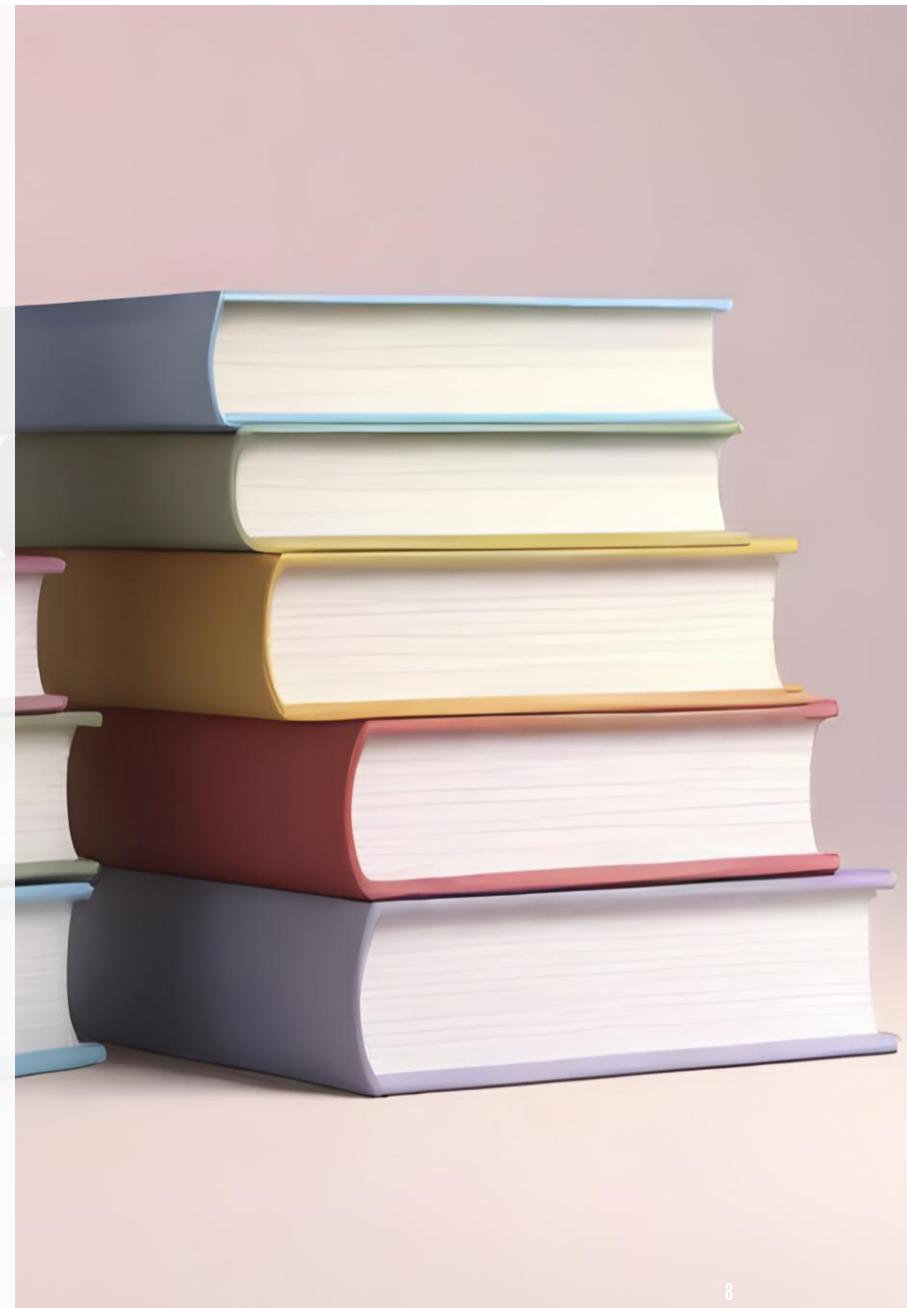
Week 6

- **Co-design 2** → MVP, Theory of Change, KPIs.

