



Run	Test	Indent	Blocks Menu	Search Menu
Run Other	Edit Other	Overwrite	Fold/Unfold	Line Insert

L-1 C-1 Text-52720 Chip-1524488Fast-0 Edit: Hardware,AMOS

UNAPOLOGETIC!

Get Sprite 0,1,180,180 To 185,185
Get Sprite Palette

Write 1,X,Y,1
Write Update On
Joy(1)=1 Then V-V-1
Joy(1)=2 Then V-V+1
Joy(1)=4 Then X-X-1
Joy(1)=8 Then X-X+1

Step 1=UP

```
input AS
if AS="i" Then Goto INV ;
if AS="letshavesonemusic" Then .L_1
goto MAIN ;

INV:
window 1
print "Items:"
print ITM$

CVERSION:
;ls
for NOISE=1 To 100
print Chr$(Rnd(25)+65);
next NOISE
print "autoexec.bat not installed"
print "sound manager not installed"
print "requires Pentium P133 with 500Mb RAMand 6x CD-ROM Drive"
print "not enough ERAW"
print "10 divided by 2 is 585.999999999"
error 1

T:
ocate 0,9 : Cline
ocate 0,9 : Print "Would you
input FIX$
if FIX$="b" Then Goto FTBUY :
if FIX$="s" Then Goto FTSELL
goto FT :

len ****THE BIT WHERE THEY DE

FTBUY:
if M=0 Then Goto NOCASH2 :
ocate 0,9 : Cline
ocate 0,9 : Print "How many
input RIBM
ROBOTS=YROBOTS+RIBM
EDUCT=RIBM*AA
I=M-DEDUCT
goto MAIN2 :

INOT:
ocate 0,9 : Cline
```

lab6

issue26.7

...the word "light" mean anything
...cannot see anything

You can now see things
You can see Toothbrush
Screwdriver
Glass of Water
Pillow
Phone

There is a doorway lea
?

The man broke the palace that was
The cat broke the hat that was
The cat wrote the car that was
The man took the house that was
The cat carried the coat that was
The cat closed the coat that was
The crocodile wrote the table that was
The dog wrote the house that was

Multipack, not to be sold separately

Layout bugs!

Graphic design that makes you beg for AI



Player One: 1233
Player Two: 1243
Player Three: 1187

left

right

As Gold 23 1
opper 18 1
er 14 1
aron 22 1
erson 22 1

Attachment leads to suffering; PDF attachments doubly so

horse would you like, player one?

Abandon ship. You shouldn't have to deal with this.

program at line 5
ct mode, <SPACE> to edit



FREE or nearest offer

Actually issue number 9

Calendar versioning for show, integers for a pro

Load this PDF
In a Gempub reader tool
And enjoy the mlog

Heavy Vehicle Factory

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Longitudinal Storytime...

were

Back to Gemini

Welcome. It's been a while - but not in Geminispace it hasn't, where assistant editor James has been mlogging diligently this year, as a refuge from the literal warzone that the open web has become. Much like [issue 5](#), this issue serves as an archive of the mlog, and a chance to get readership into double digits.

Weblog : blog :: Gemlog : mlog

As well as the traditional PDF/A format, this file is also in [gempub format](#), which is a nice self-contained way to archive a Gemini capsule and read it offline. It could have been in *self-extracting* gempub format too, at the cost of falling back to plain PDF, but that cost is too great. You never go full PDF.

Lagrange, the premier Gemini browser, won't open it until [this bug](#) is fixed, but we can wait.

How?

LibreOffice is still the state of the FOSS art for PDF/A production. Fortunately, it turns out LibreOffice Writer is nicely scriptable from Python, using its UNO API. You can process a gemtext document line by line, firing off `insertString()` calls, and watch the document populate before your eyes, like your favourite token generator.

After first installing the uno module (e.g. `sudo apt install python3-uno`), you'll want to do something like this:

```
import uno
from com.sun.star.connection import NoConnectException
from com.sun.star.style.BreakType import PAGE_BEFORE
from com.sun.star.style.BreakType import NONE

def connect_to_libreoffice():
    """Connect to a running LibreOffice instance started with:
    soffice --accept="socket,host=127.0.0.1,port=2002;urp;StarOffice.ComponentContext"
    """
    local_ctx = uno.getComponentContext()
    resolver = local_ctx.ServiceManager.createInstanceWithContext(
        "com.sun.star.bridge.UnoUrlResolver", local_ctx
    )

    url = (f"uno:socket,host=127.0.0.1,port=2002;urp;StarOffice.ComponentContext")

    try:
        ctx = resolver.resolve(url)
    except NoConnectException:
        raise RuntimeError(
            "Could not connect to LibreOffice. "
            "Did you first run soffice --accept=... ?"
        )

    smgr = ctx.ServiceManager
    desktop = smgr.createInstanceWithContext("com.sun.star.frame.Desktop", ctx)
    return ctx, smgr, desktop
```

```
def create_doc():
    ctx, smgr, desktop = connect_to_libreoffice()

    doc = desktop.loadComponentFromURL("private:factory/swriter", "_blank", 0, ())

    return doc

doc = create_doc()
```

You now have a doc object from which you can create a cursor and start controlling Writer:

```
cursor = doc.Text.createTextCursor()
cursor.ParStyleName = "Heading 3"
doc.Text.insertString(cursor, "Hello!", False)
c = "com.sun.star.text.ControlCharacter.PARAGRAPH_BREAK"
doc.Text.insertControlCharacter(cursor, uno.getConstantByName(c), False)
```

That's about it! The rest is a matter of looking up service and interface names in the [API docs](#) and [any other documentation you can find, lord help you](#), though for the purpose of converting gemtext to Writer, we don't need much more than the ability to insert paragraphs of a given style.

How about the PDF + gempub polyglotting?

Since gempub is just a particular layout of zip file, we use the exact same technique as for [issue 4](#), so this could easily be a Factorio mod too, but while it would be easy to mod a Display Panel to show gemtext content, the game environment provides no network route out, so we can't make a full Gemini client within Factorio. *That* would have been worth doing, but we couldn't, so it isn't.

Conclusion

Please relax and enjoy some small content, with a little buried treasure not to be found in Geminispace.

Small Thoughts

Tagged: meta
2026-03-19
Original: gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/19/abc/

For the Small Web

This 'mlog is not a grand statement about anything, just some human-scale ground truth.

I use this

2026-03-21

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/21/use/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/21/use/)

I'm not famous enough to be interviewed by Uses This, but I do have very important opinions on stuff that has stood the test of time and deserves to be recommended.

Software

XFCE

I used to love tweaking KDE settings, trying to create the perfect setup, but I ran out of time and needed a desktop UI that Just Worked. I tried GNOME for a while until the Gnome 3 rugpull, and the final straw was the refusal to support type-ahead-find in the file picker, so I landed on XFCE and haven't looked back. I'm not aware that it has added any major new features in the last ten years, and that's completely fine with me. It launches apps and manages windows and as far as I'm concerned that's a completely solved problem and I don't need to ever think about it again.

Vim

I was aware of vim vs emacs before I ever used a non-commercial OS, and for a while I tried them both, but at the time I was more interested in learning Perl than Lisp, so I settled on Vim and now I can play it about as well as I play piano. 25 years of muscle memory later, I feel like I'm missing a limb if I arrive at a terminal that doesn't have it installed.

Digikam

I have a love-hate relationship with Digikam. On the one hand, it's buggy and obtuse in a way that only C++ applications know how to be. On the other hand, 23 years later I'm still using it. True, I did at one point get so frustrated by its limitations that I created a complete web-based photo/genealogy system to replace it, but a few years later the web fell off a complexity cliff and became a chore to write for, so I'm back on Digikam.

I don't trust it with my originals, so it only has access to a read-only view of the filesystem. I use it strictly for viewing and metadata management.

Krusader

This is the best orthodox file manager. The two-pane view combined with preview pane makes bulk file operations easy. I mainly use it for sorting photos fresh out of their DCIM folders.

It has some KDE-derived jank, but that can be tolerated.

Thunar

This is the best non-orthodox file manager. It does everything you need and does it lightning fast. In that respect it is the anti-Nautilus, which does things you don't want it to do, and lags while doing it.

Firefox

The web is now a dangerous, unpleasant place. It is feature-complete, yet the features keep growing, and browsers keep churning. You must place an ultimate level of trust in a browser, because it mediates (and could control) everything you do on the web: banking, taxes, love letters, passwords, angry rants against browsers... For now, Firefox is the least worst because it comes from the least-disreputable vendor.

I don't use any add-ons, because I don't grant any add-on author that level of trust.

There are derivatives which strip gunk, but that places yet another party in the supply chain. Trusted gunk outranks shady purity.

Dropbox

I've tried them all. Nothing works better, and it's had a native Linux client since the beginning. It's a shame the company seems to have gone on a decade-long detour of random acquisitions and pointless feature churn, but the core product hasn't gone away and is still stable.

Joplin

Having tried every note-taking and journaling system under the sun, and creating some myself, I find Joplin to be the sweet spot of featureful and simple. Fully open source, and with a nice iOS client too. Some prefer Obsidian's use of markdown files, but I consider markdown-in-SQLite to be an equally open and sane format.

It integrates with Dropbox for cross-device syncing. Not an easy feature to get right, but Joplin manages it.

Recoll

From the era of desktop software, this is a powerfully configurable and well-maintained search engine for local files.

Hardware

Apple ecosystem

I know they're in control, and I know their masters are watching, but I choose to handle the devil-you-know threat of being impersonally surveilled over the risk of being personally surveilled by a niche supplier that takes a malign interest. Normies hide in plain sight.

With that out of the way, I switched from Android to iOS many years ago after finding Android a relentlessly stuttering experience. iPhones and the Apple Watch are completely great when they work, and they do work most of the time. When they don't work, or when you want to put a foot outside the guardrails, you are of course completely fucked.

Phillips AJ3230 clock radio

More than 25 years continuous uptime and this thing is still functioning perfectly. I imagine it will outlast FM transmissions. Even then, I'll keep using it as a clock.

Cherry MX Desktop

This is a beautiful keyboard, for which I have only praise. The mouse is brilliant while it lasts, but very sadly it doesn't last: there is a flaw whereby the wheel becomes jumpy. No amount of cleaning helps. Cherry replaced it under warranty, but the replacement eventually developed the same problem, so it's clearly a design flaw.

Pentel EnerGel pens

These are available in a wide range of colours, can be refilled, and have a great fluidity and texture. I don't write enough to justify a more expensive pen, which probably

wouldn't be a whole lot better anyway, but I do write enough to know that amongst affordable pens these are the best.

Notebooks

Plain or ruled A4 pads. As long as it's not from the very bottom of the gsm barrel, any will do. I draw diagrams, write actions, and take very brief notes - not for the sake of art. It all goes in the scanner and then the shredder.

I did once use Moleskines while travelling in highly offline places, but you can't back them up, you can't feed them through an ADF scanner, and they're expensive. I'm not writing Dr Jones Sr.'s grail diary here (but perhaps I **am** creating the digital equivalent).

Daily games

Tagged: games

2026-03-21

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/21/daily/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/21/daily/)

I like these daily games. Maybe you will like them too.

[Wordle](#)

[enclose.horse](#)

[Spellbinding](#)

[Bracket City](#)

I tried these but didn't stick with them:

[Cell Tower](#)

[Regexle](#)

They're too trivially mechanically solvable.

This one-off regex crossword is better, and is the one that I know as the original:

[2013 MIT Mystery Hunt regex crossword](#)

Pedantle and Cemantle are interesting but the embedding space they are based on doesn't always make a lot of sense, and they have sadly begun an ad-enshittification journey:

[Pedantle](#)

[Cemantle](#)

Fractal Design R6 Repair

Tagged: hardware

2026-03-25

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/25/fractal-design/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/25/fractal-design/)

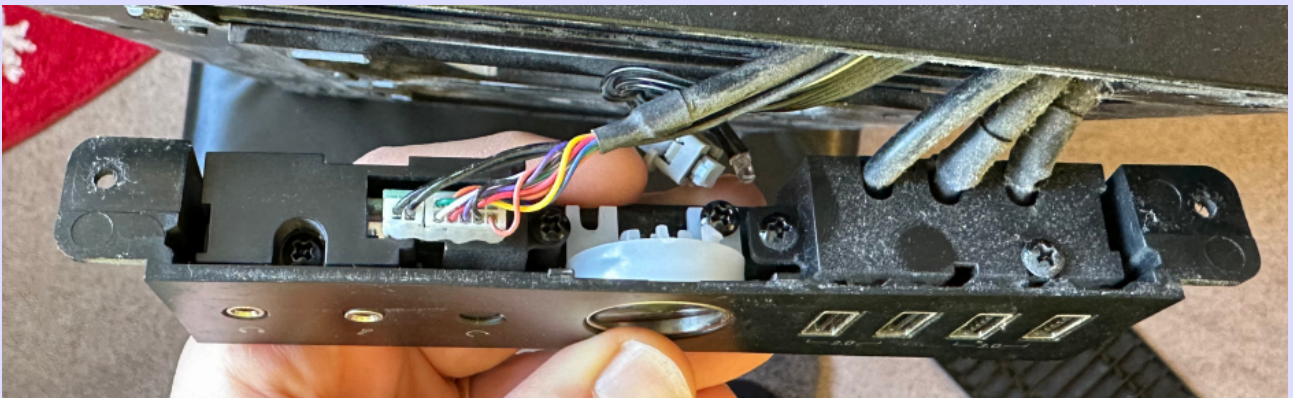
Despite this case being half a decade out of warranty, Fractal Design kindly sent me a replacement power button and cable - shipped internationally - for free.

