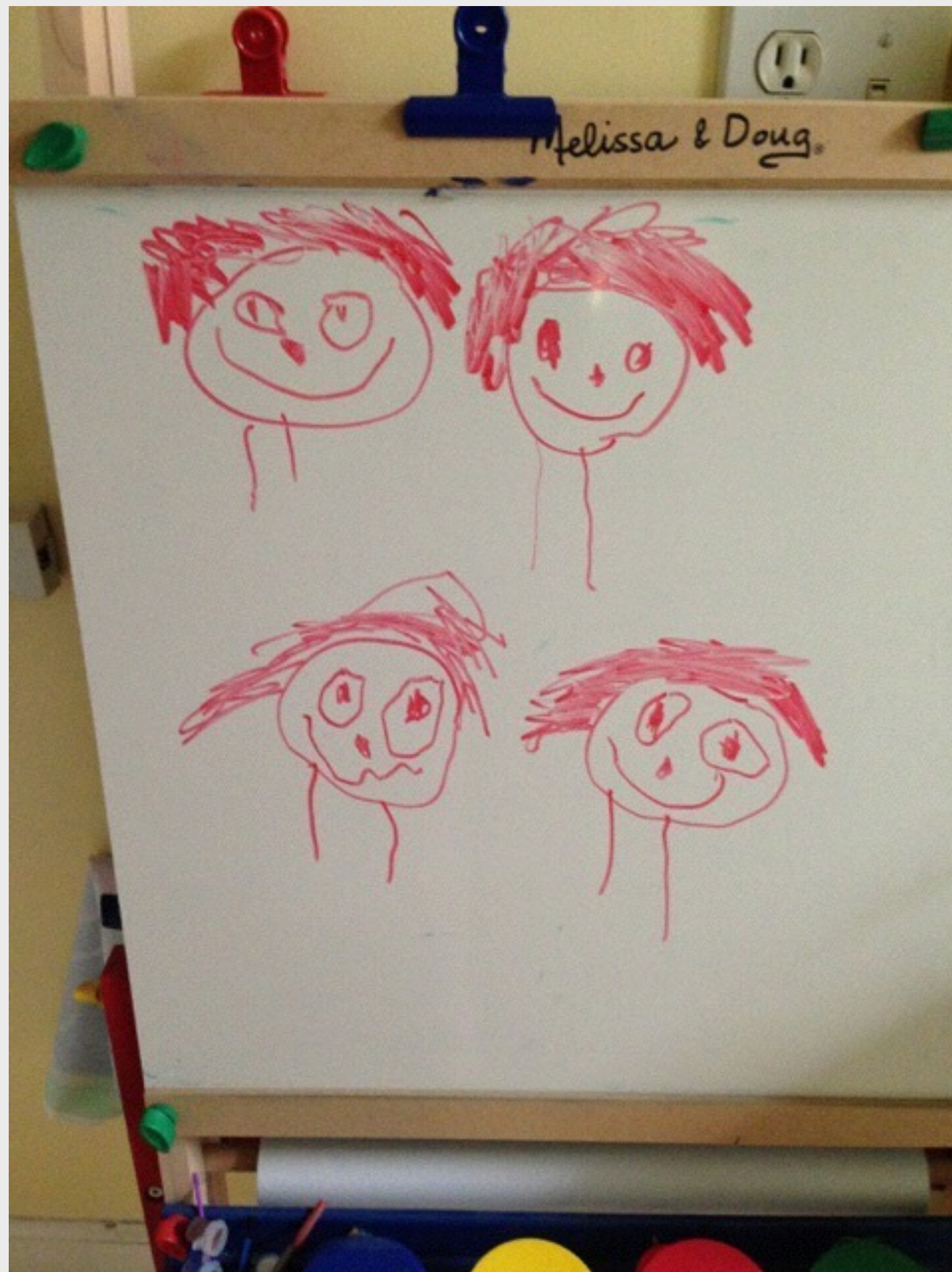


Approaching Technology Like a Two-Year-Old



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Learning New Words



"What technology is, Daddy?"