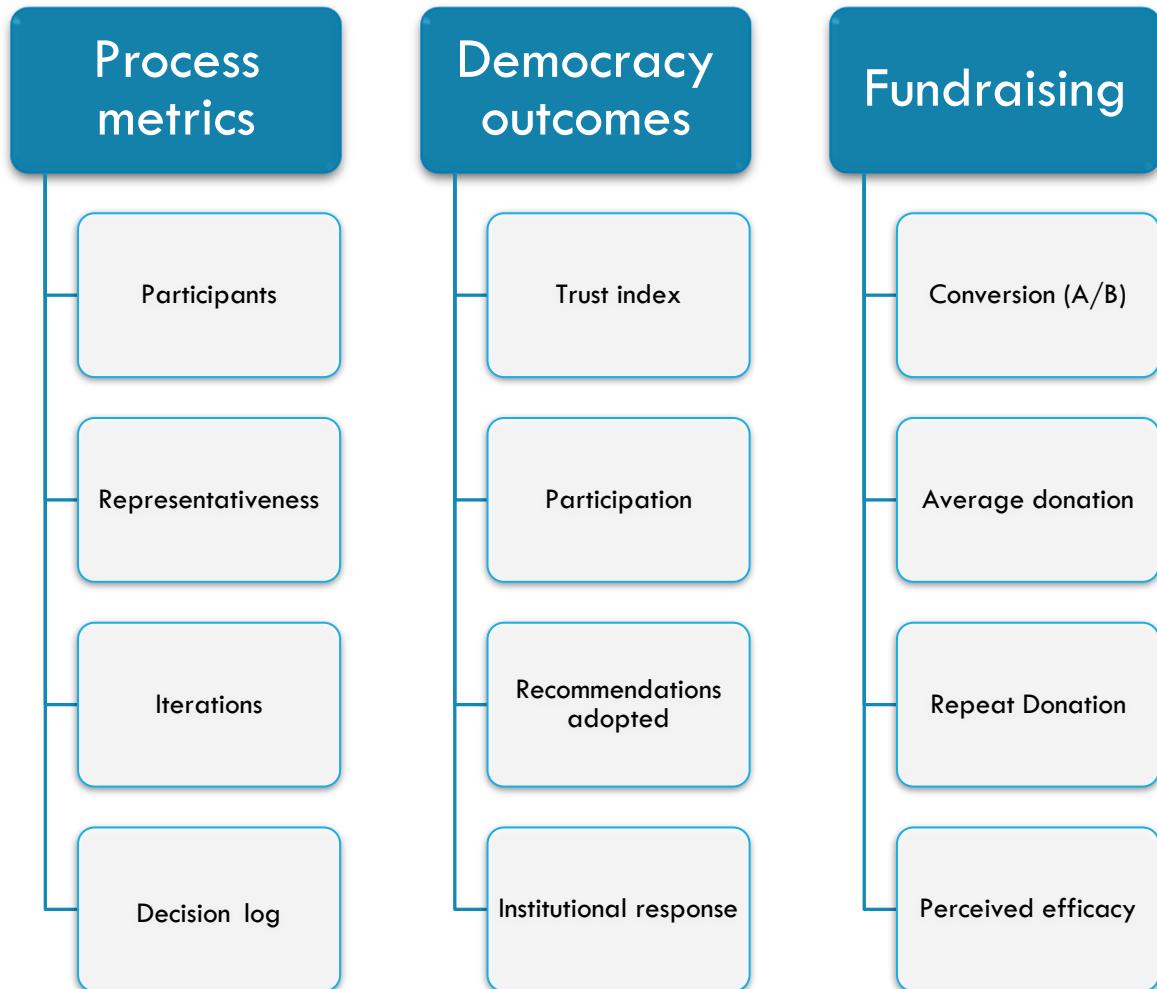


Week 7-8

- **Final pack** → evaluation plan, institutionalisation of participation.



WHAT TO MEASURE (M&E FRAMEWORK)



COMMON PITFALLS & SOLUTIONS

- ✗ Tokenism → ✓ publish recommendations + institutional response.
- ✗ HCD as PR → ✓ decision log with before/after changes.
- ✗ Excluding small actors → ✓ re-granting, templates, unit costs.
- ✗ Ethical risks in storytelling → ✓ informed consent, dignity, facts.



DESIGN WITH PEOPLE, MEASURE WHAT MATTERS, RESPOND TRANSPARENTLY.

👉 Try this week:

- Do 5 interviews
- Run a 2h co-design • Test 2 fundraising messages





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believe in the power of big ideas and meaningful connections. Driven by curi



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