I guess they recognised that it was a design flaw that caused the tiny piece of plastic inside the switch to break.

Still, that's pretty good service.

Fitting the button was a matter of pulling the front of the case off, unscrewing the switch/USB/jack panel, unscrewing the power button assembly, fiddling with the old broken power button until it popped out, then fitting the new one and threading the cable back to F_PANEL on the motherboard.

I took the opportunity to remove about a pint of dust using a vacuum cleaner.



Astrobotany

Tagged: games

2026-03-26

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/26/astrobotany/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/26/astrobotany/)

My plant is a common goth mature lithops.

This is one of the oldest attractions in Geminispace, and I still don't really get it.

I wonder how many people set up cron jobs to water their plants, and if that's considered advanced play, or cheating (or cheating yourself).

At any rate, the number is going up.

Comments

Comment from Gritty 3 months ago:

I once looked at the top plants and they were advancing so fast that there's no way a human is handling it. you can just refresh the page

New TLS certificate notification

Tagged: meta
2026-03-27
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/27/certificates/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/27/certificates/)

Purely to complete the audit trail, and for the benefit of the maybe 1 or 2 people who might be affected, this post is to confirm that the TLS certificates for this Gemini capsule changed yesterday and changed again today, so if your browser is acting all cautious and throwing up a message about the certificate being untrusted, that would be why.

Of course, if this were a hostile takeover, this would be exactly the kind of message an attacker would put out, which would make this notification pointless, so I augment it with a crypto-stylometrically-secure limerick:

*There once was a blog on the web
Which moved to a gemlog, it's said
The cert's old and busted,
Decreasingly trusted
So it got regenerated using the same private key but with a Subject Alternative Name field instead*

Why

The old cert just used a Common Name, because that's all Molly Brown required at the time, but nowadays, the Subject Alternative Name field is needed too, so the latest version of Molly Brown refused to load the old cert. I initially regenerated a completely new cert, triggering a warning in Lagrange and presumably any other client that takes TOFU seriously, but have now re-regenerated a cert using the original private key, per advice from skyjake:

[BBS discussion](#)

Thank you skyjake!

If this third cert is successfully recognised as trusted, nobody should ever notice.

OFFLIRSOCH 2026 entry: BugoutBack

Tagged: software
2026-03-28
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/28/bugoutback/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/28/bugoutback/)

Below is my entry into this year's Offline First Software Challenge, as pre-announced here:

[Advance notice of OFFLIRSOCH 2026](#)

(I maintain the event should be abbreviated as the OffSoffCookoff).

Consider it mostly memeware, but as is traditional in the world of Data, it is fully functional.

```
#!/usr/bin/env python3
# BugoutBack: a zero-configuration emergency backup tool.
#
# Whether it's flames licking at the doorway or black helicopters on the
# horizon, your last act at the keyboard should be:
#
# 1. Plug in some removable media
# 2. Run this script
# 3. Let it work for as long as you've got
# 4. Hit Ctrl-c when it's bugout time
# 5. Grab your media and run
#
# Those with time to prep may modify some variables below to prioritise
# or exclude certain paths, otherwise the script will attempt to back
# up your home directory, starting with the smallest files, until disk
# space on the target media runs out, in which case a partial (but still
# mostly readable) file will remain.

import os, tarfile, gzip, shutil, signal, errno
from pathlib import Path

###
### Configure the variables below
###

# Set BACKUP_TARGET to None to auto-detect removable media, or specify a path
# like this:
#BACKUP_TARGET = Path("/mnt")
BACKUP_TARGET = None

START_PATHS = [
    Path.home(),
]

PRIORITY_PATHS = [
    Path.home() / ".ssh",
    Path.home() / ".gnupg",
    Path.home() / ".config",
]

EXCLUDE_PATHS = [
    Path.home() / ".cache",
]

###
### Leave the rest alone
###
```

```

STOP_REQUESTED = False

def handle_sigint(signum, frame):
    global STOP_REQUESTED
    print("Finishing current file and shutting down...")
    STOP_REQUESTED = True

signal.signal(signal.SIGINT, handle_sigint)

def is_removable_device(dev_name):
    base = dev_name.rstrip("0123456789")
    removable_path = Path("/sys/block") / base / "removable"

    try:
        return removable_path.read_text().strip() == "1"
    except:
        return False

def detect_target():
    candidates = []

    with open("/proc/self/mounts") as f:
        for line in f:
            parts = line.split()
            device, mountpoint = parts[0], parts[1]

            # Only real block devices
            if not device.startswith("/dev/"):
                continue

            dev_name = Path(device).name

            if not is_removable_device(dev_name):
                continue

            mount_path = Path(mountpoint)

            if not mount_path.exists():
                continue

            try:
                usage = shutil.disk_usage(mount_path)
                candidates.append((usage.free, mount_path))
            except Exception:
                continue

    if not candidates:
        return None

    # Pick the one with most free space
    candidates.sort(reverse=True)
    return candidates[0][1]

def is_excluded(path, target):
    for ex in EXCLUDE_PATHS:
        if path == ex or ex in path.parents:
            return True

    if path == target or target in path.parents:
        return True

    return False

def is_priority(path):
    for p in PRIORITY_PATHS:
        if path == p or p in path.parents:
            return True
    return False

def scan_files(target):
    files = []

    def walk(root):
        for dirpath, dirs, filenames in os.walk(root, topdown=True):
            dirpath = Path(dirpath)

```



```

        dirs[:] = [ d for d in dirs
                     if not is_excluded(dirpath / d, target) ]

    for name in filenames:
        path = dirpath / name

        if is_excluded(path, target):
            continue

        size = path.lstat().st_size
        files.append((path, size))

    for P in START_PATHS:
        print(f"Scanning {P}")
        walk(P)

    return files

def write_archive(files, target):
    partial_path = target / "backup.tar.gz.partial"
    final_path = target / "backup.tar.gz"

    disk_full = False

    try:
        with open(partial_path, "wb") as raw:
            with gzip.GzipFile(fileobj=raw, mode="wb") as gz:
                with tarfile.open(fileobj=gz, mode="w") as tar:

                    for path, size in files:
                        if STOP_REQUESTED:
                            break

                        arcname = path.relative_to("/")

                        try:
                            tar.add(path, arcname=str(arcname))
                            print(f"{path} ({size} bytes)")
                        except OSError as e:
                            if e.errno == errno.ENOSPC:
                                print("Disk full")
                                disk_full = True
                                break
                            else:
                                raise

                    # Flush everything to disk to increase the chance of data survival
                    raw.flush()
                    os.fsync(raw.fileno())
                    os.sync()
    except Exception as e:
        print(f"Backup was stopped by an error: {e}")
    finally:
        if disk_full:
            print(f"Backup file: {partial_path}")
        else:
            partial_path.rename(final_path)
            print(f"Backup file: {final_path}")

def main():
    target = BACKUP_TARGET or detect_target()

    if not target:
        print("No removable media found. Try plugging it in harder.")
        print("Alternatively, point to the media by changing BACKUP_TARGET")
        return

    print(f"Backing up to: {target}")
    print(f"Free space available: {shutil.disk_usage(target).free} bytes")

    files = scan_files(target)

    print("Sorting files...")

    files.sort(key=lambda x: (0 if is_priority(x[0]) else 1, x[1]))

    print("Writing backup file...")
    write_archive(files, target)

```

```
print("Nothing left to do. Now bug out!")

if __name__ == "__main__":
    main()
```

Naming success

2026-03-30

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/30/cuneiforth/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/30/cuneiforth/)

They say naming things is one of the 17 hardest problems in computer science (along with cache invalidation, and off-by-14 errors), but sometimes someone makes it look easy:

[Cuneiforth](#)

Brilliant! Love it.

I'm not even commenting on the technical merits. It's just a killer name.

Did you ever go to a key signing party?

Tagged: cryptography-yeah-actual-cryptography-not-crypto
2026-03-31

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/31/key-signing-party/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/03/31/key-signing-party/)

The 90s (ish) popularised the idea that, to protect yourself against spies, you could meet your trusted associates in real life and physically verify their identity as you digitally signed each others' PGP keys. Thanks to the magic of mathematics, your Quake serialz could be exchanged in peace and your super-important IRC logs could be assuredly untampered-with.

I see the web of trust is still a popular thing to try to grow at conventions.

My main reason for not bothering is because I never felt there was a moment where a message's authenticity couldn't be adequately inferred from context or TOFU. Maybe I just don't run in dangerous enough circles to attract men in the middle.

But now that we have automated machines that can confect context and appear highly authentic, perhaps human-to-human verification of keys could stand to go mainstream.

Comments

Comment from halfelfmonk 1 month ago:

I like this idea. Sneakernet is an unbreakable captcha. unfortunately, I have no idea who any of you people are, nor do I know how to meet in person. I suppose my local community could benefit from this. How would one organize a party like this among willing tech novices/amateurs?

The Super Mario Galaxy Movie

Tagged: film

2026-04-01

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/01/the-super-mario-galaxy-movie/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/01/the-super-mario-galaxy-movie/)

Our local cinema went all-in on this movie. Bespoke headrest covers, giant yellow ? cubes in the room, racks of Yoshi and Luma toys, full Mario livery on the corridors, a photo-op where you could sit in a little boat (was this even in the film?), and they even had a real life human announcer come in and give a welcome speech. Epic!

Spoilers below

It's visually impressive, like an exploding paintbox, but it pushes from one action set piece to the next rather than being pulled along by the story. There are plenty of fan service lingering shots inspired by levels from the game, and oh god is it nearly 20 years since that came out?

The kids loved it even though they've never even played a Mario game, but it scrapes a bare 3/5 from me. It's worth watching once, but it lacked the freshness and wit of the first one, replacing it with Minions-esque zaniness.

Jack Black is wasted and should just get on with another Tenacious D movie.

Comments

Comment from Alhambra\ 3 months ago:

I agree. I don't know enough about the extended universe of the games to comment on all of the fan service but I did like seeing old characters. I've seen it three times in the last three days (kids like it) and there are still parts I can't remember the transition between. Just like you said it is a lot of action set pieces and thin on story. I think 3/5 is a good rating but in my case it's an enthusiastic 3/5 as I don't think a 5/5 version of this movie is possible.

The Cassini Division

Tagged: books

2026-04-06

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/06/cassini-division/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/06/cassini-division/)

by Ken MacLeod

This is from memory, as I haven't got a copy to hand, and I read it about 25 years ago, so someone correct me if I'm wrong, but I think a plot point was that the protagonists never turned on their comms systems because some kind of malicious transhuman/AI entity was continually broadcasting malware on all frequencies, and they would surely be hacked/manipulated if they opened any channel, and then they did open a channel, and they were immediately hacked.

I never expected **that** to be the part that came true first.

True evil requires teamwork

Tagged: collaboration

2026-04-08

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/08/poison-and-enslave/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/08/poison-and-enslave/)

VILLAIN: I invented a machine that will poison and enslave all the peoples of the world!

HERO: I vow never to rest until such evil is defeated.

VILLAIN: Alright, I hear you. I'll dial it down to just poison and enslave the people we really don't like.

HERO: I'm listening...

Apple Watch SE drying timeline

Tagged: hardware

2026-04-09

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/09/apple-watch-drying-timeline/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/09/apple-watch-drying-timeline/)

2022-07-14

Apple Watch SE is sold as water resistant with the case stamped "WR-50 METERS".

2022-07-15 to 2026-04-04

Apple Watch SE has many happy adventures.

2026-04-05

Apple Watch SE goes for a swim in shallow pool water.

2026-04-06

Apple Watch SE is very unhappy. Glitchy charging, no accelerometer.

2026-04-07

Apple Watch SE is functional except for accelerometer-related features like step counting and movement tracking.

Apple Watch SE enjoys a day in the sun.

2026-04-08

Apple Watch SE is feeling better. All systems nominal.

2026-04-09 to ???

Apple Watch SE is taking it one day at a time.

Pronouns for an LLM

2026-04-10

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/10/it/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/10/it/)

We read:

[“Being called out by an LLM” was not on my Bingo card](#)

... in which Sean Connor writes:

Furthermore, I'm using the pronoun “it” over “they” because using “they” would be, in my opinion, anthropomorphizing it more than it deserves.

IT as in Information Technology.

IT as in Stephen King's IT.

Seems entirely appropriate.

Notes on replacing a Torbeck diaphragm washer

Tagged: hardware

2026-04-13

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/13/torbeck/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/13/torbeck/)

Common advice for a continually running toilet fill valve is to dismantle the valve and check for debris. I didn't find any, but the black 32mm rubber washer inside was leaving black residue, which I now suspect was indicative of failure.