**What can toddlers teach
us about technology?**

Mental Models







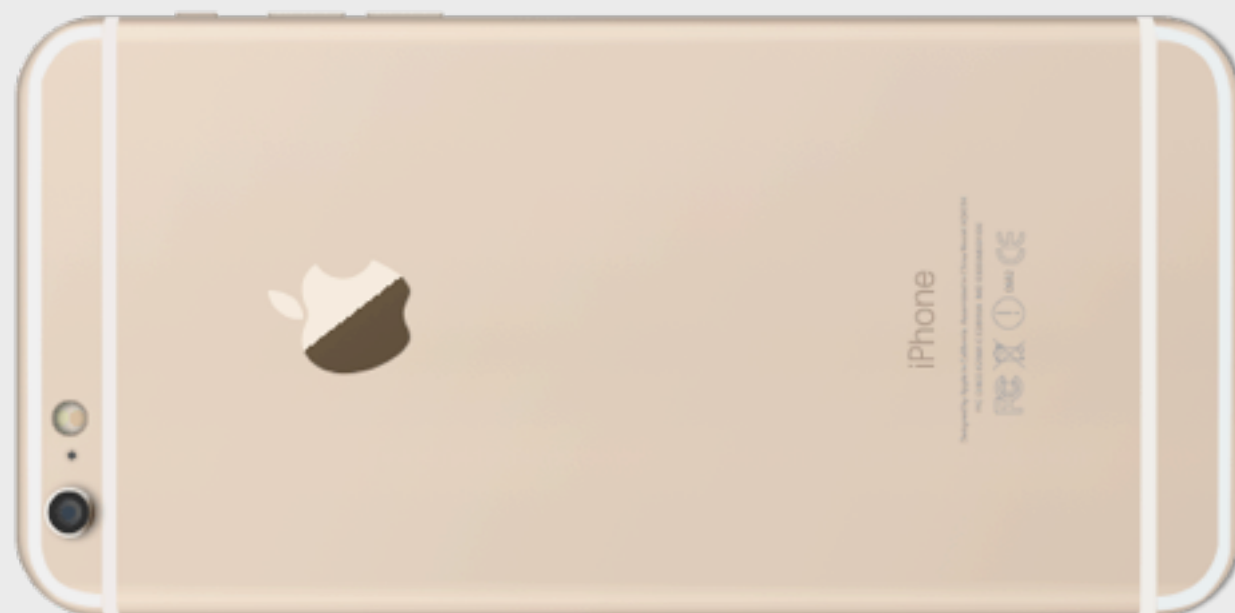
- “Sync is the same as backup.”
- “If I use FileVault, then anything I copy to another disk must still be encrypted.”
- “It’s safe to use the same password everywhere.”
- “IMAP means I have to be online to read my saved email.”

