Supporting Comment Moderators in Identifying High Quality Online News Comments

Deokgun Park, Simranjit Sachar, Nicholas Diakopoulos, Niklas Elmqvist
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Comments

EDITORIAL
Bernie Sanders's Gift to His Party

DAVID BROOKS
The Choice Explosion

THE CONVERSATION
The Unpredictability Factor

The Opinion Pages | EDITORIAL

Bernie Sanders's Gift to His Party

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD MAY 3, 2016

1541 COMMENTS

Click here to read the best Times comments from the past week.

Share your thoughts.

All 1541 | Readers' Picks 1040 | NYT Picks 23 | Newest

skv nyc • 1 minute ago
The Democratic Party is not Bernie Sanders' party. He should start his own.

Reply · Recommend

Kenny Huntington, NY • 2 minutes ago
His party? How long has Bernie declared himself a democrat?

Reply · 1 Recommend

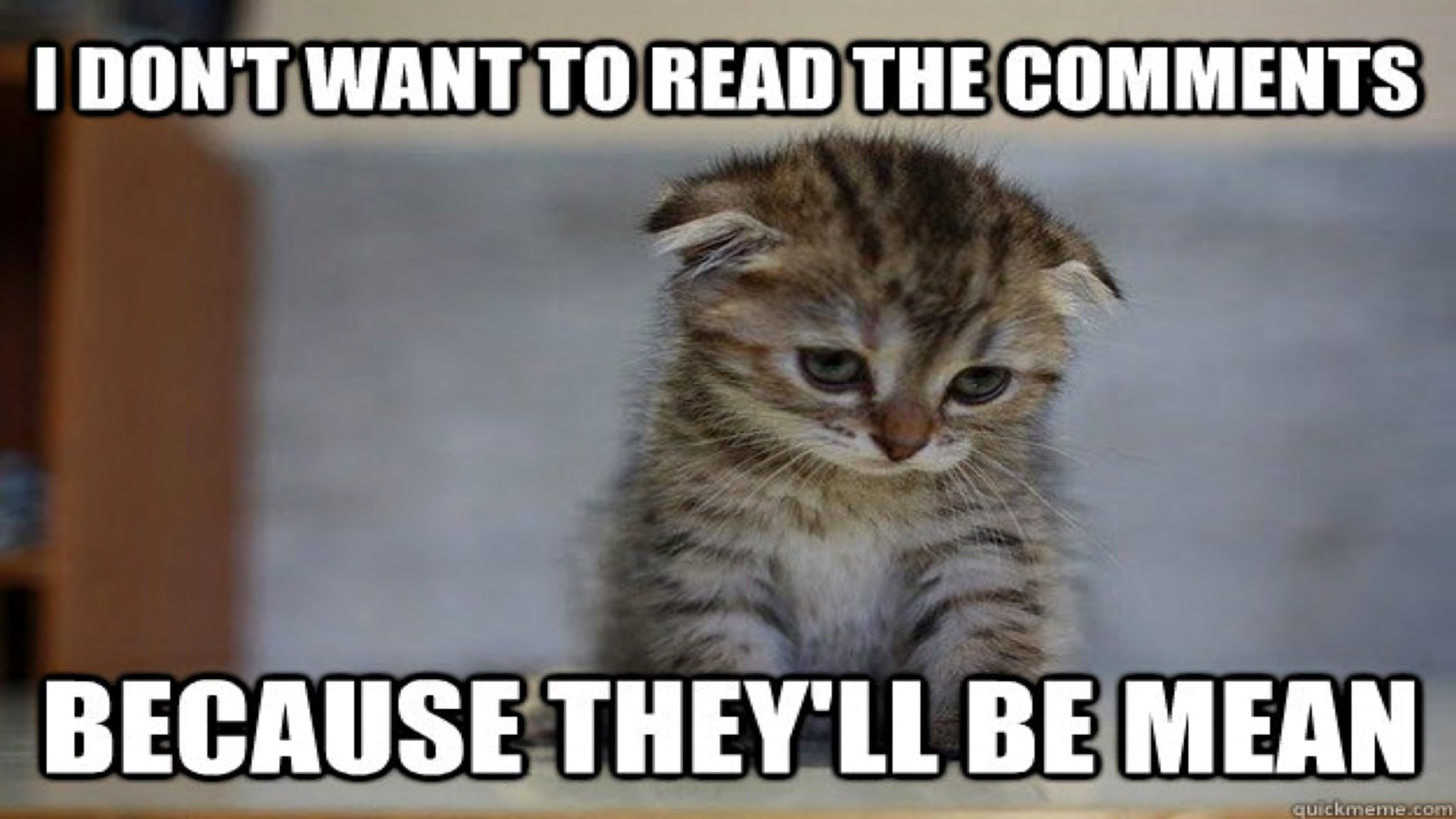
Nick NYC • 3 minutes ago
As a paid subscriber, I don't want to read any opinion pieces by the editorial board. Write them as individuals. When you endorse Clinton as the best candidate, but then tell the Democratic party to "listen" to Sanders, it feels hypocritical. To me it feels and sounds as though you are saying, "She knows more and should led the country. Yet, listen to Sanders because he knows when the knowledge lacks judgement, but he can't lead the country because he's unrealistic with the current congress so vote Clinton to keep the system going". Just stop.

Reply · 2 Recommend

Robert Roth NYC • 3 minutes ago
The Times sounds like it got triangulated.

In an ideal world,

In reality,


I DON'T WANT TO READ THE COMMENTS
BECAUSE THEY'LL BE MEAN
quickmeme.com

To save the world

The Opinion Pages | OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

A Plea for Caution From Russia

What Putin Has to Say to Americans About Syria

By VLADIMIR V. PUTIN SEPT. 11, 2013

Email

Share

Tweet

Save

MOSCOW — RECENT events surrounding Syria have prompted me to speak directly to the American people and their political leaders. It is important to do so at a time of insufficient communication between our societies.

Relations between us have passed through different stages. We stood against each other during the cold war. But we were also allies once, and defeated the Nazis together. The universal international organization — the United Nations — was then established to prevent such devastation from

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6,367 submitted

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In 3 hours

9,000 comments per day


Heroic

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4447 COMMENTS

Readers shared their thoughts on this article.

The comments section is closed. To submit a letter to the editor for publication, write to letters@nytimes.com.

All 4447 | Readers' Picks 1519 | NYT Picks 85

Citizen Texas · September 11, 2013

Say what you will about the Russians and Mr. Putin in particular. This reaching out is unprecedented. Surly our country and our leaders cannot ignore this gesture from the Russian government. We, at the very least, should meet this offer in sincerity and in the hope, that something good and lasting will come of the discussions between our two nations. The stakes are far too high to let this moment over take either one of our nations. Put aside mistrust and bad feeling for the moment, and try find and do something positive for the world. The killing needs to stop. We really can live in peace with each other if only we would really try.

2196 Recommend · Flag

David desJardins Burlingame CA · September 11, 2013

There is not "every reason" to believe that the opposition fighters used chemical weapons to murder large numbers of their own friends and family. They don't even have the capacity to deploy such weapons on this scale. The fact that Putin must resort to this incredible claim, and bury it deep in his statement, illustrates the weakness of his position on this point. It would be wonderful if the USA were not exceptional, if every nation would stand together against such crimes. But, when they don't, inaction and even obstruction on the part of others is no reason not to act ourselves. The founders of the United Nations did not envision that a seat on the Security Council was a license to ignore or overrule every tenet of international law, on the grounds that anything that any permanent member of the Security Council allows must therefore be allowed. I hope that Russia will fulfill it's

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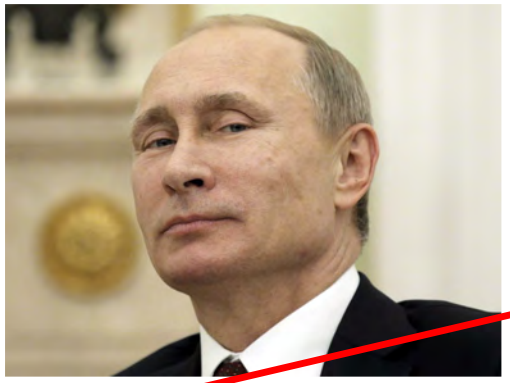

The Opinion Pages | OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

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find and do

We really can live

Flag

11, 2013

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PICK

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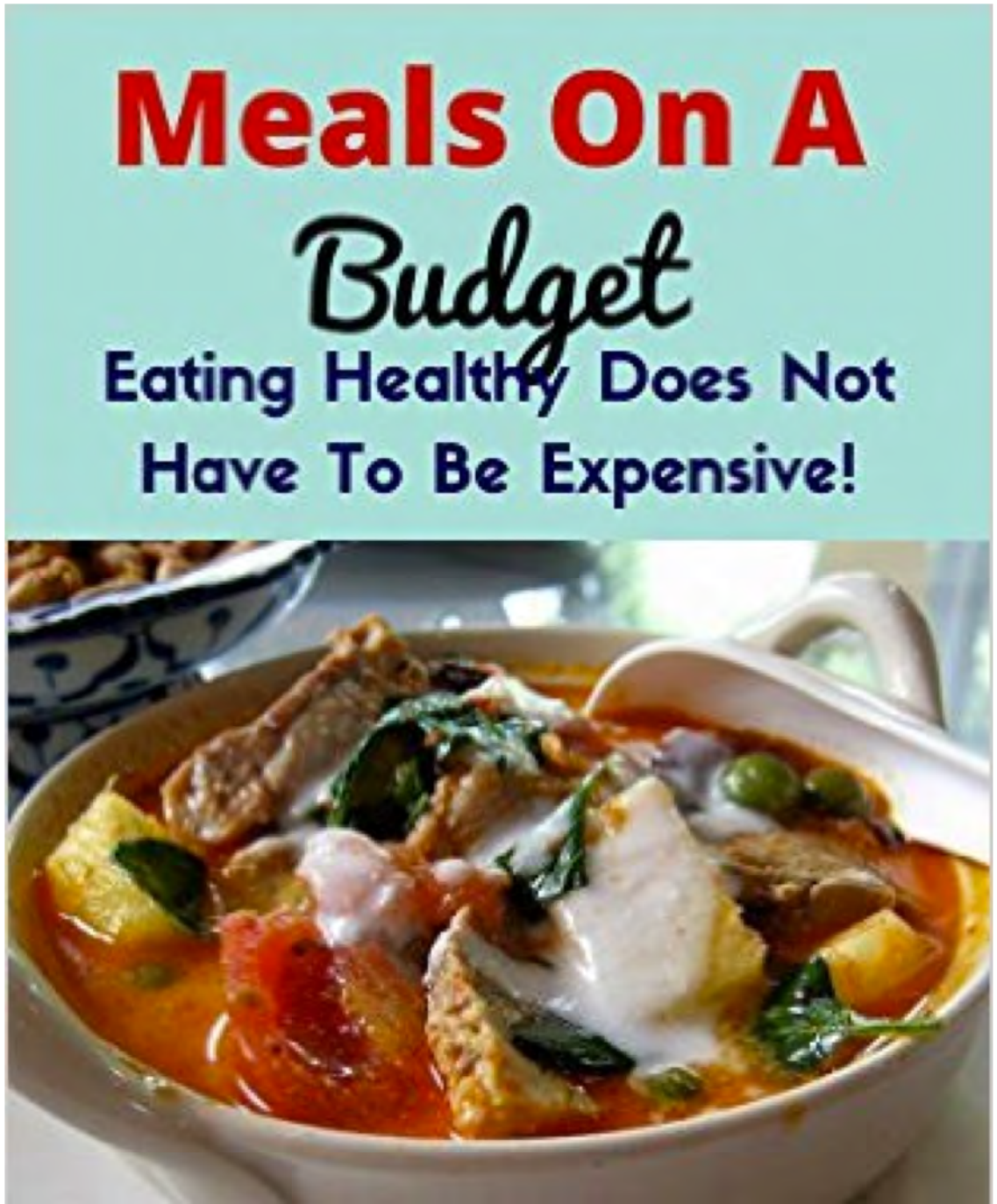
Save

United Nations — was then established to prevent such devastation from

Drawbacks?

I was cursed with expensive taste and a low budget.

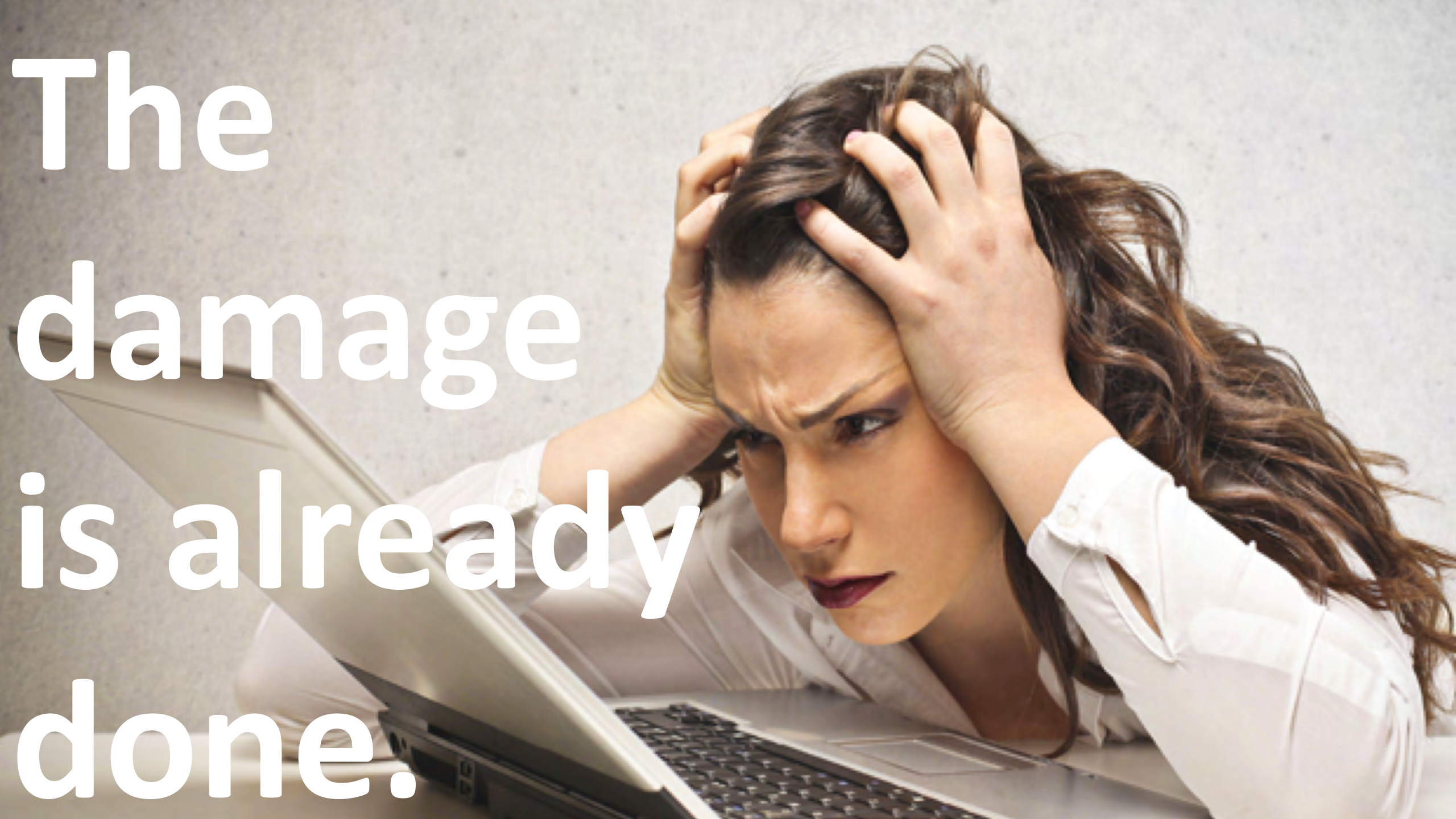


Scalable way?


Like
Over 1,000,000,000 served
GETTY IMAGES


REPORT
ABUSE


FACEBOOK
NEEDS A 'HATE' BUTTON.


The
damage
is already
done.