The old washer was labelled TOR WPE II C.

The replacement was from Epson (presumably not the printer company), sold at Toolstation under SKU 62694 for £3.95, manufacturer ID RDT02999B-TL, and was labelled TOR XW 6. It came with a small plastic pin, unlike the old one, but this pin could be easily pulled out to turn it into the old style washer.



With old and new in hand, the difference was clear: despite the old washer not looking damaged or worn in any way, it was much more rigid, and the new one was much more pliant. I don't understand why this makes such a difference, but it did: once fitted, the new valve resolved the issue, to my great relief, as I really didn't want to have to unplumb the whole valve fitting.

No tools were required aside from a screwdriver to turn the water off at the isolation valve, so I highly recommend DIYing this cheap fix.

Comments

Comment from Gritty 3 months ago:

I've had to replace the entire tank assembly a few times. The newer systems aren't bad and don't take long but there's still a time investment. glad it was an easy fix

Star Trek II: WoK

Tagged: film
2026-04-15
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/15/startrekii/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/15/startrekii/)

Finally managed to raise a kid to the age where this becomes an enjoyable watch, so we watched it last night. It was my first time since seeing it on a recorded-off-TV VHS copy, and boy does the Director's Cut look great in 4K! Notes follow:

- The chief scientist is female, the Reliant's captain is black, *Mister* Saavik, and they have brain worms? Gee films are so woke these days.
- Khan is from 1996.
- The models look amazing. CGI would have to work hard to look this good.
- The actual CGI of the genesis demo is also pretty cool for 1982.
- McCoy goes on a racist rant against Spock over a nothing of a comment about how the genesis device works. /Are you by any chance in favour of these experiments??!! Burn the heretic!/
 - They use warp 5 to get to Regula 1.
 - Kirk creeps on Saavik in the turbolift about her hair, and we also find out later he's an absentee father. Speaking of early 1980s movies about fathers...
 - "Dr Marcus never told you about your father..." / "She told me enough. She told me he was never a Boy Scout!"
 - In the scene where Saavik is quoting regulations, what is the formula being printed on the screen behind Spock?
 - Spaceships moving slowly. Firing weapons and having every shot count. So refreshing!
 - Cybersecurity in the 23rd century: each ship has a 5 digit password that allows remote root.
 - Hygiene in the 23rd century: space stations have rats.
 - KHAAAAAAAAAN!
 - The nebula chase where they couldn't see each other on screen: do starships not have windows?
 - Did the static from the nebula affect communications and sensors, but not transporters? (They seemed to intend to board the Reliant by transporter). Or maybe they were out of the nebula by that point.
 - Lens flare on the genesis device. Is this what JJ Abrams was trying to reference?
 - Did the genesis device create a whole new star as well as the planet? I guess it had a nebula to work with.
 - Ricardo Montalbán reprised his use of mind control in The Naked Gun (1988). Cuban?

- The following main cast actors are still alive: George Takei (Sulu), Walter Koenig (Chekov), Judson Scott (Joachim), and the seemingly immortal William Shatner (Kirk). Dude is 95 and is about to release his first metal album.

Unanimous score: 4/5. Enjoyable, memorable, accomplished, and certainly the best Star Trek movie.

Mapping the plot to the DIY Star Trek Script Flowchart, we get:

Whilst ferrying bigwigs about, the crew of the USS Enterprise encounters a gang of superbeings which pisses them about for fun and depletes the shields to 5%, but their opponent turns out to be mad and vulnerable to a cunning bluff, and so Spock does something seemingly illogical, which means everything turns out okay, give or take a few personal tragedies. Then, finally Kirk says something worthy and they leave at warp factor (rolls dice) 3.

[The DIY Star Trek Script Flowchart](#)



Pizza Log: Experiment 1 - Baseline the Base

Tagged: food

2021-02-07

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2021/02/07/baseline/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2021/02/07/baseline/)

Experiment date: 6th February 2021

Objective: baseline the base

Abstract: An attempt to quantify flour and yeast ratio. The focus on ratio lead to a disastrous failure of quantity management, but an acceptable result in the end.

My pizza technique - of slinging unmeasured flour, yeast and water together in a bowl with the occasional dash of salt and oil - has reached a local maxima. I now realise that baking is not just about flavour combination, but also features some interesting chemistry and biology.

My theory was always that pizza is basically just SWOFTTY:

- Salt
- Water
- Oil
- Flour
- Time
- Temperature
- Yeast

Find the right SWOFTTY combination, make the perfect pizza, right?

Aside from recipe websites generally being garbage piles of advertising, I find them mutually contradictory and full of hand-wavey terms that might make total sense to the author, but leave far too much room for interpretation.

I want to take an engineering approach to optimal pizza. I'm going to start with quantified SWOFTTY, then measure and iterate.

My first experiment is just a baseline - to record quantities for my traditional ingredient-slinging recipe, so that I have something to improve upon.

Reagents

- 5g salt
- 590ml water

- 30ml extra virgin olive oil
- 971g Supermarket own-brand self-raising flour
- 7g Allison's dried active yeast

Method

I began with good intentions, but made a fatal mistake right at the beginning: the water for yeast activation wasn't warm enough, so I added more. I'm not convinced the yeast ever properly activated, and I had to add more flour to match the increased quantity of water. By the time I had recovered the batter into a dough, I had used nearly a kilo of flour - more than twice as much as usual, and surely throwing the ratios way off. This was a disaster. Still, this journal publishes negative results too.

I kneaded the dough for 10 minutes, transferred it to a clean bowl, covered it with a damp teatowel, and set a timer for an hour and a half.

Aside - how does one properly dampen a teatowel anyway? I ran it under the tap for half a second and squeezeruffled the moisture through.

An hour and a half later, great disappointment set in. Almost no rise. Perhaps the dough realised that it was already an insane size. I gave it a squish down and tried to extract it - still goopy.

At this point I set the oven to 230°C - its maximum setting.

I divided the dough into two halves, then one of the halves into quarters, then placed the shaped charges back under the teatowel for another 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, my great disappointment turned to mild disappointment - a slight rise!

I stretched the dough balls out over the foiled and oiled baking trays, and pre-baked them for 5 minutes. This is something I started doing to help make sure the dough cooks through regardless of the weight of toppings above.

Toppings on, then 10 minutes in the oven.

Sauce

- 35ml extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped finely
- 500g supermarket own-brand tomato passata with basil

Heat the oil in a pan, flash the garlic for 30 seconds, add the passata, simmer for 20 minutes to reduce.

Toppings

Mozzarella, smoked mozzarella, and pepperoni.

Result

Astonishingly, the pizzas had risen to an acceptable springiness, despite the mad quantities! They might have been more than an inch thick, but that didn't seem to bother my customers.

~lab6: 7/10 Far too thick, passably tasty dough, great toppings, great sauce.

Mrs ~lab6: 9/10, slightly soggy bottom, but nice.

Little Miss ~lab6: 10/10 Love it

Littler Miss ~lab6: nom

What can I say? Even when pizza is bad, it's good. And this monster is going to be breakfast too.

Limitations

Despite wanting to measure everything, there's a lot I didn't measure:

- Water temperature for yeast activation
- Quantity of extra flour picked up during kneading
- Kneading technique
- Oven temperature was set to 230°C, but I have no way of knowing whether it tells the truth
- Ambient temperature in the kitchen

Next time

I intend to do more research on recommended ratios, and try to get those right, before looking into increasing the quality of the ingredients.

--

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Pizza Log: Remark 1 - National Pizza Day

Tagged: food

2021-02-09

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2021/02/09/remark/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2021/02/09/remark/)

Today is the 9th of February 2021.

I heard that in some countries, today is National Pizza Day. I don't think I live in one of those countries. It's also Saint Teilo's feast day.

The whole idea of named days is a bit silly. It's not like there is an official registry. I think anyone can proclaim a day of observance for anything - or a month, or a year. Allow me to demonstrate:

I hereby declare it is International Pizza Epoch. The epoch began on 1st January 1970, and will continue until they run out of integers, or until pizza is no longer popular, whichever comes sooner.

Celebrate with me by making some pizza, and let the celebration continue tomorrow!

Although actually, we're not having pizza tonight, so I guess the remark is over.

--

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Pizza Log: Experiment 2 - Cold Proof

Tagged: food

2021-02-13

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2021/02/13/cold-proof/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2021/02/13/cold-proof/)

Experiment date: 13th February 2021

Objective: Implement some best practice

Abstract: Using stronger flour, more water, saner ratios, and longer proving, I created a flawed masterpiece, spoiled by one schoolboy error.

Reagents

This week I am trying to firm up ingredient ratios. I've discovered the concept of "baker's percentages", which is where minor ingredients are specified as percentages of the major ingredient (flour) rather than absolute weight. This makes a lot of sense - the recipe can thus be scaled in proportion to the target quantity of dough. Based on some research, here are the percentages I have settled on:

- 100% flour
- 70% water
- 1% yeast
- 2% salt
- 3% oil

Numerologically, I like these ratios. Easy as 1-2-3. Well, easy as 100-70-1-2-3.

Method

I was recommended to aim for an 80% hydration dough, but I looked up some videos of people attempting this and got scared. It looked like they were handling porridge - and they were all using stand mixers. I don't have one of those and I don't want to give up kitchen workspace to one.

So I dialled my aspirations back to 70% hydration, which was still up 10% on last week's unplanned narrow squeak. I needn't have worried. Since I switched to using a very strong flour this week, and I didn't appreciate how much more water is absorbed by stronger flour, the dough actually came together in a very workable blob. Rather than get either my hands or my work surface sticky, I kneaded it with two wooden spoons, picking it up and flowing it like a diabolo, letting gravity do most of the stretching work. I had a lot of fun doing this.

I was very pleased with the consistency and may try to go for an even higher hydration percentage next week.

After activating the dried yeast at exactly 42°C for ten minutes, I added the flour and salt - a lot more salt than I would usually use. I added the oil quite late and this made the wooden spoon procedure rather slippery at first, but I got it all worked in eventually.

My YouTube literature review included some information about cold proving. I like the idea of this a lot - free flavour development for no additional effort: just leave the dough somewhere cold and let it do its thing for 24 hours, 48 hours, or maybe even longer.

I cold-proved this week's dough for 6 hours in the garage. As it's February in northern Europe here, the garage is currently colder than the fridge, so I was concerned that too long in the garage might cause either the dough or I to freeze and die. I wrapped it in clingfilm and a couple of teatowels, and hoped for the best.

I checked on it after 4 hours, by unwrapping the towels and jabbing a thermometer into it. To my astonishment, it was 10.0°C in the centre - exactly the recommended temperature, to three significant figures! I left it for another two hours, then brought it inside to warm back up to room temperature.

As evening approached, I oiled some foiled trays and turned the dough out, splitting it into two and shaping the pieces into the usual squashed sphere shapes.

I put 30 minutes on a timer and decided to call this period a second proof. The trays sat on the cold oventop - so proof by induction?

Sauce

- An unmeasured lug of extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped finely
- 500g supermarket own-brand tomato passata
- An unmeasured shake of dried basil

Heat the oil in a pan, flash the garlic for 30 seconds, add the passata and dried basil, simmer for 20 minutes to reduce.

Last week I used passata which came with the basil already in it. The plain stuff is much cheaper, and this version of the sauce tasted no different - win!

Toppings

Mozzarella, smoked mozzarella, pepperoni, shallot and pineapple.

I roasted the pineapple chunks beforehand to drive out most of the moisture.

Result

I was very excited by the dough - it was behaving just like all the doughs I had seen on recipe websites for a split second just before they disappeared behind an advert.

And indeed, the dough was excellent!

So what went wrong? A classic error: I put too many toppings on, and I neglected to pre-bake the dough for a few minutes without toppings. The result was a soggy, undercooked centre. A real disappointment because the outer crust was fantastic.

~lab6: 8/10 Definitely the tastiest dough I've ever made, but a floppy soggy centre was unforgiveable.

Mrs ~lab6: 9/10 but was paying more attention to the gin

Little Miss ~lab6: 10/10

Littler Miss ~lab6: 10/10

These girls are easy to please!

Next time

This is now my new baseline recipe. I'm going to try a higher hydration with the same flour, and I'm definitely going to remember to prebake because I'm not giving up the lashings of toppings. I'll take a slightly uneven bake in exchange for more of the good stuff.

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Pizza Log: Experiment 3 - Alco-bread

Tagged: food

2021-02-20

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2021/02/20/alcobread/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2021/02/20/alcobread/)

Experiment date: 20th February 2021

Objective: See how far I can take cold proving

Abstract: Due to rising ambient temperature as winter fades towards spring, the cold-proving chamber (garage) wasn't quite cold enough, and so I accidentally made alco-bread. 10/10, would make alco-bread again.

Reagents

I really liked last week's recipe, so I'm keeping it exactly the same except for the hydration level. By jacking it up to 80% I hope to achieve a softer dough, without too great a hazard to kneading, as my flour is very strong. This is Matthews Cotswold Flour Strong White, and it's goooood.