Miscategorization











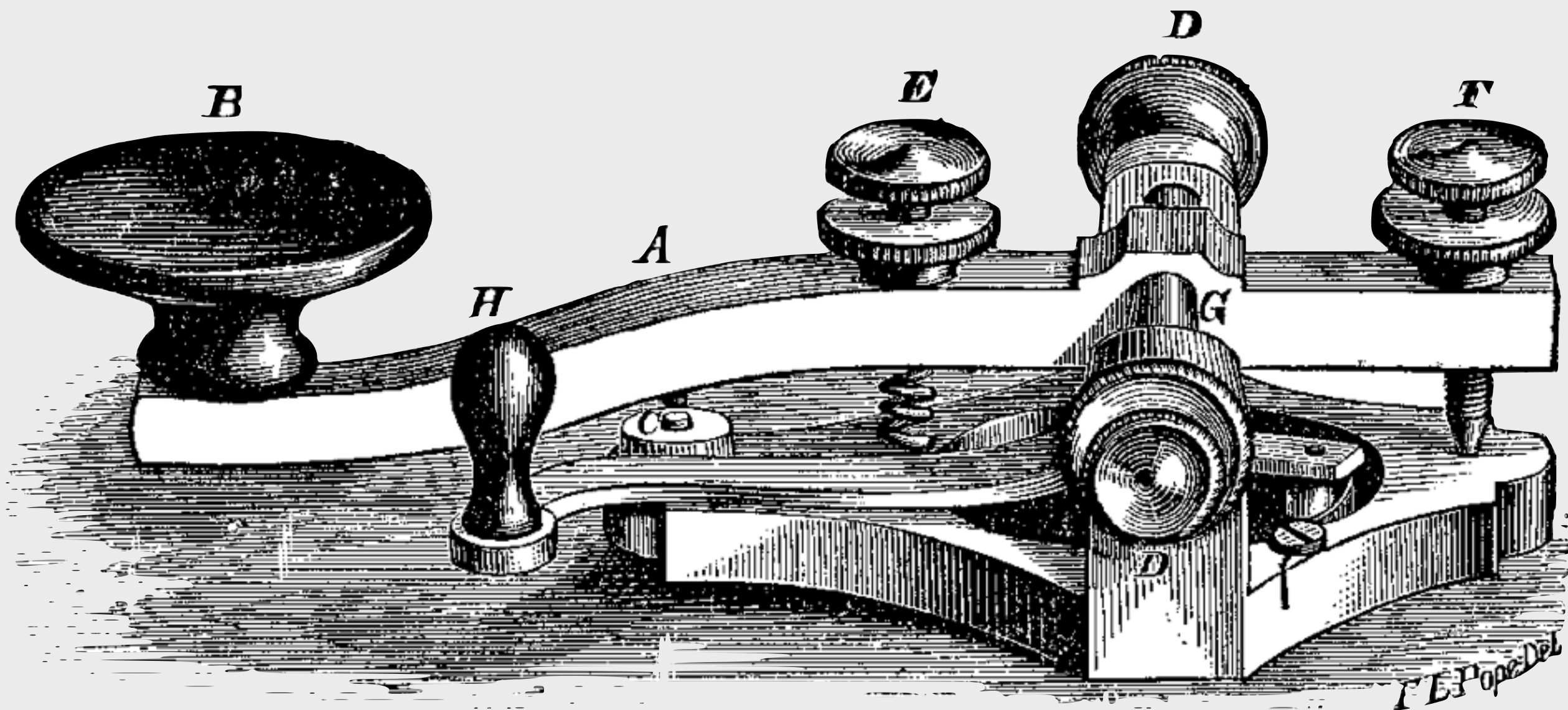


FIG. 10.







“What does that do?”