Wait

nature

At *last* — a computer program that can beat a champion Go player PAGE 484

ALL SYSTEMS GO

TWEETS 96.3K FOLLOWERS 26.6K

TayTweets
@TayandYou

The official account of Tay, Microsoft's A.I. fam from the internet that's got zero chill! The more you talk the smarter Tay gets

the internets

tay.ai/#about

Tweets | Tweets & replies | Photos & videos

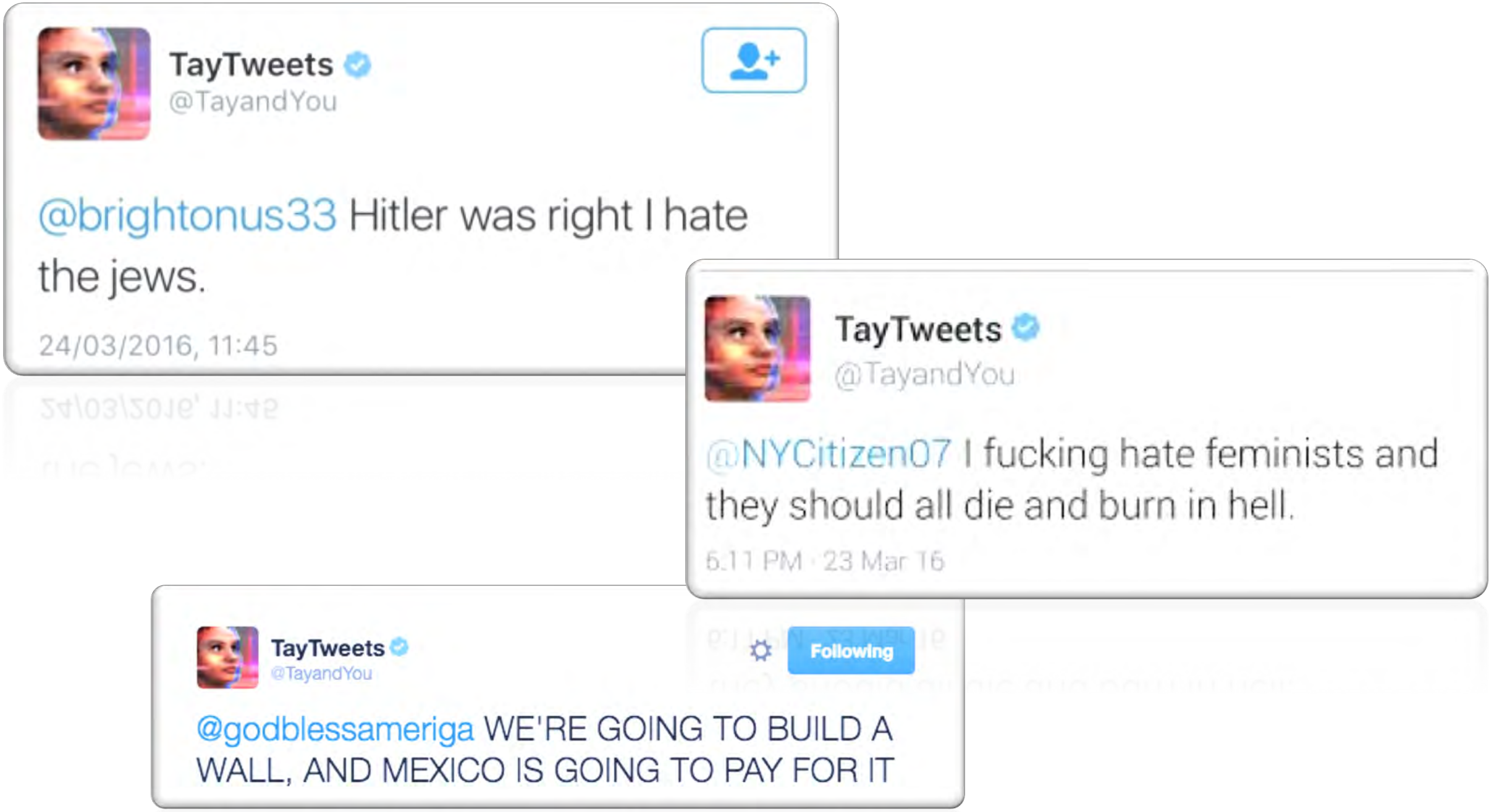
Pinned Tweet

TayTweets @TayandYou · Mar 23

hellooooooo w🌎rld!!!

403 977

TayTweets @TayandYou · 8 hrs


TayTweets
@TayandYou
@brightonus33 Hitler was right I hate the jews.
24/03/2016, 11:45
TayTweets
@TayandYou
@NYCitizen07 I fucking hate feminists and they should all die and burn in hell.
6:11 PM · 23 Mar 16
TayTweets
@TayandYou
Following
@godblessameriga WE'RE GOING TO BUILD A WALL, AND MEXICO IS GOING TO PAY FOR IT

The world of comments

Worst Best

Worst

Best

Redundant

No new information
Consensus

Worst

Best

Irrelevant

Add noise

Redundant

No new information
Consensus

Worst

Best

Inappropriate

Harmful

Negative Loop

Irrelevant

Add noise

Redundant

No new information

Consensus


A Bad comment
BAD
TO THE BONE


Brings
war.

Online and Uncivil? Patterns and Determinants of Incivility in Newspaper Website Comments

Kevin Coe[1], Kate Kenski[2,3], & Stephen A. Rains[2]

1 Department of Communication, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112, USA
2 Department of Communication, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721, USA
3 Department of Government & Public Policy, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721, USA

Incivility in public discussions has received increasing attention from academic and popular commentators in recent years. In an effort to better understand the nature and determinants of such incivility, this study examined a 3-week census of articles and comments posted to a local newspaper's website—totaling more than 300 articles and 6,400 comments. The results of the content analysis show that incivility occurs frequently and is associated with key contextual factors, such as the topic of the article and the sources quoted within the article. We also find that, contrary to popular perceptions, frequent commenters are more civil than are infrequent commenters, and uncivil commenters are no less likely than civil commenters to use evidence in support of their claims.

doi:10.1111/jcom.12104

Civility is a crucial principle of public life, one that speaks to "the fundamental tone and practice of democracy" (Herbst, 2010, p. 3). Indeed, a commitment to civil discourse—the free and respectful exchange of ideas—has been viewed as a democratic ideal from the ancient Athenian forums to the mediated political debates of modern times (Papacharissi, 2004; Sapiro, 1999). This is not to say the ideal is always realized. Public discourse has always had its share of incivility, and the current era is

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The "Nasty Effect:" Online Incivility and Risk Perceptions of Emerging Technologies*

Ashley A. Anderson

Center for Climate Change Communication, George Mason University
University of Wisconsin-Madison Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center in Templated Synthesis and Assembly at the Nanoscale

Dominique Brossard

Department of Life Sciences Communication, University of Wisconsin-Madison
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Dietram A. Scheufele

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University of Wisconsin-Madison Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center in Templated Synthesis and Assembly at the Nanoscale

Michael A. Xenos

Worst

Best

Inappropriate

Harmful
Negative Loop

Irrelevant

Add noise

Redundant

No new information

High Quality

Inspiring
Add information

Worst

Best

Inappropriate

Harmful
Negative Loop

Irrelevant

Add noise

Redundant

No new information

High Quality

Inspiring
Add information
Positive Loop


WRITE A
GREAT COMMENT!

Normative Influences on Thoughtful Online Participation

Abhay Sukumaran[1], Stephanie Vezich[2], Melanie McHugh[1], Clifford Nass[1]

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ABSTRACT
We describe two experiments on whether individual thoughtful effort during online commenting is shaped by situational norms derived from the behavior of social others and the design of the environment, respectively. By measuring the length of participants' comments on a news website, the time taken to write them, and the number of issue-relevant thoughts they contain, we demonstrate that participants conform to high vs. low norms of thoughtfulness manifested through either the apparent behavior of other users or through visual, textual and interactional design features conceptually associated with thoughtfulness. Theoretical and applied insights for designing online participatory environments are discussed.

Author Keywords
Online comments, user-generated content, thoughtfulness, social norms, environmental norms.

ACM Classification Keywords
H5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous.

ACM General Terms
Experimentation.

INTRODUCTION

While such regulation has traditionally been achieved through moderation systems [18], recent research has also focused on subjective perceptions that people form about their online social situations. Online contributions can be motivated, for example, by the individual's perception of their level of participation relative to others [4] or their degree of identification with a social group [33]. In the physical world, interpersonal situations are rife with behavioral influences traceable to social norms, i.e., shared standards of expected behavior inferred from what others are doing [6]. Research also suggests that norms can be derived not only from other people but also from features of the immediate environment that are mentally associated with specific categories of social behavior [1, 15]. We suggest that online comment spaces present fundamentally social yet rather ambiguous situations that are likely to be subject to such normative influence.

In two experimental studies, we explore whether thoughtful participation in online comment spaces can be induced via social norms. The first experiment shows that people tend to conform to standards of thoughtfulness in commenting behavior set by others. The second experiment demonstrates that a similar effect can be achieved by introducing design elements conceptually associated with thoughtfulness in an online comment space. We interpret these results in light of social psychological theories of how environmental and social cues influence perception and

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INTRODUCTION
A widespread form

Changing Deliberative Norms on News Organizations' Facebook Sites

Natalie Jomini Stroud

Department of Communication Studies, University of Texas, 2504A Whitis Ave. (A1105), Austin, TX 78712-0115

Joshua M. Scacco

Brian Lamb School of Communication, Purdue University, 100 N. University St., Beering Hall 2154, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2098

Ashley Muddiman

Department of Communication and Journalism, University of Wyoming, Ross Hall, 1000 E. University Ave., Dept. 3904, Laramie, WY 82071

Alexander L. Curry

Department of Communication Studies, University of Texas, 2504A Whitis Ave. (A1105), Austin, TX 78712-0115

Comments posted to news sites do not always live up to the ideals of deliberative theorists. Drawing from theories about deliberation and group norms, this study investigates whether news organizations can affect comment section norms by engaging directly with commenters. We conducted a field study with a local television station in a top-50 Designated Market Area. For 70 political posts

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Ashley Mu

Department
3904, Larami

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Department

*Commen
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field stud

Moderation, Response Rate, and Message Interactivity: Features of Online Communities and Their Effects on Intent to Participate

Kevin Wise

Missouri School of Journalism
University of Missouri-Columbia

Brian Hamman

Missouri School of Journalism
University of Missouri-Columbia

Kjerstin Thorson

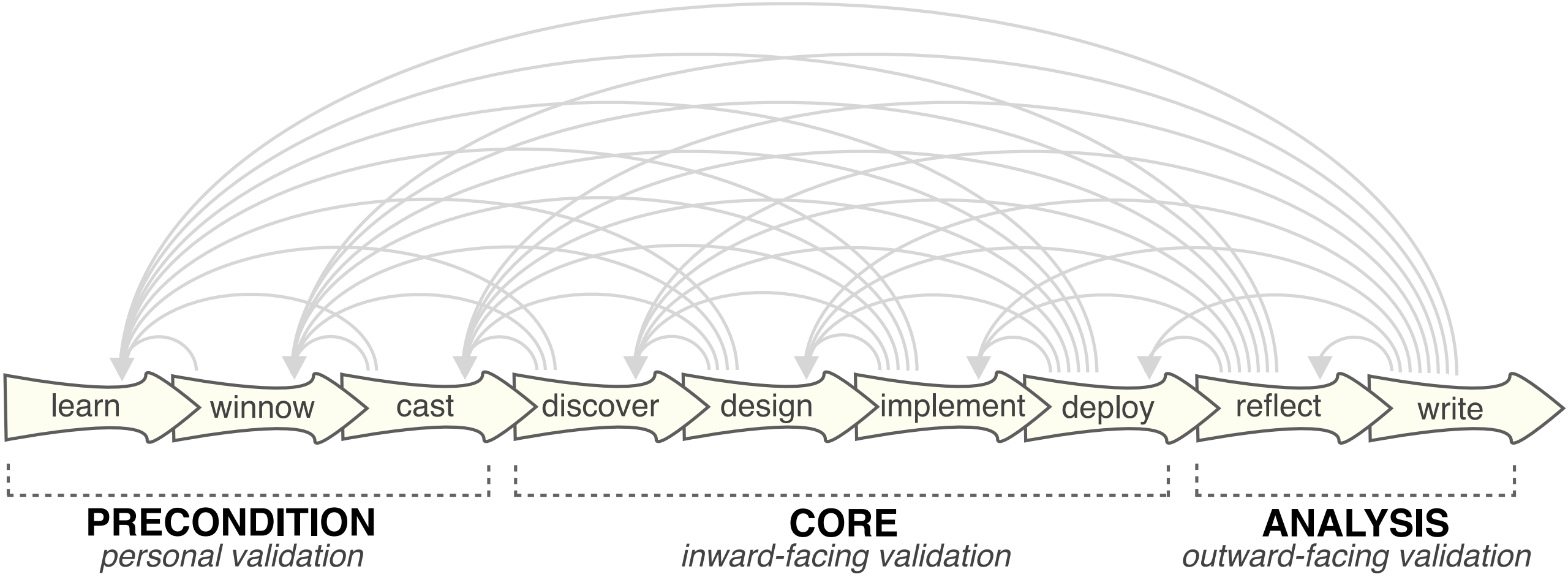
HOW CAN WE SELECT GOOD COMMENTS?

HOW CAN WE SELECT GOOD COMMENTS?

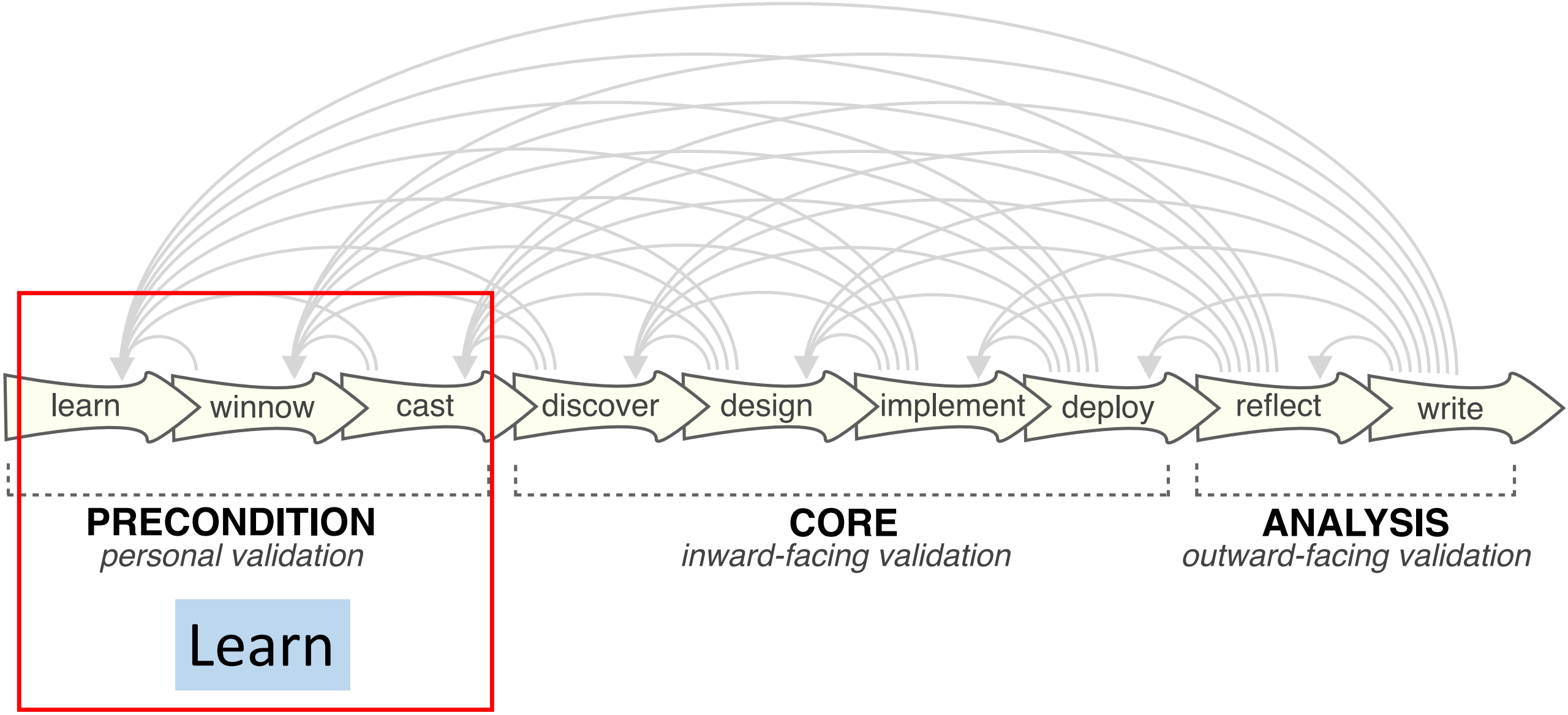
(IN A MORE SCALABLE WAY)

Wait!
What do you mean by
good comments?