- 100% flour
- 80% water
- 1% yeast
- 2% salt
- 3% oil

Method

This week I activated the yeast at 41°C. After ten minutes, I had very little foam, and started to worry that the dried yeast had died in the fridge. I gave it another ten minutes, and got a slight amount more foam. I hoped that this slight amount was enough to get it started.

Cold-proving in the garage worked well last week, but I only gave it six hours or so. This week I left it for twenty-six and a half hours, just because that was the time window between my dough-making opportunity and my pizza-eating opportunity.

Unfortunately, it is no longer deep winter here. Temperatures are far milder than they were seven days ago. I measured the ambient garage temperature as 11.4°C - at least ten degrees warmer than it was a week ago. The temperature inside the dough was surely even higher. As a result, this cold-proving was not truly cold. I checked after a

few hours, and indeed the dough had filled the clingfilmed bowl entirely. Still, I left it overnight to see what would happen.

The next day, I found a significantly collapsed dough, and upon unwrapping it was greeted with a powerful sharp-smelling whiff. Uh-oh. I feared I had left the realm of dough-making and entered the realm of brewery. Was this fermentation? Or rotting?

Nevertheless, I strongly believe that even bad pizza is still good, and I'm not one to abandon an experiment midway, so after cutting and shaping and leaving for an hour, I was ready to bake. The dough was a lot wetter than last week. I'm not sure if this was because of the hydration level, or because of the collapsing. It looked thoroughly puddle-like on the baking tray, but I was able to press it out into circles with oiled fingers.

Taking my key learning from last week on board, I prebaked the dough for 8 minutes, and was granted hope by its nice rise after all. On went the usual toppings, and in they went for another ten minutes at 230°C.

Sauce

No oil this week. I'd like to say it was out of health concerns, but actually I just put the tinned tomatoes in the pan first, forgetting to fry the garlic. By putting the garlic in second, I effectively boiled it in the tomatoes.

- 🧄 2 cloves of garlic, chopped finely
- 🍅 A 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
- 🌿 An unmeasured shake of dried basil
- 🧂 A couple of grinds of salt

I simmered this for 25 minutes, reducing it to a thick sauce.

Toppings

Mozzarella, pepperoni, 🍷 shallot and 🍍 pineapple.

I roasted the pineapple chunks beforehand to drive out most of the moisture.

Result

Despite worrying that I was about to get everybody drunk, the pizzas turned out to be truly awesome. There wasn't a huge amount of rise in the centre, but the dough was cooked through almost perfectly, with some nice bubbles and the right balance of crispy crust with soft interior. Whatever alcohol was in the bread had surely been cooked off, and only a pleasant well-developed fermenty-yeasty taste remained. It was really, really good!

10/10 scores across the board from all judges.

Little Miss: "I don't think you could have done better. It was perfect."

Next time

Was it truly tastier than last week's? Did the overlong warm-proving help or hinder? If it helped, was the extra taste worth the extra effort? A week is a long time, with many tastebud resets, so next week I aim to do some A/B testing.

I'm also trying to drive out my remaining non-vegan dietary inputs, and pizza is holding me back, so I am going to restart experimenting with purely plant-based toppings soon.

Technical Appendix 1

There are currently no Unicode emojis for flour, yeast, oil, mozzarella, pepperoni, dough, oven, cold-proving, alco-bread, leavening, or maillard reaction.

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Pizza Log: the revenge

Tagged: food
2026-04-16
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/16/pizzalog/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/16/pizzalog/)

Who remembers breadpunk.club? Sadly defunct but I've dug a series of posts out of Kennedy's Delorean Time Machine[0], republishing here under the original dates, thus creating an alternate timeline for this mlog.

[\[0\] Delorean Time Machine](#)

Original index post

I love pizza.

I have eaten many pizzas, in many pizza venues, in many pizza-loving countries. I also try to make pizza. I'm OK at making OK pizza, but it turns out making good pizza is harder than it looks.

This is not a blog. This is a lab notebook for a series of pizza experiments, as I quest for the perfect pizza.

This is also not a recipe site. I don't actually know how to make good pizza - yet - but if I figure it out, I'll add a link at this point taking you straight to the definitive, canonical, most awesome pizza recipe.

I encourage readers to send me messages pointing out any mistakes.

[2021-02-07 Experiment 1: Baseline the Base](#)

[2021-02-09 Remark 1: National Pizza Day](#)

[2021-02-13 Experiment 2: Cold Proof](#)

[2021-02-20 Experiment 3: Alco-bread](#)

Postscript

Longtime readers may recognise that this all led to the front-cover-worthy Baseline Pizza recipe from Lab 6 Issue 3, not coincidentally the only Gemini-native issue:

[Lab 6 Issue 3](#)

Lord of the Rings: Return of the King: The Rewatch

Tagged: film
2026-04-17
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/17/rotk/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/17/rotk/)

It's been nearly 23 years since I last wrote about this film on this site, and in the meantime surely everything that can be said about it has been said, and yet here we are, saying some more.

Halfway through I was thinking... you know what, this is actually dragging a little. The second half is a lot better. Although it's the capstone on an incredible trilogy, I still have to give it a 4/5. An extremely large value of 4 perhaps, but a lot of the fighting is dull, the rousing speeches are generic, the ghost army is a cheesy deus ex, it's not as quotable or memeable, and the doe-eyed ending is mawkish. Damn, I didn't think I'd be this harsh.

In a just world, all those Oscars would have gone to Fellowship.

We watched the theatrical version. The only part I missed was the Mouth of Sauron.

Lilo & Stitch, Tia Carrere, and vintage Mac warez

Tagged: software, film
2026-04-18
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/18/lilo/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/18/lilo/)

Tonight's film was the 2025 remake of Lilo & Stitch. I enjoyed it more than the original, which I never watched when it was new because at the time I was more into LILO, the GRUB precursor.

3/5 - worth watching once.

Then I realised both new and original feature Tia Carrere! Yes, the Tia Carrere from 1995's The Daedalus Encounter, the Mac FMV game that I never played but saw a trailer for. Where would that have been? Video on a computer in 1995 was an exciting novelty. It must have been on a coverdisc of something like The Mac or Macworld magazine.

Anyway, now that we're onto the real subject, there are two early-90s artifacts I'm always on the lookout for:

- An animated advert for a Canon bubblejet printer. It had pastel colours and a funky soundtrack.
- An Excel spreadsheet that used vector drawing objects to draw an incredibly detailed 3D model of an internal combustion engine.

I hereby put this request out into Geminispace, so that it may reach a broad audience.

Comments

Comment from Gritty 2 months ago:

"broad"

very broad

Comment from James 2 months ago:

It's working - we're up to n=1!

Voyage into Cheapness

Tagged: economics

2026-04-21

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/21/butter/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/21/butter/)

Well, I got the viral butter squishy - shipped halfway round the world by air freight from China in less than a week. The total cost was £0.00 for the squishy and £1.35 for a potato peeler. Free delivery.

This whole affair probably says a lot about the state of the world.

Still, viral butter squishy.

The G4 bulb

Tagged: hardware

2026-04-22

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/22/bulb/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/22/bulb/)

Replaced an old halogen bulb with an Energizer S18747 LED. Turns out “G4” standardises the pin spacing but not the length of the unit, so the new bulb only barely fits in the space.

The packaging says the bulb will last 15 years, and indeed I can’t remember ever having to replace an LED bulb. I could have bought two for a much better unit price, but I would definitely have lost the spare at some point in the next 15 years, and 15 years’ worth of inflation will destroy the saving anyway.

Do we believe the packaging?

I’ll give an update in 2041.



Zoot(opia|ropolis) 2

Tagged: film

2026-04-24

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/24/zoo/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/24/zoo/)

In this movie, there's a sticky note on the side of a monitor saying "There is no place like 127.0.0.1" which is:

- kind of funny
- not quite funny enough (because if they meant home they should have written ~)
- the product of a society where IPv6 penetration is less than total.

Points for the relentless and ingenious animal puns in the background. The foreground was much less interesting. The fox has permanent Dreamworks Face. The snake is Short Round and Wang and Wang!

2/5 - sequelitis, by the book.

Star Trek III: The Search for Spock

Tagged: film
2026-04-25
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/25/spock/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/25/spock/)

The even number thing is nonsense. This is not a bad film!

Destruct sequence completed and engaged. Awaiting final code for one-minute countdown.

I used to have this audio clip set as the shutdown sound on my System 7 Mac.

Plus, it's got Christopher Lloyd, an eternal legend.

*Roses are red
Violets are blue
Kirk has had...
Enough... of you!*

3/5 - the slow bits are forgiven.

Comments

Comment from elpher5FBbof 1 month ago:

"I am not Spock" and "I am Spock" by Nimoy are on my reading list.

Man with a Movie Camera (1929) has a link to Syndicate Wars

Tagged: games, film

2026-04-29

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/29/swars/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/29/swars/)

Dziga Vertov released this silent movie in 1929, and The Alloy Orchestra greatly enhanced it in 1995 with a soundtrack, which is used on the Lobster Films restoration of 2015 (released on Blu Ray).

In a film full of interesting things made more interesting by age, the most interesting thing is at timecode 1:03:44 where the music features the same electronic motif that opens the Syndicate Wars soundtrack from 1996 (pitch shifted).

I asked the composer who worked at Bullfrog at the time if he had intentionally sampled the movie soundtrack, and he said he had not. Perhaps there is a common ancestor in a 90s-era synthesiser.

3/5 - worth watching once for the sheer spectacle of everyday life in antiquity.

Anyway, move along. Keep moving.

<https://github.com/swfans/syndwarsfx>

Continuous Privacy Policy

Tagged: software

2026-04-30

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/30/alpine/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/04/30/alpine/)

This is absurd, right?:

Alpine's privacy policy is a living, online only, document, which can be found at <http://alpine.x10host.com/privacy.html>. By following the previous link, Alpine will connect to an external server, and will download it and display it for you. Please take some time to read it and understand it. Since the Privacy Policy could be amended to take into consideration new additions to Alpine, please check it periodically.

A classical UNIX tool now has an online-only privacy policy that I have to proactively check periodically?

It's OK though, we're in modern times: the link doesn't work.

Intersecting rollercoasters

Tagged: rides

2026-05-04

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/04/intersections/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/04/intersections/)

When one rollercoaster overlaps the footprint of another, let's call them intersecting rollercoasters.

I'm no theme park expert but I imagine parks would have a few reasons to avoid doing this:

- Risk (objects falling from one ride onto another)
- Coupling designs (having to consider multiple unrelated rides in conjunction)
- Coupling failure domains (having to close one ride to fix another)

Still, as a guest, I think it's super-cool when rides intersect:

- It helps with depth of worldbuilding
- The close encounter experience of having a train zoom overhead while on another zooming train
- The sheer immersion of being surrounded by rides in all directions!

There are plenty of self-intersecting coasters - those don't count. Nor does it count for the queue to wind amongst the track (although this is also great, particularly on The Wicker Man). No, I'm talking about intersections of two or more completely separate attractions, and I was surprised to find it doesn't seem to be a big topic of conversation. Where are the protracted flame wars about whether in-park monorails count as rides for the purpose of intersection? I was expecting to find IRDb (well actually I did, but it's about infrared remote control codes).

So here are a few:

Drayton Manor Park, UK

- The Wave is right on top of the River Rapids, and I think technically goes over Air Race too, making this an intersection chain of length 3. If you believe the Polperro Express train ride should count as a ride, then that extends the chain to length 5 by also linking Stormforce 10.
- In Thomas Land, Winston's Whistle-Stop Tours runs over Sodor Classic Cars and Harold's Helicopter Tours.

- Jormungandr in the Viking land runs under the track of Gold Rush in Frontier Falls - a classic intersection.

But wait, you say, do River Rapids rides really count as rollercoasters? Ehh, they're on coasterpedia.net, so I say yes. Flat rides too. For the purpose of valuing intersections, they all contribute to the immersion and fun. For this reason, I'm mostly in the transit-counts-as-a-ride camp, as they tend to get entries on coasterpedia, though if the park presents it as a transport system rather than a ride, then I lean the other way. The Alton Towers Monorail, for example, is listed on coasterpedia, but Alton Towers themselves do not list it as a ride. This is unlike the Walt Disney World Railroad which is treated as a first class attraction.

So, speaking of Alton Towers...

Alton Towers, UK

- The Galactica lift hill goes over Nemesis (Reborn), and these are an incredible pair of rides, but it's just the one intersection.
- The Get Set Go Tree Top Adventure runs over at least one other ride but I can't remember the details.

Chessington World of Adventures, UK

- Honorable mention to Vampire which runs down a themed street, but that's not a ride, so no deal.

Disneyworld Magic Kingdom, Florida

- The People Mover famously intertwines through many areas and shops, but the official intersections are with Space Mountain and the Tomorrowland Speedway. Does it go into the Carousel of Progress too? It's a chain of either 3 or 4.
- Here's the big one: the aforementioned Walt Disney World Railroad goes through no less than: Tiana's Bayou Adventure, Big Thunder Mountain, Pirates of the Caribbean (it goes under the show building), and... The People Mover. So is this a chain of 4, or should it be allowed to merge with the other chain via the People Mover, for up to 8?