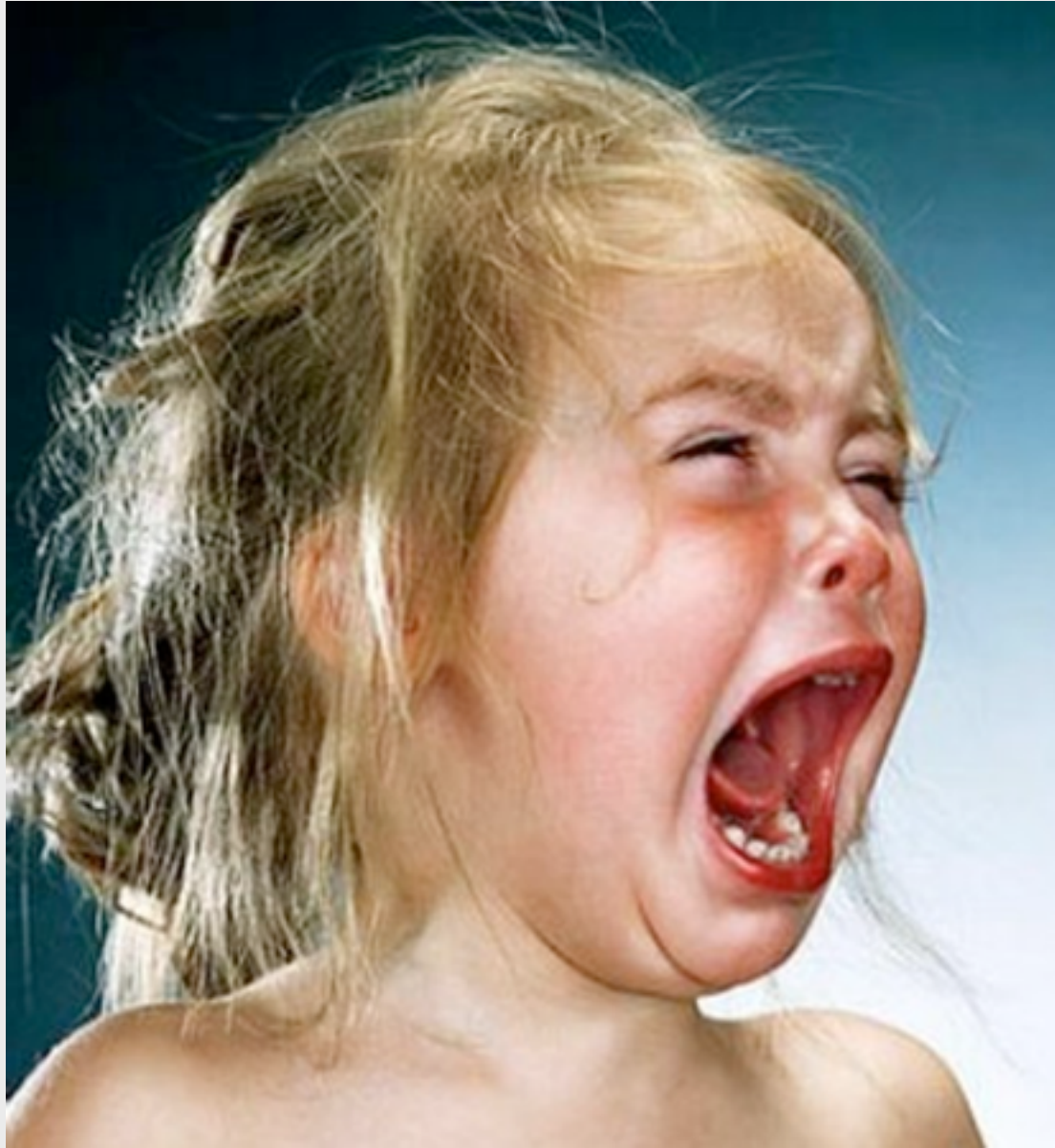
Curiosity

- Ask lots of questions.
- Experiment and explore.
- Keep asking, “What does this do?”

**We're technology
storytellers.**



**How can you support
users who act like
two-year-olds?**



Tantrum Tips

- Stay calm; use a soothing voice.
- Take the problem seriously.
- Empathize & reiterate.
- Solutions are less important than feelings.

Vocabulary Limits

Toddler:

- Carbonated = “spicy water”
- In 6 weeks = “not today”

Grownup:

- Malware = “virus”
- Button, slider, tab, disclosure triangle, resize box, pop-up menu etc. = “icon”





Unreasonable Requests

Toddler:

- Why can't we go to Grandma's house?
- Can it be my birthday every day?

Grownup:

- Why don't you add a Convert button?
- Can I use FTP to back up my laptop to the server?

Resistance to Change

Toddler:

- Why can't I wear my old shoes?
- I don't like avocado!
- That's not the right store!

Grownup:

- I can't adapt to a new OS. Snow Leopard forever!
- I'll read that PDF as soon as I've printed it out.

Final Thoughts

- Two-year-olds can teach us about technology (and other things) even as we teach them.
- We can only stay ahead of them for so long.

Further Reading

- *The Philosophical Baby*
alt.cc/64
- Two Theories of Home Heat Control
alt.cc/65
- FlippedBITS
alt.cc/66