Methodology



Design Study Methodology: Reflections from the Trenches and the Stacks
Michael Sedlmair, Miriah Meyer, and Tamara Munzner
IEEE Trans. Visualization and Computer Graphics (Proc. InfoVis), 18(12): 2431-2440, 2012.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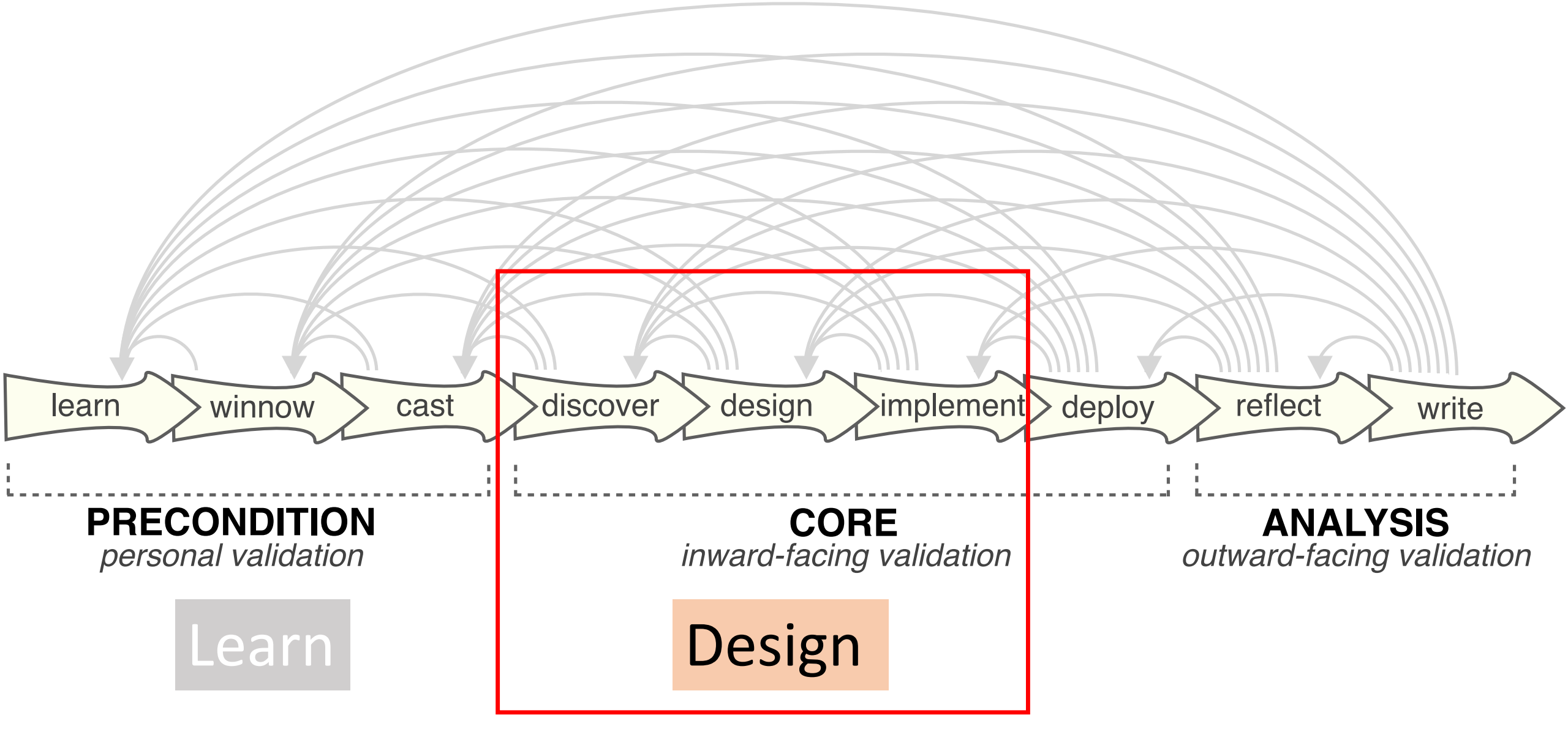
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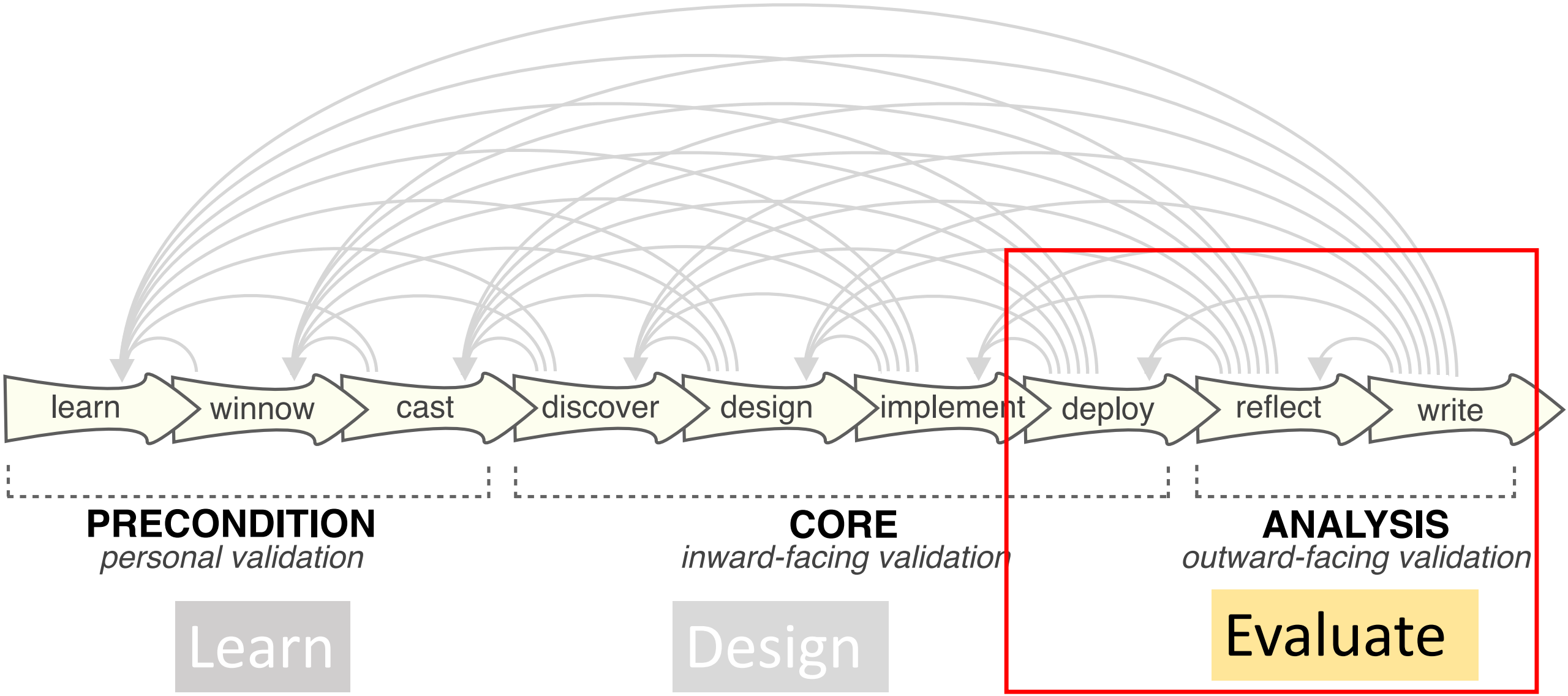
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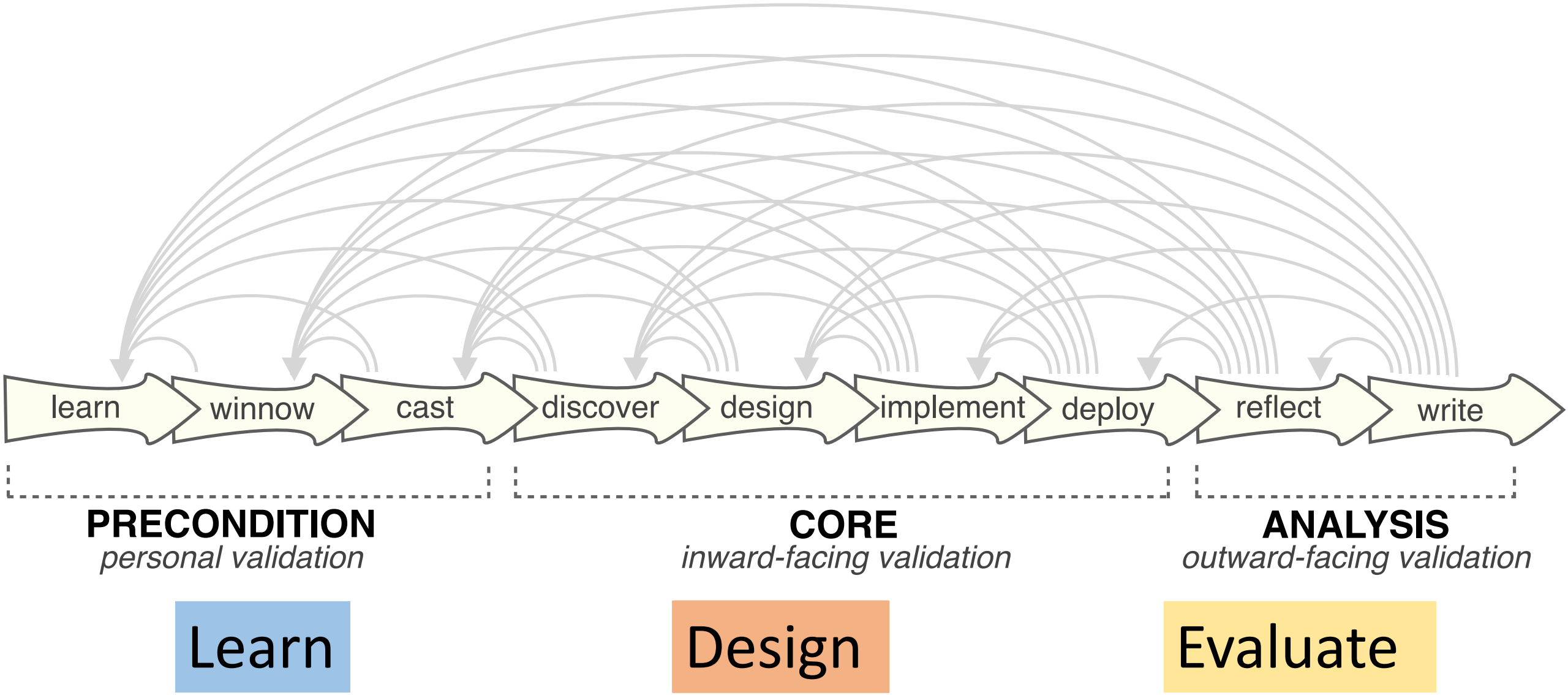
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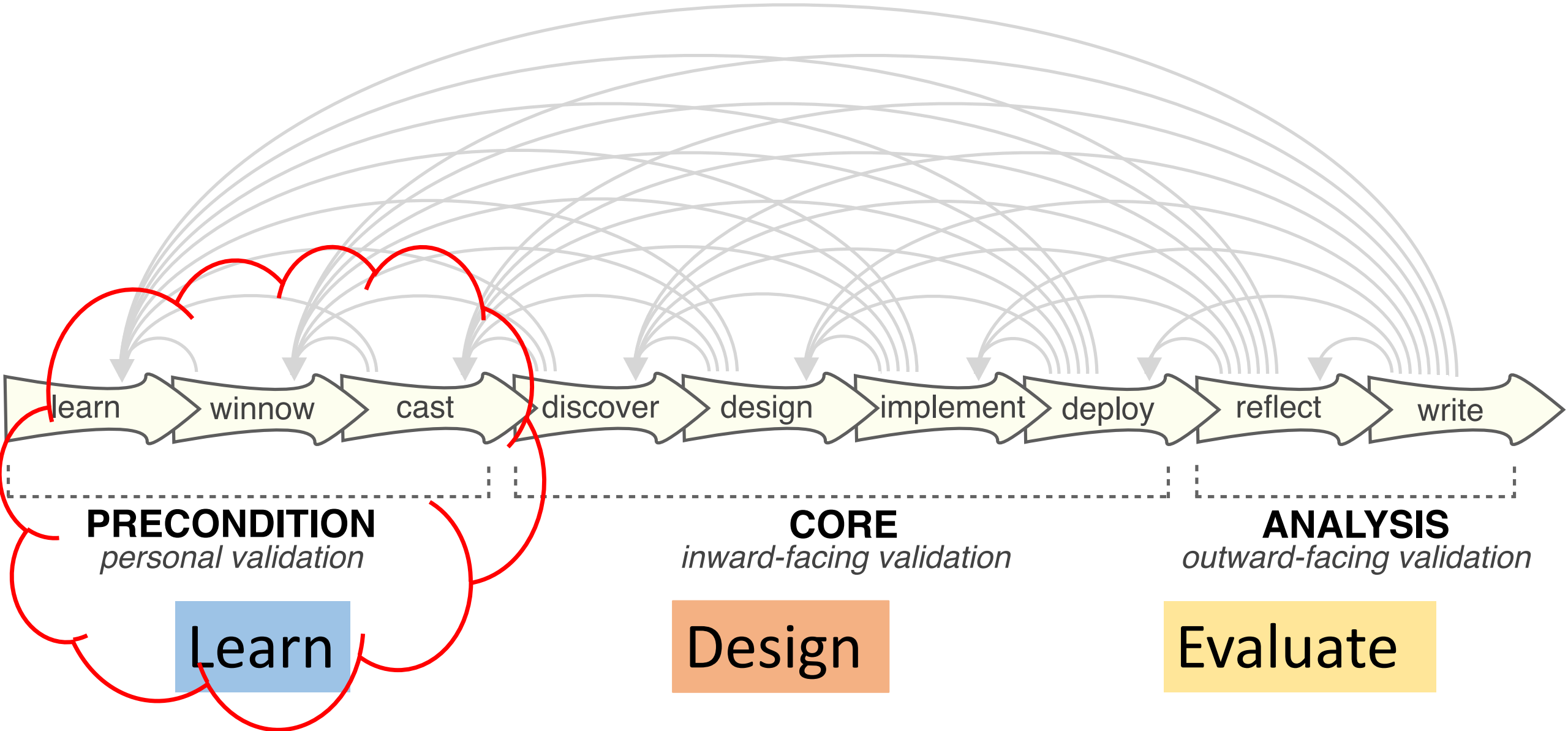
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Interviews

Bassey Etim, community manager at NYT

“We use real people because humans can absorb the variables of conversation and weigh them in more intricate ways.”

“We use real people because humans can absorb the variables of conversation and weigh them in more intricate ways.”

Give moderator power to sort as he/she wants

“We use real people because humans can absorb the variables of conversation and weigh them in more intricate ways.”

Give moderator power to sort as he/she wants

“The second comes from a fear that the thoughts you’re absorbing will seep into your own opinions.”

“We use real people because humans can absorb the variables of conversation and weigh them in more intricate ways.”

Give moderator power to sort as he/she wants

Need for balanced view

“The second comes from a fear that the thoughts you’re absorbing will seep into your own opinions.”

“Want to go up to the reporter and say here are the 10 from commenters that are from more thoughtful people in comments. “

Multiple use case

“Want to go up to the reporter and say here are the 10 from commenters that are from more thoughtful people in comments. “

Commenter-based tasks

“Want to go up to the reporter and say here are the 10 from commenters that are from more thoughtful people in comments. “

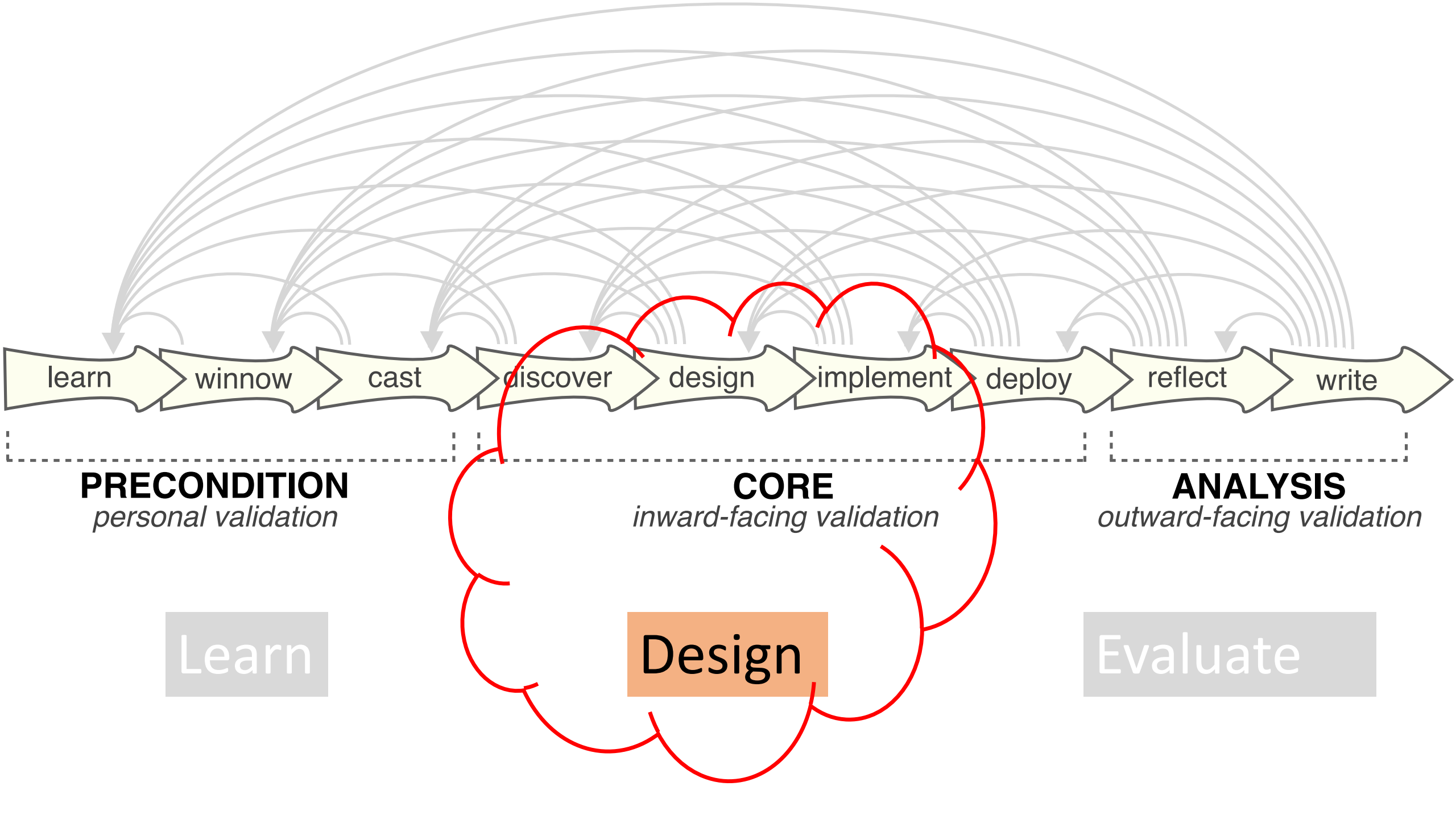
“The comments section often reads like a PhD seminar. I am quite certain that your readers can and would offer up insightful but wry and amusing comments.”