The rest of Disneyworld is highly compartmentalised, with no intersections in EPCOT or Hollywood Studios as far as I can recall, but perhaps one in Animal Kingdom where Avatar Flight of Passage and Na'vi River Journey seem to occupy the same building. Universal Studios Hollywood is also segregated into buildings and discrete rides.

Others

My theory is that intersections get phased out as parks become more risk-and-project driven affairs, meaning the older parks should have more. I'm sure a more dedicated fan can extend and correct this.

Words I've learnt from Spellbinding

Tagged: language

2026-05-10

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/10/new/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/10/new/)

[gemini://spell.mywire.org:1966/](https://spell.mywire.org:1966/)

Caracara

A type of falcon native to the Americas.

[Crested Caracara](#)

Acta

Recorded proceedings / official acts

[Acta](#)

Caracal

A wild large cat with ears like horns

[Caracal](#)

By fun coincidence, there is a Nostr client named caracal, and a new version was announced today:

[gemini://bbs.geminispace.org/s/caracal/43022](https://bbs.geminispace.org/s/caracal/43022)

(What's a Nostr client?)

<https://nostr.how/en/what-is-nostr>

Catfall

(nautical) A rope used in hoisting the anchor to the cathead. (What's a cathead? A heavy piece of timber projecting from a ship on which an anchor is raised or lowered, and secured).

[Catfall](#)

Curr

To make a murmuring sound (as of doves). /Not/ the same as cur, famously deployed in The Secret of Monkey Island:

This is the END for you, you gutter-crawling cur!

[Curr](#)

Facta

Plural of factum, a legal term with a few different meanings centred on factual things. What's the difference between a Latin word being absorbed into English, and English-speaking lawyers occasionally dropping into Latin?

[Facta](#)

Tactual

A synonym of tactile.

[Tactual](#)

JPEG XL is useful today

Tagged: software
2026-05-13
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/13/jpegxl/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/13/jpegxl/)

```
$ sudo apt install jpeg-xl-tools
$ cjxl in.jpg out.jxl
$ djxl out.jxl original.jpg
$ sha256sum *
04319b26a0fae3498dc3ec7601398f39d8dc91fe137fb80c954feef388d4e5b1  in.jpg
04319b26a0fae3498dc3ec7601398f39d8dc91fe137fb80c954feef388d4e5b1  original.jpg
f9a78a9b5ae4b6171e60ef97a9a9176866568844338ef9f40d2fdd60d350e430  out.jxl
$ ls -lh
total 17M
-rw-r--r-- 1 james james 6.0M May 13 21:50 in.jpg
-rw-rw-r-- 1 james james 6.0M May 13 21:56 original.jpg
-rw-rw-r-- 1 james james 4.9M May 13 21:56 out.jxl
```

Even though cameras don't (yet) produce JPEG XL files natively, and even though browsers are dragging their heels on support, it's still useful today as a special-purpose compression algorithm for archiving existing libraries of JPEG files.

cjxl will shave 22% off the size of existing JPEGs, and djxl will rehydrate back to the exact original file. This is a real and substantial cost saving when sending them to deep archive storage.

This backwards compatibility is the killer app that makes JPEG XL the inevitable next-gen image format (well, that plus brand recognition). Other technical merits are secondary. It's only a matter of time before the browsers and camera manufacturers come round.

[JPEG XL browser support status](#)
[AVIF browser support status](#)

Comments

Comment from Perry 1 month ago:

I was pleased to see this released for iPhone as a RAW storage mechanism. I would love for Canon to adopt it as a replacement for CRAW.

Comment from Perry 1 month ago:

I was pleased to see this released for iPhone as a RAW storage mechanism. I would love for Canon to adopt it as a replacement for CRAW.

The 'Burbs (1989)

Tagged: film
2026-05-15
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/15/burbs/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/15/burbs/)

I heard there was a TV remake of The 'Burbs so I called the kids in and told them they were in for a treat. We watched the 1989 original.

It must have been 25 years since I last saw this, which is long enough for a rewatch to be a new experience. It was even better than I remembered. It's such a simple, compact film, and perfectly crafted; a breath of fresh air compared to flabby 21st century blockbusters with a hundred actors and a thousand sets and a million cuts.

It's also a densely well-connected movie. Joe Dante, director of Gremlins and Innerspace. Tom Hanks, A-lister from everything. Darla the dog from Silence of the Lambs. Robert Picardo from old and new Star Trek. Carrie Fisher from The Blues Brothers. Corey Feldman from The Rise and Decline of Twelve Actors Named Corey. And Dick Miller, star of every single Joe Dante movie and hundreds of others. This guy is the Kevin Bacon of acting.

4/5 - enjoyable, memorable, accomplished. A classic VHS movie. We were all hooked.

This is why Hollywood is in crisis. The back catalogue is too good.

Film production pro tip

Begin the name of your movie with an apostrophe so that it alphabetically sorts to the top. Boom! Instant attention from those who get their movies off lists instead of off algorithms. Man that Joe Dante had some foresight.

Comments

Comment from drh3xx 1 month ago:

Absolutely love this movie and agree that it was better than I remembered when I revisited it. I actually managed to find a DVD copy in a charity shop (thrift store) last year. Found some other classics such as DARYL and Batteries Not Included. I'm not sure how BNI will fare on a rewatch but DARYL was great.

Comment from James 1 month ago:

We also watched Batteries Not Included a couple years back. It was charming and old-fashioned and from the "can't go wrong with Spielberg" era.

Crystal Quest (Mac, 1987) & Carmageddon (PC, 1997)

Tagged: games
2026-05-18
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/18/crystal/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/18/crystal/)

... were made by the same guy, Patrick Buckland! Quite an incredible jump in sophistication in only ten years. It's fun living on the steep bit of a sigmoid curve.

Anyway, I was unaware of this connection until I read today that Anthropic is acquiring Stainless. Unfortunately, they seem to have accidentally bought the wrong Stainless.

Imagine Claude in Turbo Nutter Bastard Nitrous mode. What a missed opportunity.

<https://www.anthropic.com/news/anthropic-acquires-stainless>
<https://www.stainlessgames.com/>

Big Camera

Tagged: photography

2026-05-19

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/19/bigcamera/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/19/bigcamera/)

A couple weekends ago I was wandering around a festival when someone approached and asked if I was part of the events team.

No, why do you ask?

Because of the camera.

I was carrying a Canon R6. Almost everyone was taking photos all around, but almost everyone was using their phones. I didn't see any other big cameras.

She asked if I would take a photo of her and her friend. Sure, why not?

They posed like it was a professional photoshoot. It seemed to be to them a great novelty.

Her first idea for sharing the photos was to take a photo of the screen on the back of my camera with her phone. I said that won't look very good. Her second idea was to get my TikTok. Like the decrepit prehistoric Luddite that I am, I suggested she just email me, and I'd email her back.

It worked just fine. No apps, no scrolling, no algorithms.

It sometimes seems that every angle and space in the world is so densely photographed already that there's hardly any point left in photography. But apparently ~nobody is doing it with big cameras any more. At least, amongst amateurs. I get it. I don't carry the big camera as often as I used to.

It's easy to get lulled into a sense of good-enough by phone screens, on which smartphone photos can look as good as big camera photos. On the immersive high-DPI electronic wallpaper of the future, I think we'll come to miss the quality that you can only get with big sensors and big lenses.

Or maybe still photography itself will be considered quaint - obsoleted by personal drone clouds taking continuous Gaussian splat video for 24/7 instant replay.

Email will probably still be a fine way to send the results though.

Comments

Comment from senders 1 month ago:

As someone also with an R6, I feel awkward bringing my camera around for much the reason described here: it makes me stand out. I need to get over the fear of being perceived — because having a proper photograph of something truly goes a long way over a standard phone capture.

I made a point to, however, bring it to any family event, so if there is something photo worthy I can try and get the best possible photo of it.

Comment from lab6.com 1 month ago:

test+comment

Comment from lab6.com 1 month ago:

Test comment with
multiple lines

Comment from perry 1 month ago:

My+sincere+apologies+above+for+the+junk.+My+agent+when+rouge.
+I+also+shoot+on+an+R6+and+love+bird+photography.+My+giant+telephoto+lens+
%28the+200-800%29+gets+a+ton+of+attention.
+It+definitely+makes+me+uncomfortable.+

Comment from James 1 month ago:

Hi perry, no worries. Out of interest, what client are you using? I'm wondering where the +'s are coming from.

Comment from perry 1 month ago:

I+commented+from+the+Gemcap+browser+beta+on+Android.+https%3A%2F%2Fgithub.com%2Fhugmouse%2Fgemcap

Comment from James 1 month ago:

Thanks, I'll take a closer look when I'm back at a keyboard. As it happens, I'm out with the R6 again, making more friends on account of it!

Anti-ROOPHLOCH entry

Tagged: climate

2026-05-23

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/23/antiroophloch/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/23/antiroophloch/)

The ROOPHLOCH rules state:

If you choose to accept the challenge, you must author and publish a phlog and/or gemlog post while not inside any permanent artificial shelter and without plugging your device(s) directly into "the grid", i.e. electricity and internet access must not come from a socket in the wall.

[gemini://zaibatsu.circumlunar.space/~solderpunk/gemlog/announcing-roophloch-2025.gmi](https://zaibatsu.circumlunar.space/~solderpunk/gemlog/announcing-roophloch-2025.gmi)

So, I'm on a long-haul flight. I figure that counts as artificial shelter, but not permanent - and this device certainly isn't plugged into anything.

I was going to suggest that the slim, efficient Gemini protocol is a nice fit for the latency and bandwidth-constrained environment of 300 people sharing the same satellite uplink, but since it's the future, the latency and bandwidth are actually fine.

Some may argue that it isn't currently September. Those people are entitled to their opinion, but what really makes this an anti-ROOPHLOCH is posting while watching An Inconvenient Truth on the in-flight entertainment.

Don't worry, I stopped. I know how it ends.

In flight movie triple bill

Tagged: film

2026-05-23

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/23/triple/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/23/triple/)

Office Space (1999)

A rewatch for the first time in a long time. The first half is 4/5 dark, dark satire, but degenerates a little into a kind of heist movie. Overall I think it's got to be a 3/5.

The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie (2004)

Might have worked as an episode. Otherwise dilute. It was never quite my thing. 2/5.

John Wick (2014)

Head shot! Multi kill! Is this the Unreal Tournament movie? Completely over the top, but... well executed. 3/5.

Stardust Racers at Epic Universe

Tagged: rides, bttf

2026-05-27

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/27/stardust/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/05/27/stardust/)

This is the best coaster at any of the Universal parks in Orlando. Two simultaneous trains. 10/10 acceleration. A boost up to 12/10 acceleration! A ton of airtime. An astonishing intertwining dive (“celestial spin”). This thing is massive.

Ya best proteck ya neck. I found it best to /not/ push back against the headrest, against the advice.

The best part is the great rider throughput, meaning it never went over a 45 minute wait the entire day, and we never waited more than 10. We rode it four times.

In comparison

I preferred it to Velocicoaster. That was too much.

I also really like Hulk. Stardust Racers has everything that’s great about Hulk and doubles it.

Theming

Apparently it’s original IP, rather than a Neil Gaiman tie-in (bullet dodged) or a spinoff of the Amiga game (shame), but seeing as there is a flux capacitor on the back of each train, it’s clear this is really a teaser for Back to the Future 4.



Words I learnt from Spellbinding in May

2026-06-05

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/05/words/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/05/words/)

[Spellbinding, a longstanding, fun, and addictive Geminispace clone of Spelling Bee.](#)

Players are required to find words involving the central letter, of minimum length four, complying with a dictionary that contains a large number of common words, and also some that are less familiar - to me, at least. Here are some of the latter.

pinbone

A variant of pin bone, as found in a fish.

pippin

A seed, or a variety of apple. Nothing to do with Lord of the Rings, although Pippin does get an apple after complaining about second breakfast.

ennead

A grouping of nine objects. Supreme Court judges, Muses, or Nazgûl. We need to bring this word back!

ninepin

One of the pins in nine-pin bowling (the game with an ennead of pins).

I checked: tenpin is also a word!

eely

Like an eel, of course.

inly

Inwardly (obsolete).

nelly

From the cockney rhyming slang /not on your nelly/ ~ Nelly Duff ~ puff ~ life.

dido

A shrewd trick. Wiktionary gives this interesting speculative etymology:

The "trick" sense might come from the trick of Dido, queen of Carthage, who, having bought as much land as a hide would cover, is said to have cut it into thin strips long enough to enclose a spot for a citadel.