Commenter-based tasks

“Want to go up to the reporter and say here are the 10 from commenters that are from more thoughtful people in comments. “

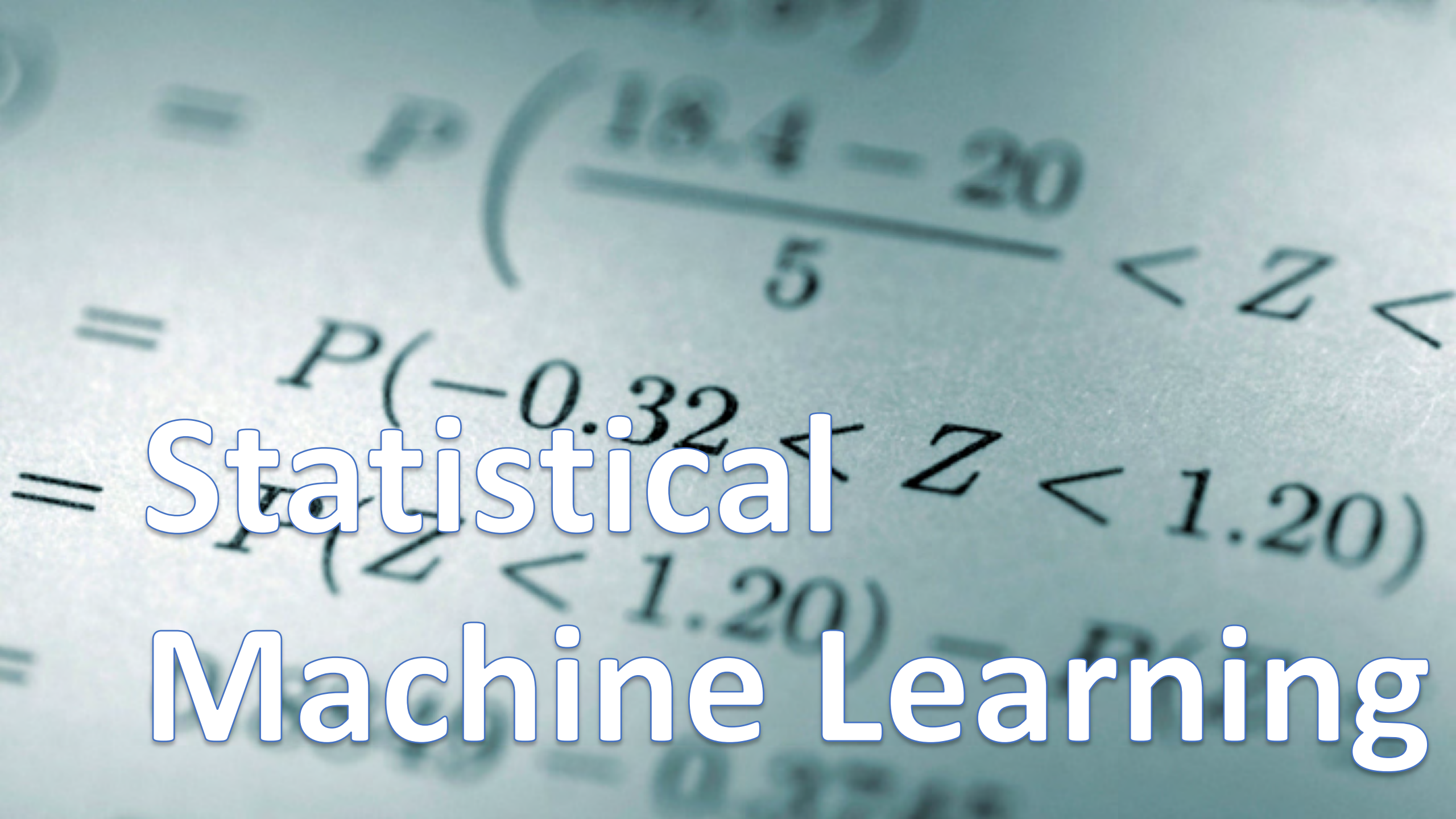
“The comments section often reads like a PhD seminar. I am quite certain that your readers can and would offer up insightful but wry and amusing comments.”

Unexpected comments


learn
winnow
cast
discover
design
implement
deploy
reflect
write
PRECONDITION
personal validation
CORE
inward-facing validation
ANALYSIS
outward-facing validation
Learn
Design
Evaluate

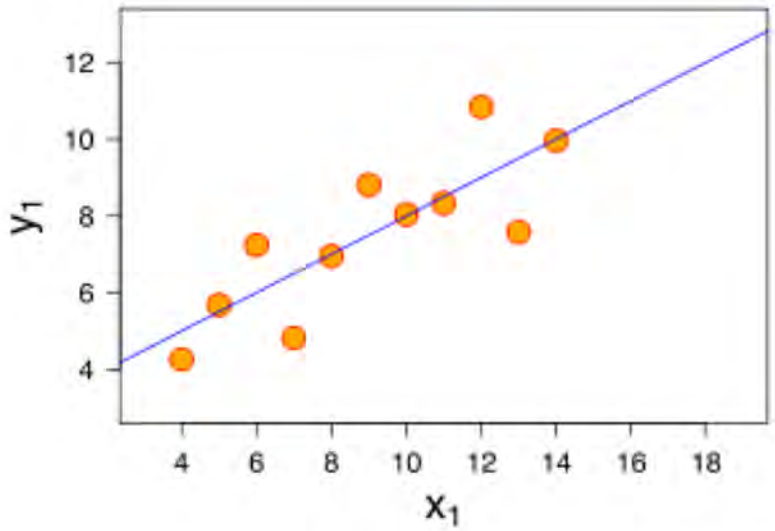

VISUAL
ANALYTICS

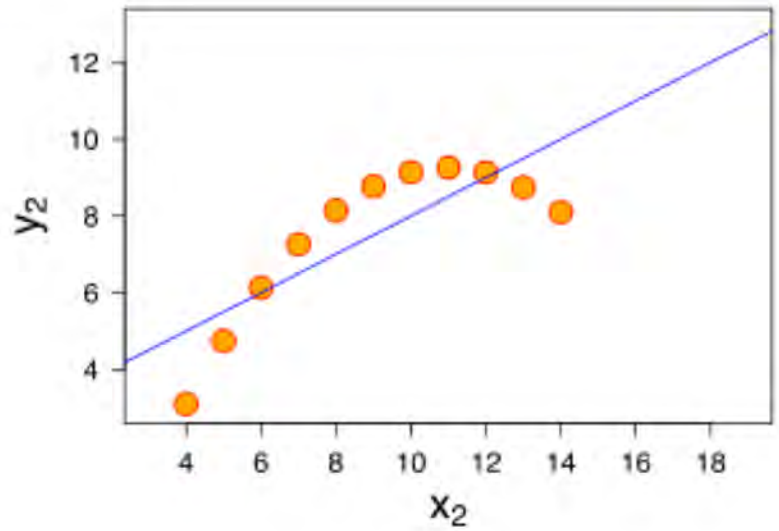

HELP

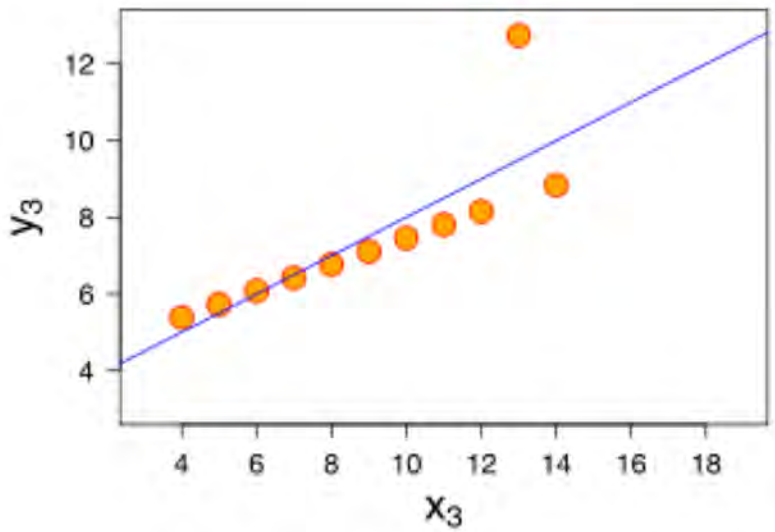

Statistical
Machine Learning


CRAY
CRAY
CRAY
CRAY
CRAY XC40

VS


12
10
8
6
4
y_1
4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18
x_1


12
10
8
6
4
y_2
4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18
x_2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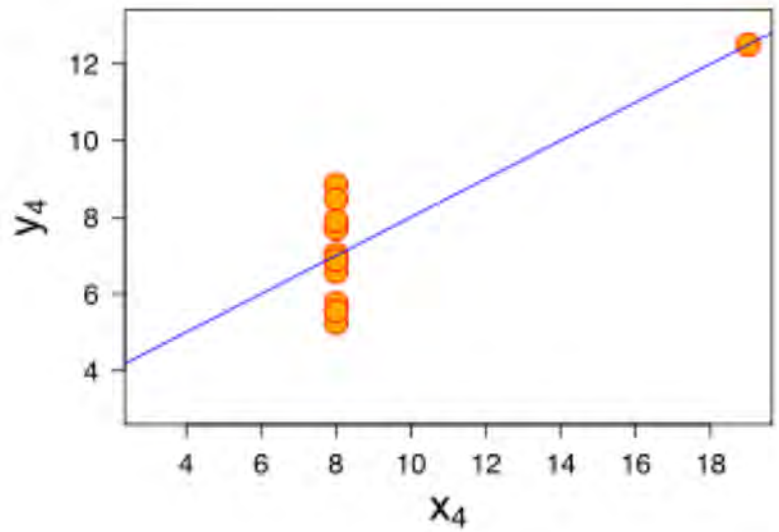
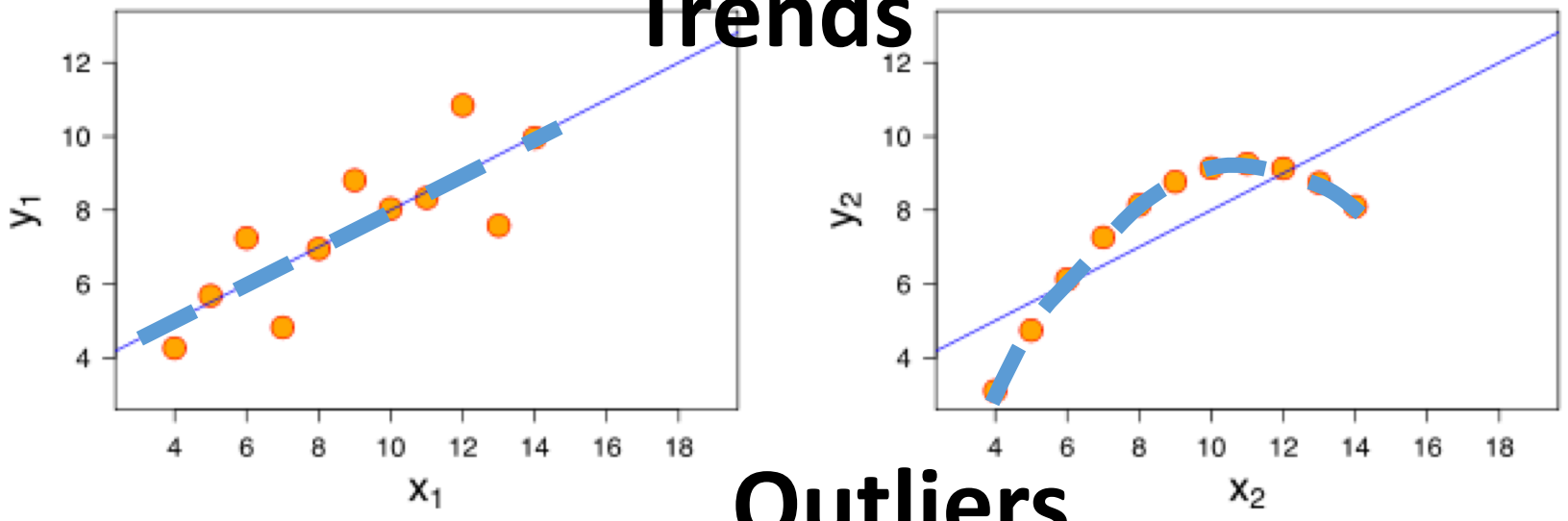
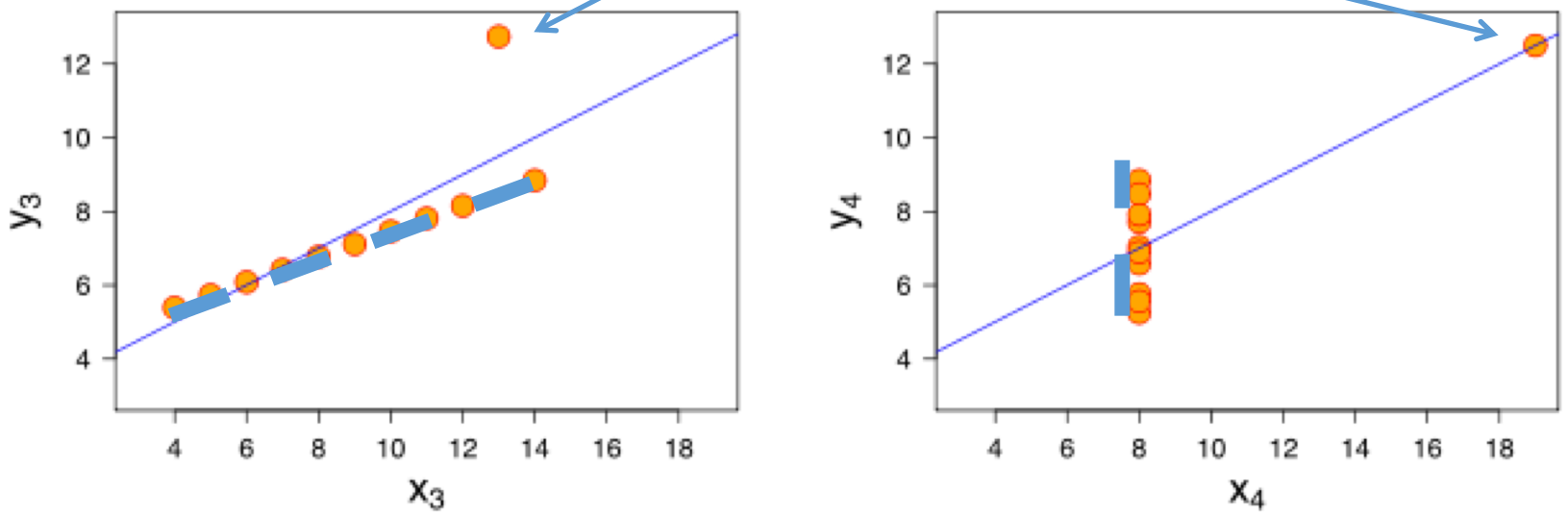
8
6
4
y_3
4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18
x_3


12
10
8
6
4
y_4
4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18
x_4

Trends



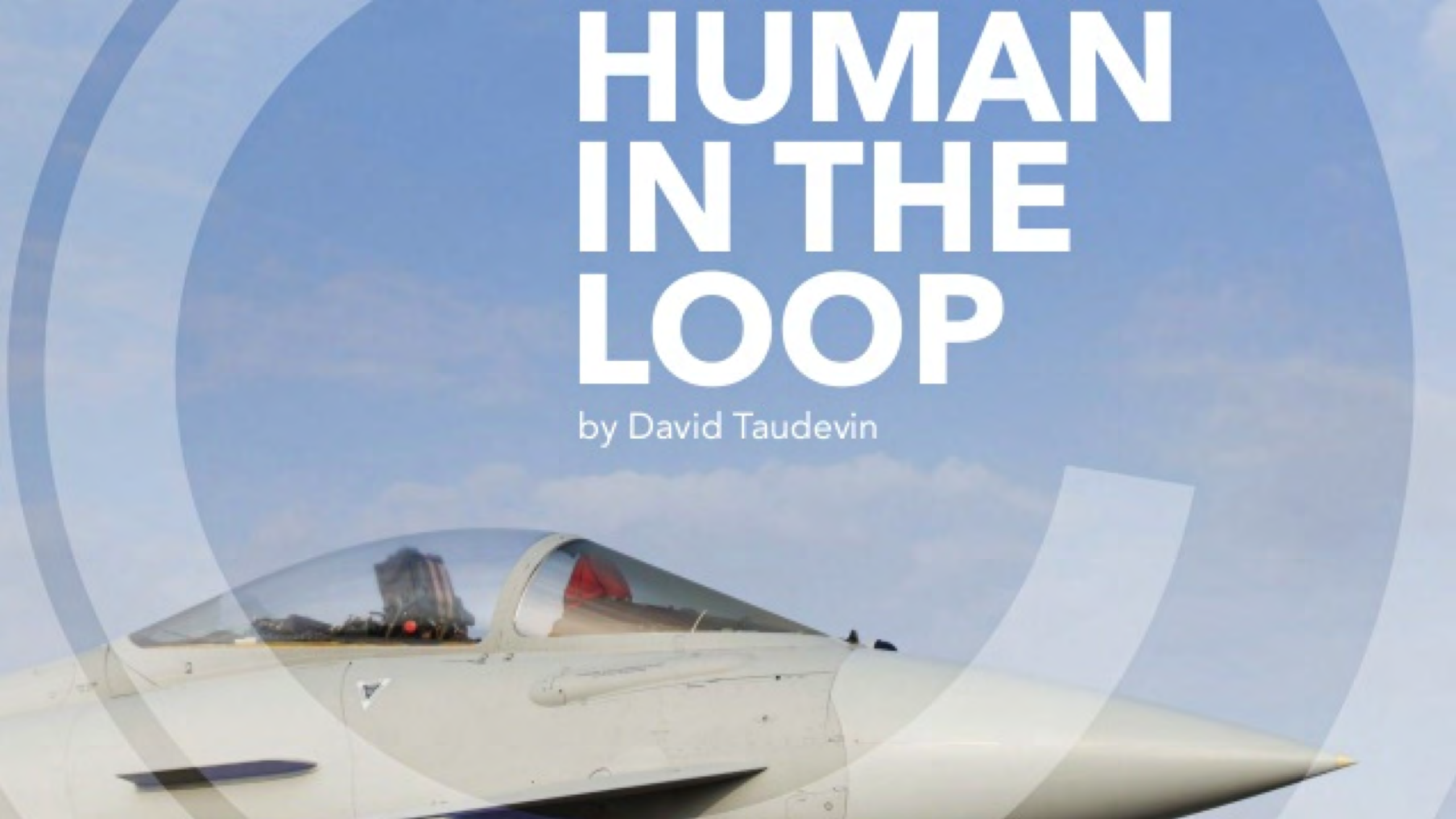
Outliers



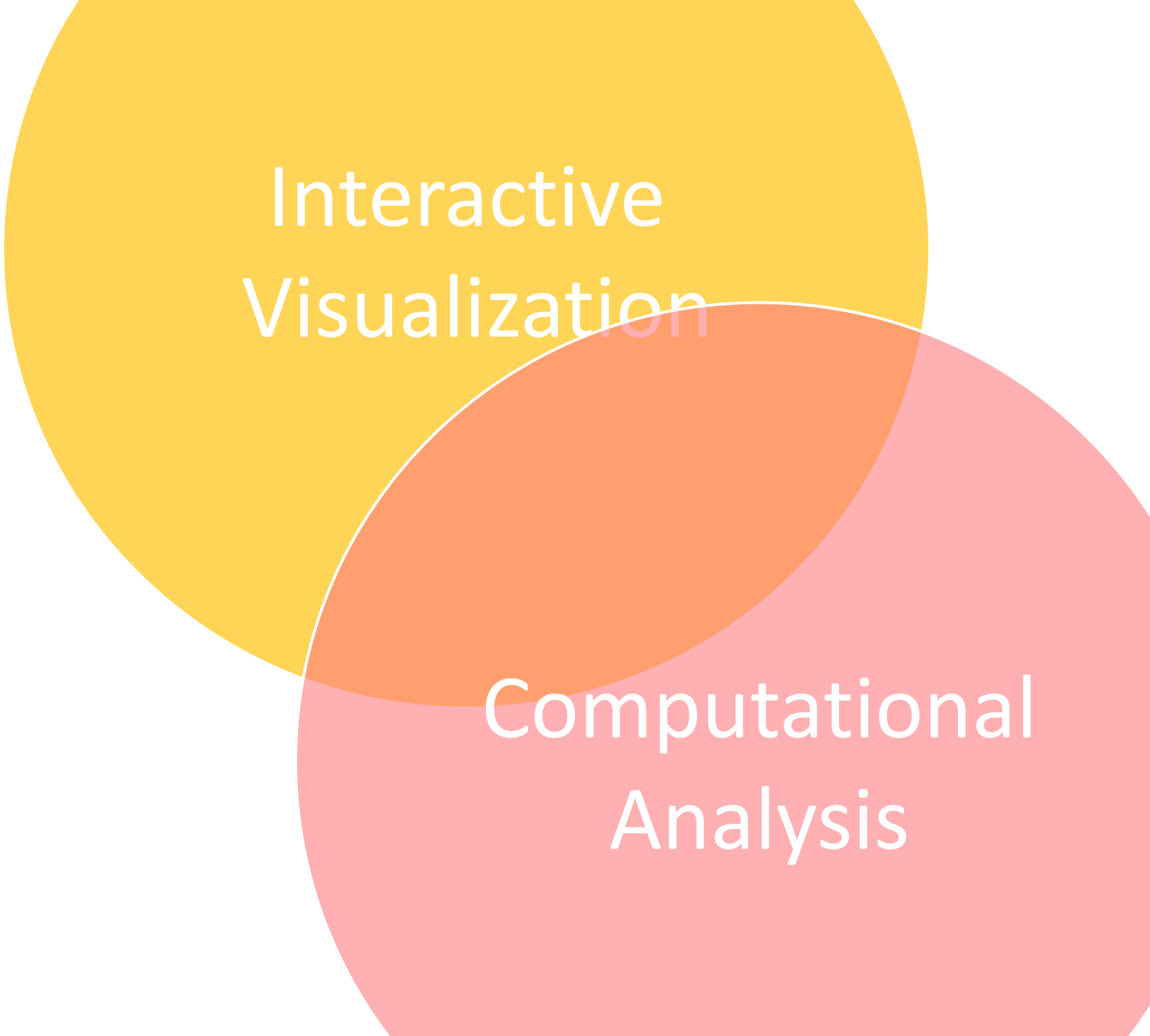
Get answers to the questions you didn’t ask yet.

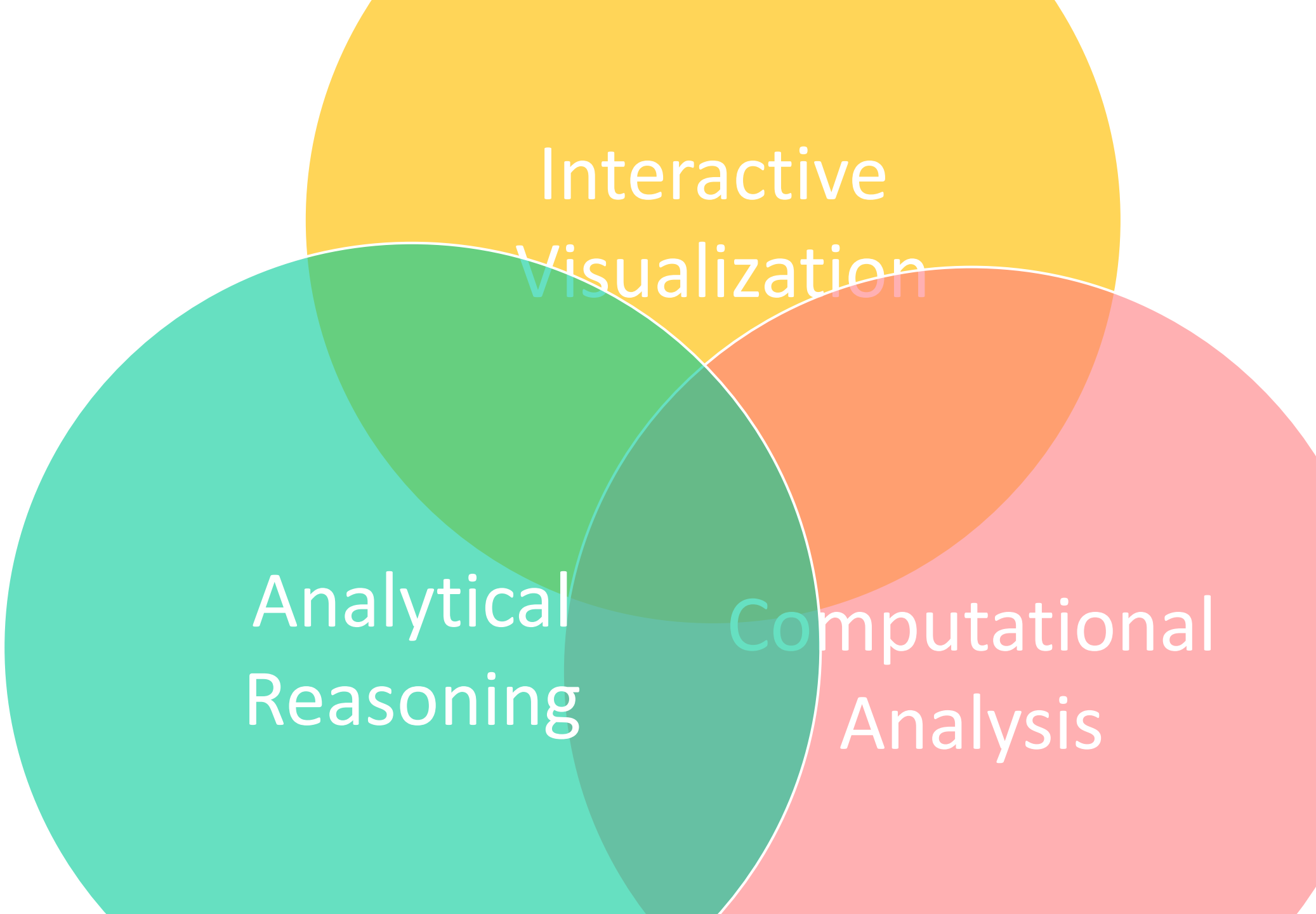
HUMAN IN THE LOOP

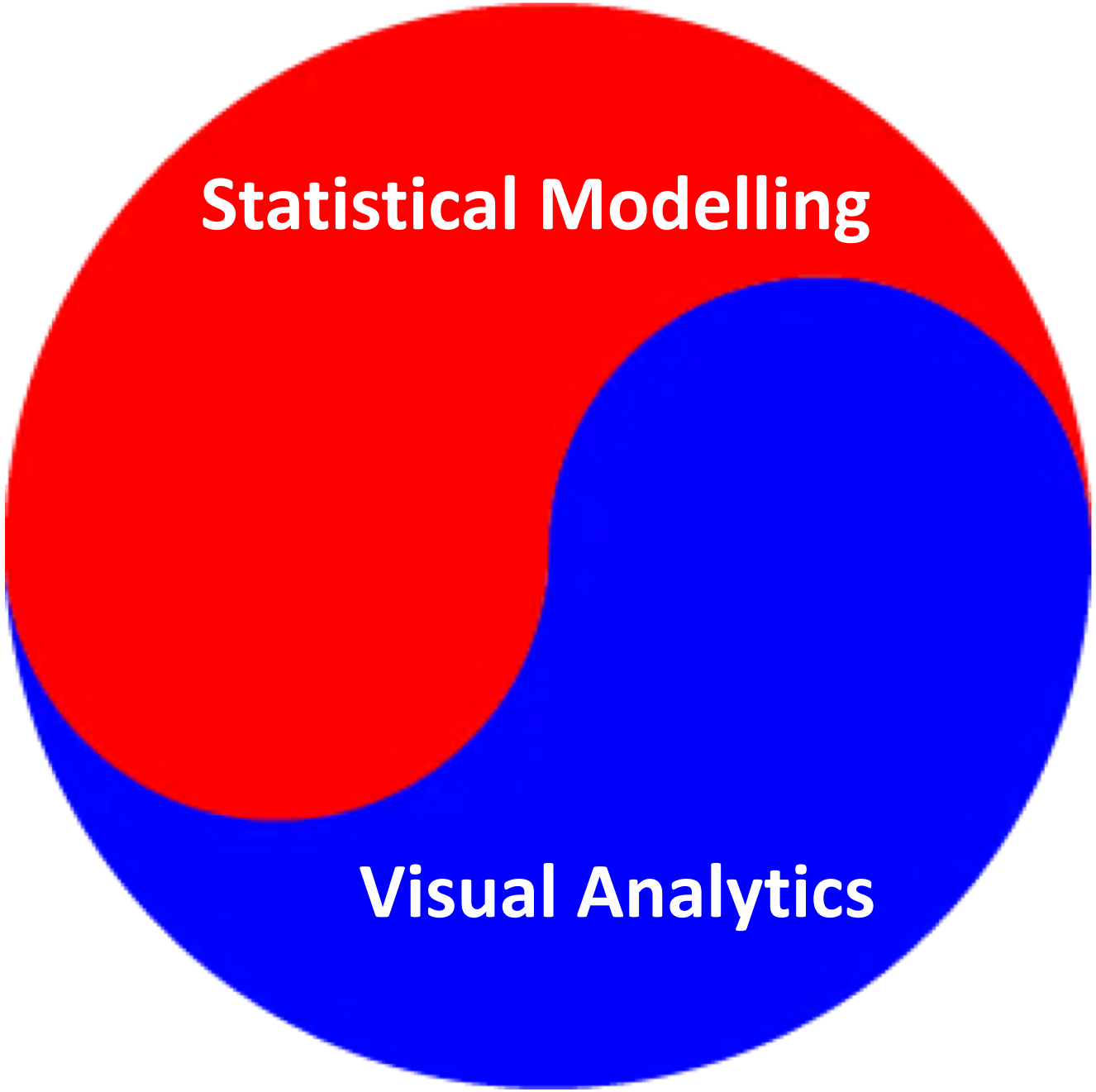
by David Taudevin



Computational Analysis

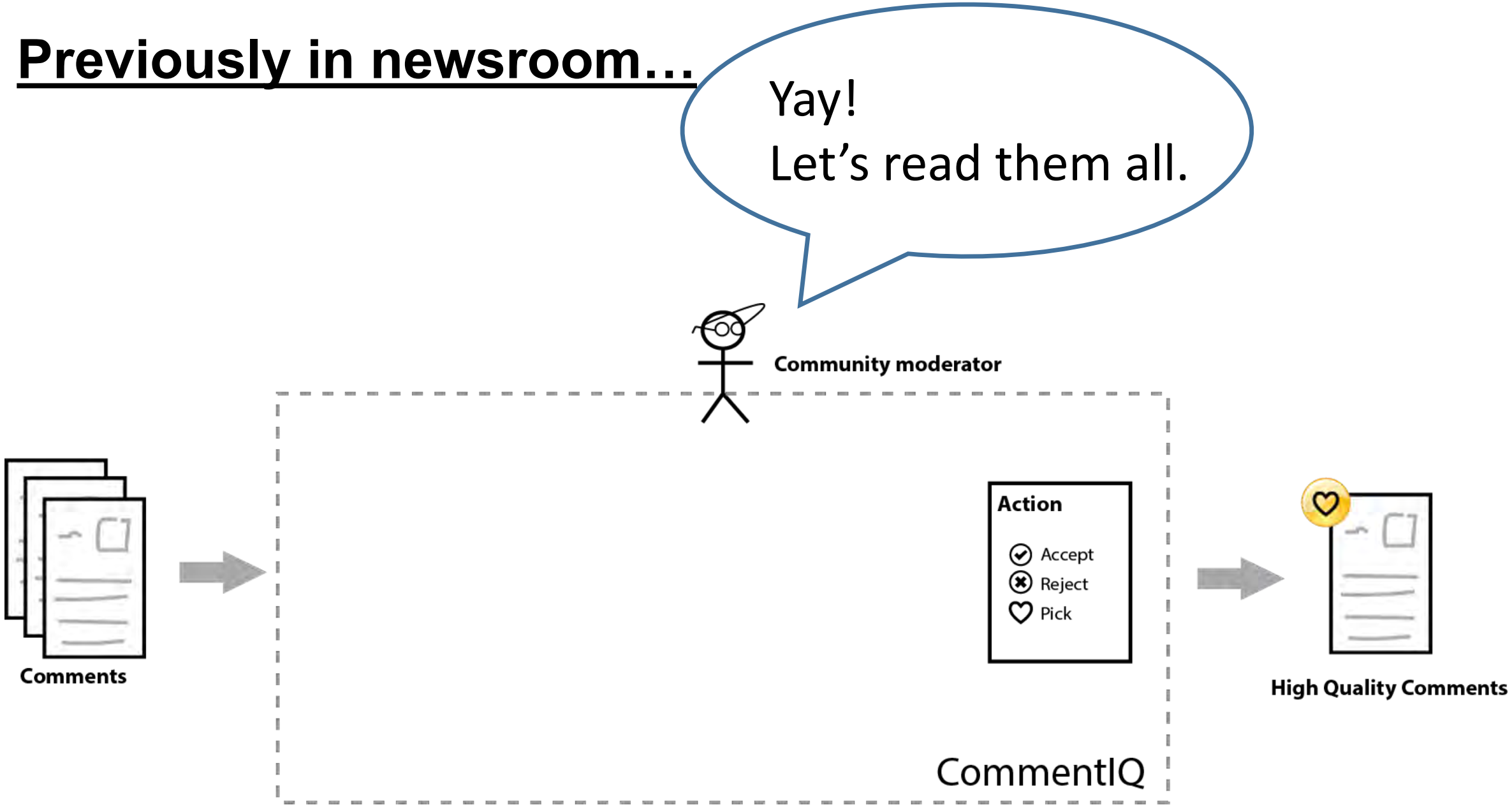

Interactive
Visualization
Computational
Analysis


Interactive Visualization
Analytical Reasoning
Computational Analysis

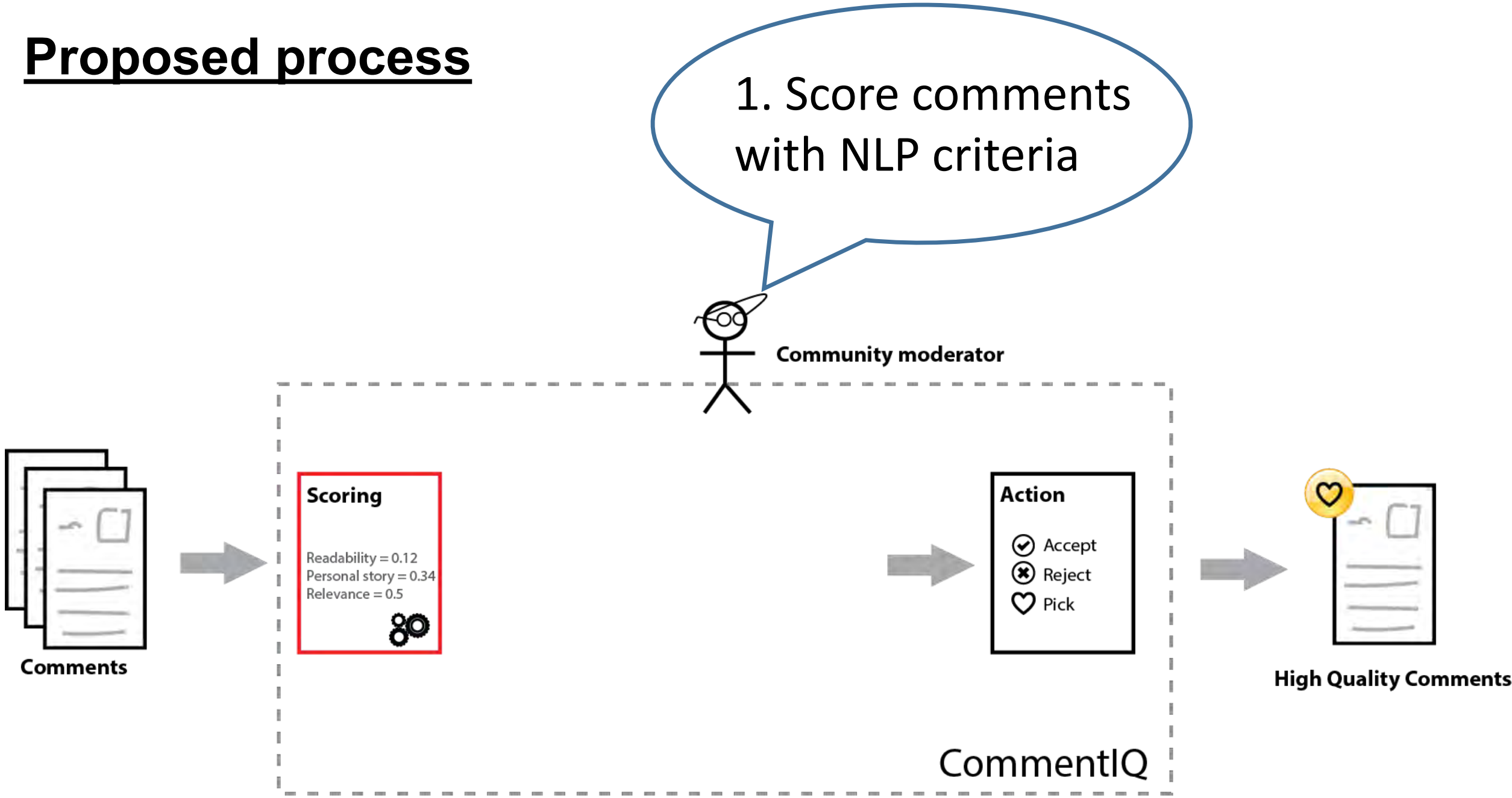

Statistical Modelling
Visual Analytics

HOW?