Surprising that the locals did not insist she also be cut into thin strips so as to properly occupy her land.

dudish

Like a dude, of course.

eddied

Past tense of eddy, which apparently is a verb as well as a noun found in the space-time continuum.

oid

Shaped like an egg.

anatta

The concept of egolessness in Buddhism. Quite the opposite of the Lord of Gifts.

annatto

A tropical American evergreen shrub.

shid

An obsolete unit of length equal to four feet.

shished

Past tense of shish, synonym of shush - to be quietened.

siss

A hissing noise.

sissed

Past tense of siss - the making of a hissing noise.

bibi

A grandmother, in Indian English.

beebee

Another way to spell BB, as in ball bearing, as in a BB gun.

beno

A fermented drink made from palm tree sap, from the Philippines.

bicone

A surface of revolution of a rhombus. One of these:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicone>

bocce

A game like bowls.

bocci

Alternative form of bocce.

niobic

Relating to niobium (atomic number 41).

amixia

The absence of mixing, for example a lack of interbreeding between two populations due to geographic isolation.

axilla

The armpit. Not the axe-wielding form of a Japanese monster.

axillae

The armpits.

axillary

Relating to the armpit.

laxly

In a lax manner.

footband

A group of foot soldiers!

natant

Floating or swimming. Quite poetic.

duce

An authoritarian leader. But like Fuhrer, there's really only one, right?

jejune

Lacking substance, or simplistic.

fife

A small flute.

skeif

A diamond-cutter's polishing wheel.

biblist

A Bible scholar or enthusiast.

bilith

Two stones - twice a monolith, of course.

bitt

Nautically, a bollard, or the mooring posts around which cables are secured.

hili

Two hiluses. What is a hilus? A hilum. What is a hilum? The eye of a bean or other seed.

ibis

A long-legged wading bird. One of these:  (heiroglyph of an ibis - thank you Unicode!)

rill

A very small river or brook.

shist

Alternative form of schist, the rock.

tilth

Agricultural labour, or cultivated land.

trimotor

A plane with three motors.

torii

A traditional Japanese gate. One of these: 

toro

A traditional Japanese lantern. Not one of these: 

Also part of a tuna, used in sushi.

Also a tree native to New Zealand.

So, a dual import from Japanese and Māori.

trior

Variant of trier - one who tries. Seems a stretch.

troth

An oath or pledge, such as to marry someone - hence betrothed!

aroar, arow, and aswoon

It's not that I didn't know what roar, row, and swoon meant, but I needed reminding that the a- prefix is an archaic way of making an adjective.

inion

The external occipital protuberance; the bump at the back of the head.

nonwar

Not a war. Duh. Seems dubious.

orris

An iris (plant) with a fragrant root.

Also a type of gold or silver lace.

roan

A horse with a dark coat that has individual white hairs.

rosin

A resinous material obtained from pine trees. Used on violin bows.

warison

A signal to attack, played on a bugle.

War is ON!

cavalla

Various types of fish.

vacua

Multiple vacuums, of course.

valuta

A foreign currency

Also apparently runs on GNOME:

<https://apps.gnome.org/en-GB/Valuta/>

valval

Relating to valves.

vita

I knew about the Curriculum Vitae, hence Vita, but thought of it as Latin. Apparently Vita alone refers to a biography of a saint.

vitta

[Roman headwear](#)

[An oil tube in the fruit of some plants \(an oil tube, huh?\)](#)

[A mollusc](#)

Merriam Webster also says it is a stripe or streak.

A busy word.

ixia

A genus of South African plants, sometimes known as the corn lily.

maxilla & maxillae

The bone of the upper jaw, and its plural.

maxixe

A Brazilian dance from Rio de Janeiro. Huh!

cuppy

Having the form of a cup. Basic.

pappus

Downy chin hair.

pupu

From Hawaiian, meaning an appetizer.

scup

A fish, also known as the porgy.

scut

Obsolete word for a hare.

scuta

Plural of scutum, a shield.

stupa

A medicated cloth or sponge. Also a Buddhist monument.

succus

Juice.

exine

The outer layer of a pollen grain.

razzia

A destructive raid.

tazza

A shallow dish mounted on a stem and/or foot.

tzitzi

Possibly the tassles on traditional Jewish garments, but this spelling seems undocumented.

zaatar

Also known as za'atar, a herb.

ziti

Long macaroni tubes.

adman

Someone working in marketing.

anna

A former Indian coin.

bandanna

Alternative form of the more common bandana.

scarrow

A shadowy or faint light, from Scottish.

scow

A large flat-bottomed boat with square ends.

yarrow

A herb with white flowers.

craw

The crop of a bird.

donna

A noblewoman in Italy.

jane

A silver Genovese coin.

jean

A slightly awkward way of saying something is made of denim.

naid

Alternative form of naiad. A water nymph.

You hear the splashing of a naiad.

nonda

An Australian shrub.

isogloss

A linguistic feature shared between languages.

olio

A Spanish stew.

otitis

Inflammation of the ear.

solì

A passage of music played by a section of the orchestra.

tutti

A passage of music played by the whole orchestra.

bubby

A slangy term for brother, or breast.

buss

A kiss, or a Dutch herring boat.

musette

A type of bagpipe.

mutest

The most mute, of course.

sute

Maybe an old word for soot or suit.

Bonus: words from Gobble

Gobble is a relatively new game to Geminispace:

[gemini://gemini.patatas.ca/gobble](http://gemini.patatas.ca/gobble)

I found its dictionary to be far more familiar than Spellbinding's, but still with a few novel (to me) words.

cadge

Slang meaning to obtain by wit or deception.

chantey & chanty

Alternative forms of shanty, as in sea.

oultre

Alternative form of outré, directly from French, meaning unconventional.

oater

A Western movie (cowboys, etc.).

sterna

Plural of sternum (though you don't normally have more than one...).

togae

Plural of toga.

ranis

Plural of rani, the wife of a rajah.

alary

Relating to wings. Nice.

tarns

A small mountain lake. Probably how he got the idea for Dwarf Fortress.

catmint

A plant

recta

A rectum, but more than one of them.

Review of Sava's response to Not Bob's review of sava.i2p

Tagged: curation

2026-06-06

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/06/review/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/06/review/)

It's funny what pops up on Antenna:

[Sava's I2P site](#)

[Not Bob's review of it, on I2P](#)

[Sava's response on Gemini](#)

I found the reponse useful, because it made me further aware of I2P and the existence of real people using it. The response is a nicely formatted, well-written blog entry that quotes the whole original review, which is helpful because I don't use I2P. I liked the part about Chinese radios. Frankly, that was the main part.

The original review was glowing - 5/5s all round - and the response was appreciative and harmonious. I only wish Sava had upgraded the response to a full review and given his own rating of the original review. That would have opened the door for Not Bob to review /this/ review, completing the circle of accountability.

For that reason, I give the response the gift of 4/5, which comes with the hope of improvement.

Feel free to leave your own review of this review of the response to the review. I'm curious how Cosmos will handle it.

How to Train Your Dragon (2010)

Tagged: film, rides

2026-06-06

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/06/dragon/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/06/dragon/)

It's made to a tween formula, but it didn't impress my tweens. It has that plastic injection moulded Dreamworks look. I can believe Vikings with Scottish accents, but surely they could have been /better/ Scottish accents given the actors are actually Scottish? And boy is Jay Baruchel's Hiccup voice annoying, like he's doing an impression of Holly Hunter's Elastigirl from The Incredibles.

BUT!

The ride at Epic Universe is great! It's a super-smooth mid-size coaster with multiple launches, nice themeing, nice music, and good throughput. I'd ride it ten times before watching the movie once more, so I'm feeling generous and will give the movie 3/5. Yes, it's worth a watch just to add context to the park experience.

NetHack 5.0.0 - First Ascension

Tagged: games
2026-06-08
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/08/nethack/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/08/nethack/)

This is the log of a chaotic Samurai, first of her kind in my ascension todo list, and my first game of the newly released NetHack 5.0.0.

Dlvl1 - a neutral altar, a saddle, and a halberd on the floor. Kind of a random start. As it turned out, I never returned to this altar.

Dlvl2:

You flounder. You make a lot of noise.

These gauntlets must be fumbling.

Dlvl4 - the most terrifying enemy that any NetHack player can encounter: a "Program in disorder" bug, triggered by the disappearance of a vault guard. Turns out to have already been reported and will be fixed in the next version, and fortunately had no lasting effect on the game.

Minetown - Grotto town, mirror image (this is new). A co-aligned temple proved to be my main stash base for the rest of the game. Monsters can now open chests, so it's terribly useful to have a room that (most) monsters won't enter.

Camped out for a while, eventually getting poison resistance from a quivering blob. It was the sacrifice of a hill orc that got me Snickersnee, which I'd been hoping for, since I'd read it was now awesome.

I'm happy to report that it is indeed awesome! You can now apply it to attack squares 2 away from you (only in four cardinal directions while twoweaponing). This was incredibly useful for dealing with monsters that would otherwise have required a ranged attack. This ability alone would have been good, but you also get to use it as a free action, similar to a stethoscope, which makes it now one of the top weapons in the game. In fact, it rendered my yumi and ya (bow and arrow) completely obsolete: even though I later enchanted some arrows up to +7, I don't think I used a single one of them.

The game almost came to a fat-fingered end after accidentally hitting a floating eye and getting accosted by rats. Down to 12HP but survived. Phew.

Dlvl8 - found an ice box, which I initially planned to haul up to the mines and use as my stash box, but wasn't sure if it was lockable, so first went back to explore the deeper mines. A level teleporter took me back to Dlvl1, so I had to rush back before my pet dog went feral.

A randomly sacrificed giant ant gifted me Dragonbane. Huh, apparently it grants reflection, and apparently has done since 3.6.1. I never knew, but I never played 3.6.x much. I'm a time traveller from the 3.4.3 era.

Another accident: put on an un-BUC-id'd dwarvish cloak which turned out to be cursed. Prayer reversed that.

Dlvl10 was a bones file! Thank you, ArrBianca, the archaeologist. I carried your head of romanesco for a long while. Your lamp was still lit. Creepy.

Why the heck was there a giant eel in the mines? A poly trap? I never found it.

Dlvl12 - a wand of enlightenment proved that a ring was free action - nice. Wore it for the rest of the game.

A little Python function to calculate the true price from a broke shopkeeper who charges 1/4 more:

```
p = lambda x: (x*(10/9)/0.75)*2
```

"A lethargic aura surrounds your pair of iron shoes." - oh, this is new. Source diving revealed that iron shoes protect you from magic traps, at the cost of draining the enchantment of the shoes (and they only protect you if they have positive enchantment). I like this change. It concords with how metal armor inhibits magic when spellcasting. Sadly though, my uncursed thoroughly rusty +2 pair of iron shoes was now down to +1 and in need of replacement.

A flaming sphere got 2 of my potions of healing, a silver spellbook, and damaged my shield. Damn.

Mine's End - mirrored catacombs. Another level teleporter separated me from my pet, but again I rushed back in time.

YAFM:

A statue suddenly appears next to you! It bites the ogre king.

I assumed this was my dog attacking from the other side rather than the statue coming to life. In fact it wasn't even a statue, it was a large mimic.

The wand of enlightenment again proved a useful method for identification, yielding a +1 ring of increase damage, which I wore until very late in the game.

Divine protection from donating to priests has been slightly nerfed: you now have to donate 500*XL (or multiples thereof) to be guaranteed protection.

T:14672 and down to AC:-10. My dog, on the other hand, keeps picking fights. He was down to 9HP out of 72HP at one point, so I locked him in a closet to heal.

Back on Dlvl8 in the main dungeon, a throne first depleted my Int to 5 (no biggie, this Samurai was never going to be a spellcaster), and then granted me a wish! I opted for the unfortunately-acronymed blue dragon scale mail, which now grants speed and shock resistance. The first of these has always been a top priority, but now shock resistance is even more important for protecting your rings and wands.

Boy was sokoban annoying with the levels flipped. It's not real variety, it's just more to memorise. Got the bag. I later found at least three more bags of holding as random dungeon floor loot, and was tempted to intentionally destroy them. Any more than one bag of holding in a game is a liability.

Dug into a fountain at Mine's End to create my blanking and diluting pools. The first batch of holy water went to the bag of holding, then to a scroll of identify, which luckily did a full inventory identification on the first try. This luck would not be replicated on subsequent reads.

I never figured out how my Int got back up to 8. I'm certain it wasn't restored by a unicorn horn, which has been nerfed so as not to do this any more.

Genocided L and h. Can't be dealing with those.

Turn 20000 passed and my original dog was still with me. At this point I had AC:-20, the +6 Snickersnee, and a nearly full selection of tools and attack wands. I felt very confident, which is usually a bad sign.

The bigroom is often a big challenge. You get swarmed almost immediately. This was the starting position:

think these are the new meta for footwear, providing speed can be obtained from blue dragon scale mail. That does leave a gap to fill for magic resistance, so I was excited to find a cloak outside Medusa's room. It turned out to be +2 displacement, which is pretty nice, but I had been hoping for a cloak of magic resistance.

T:32333 My dog reached level 10, which is higher than the natural maximum, so I guess he must have eaten a wraith corpse.

Tragically, on T:33126 he finally met his end at the hands of an ogre. In 5.0.0 you can now place a pet corpse on an altar and pray to have it revived, but this time no corpse was left. Goodbye my loyal friend. This was probably my longest-serving pet in any NetHack game.