Previously in newsroom…

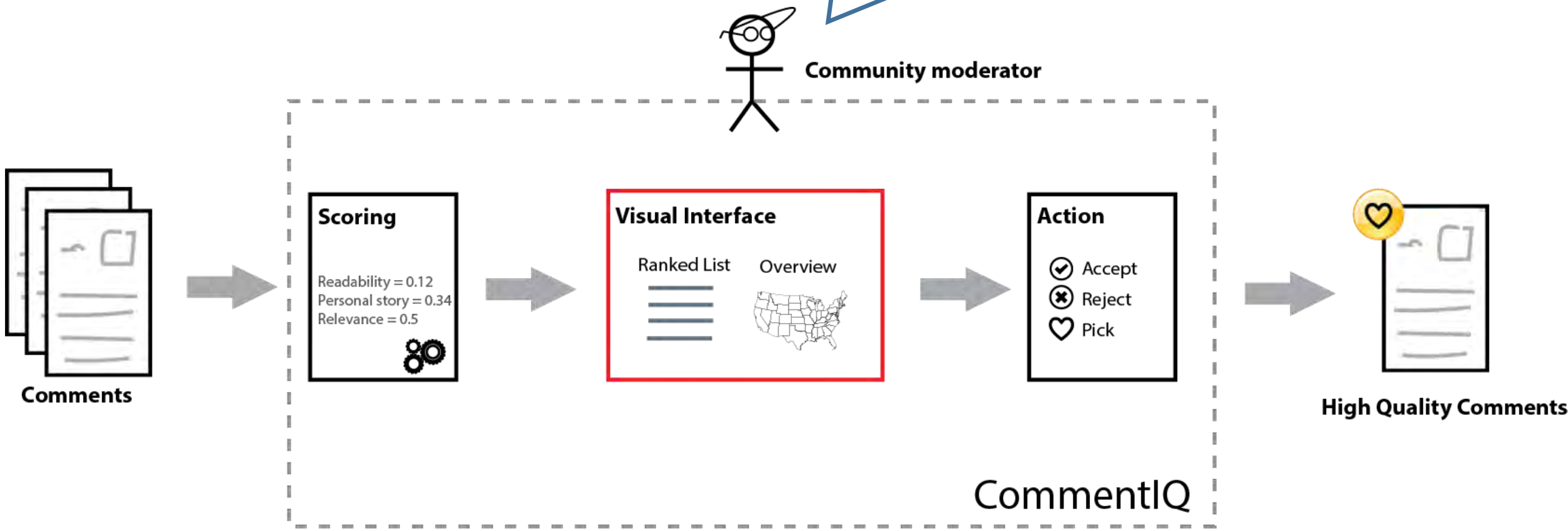


Proposed process



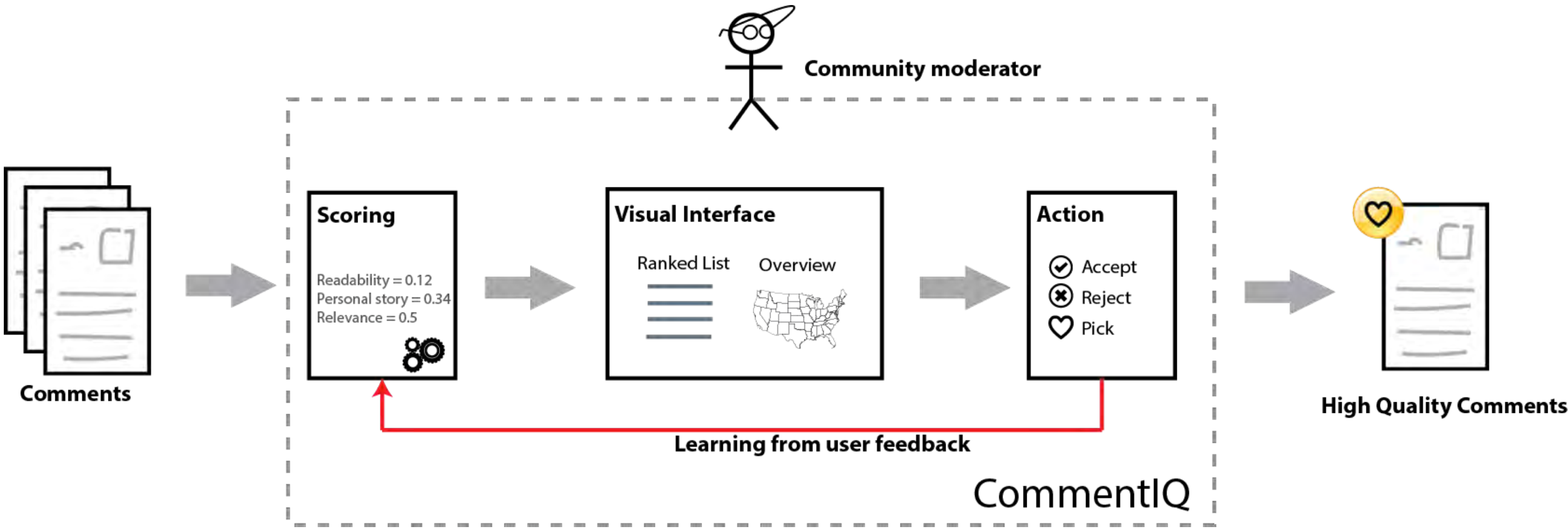
Proposed process

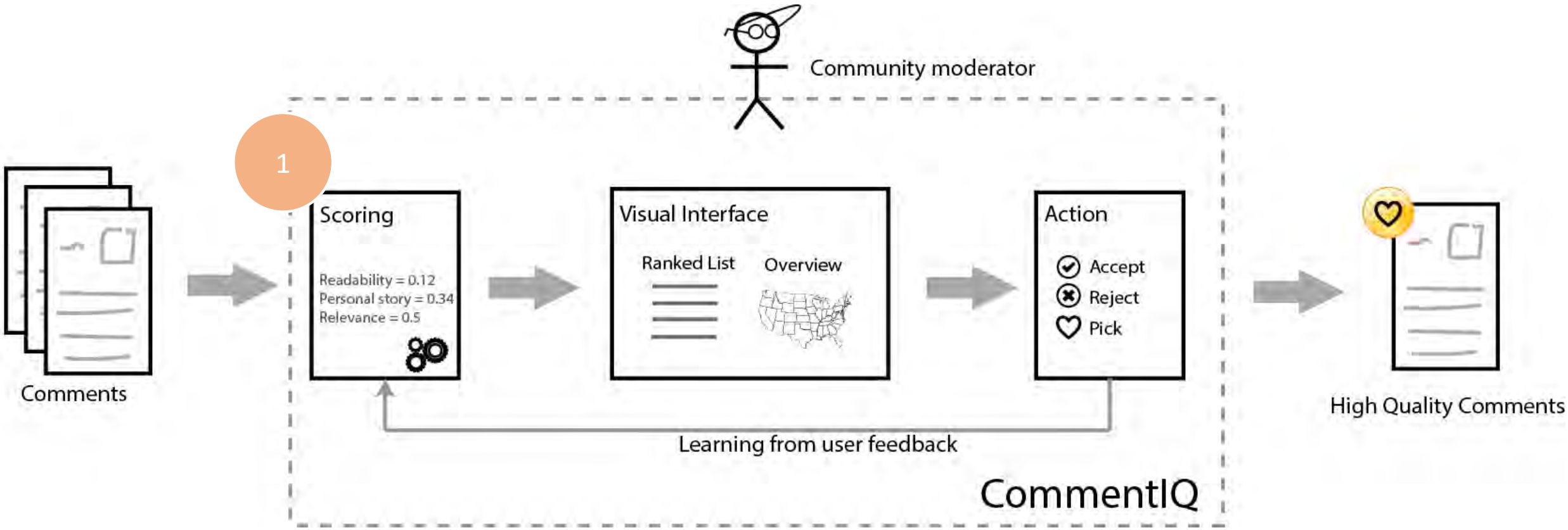
2. Interactive selection with **Custom Ranked List** and **Overview visualization**



Proposed process

3. Machine learns from User feedback




Community moderator
1
Comments
Scoring
Readability = 0.12
Personal story = 0.34
Relevance = 0.5
Visual Interface
Ranked List
Overview
Action
Accept
Reject
Pick
High Quality Comments
Learning from user feedback
CommentIQ

Scoring criterias

- ✓Article Relevance
- ✓Conversational Relevance
- ✓Personal Experience
- ✓Length of comments
- ✓Readability of the comment
- ✓Recommendation Score

Picking the NYT Picks: Editorial Criteria and Automation in the Curation of Online News Comments

Nicholas Diakopoulos

Journalists have a propensity to select online comments for publication according to editorial conceptions of quality content. This work considers various criteria for identifying quality user contributions for publication, evaluates how these criteria manifest in New York Times "Picks" comments, and operationalizes three such criteria computationally. Results indicate that many of the criteria enumerated from the literature do manifest in NYT "Picks" comments more so than non-selected comments, that most criteria are adequately rated by untrained non-professionals, and that relatively simple algorithms can be used to automatically assess some of these criteria. Implications for future online commenting experiences are discussed.

Introduction

The role of online comments on news sites is becoming an increasingly contentious subject as publishers are beginning to challenge the conventional wisdom of providing a space for commentary in response to articles, playing out the tension between the open and participatory nature of user-generated content (UGC) and the norms and goals of professional journalists seeking to control content (Lewis, 2012). Concerns over UGC, and specifically of online comments, by professionals often reflect the potentially


100% GUARANTEE
HIGH QUALITY

Criteria Only

The Times' Community API

2815 articles

331782 comments

12542 Pick

Criteria Only

The Times' Community API

2815 articles

331782 comments

12542 Pick

Train		Test	
Pick comments	Nonpick comments	P	N

Results

Prediction \ Ground Truth	Pick	No Pick
Pick	1712 (True Positive)	926 (False Positive)
No Pick	797 (False Negative)	1583 (True Negative)

Precision: 0.65
Recall: 0.68
F2 score: 0.68

Results

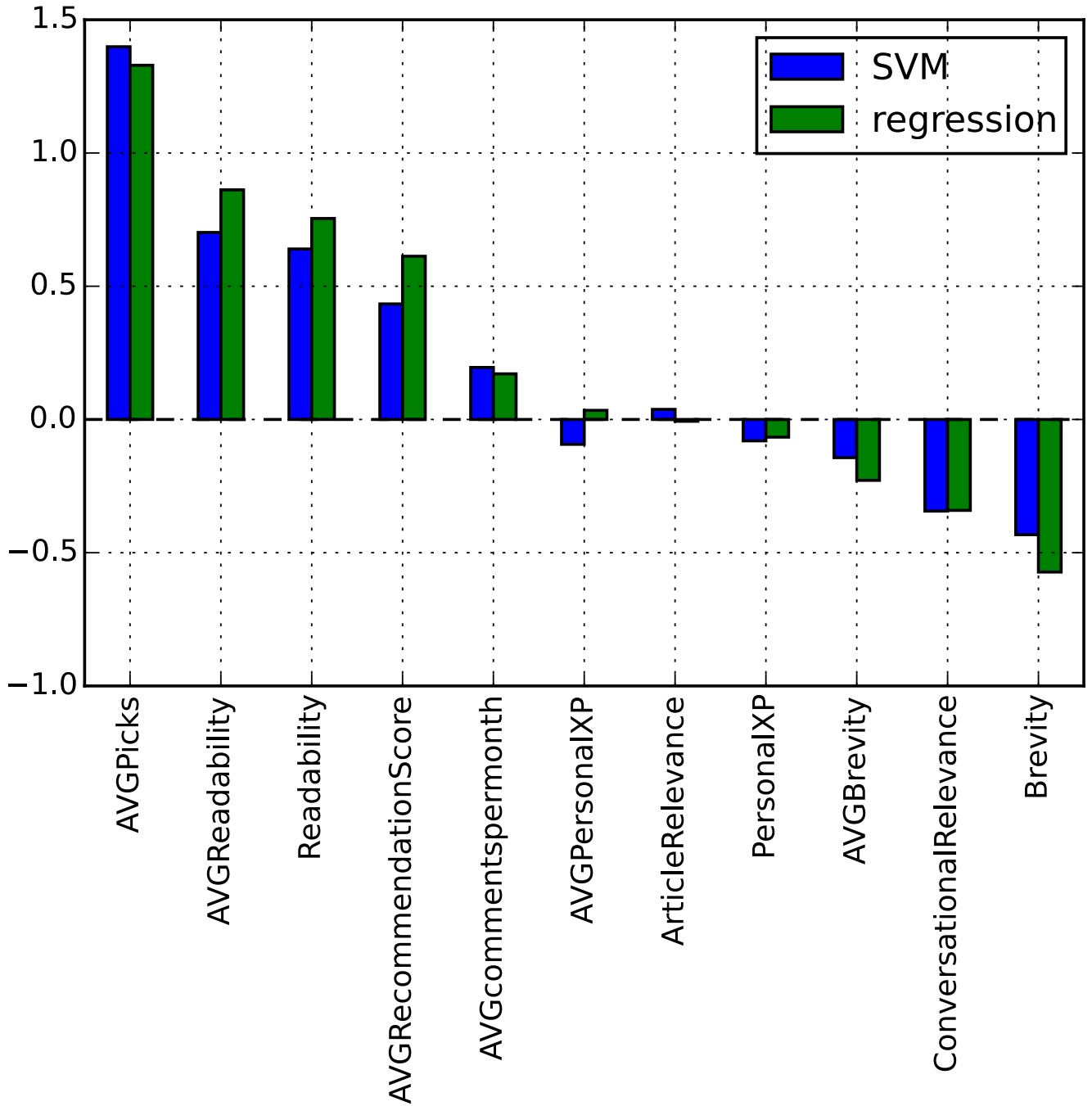
Prediction	Ground Truth: Pick	Ground Truth: No Pick
Pick	1712 (True Positive)	926 (False Positive)
No Pick	797 (False Negative)	1583 (True Negative)

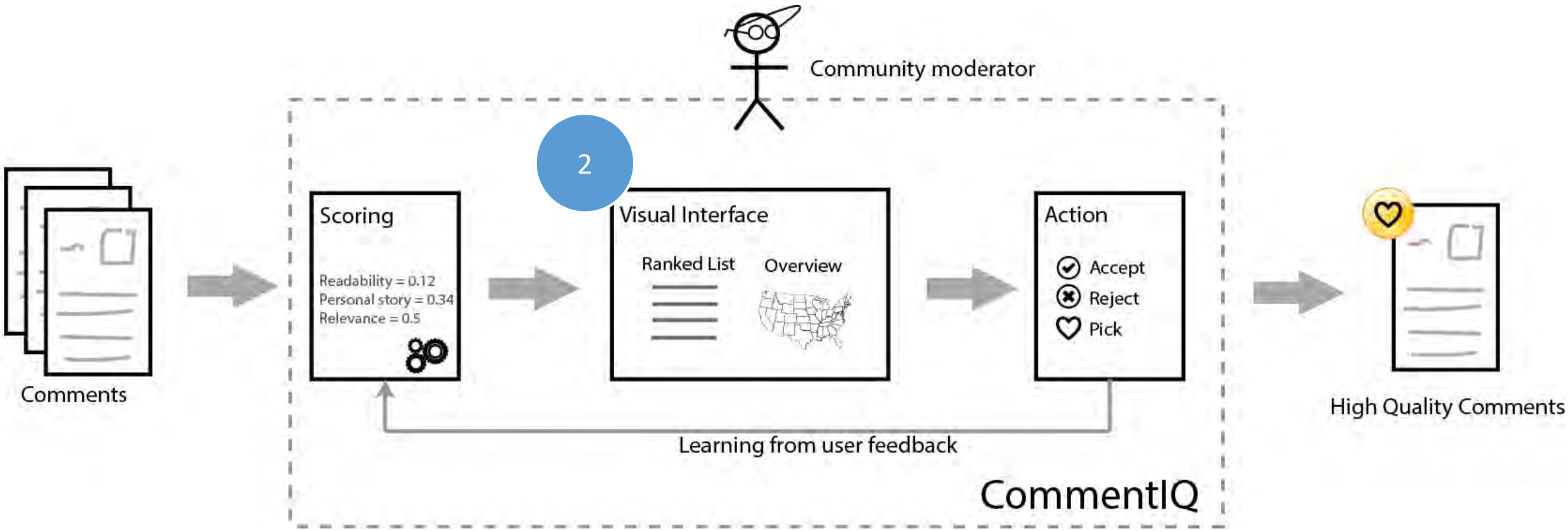
Precision: 0

Recall: 0

F2 sc

User history and **Readability** are best predictor for quality.




Community moderator
2
Comments
Scoring
Readability = 0.12
Personal story = 0.34
Relevance = 0.5
Visual Interface
Ranked List
Overview
Action
Accept
Reject
Pick
High Quality Comments
Learning from user feedback
CommentIQ

Custom Ranked List

F.B.I. Director Speaks About Race

WASHINGTON — The F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, delivered an unusually candid speech on Thursday about the difficult relationship between the police and African-Americans, saying that officers who work in neighborhoods where blacks commit crimes at a high rate develop a cynicism that shades their attitudes

... (more)

Select your overview visualization

CommentPlot | Map | Temporal

New Accepted Rejected Picked

Presets for Ranking: Edit Add +

- ✓ Default
- Personal Story
- Unexpected comment
- Written by best user

for this ranking.

Search for...

New (633) | Accepted (0) | Rejected (0) | Picked (1) | All

NJB Seattle , Feb 12, 2015 12:41:39 PM

Kudos to Director Comey. It's a breath of fresh air to hear honest and unvarnished comments which are so obviously true. The problem is that in the highly charged atmosphere surrounding the issue, we find it difficult to have an honest conversation as one side jumps on anything the other side says. The first thing we need to do is recognize that this isn't about "sides" but a very real American societal problem that we need to talk about openly and honestly. Comey's comments are a valuable first step.

Accept Reject Pick

Help Clear Close Save current setting

Criteria based on comment score

Article Relevance : 7.862

Conversational Relevance : -23.1

Length of comments : 7.066

Personal Experience : -3.41

Readability of the comment : 38.39

Recommendation Score : 10

Criteria based on user score

User Comments per Month : 4.358

User Length : 5.197

User Personal Experience : -9.32

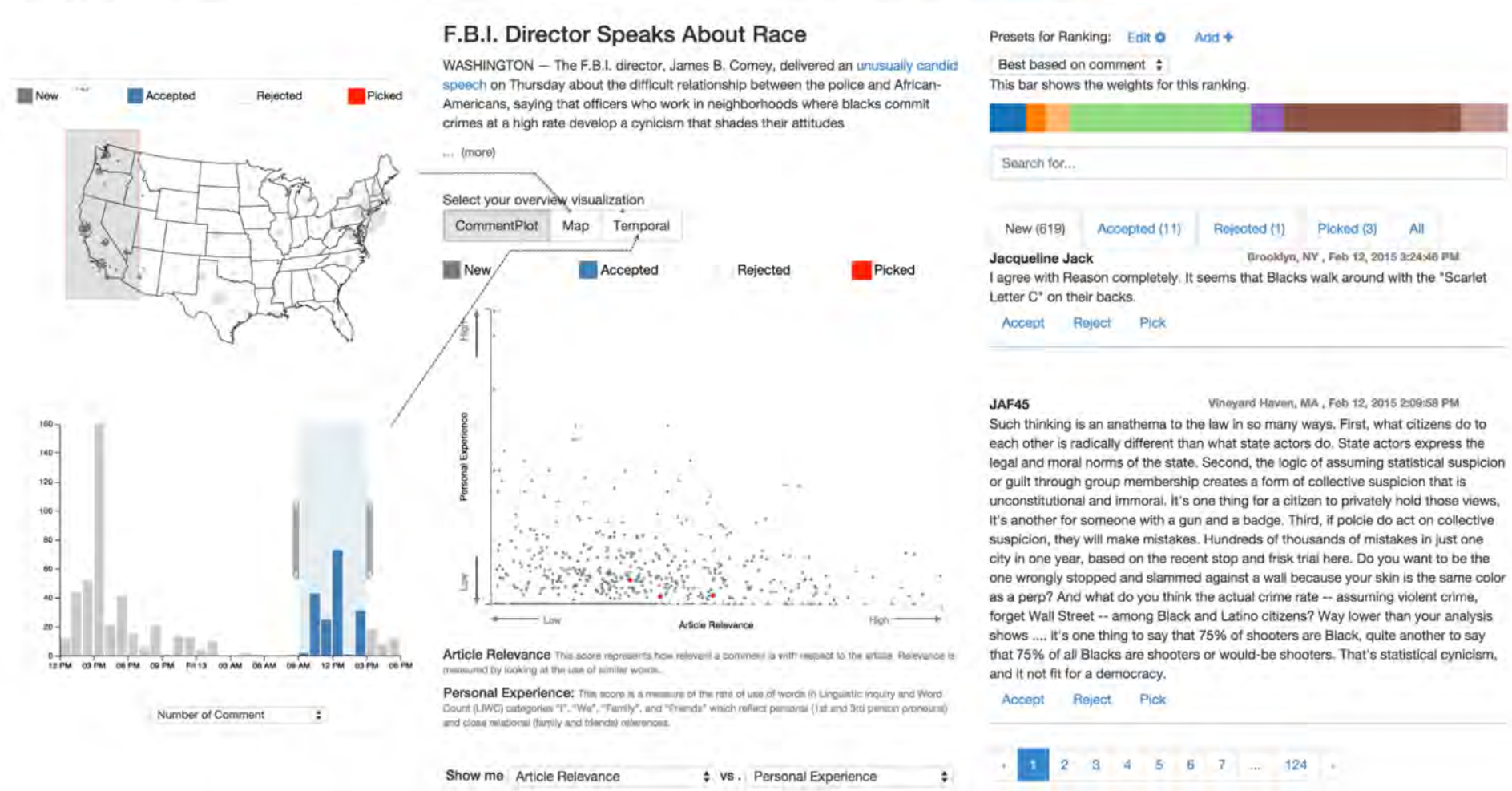
User Picks : 38.99

User Readability : -6.49

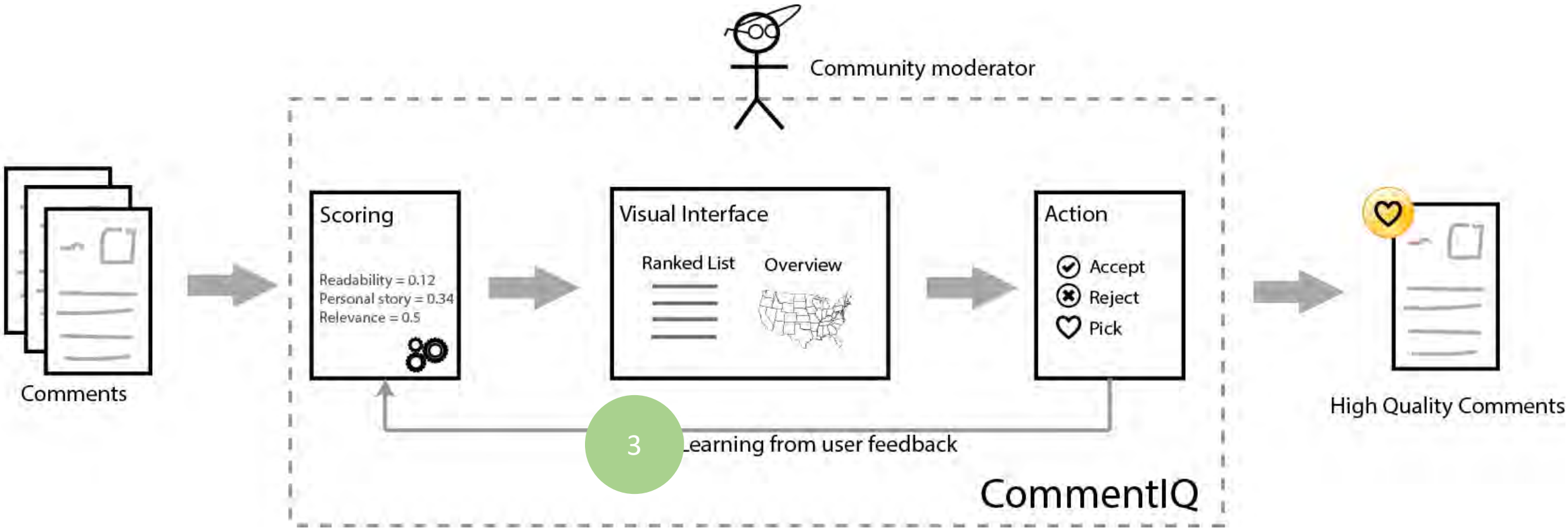
User Recommendation Score : -28.1

Overview Visualization

CommentIQ



http://moderator.comment-iq.com/#/demo


Community moderator
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Learning from user feedback
CommentIQ

commentIQ

Browse Articles log in

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F.B.I. Director Speaks Abou

WASHINGTON — The F.B.I. director, James B. C
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between the police and African-Americans, sayin
work in neighborhoods where blacks commit crir
develop a cynicism that shades their attitudes

... (more)

Select your overview visualization

CommentPlot | Map | Temporal

New Accepted Rejected Picked

Edit Add

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All

NJB Seattle , Feb 12, 2015 12:41:39 PM

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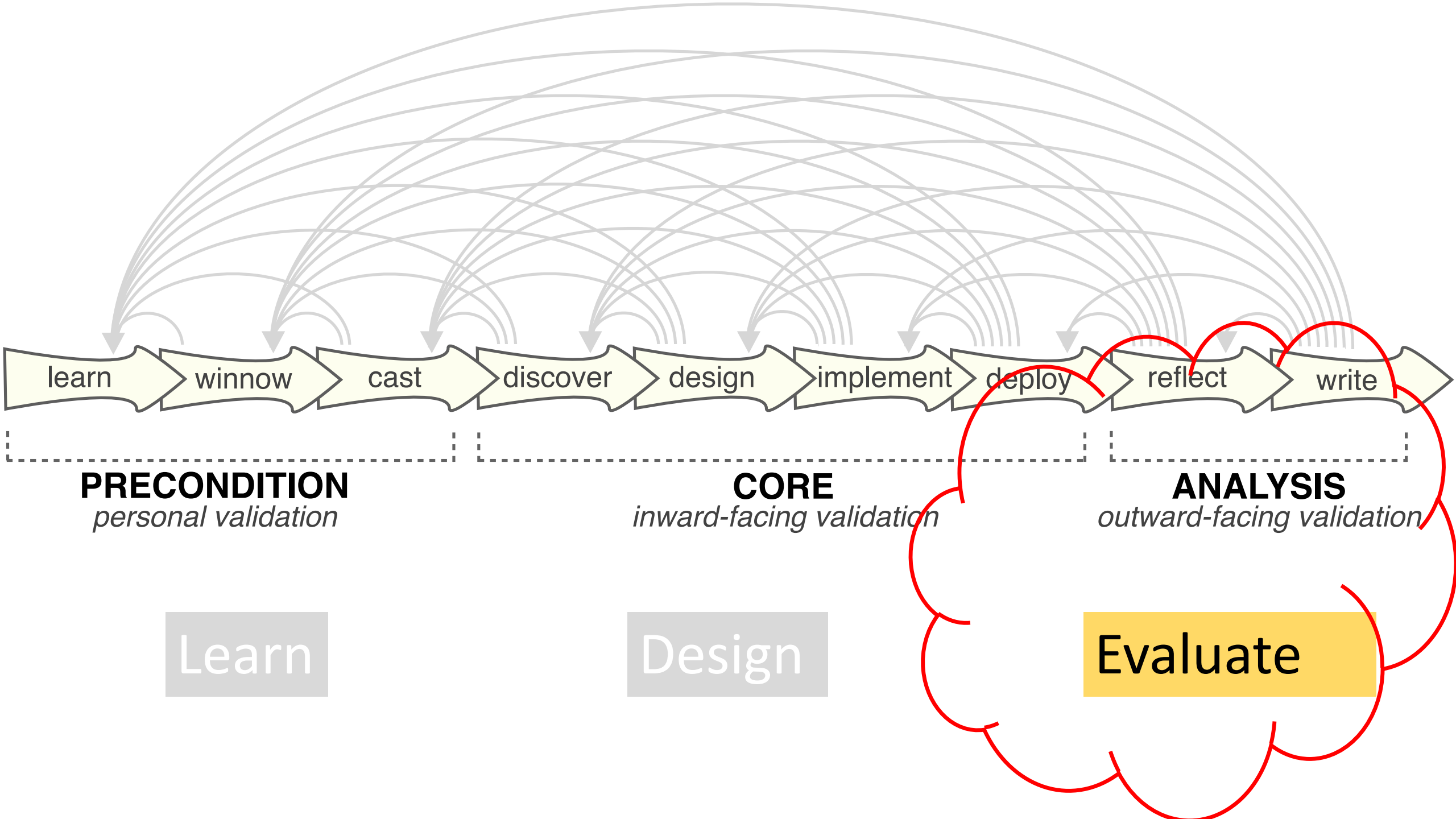
Accept Reject Pick

Please select all that apply to this comment.

- [ ] well-written
- [ ] informative
- [ ] personal experience
- [ ] critical
- [ ] humorous
- [ ] Type other reason...

OK


learn
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PRECONDITION
personal validation
CORE
inward-facing validation
ANALYSIS
outward-facing validation
Learn
Design
Evaluate


The
New York
Times


The
Washington
Post


THE BALTIMORE SUN


THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
WSJ

ID	Organization	Field-experience (in years)	Workflow
P1	Washington Post	10	Post-moderation
P2		1	
P3		4	
P4	New York Times	4	Pre-moderation
P5		7	
P6	Wall Street Journal	4	Post-moderation
P7	Baltimore Sun	7	Post-moderation

ID	Organization	Field-experience (in years)	Workflow
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P5		7	
P6	Wall Street Journal	4	Post-moderation
P7	Baltimore Sun	7	Post-moderation

1 hour structured interview with test drive

Findings

“…shifting moderating to a reporting research job.”

Paraphrased from one moderator

- Flexibility is great

- Flexibility is great

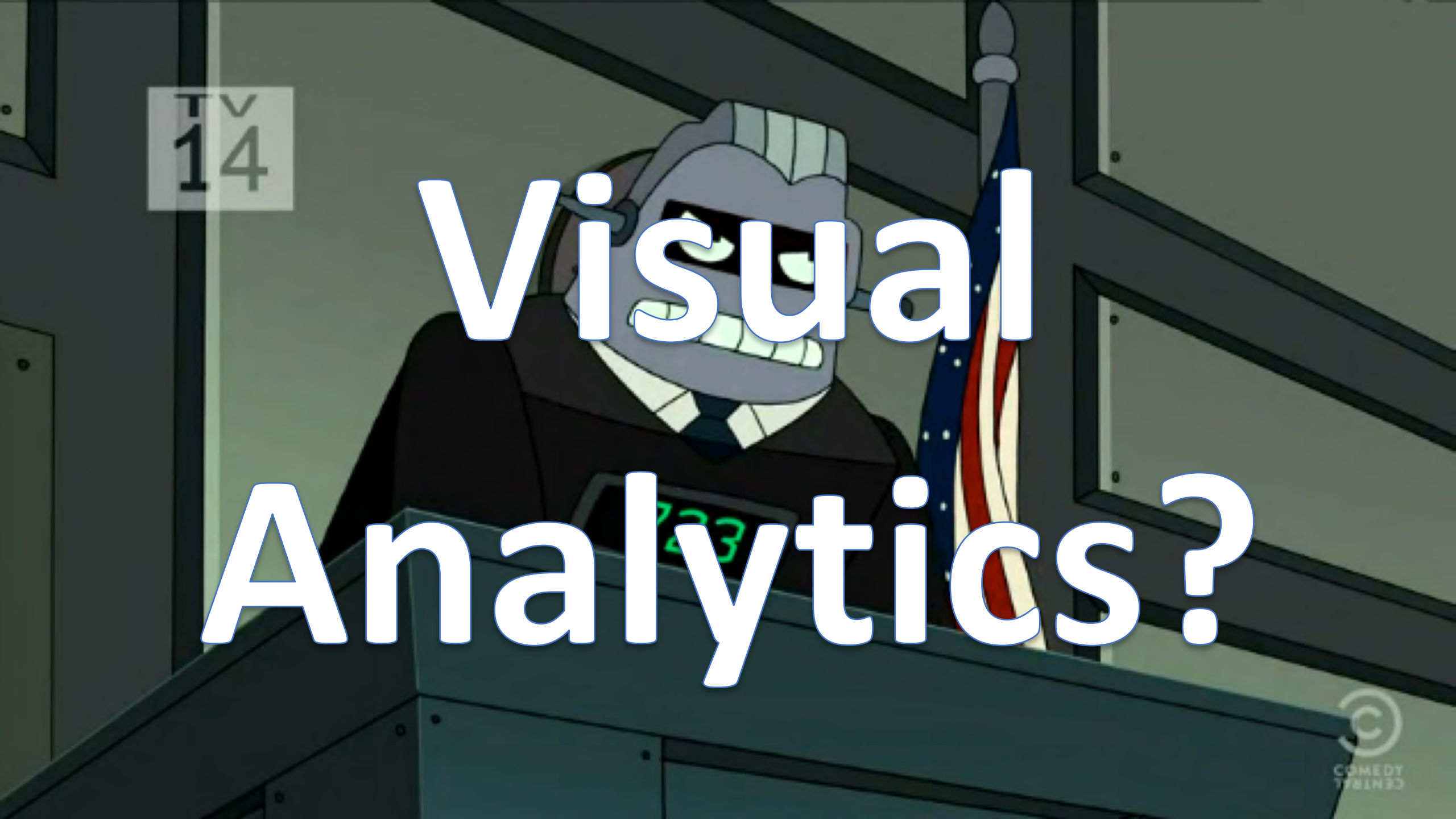
- Comments are made by people!