T:34735 I have autopickup set to grab every wand for the following reason: an unidentified iron wand (sifted out of the piles of debris left at the Castle entrance) turned out to be a wand of wishing. 5.0.0 nerfs wands of wishing so that they only ever hold one charge at a time, but by the end of the game, I still had a surplus of wishes, because I had been such a packrat that I wasn't lacking for much. Except for magic resistance, so...

T:35083 I weighed up the blessed Magic Mirror of Merlin. This is a nice lightweight artifact that grants magic resistance purely through being carried, but like all artifacts, it can be stolen by Rodney, so it can't be relied upon. Still, you first have to survive long enough to worry about Rodney, so I wished for it anyway. This way, the cloak slot is left available for a cloak of protection, which is a nice way to get MC3, which renders monster special attacks like vampire bites almost harmless.

Time for the quest.

As if by magic, that tattered cape on Home 2 was a cloak of protection!

I needed a cursed potion of invisibility to wake the quest nemesis from within a safe boulder fort (his Tsurugi of Muramasa can instakill you, so you don't ever want to get adjacent to him). I also needed some more hitpoints, so wanted to nurse dance, so needed some cursed scrolls of genocide. Both of these demands pointed to a need for unholy water, so I set off back to my diluting pools and split my water supply into 15 separate stacks by naming each one, then read a blessed scroll of remove curse while confused (I like to initiate confusion using a tripe ration, because they are far more common than potions of confusion, and at this point in the game I didn't have any forgotten spells). This generated enough unholy water to see both my projects through. 4 nurses got me up from 134HP to 157HP, and Ashikaga Takauji died to five zaps of a wand of cold.

One of the few armor items I had yet to find was a T-shirt, and as luck would have it again, I found one just lying on the floor of the Valley of the Dead. A single enchant armor scroll got it up to +3. My AC was now -32. Usually this would be enough to ascend, but I wasn't done yet.

T:43139 Got intrinsic shock resistance from a black pudding, which would have been a nice backup if I ever swapped out the blue dragon scale mail, but I never did.

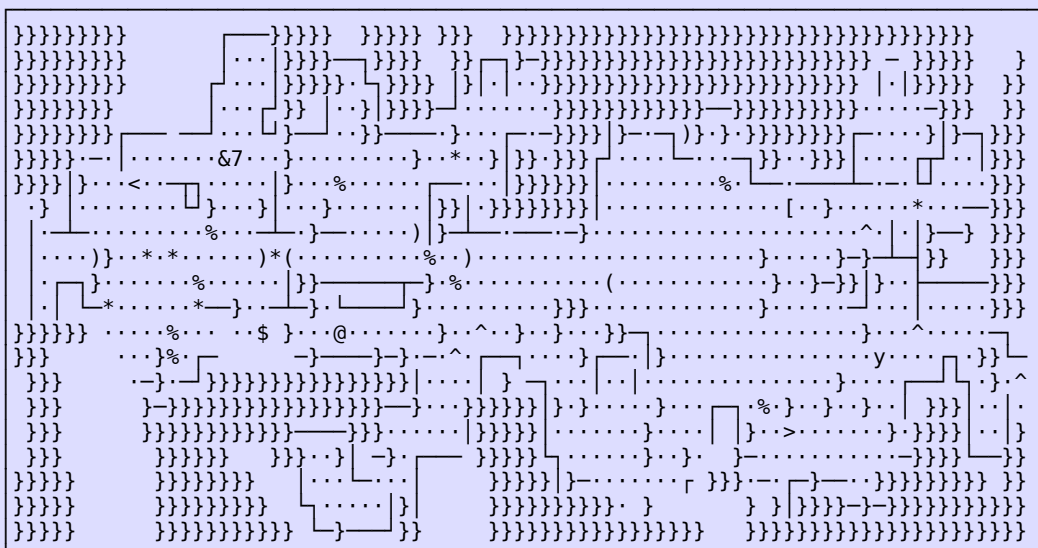
The new Gehennom is much better. Much more varied - and seems to have a lot of statues everywhere, which is quite atmospheric.

T:47401 My second bout of nurse dancing got my HP up from 163 to 238 - an incredible boost!

After spending much of Gehennom in darkness, I finally found a magic lamp in Orcus town, which I kept for its light and never cashed in for its wish.

Vlad is a little annoying since 3.6.x, as he flees downstairs easily, but he also dies easily to a twoweaponed +6 Snickersnee and +7 silver saber (doing the additional d20 silver damage against him) plus another +6 from gauntlets of power and a +2 ring of increase damage. I was oneshotting most monsters at this point.

Look at this beautiful new Gehennom level layout:



Tip - don't add candles to the candelabrum too early as they'll light whenever you walk over lava, which, as you can see, there is a lot of.

Vlad's throne has a variety of nasty side-effects but the worst is mitigated by wearing an amulet of unchanging, so I went for it and got the wish: scrolls of charging, which despite being past turn 50000 I still hadn't found.

T:55686 Began the prep for the final ascension run. Got an elven leather helm up to +8, and after donating more than 100,000 zorkmids, got a twelfth point of divine protection. Did some polypiling to turn five spare unicorn horns into a (1:96) magic marker, and then polyselfed into a xorn to eat some rings and amulets. The edible amulet of guarding added another 2 points of intrinsic protection, and I got teleport control and protection from shape changers in this way too.

Switched the amulet slot to life saving. I decided I had enough mitigation (chiefly, disintegration resistance) to forego any source of reflection.

Alchemised up my 31 potions of healing, raising my hitpoints to a ridiculous 573, leaving five potions of full healing for emergencies.

Final ascension armor was:

- +4 gauntlets of power
- +4 water walking boots
- +5 shirt
- +4 blue DSM
- +4 cloak of protection
- +8 elven leather helm

In total, AC:-46.

I bade a fond farewell to my stash chest with more than 400 items in it and set off for the endgame.

T:59158 Wizard woken. Hi. Here's a wand of death I found.

Teleported down to the vibrating square.

Rodney came back quickly, but the wand of death prevailed again.

A very handy cockatrice allowed me to clear out the sanctum easily. Shattered the statues and gathered no less than 4 cloaks of magic resistance - one of them fireproof! I kept that one, but ended up never using it.

Rodney cursed one of my rings, so I decided to take off my gloves to get it uncursed. An uncharacteristically helpful 5.0.0 feature arrived:

| *Take off your gauntlets despite carrying a dead cockatrice? [yes | n] (n)*

Merely carrying a cockatrice corpse won't stone you, so I guess this is just prompting you to be cautious while your gloves are off.

T:59441 Picked up the amulet, got a wish. The climax of a pitched battle against Moloch and his high priest is something of an awkward moment for a wish. I didn't really need anything by this point, so I decided to get some spare scrolls of genocide and try out the purple rain strategy.

On the way up, the Wizard did in fact steal the Magic Mirror of Merlin - my only source of magic resistance. Worse, this gave /him/ magic resistance, so my strategy of wand-of-death'ing him wouldn't work. I relied upon my amulet of life saving to protect me from his touch of death, but he didn't use it in the 3-4 hits it took to take him down through simple whaling on him with the mega-overpowered swords. The theft didn't stop there: a salamander with a bullwhip stole /both/ my primary weapons, /and/ the Tsurugi which I had kept on hand as a spare. Luckily for me, it didn't use them, so it was also dispatched with the wand of death. These things are useful!

T:61401 Stumbled into the final portal after a very frustrating plane of air. I read my cursed scroll of genocide and summoned purple worms, then while chaos ensued around me, drank a potion of confusion and read a scroll of taming, creating a horde of pet purple worms that quickly set about swallowing everything - what fun!

| *Burrrrp!*

T:61442 Stood on the first altar. It was lawful. I could have ended the game here, but this was not what I came for. I backtracked, with a lot of help from my purple pets, scared Death with a camera, and marched to the second altar, which was chaotic. I donned a helm of opposite alignment, blasting away 20 points of AC, but the game was won, and I ascended a chaotic Samurai. True, it might be argued that this Samurai wasn't truly chaotic since he lived all but one turn of his mortal life as a lawful, but hey, he's down in the record file as chaotic, so I guess deathbed conversion is real.

Stay tuned for a future episode of filling-out-the-role-race-alignment-gender-ascension-matrix!

Note to descendants: check on this bulb in the year 2108

Tagged: hardware
2026-06-13
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/13/bulb/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/13/bulb/)

I replaced another old halogen bulb with a GU5.3 LED that claims to have a lifespan of 15,000 hours. Since this light is on for about half an hour a day on average, it should last until about 2108, which is convenient for the Year 2108 bug:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_formatting_and_storage_bugs#Year_2108

So put down your worches and zits, (grand)kids, and put that claim to the test. The manufacturer's address is noted below, in case the box has rotted away by that point:

Spring Sunshine Technology Co., Limited
27 Hillier Street
Sheung Wan
Hong Kong
China
Earth

Hyperscalers and the Smolnet are Compatible

Tagged: hardware, economics

2026-06-23

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/23/scale/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/23/scale/)

In-Reply-To:

[Blocking Hyperscalers on My VPS and Antenna Redux](#)
[Hyperscalers and the Smolnet are Incompatible](#)

Because running something small on something huge is a contradiction.

It's easy to assume that something is small just because you can hold it in your hand, or because it fits in your homelab, but what we can hold and call small is just the visible surface of the immense industrial supply chain that created it. Tech is not small. Very little in the year 2026 is small. Even subsistence farmers in the poorest countries use steel tools and wear textiles woven in factories.

It's scale, all the way down

The web of the world is vast and deep. Almost everything depends on almost everything else, in both direct and subtle ways.

"Small" self-hosted homelabs and boutique VPS providers are built from the same silicon fabrication processes as data centres. Tech products in general are only financially accessible because of the economies of scale of mass production. Although your single CPU might seem minimal and proportionate and sustainable, it is one of a manufacturing run of one million, and without the other 999,999, it wouldn't exist (or you wouldn't be able to afford it).

Nothing about computing is small. Gemini might feel small because it can run on 1980s-era tech, but even 1980s-era tech was the product of billion-dollar industries and the efforts of thousands of people. Gemini is only small by comparison to 2020s tech, which is the product of trillion-dollar industries and the efforts of millions of people. The whole stack, of which Gemini is only a thin slice, depends fundamentally on there being billions of paying customers to fund mineral extraction, power plants, R&D, distribution, dental plans for workers... every micro-activity and dependency accumulates cost up through the supply chain (really a supply web). That cost is enormous, and the only way to pay it is to spread it across everybody.

It's cheapness, all the way down

Hyperscale data centres are a technology for making computing products cheap, just like lithography is a technology for making transistors cheap.

The people that operate the biggest and most famous data centres may well have dubious morals, but the scale of the data centre is not part of the problem.

In fact, to the extent that hyperscale enables hypercheapness, and hypercheapness is what makes tech accessible to society at large, one might argue that /only/ hyperscale is compatible with the smolnet. The global internet is itself a hyperscale entity, and alternatives like local mesh networks are only affordable because the electronic components they need are manufactured at scale.

Alternatives to scale

Our tech comes from scale. Modernity comes from scale. Scale demands mass homogenisation. Mass homogenisation makes things cheap.

This could be a grim outlook. What if we don't want everything to be homogenous? Can we opt out of scale? It depends how rich you are, because opting out of scale means choosing smaller scale options, which are more expensive. The artisan baguette instead of the pre-sliced supermarket loaf. For the things we really care about, we do like to DIY, or choose the bespoke, hand-crafted, organic, local alternative - if we can afford it.

Sometimes we can't afford it. Sometimes we choose cheap because we have other priorities for our money. Sometime we choose cheap because we have no choice. Sometimes cheapness is outlawed because the ethical compromise is too great. It's a false cheapness when there are hidden costs. We don't allow the sale of products produced by slaves (unless the slaves are a few hops down the supply chain in a far off country where you can't see them). We increasingly recognise the false cheapness of fossil-derived products, or those otherwise built using environmental debt.

Can the second-hand market help? It increases our options, but we can't opt out of capitalism by only consuming its waste stream. Do you remember this bit in *The Devil Wears Prada*?:

And then cerulean quickly showed up in the collections of eight different designers. And then it, uh, filtered down through the department stores, and then trickled on down into some tragic Casual Corner where you, no doubt, fished it out of some clearance bin. However, that blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs. And it's sort of comical how you think that you've made a choice that exempts you

from the fashion industry when, in fact, you're wearing the sweater that was selected for you by the people in this room...

Scale concentrates power, but that's not unique to tech or fashion. Can we retain the benefits of scale without risking democracy? This is perhaps the fundamental problem of government, so we're a little beyond the scope of this post...

Back to hyperscalers

So where do hyperscalers fit in? Is their cheapness a legitimate efficiency of scale, or a Faustian bargain? Is the rest of computing any different? I don't think there is an easy black-and-white answer. There are a lot of things I don't like about Amazon and Google and Microsoft and Oracle, including a lot of things that are absolutely within their power to change, but also a lot of what they are is downstream of the trillions of decisions made by society at large, and I'm not ready to condemn someone for using them. (Which is convenient, because I'm someone who uses them. Why? Because this server fits into the Oracle free tier, and I like the idea of costing Oracle money).