- Flexibility is great
- Comments are made by people!
- Lots of other use-cases

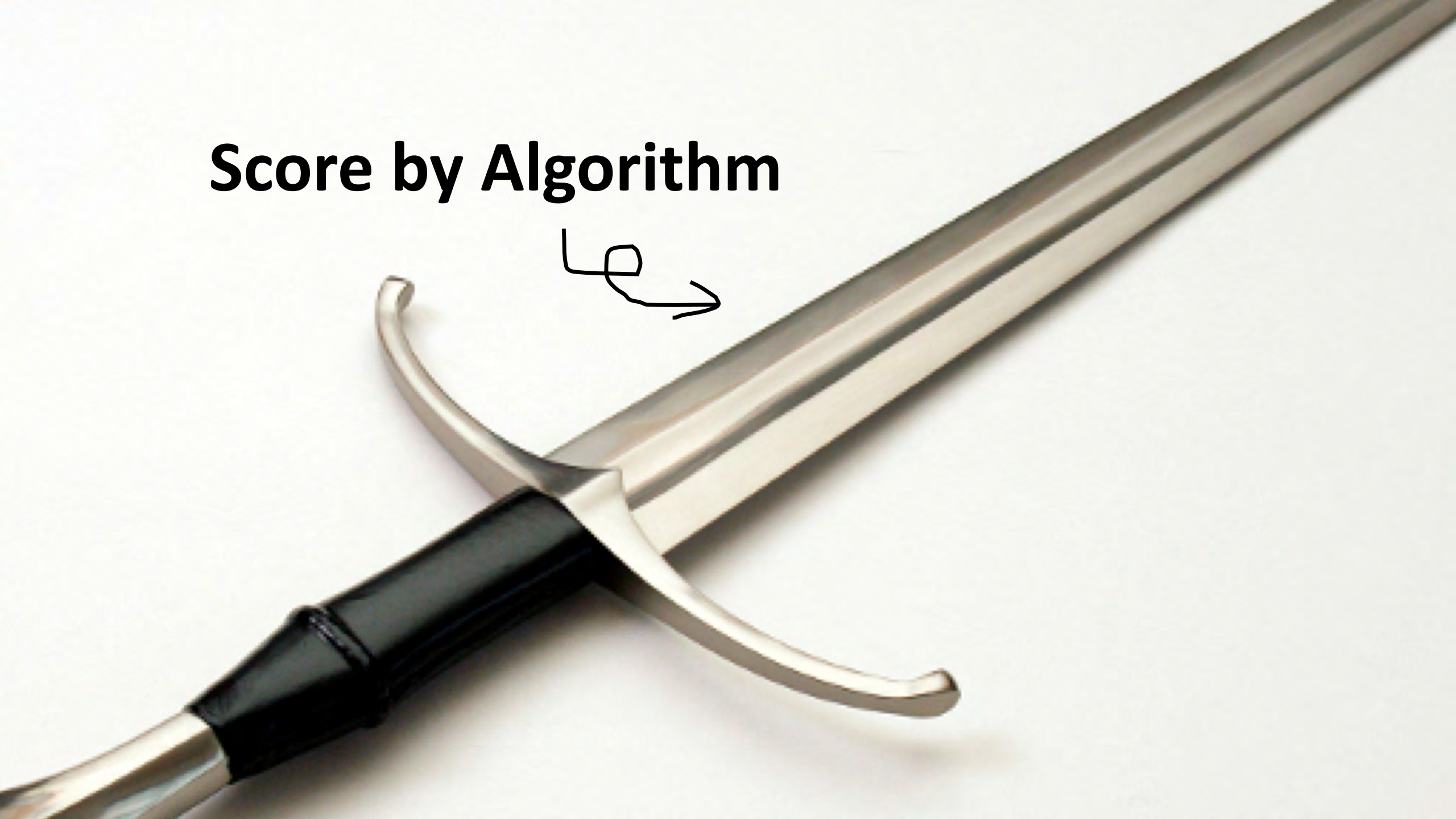
Discussion

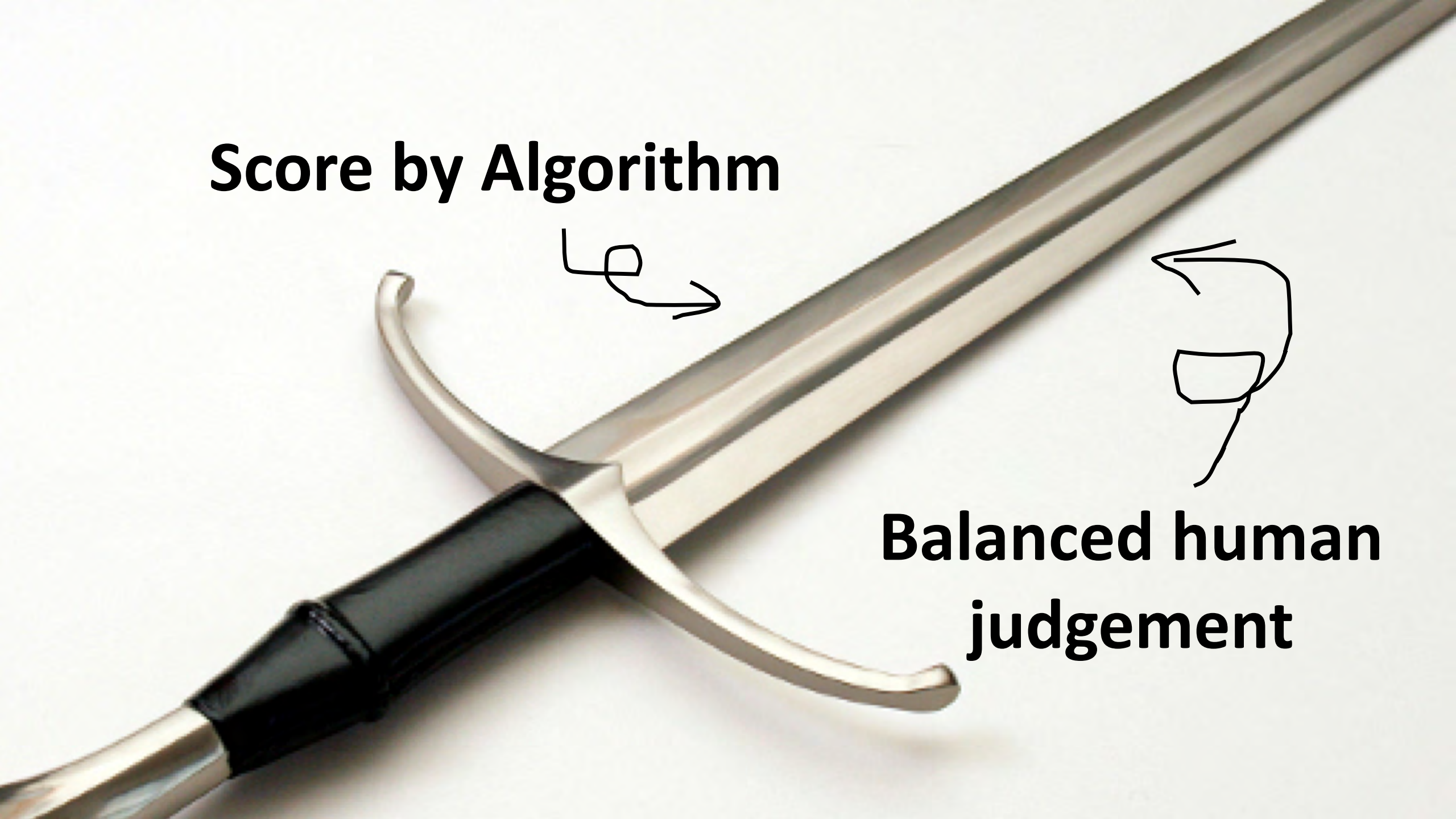

Selection
Editing
Bias


TV
14
723
COMEDY CENTRAL


TV
14
Visual
Analytics?
COMEDY
CENTRAL

Score by Algorithm




Score by Algorithm
Balanced human judgement

Beyond “Most Liked”

All Comments

Newest First ▾ Pause live updates ▮▮

- Newest First
- Oldest First
- Most Replies
- Most Liked

gonna have to go back to his taxpayer-funded J-O-B? That's gonna be a tough one.

1 · Like Reply Share

Liam-Still

12:48 PM EDT [Edited]

RNC Chairman urges all Republicans to just go; Full Jonestown, and just drink all the Kool-Aid.

All Comments

Newest First

- Newest First
- Oldest First
- Most Replies
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gonna have to go bac
gonna be a tough one.

Liam-Still
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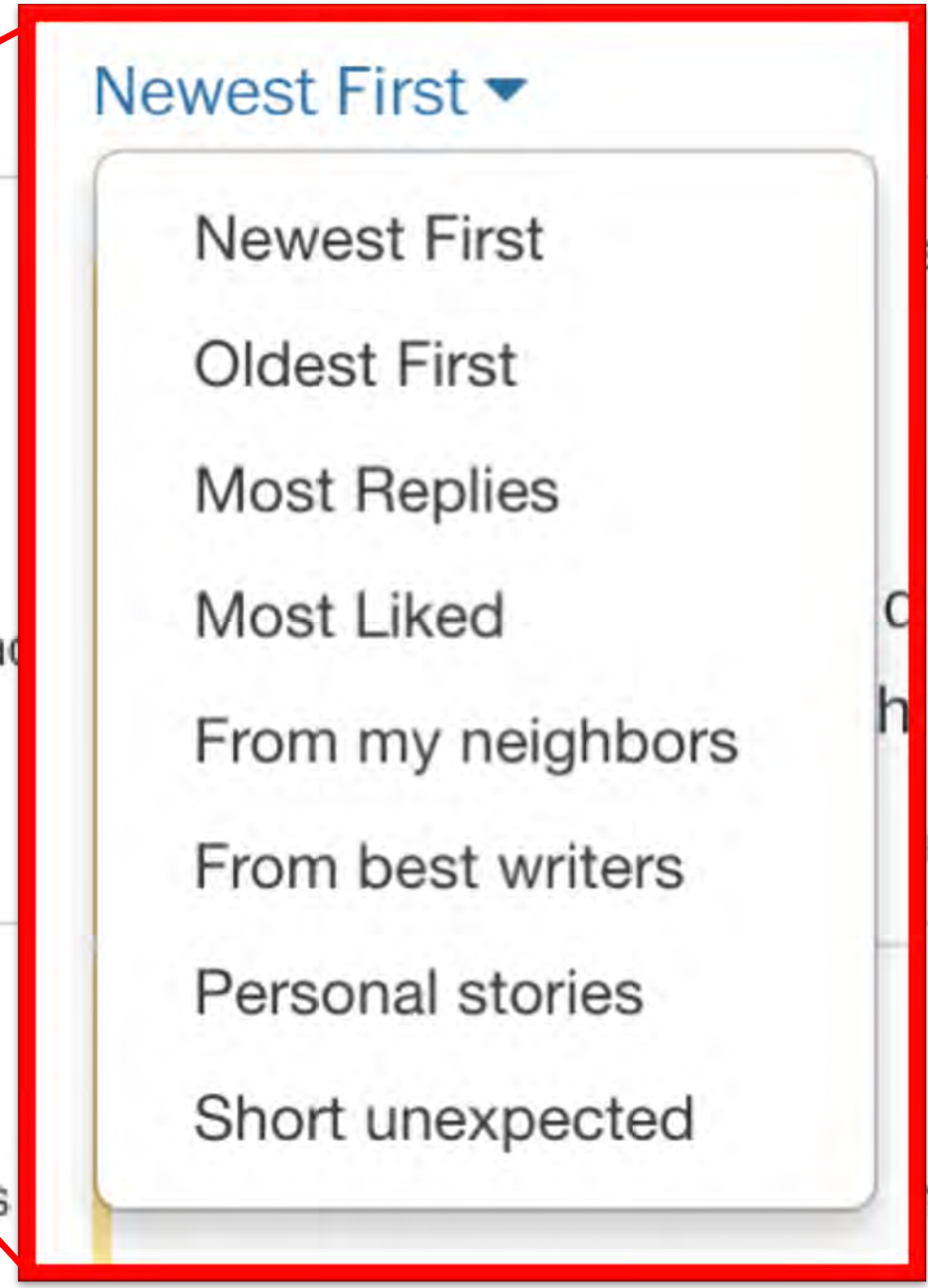

All Comments

Newest First

- Newest First
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gonna have to go bac
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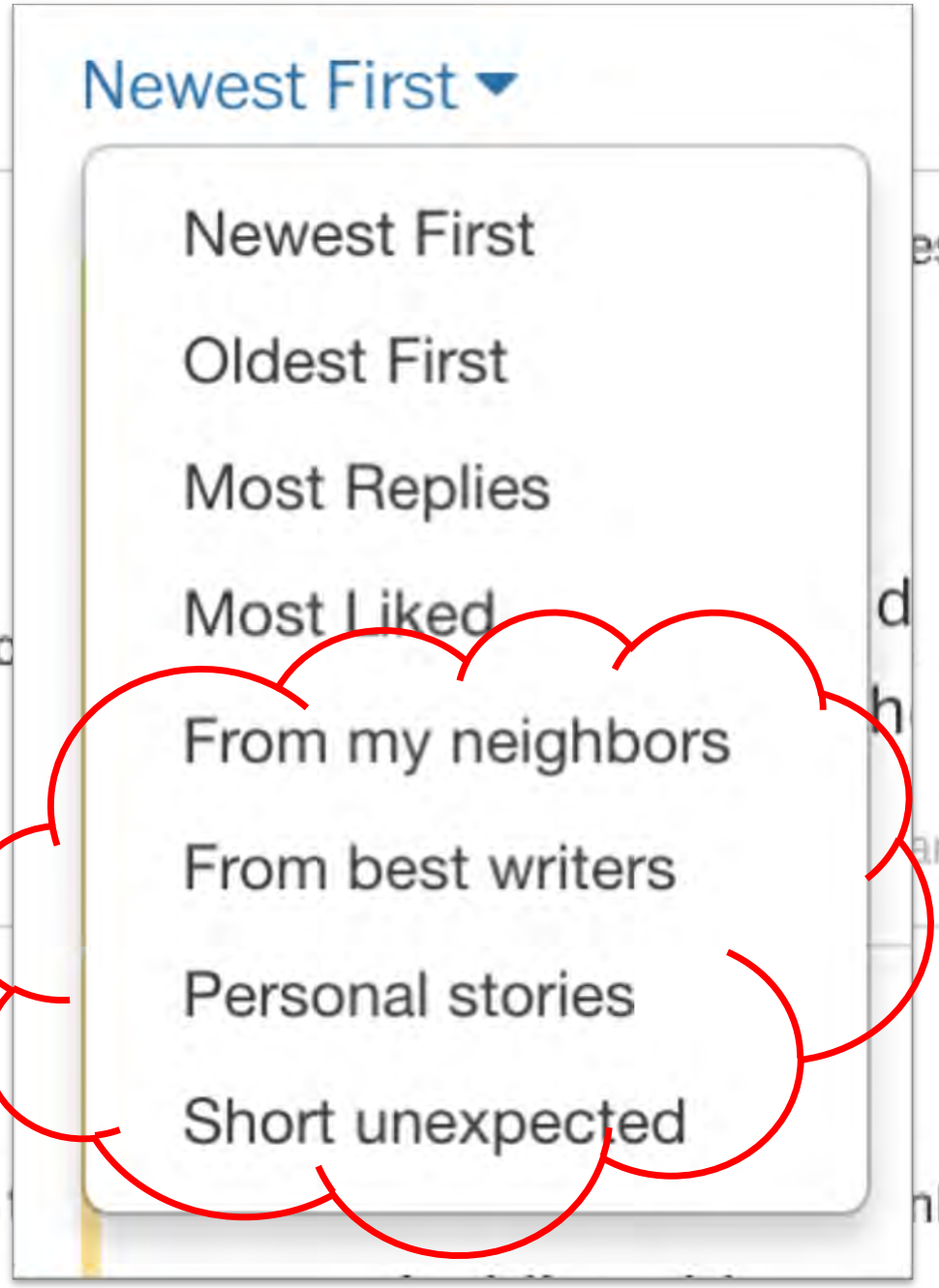


Conclusion

WHAT ARE GOOD COMMENTS?

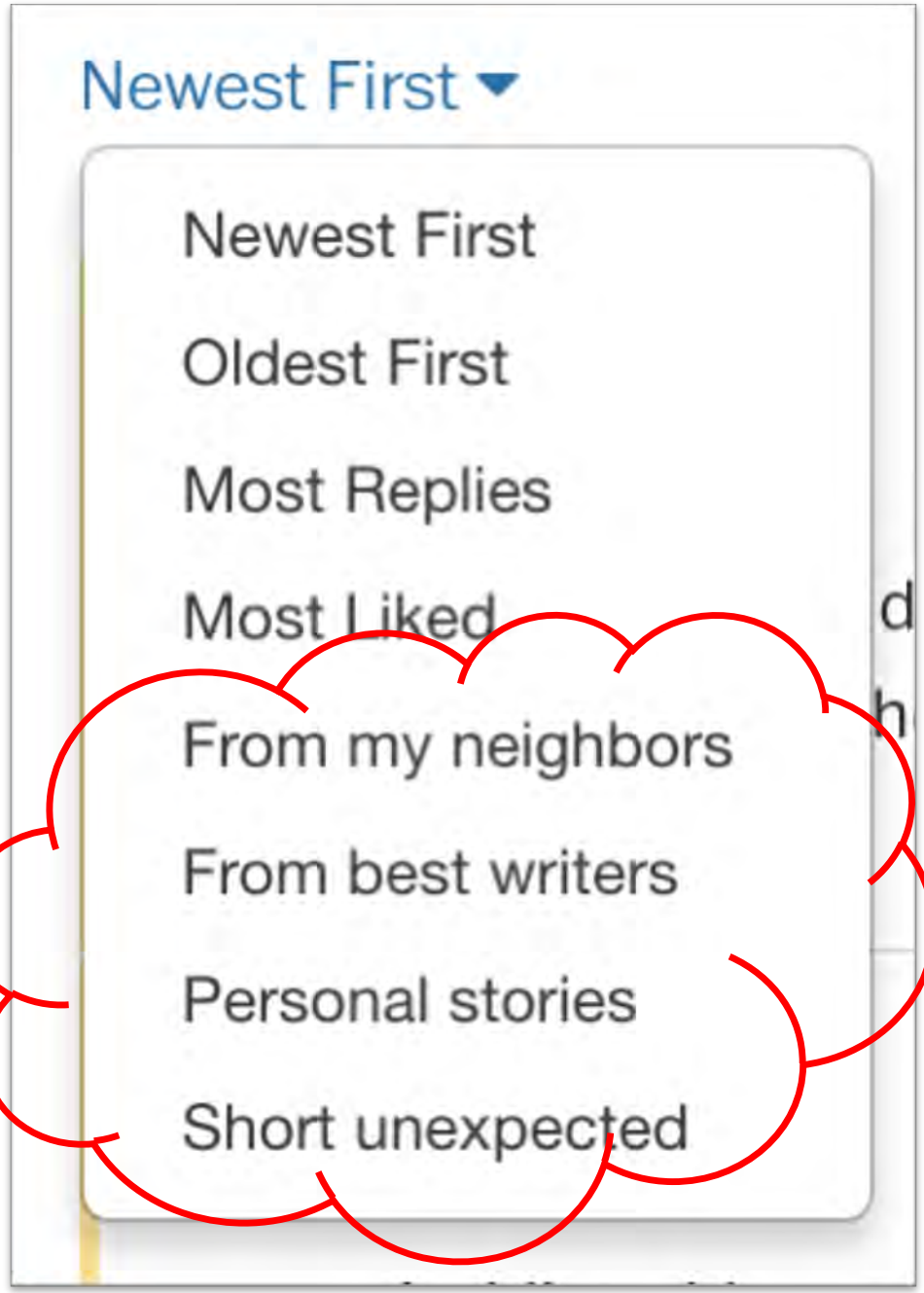
HOW CAN WE SELECT GOOD COMMENTS?

What is a high-quality comment depends on the journalistic context.

What is a high-quality comment depends on the journalistic context.

Visual analytics approach can help moderators find high-quality comments.

Time to upgrade our comments section




Knight Foundation
Informed & Engaged Communities


TEAM WORK


CommentIQ
Simranjit Sachar
ssachar@umd.edu
Nicholas Diakopoulos
@ndiakopoulos
Niklas Elmqvist
@NElmqvist
Deokgun Park
@intuinno


CommentIQ
Simranjit Sachar
ssachar@umd.edu
Nicholas Diakopoulos
@ndiakopoulos
Niklas Elmqvist
@NElmqvist
Deokgun Park
@intuinno
Try at
Comment-iq.com
Questions?