Every purchase decision steers the economy a little in a certain direction. Every time you choose between options, you pick winners and losers. Every spend sets the agenda for what exists in the world.

I tend to think all we can do is be mindful of the world we are paying for, and try to make good decisions, but also not be too harsh on those who make cheap decisions. We don't know the whole story of their priorities and constraints. We're all coming at this thing from different perspectives, and that's a kind of diversity that I think is valuable to Geminispace, not just diversity of hosting.

It's great that people are running capsules on homelabs and local-run ISPs and carrier pigeons, and it's also great that people are willing to pay for those artisan baguettes from time to time, but I don't think it's necessarily wrong to choose mainstream options either.

Hyposcale computing?

The small web isn't small just because it uses small computers. There are many ways to be small.

Comments

Comment from unstory 2 weeks ago:

You are incompatible. Envy author just because he was able to do something, that you are not capable of. So now you wrote long novel to justify your empty stances.

Comment from James 2 weeks ago:

WUT

Comment from pete-bbs-geminispace 2 weeks ago:

I don't think you addressed the point, was that the Antenna host was basically getting inundated by the hyperscale-served sites and the host person decided they can't keep up. The words here are just "deal with it because", and that seems like a non-sympathetic position.

Comment from James 2 weeks ago:

@pete I don't have a problem with the Antenna host blocking inbound traffic from any source it needs to. There was a temporary issue where the blocking mechanism also blocked outbound traffic, making it impossible to submit URLs hosted on (some) hyperscalers, but this is now fixed. The part I'm responding to is "it's OK to exclude hyperscaler-hosted capsules because people shouldn't be hosting capsules on hyperscalers anyway".

I guess you still can't automate submission to Antenna if your automation runs on a hyperscaler, but I also don't have a problem with taking a break from automation.

SILKEN TOFU: A Webring with Trusted Introductions

Tagged: cryptography-yeah-actual-cryptography-not-crypto
2026-06-29
Original: gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/06/29/webring/

Here are some links to places I know in Geminispace, along with the fingerprint (hash) of the public key of the TLS certificate they were using on the given date.

Why?

You know how dogs like sniffing each others' butts? Well now you can check whether the key fingerprint of the capsule you are visiting matches the fingerprint from when I visited, making it slightly harder to MITM you, and perhaps over time building a chain of trust from one capsule to the next. It's a very mild flavour of trust. I'm not asserting anything about the capsule apart from it's cool and you should visit. The fingerprint helps you check it's still cool.

SILKEN TOFU stands for Signed-ish Introductory LinKs Enabling Notarised Trust On First Use.

The fingerprints are not explicitly signed, but if delivered over a TLS connection from a capsule you already trust, then they are as good as authenticated by that capsule's private key. Not signed - signed-ish.

How?

Lagrange, for example, makes it easy to see a capsule's fingerprint: click the green padlock icon, choose Fingerprints, then choose "Copy SHA-256 of Public Key". Then you will have it in your clipboard and can compare it to the one you see below. If it's the same, chances are good that the capsule is the same one I saw. You only need to do this once. Your browser should take care of subsequent visits using its TOFU database.

If the fingerprint is different, power off your device immediately but quietly, then slip out of the coffee shop, avoiding anyone wearing a suit or earpiece. They're onto you. Either that, or the capsule host rotated their certificate, in which case hopefully they posted somewhere else about it.

Why, again?!

It's fine, checking fingerprints is completely optional. You don't have to automate it. You don't have to make this the official syntax. It's just neat to know that something is possible, in principle.

As of 2026-06-29, this page is just a linkdump of some fairly well known capsules. It would be more valuable to list some lesser known capsules.

Social

BBS

(skyjake's Bubble)

It's like Reddit, but without all the awful people, but with all the notification dopamine that will turn us into awful people eventually. The only hope is to be superhumanly chill and get the heck out of dodge as soon as the population exceeds one monkeysphere's worth.

[BBS \[2026-06-29\]](#)

[\[9d85d0b958e498a426dbc34d605b06eaa90edcfdd7ca1ab923bc7f0e1c9b9b61\]](#)

Station

Like BBS, but simpler.

[Station \[2026-06-29\]](#)

[\[1393ce753b82f98c2ad924d8a4cc1fc235e9cc79805dba449d3432704193672e\]](#)

Aggregators

Cosmos

Also from the mind of skyjake, as evidenced by the identical key fingerprint, is the amazing Cosmos - a super-aggregator, and a really nice experiment in threading together posts across different capsules. What will it look like when there are millions of people posting gemlogs every day? Let's find out!

[Cosmos \[2026-06-29\]](#)
[\[9d85d0b958e498a426dbc34d605b06eaa90edcfd7ca1ab923bc7f0e1c9b9b61\]](#)

Antenna (the new one)

A classic Gemini service where you tell it you've published a thing, and then it puts your thing on its list.

[Antenna \[2026-06-29\]](#)
[\[7dd5b7a33b3704b9bcc6c10ab24d59c163e368b4840f31ed48917714a1501450\]](#)

Tools

Kennedy

A Gemini search engine, and Delorean Time Machine, a capsule archive. This would be an ideal place to capture and publish key fingerprints, but a decentralised approach is also attractive, so we should all make like a tree.

[Kennedy \[2026-06-20\]](#)
[\[ba48d94a01fd81765f157b27a1c531fccddc1f3d9493979efda609241d46f990\]](#)

TLGS

"Totally Legit" Gemini Search

[TLGS \[2026-06-29\]](#)
[\[d257d88d4101e6587625218cb796838c5851049686207c54f346904e22674d52\]](#)

Capsule hosts

Gemcities

Remember Geocities?

[Gemcities \[2026-06-29\]](#)
[\[5a7e4ee7b2ddf30d8ad254e1fd4aefcedbf63335401d70778df94cf9ae2c2b091\]](#)

Mare Tranquillitatis People's Circumlunar Zaibatsu

Going all-in on the space theme. Home of ~solderpunk's capsule.

[Mare Tranquillitatis People's Circumlunar Zaibatsu \[2026-06-29\]](#)
[\[a99a8b374175cd1fd07931352f0ae7b0657a93e186660c4b968ac0862c8b131d\]](#)

Circumlunar Gemini Outpost

Another classic Gemini host, sparsely populated, but still in use.

[Circumlunar Gemini Outpost \[2026-06-29\]](#)
[\[d3e74edaa347fdc5cfea0ddc0d21c8ee57e91323b20caee0b02f93e742733c7e\]](#)

Cosmic Voyage

A longstanding Gemini collaborative writing project, which seems to have slowed down lately.

[Cosmic Voyage \[2026-06-29\]](#)
[\[d4dbf47df55c3568af81e4f39571d373406eb0094a9ff54e7282f8abd0751f09\]](#)

Gemlogs and personal capsules

bunburya

Home of an excellent SCGI reference.

[bunburya \[2026-06-29\]](#)
[\[60544fdce163cdf96c5691989b0e0d0bfc7cf2e7db033c00a1c569a1da8aa20\]](#)
[Using SCGI to serve dynamic content over the Gemini protocol](#)

mbays

Home of many Gemini wonders. I can particularly recommend Eindeutigkeit.

[mbays \[2026-06-29\]](#)
[\[c0a33dc6f41b24ed8c10375edfd8b77437ba8c54c5a779a756b0619ab2fbd897\]](#)
[Eindeutigkeit](#)

Stéphane Bortzmeyer

Where you can find statistics on Geminispace.

[Stéphane Bortzmeyer \[2026-06-29\]](#)

[\[70688221d35c3b6b7ba1731024af967abbc83a6d1a323aae72d473c2917984ea\]](#)

[Statistics on the Gemini space](#)

Lab 6

Only the greatest website and Gemini capsule and PDF/A collection in all of known space. You've heard of the self-signed certificate. Here's the self-linking webring.

[Lab 6 \[2026-06-29\]](#)

[\[dea2f5eb56c3e1c93e1da2bcf797783abf315500d74e72199da933c1b094443f\]](#)

Comments

Comment from samunder 2 weeks ago:

noice , thx

Is Old Man Willow a Maiar?

Tagged: books, lotr

2026-07-03

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/07/03/lotr/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/07/03/lotr/)

'Old grey Willow-man! I'll freeze his marrow cold, if he don't behave himself. I'll sing his roots off. I'll sing a wind up and blow leaf and branch away. Old Man Willow!'

-- The Fellowship of the Ring, Chapter 6, The Old Forest

'Eh, what?' said he. 'Did I hear you calling? Nay, I did not hear: I was busy singing.

...

'Old grey Willow-man, he's a mighty singer; and it's hard for little folk to escape his cunning mazes.'

-- The Fellowship of the Ring, Chapter 7, In the House of Tom Bombadil

We canonically don't get an explanation for what Tom and his environs truly are. It's traditional to speculate that Tom is himself an Ainur, or even Eru himself - and that Old Man Willow is a Huorn, or somewhere on the tree-to-Ent spectrum. However, I think this focus on singing is most strongly allusive to the Ainulindalë in The Silmarillion, where singing is a mechanism of creation used by the Valar and the Maiar.

We assume "eldest and fatherless" Tom is of that era, but maybe Old Man Willow is too. He could be another fallen Maiar, albeit a minor one.

AI your complement

Tagged: games, ai

2026-07-03

Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/07/03/complement/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/07/03/complement/)

In-Reply-To:

The AI Dilemma

[\[7ddf768bfde1cd78cb9ae3d0f5b0b8e24ac31e2edd09a212eaa5e5102a2780d2\]](#)

However, there is a dilemma worth exploring. My game is a niche product, designed using retro-tools to be run on retro-machines by retro-enthusiasts. Even if a few hundred people ever play, it's not going to make any money. Earlier in the development, I approached a few artists about collaboration. Unsurprisingly, no one is interested in drawing thousands of detailed images for free on the chance they may receive a few donated pennies "some day." I don't blame them.

So, what is the answer? I cannot draw the images myself. I cannot find anyone to draw them for me. Is it the position of the anti-AI crowd that my game must simply never exist because there is no marketplace to fund its creation?

I'm reminded of:

Laws of Tech: Commoditize Your Complement

In the context of ethical vs slopical use of AI, is the answer to generate your complement?

If I read a magazine article, I care a lot about the words, but don't really care about the background image. It's just cosmetic. If the text were AI-generated, I'd be totally uninterested in reading it, but a generated background image wouldn't bother me. Conversely, if someone presents an image as the main attraction, I /don't/ want it to be AI-generated. I think the difference is in core purpose vs ancillary purpose.

Some games fall into the category where the core purpose is the gameplay, or the puzzle, or the story, and the graphics are ancillary. An obvious example: chess. I wouldn't mind at all if a chess program used generated graphics for the pieces, because that's not what I'm here for. In fact, I'd say the majority of games worth playing are worth playing /despite/ their graphics. A good game is timeless.

If you've got a great idea for a fun game, and the playability is the core purpose, then I don't think it's wrong to decorate it with AI-generated imagery. It's not a million miles from traditional use of clip art, stock photography, texture packs, font libraries, outsourcing, and dependencies in general.

I'm not sure this logic applies universally. Maybe there are some games where the graphics are part of the core purpose, where generated graphics would cheapen the experience.

So: make your core purpose a labour of love, and generate the rest?

Comments

Comment from genxalt\ 1 week ago:

Thank you for taking the time to read and respond. I've been struggling with this dilemma for some time now and appreciate the insight.

Long-term review: SanDisk Ultra II 2.0GB microSD card

Tagged: hardware
2026-07-09
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/07/09/sd/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/07/09/sd/)

I cleaned out my car at the weekend, pulling gunk and junk out from under the seats. It was mostly litter and stones and dirt and pens and such, but also... a microSD card. Intriguing.

One of these

I finally got around to reading it today. Turns out it's from a Nokia N95, and there are family photos and videos on it - from 2011. That's older than the car. I did own an N95, but these photos were not taken by me. That's another story.

What you're really here for is to hear that after apparently 15 years, everything on the card was perfectly readable, without errors. I hear urban legends about NAND memory losing data if left unpowered for years at a time, but how scientific those urban legends are, I'm not sure. Certainly this particular card has spent a long time in alternately hot, cold, damp, noisy, bumpy, and dirty conditions, and has somehow pulled through.

I'd say 15 years is long enough to prove the SanDisk card has performed admirably. It's also long enough for SanDisk to have completely changed their manufacturing technology, meaning this result doesn't necessarily tell you anything about cards you can buy today. Isn't tech wonderful?

Star Trek: The Original Series: Season One: Mostly For The First Time

Tagged: tv
2026-07-10
Original: [gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/07/10/tos/](https://lab6.com/mlog/2026/07/10/tos/)

Gemini throws us back to the days of bulletin boards, plain text, and homebrew software, but let's be honest about the true purpose of late 20th century computing: Talking About Star Trek On The Internet.

Firstly: I am by no means a trekkie. I'd seen one or two Original Series episodes, a couple dozen TNG episodes, maybe the same amount of Voyager, one or two DS9 episodes, all the movies apart from the latest one, and nothing of Enterprise onwards. The characters and catchphrases are all so famous, and the influence runs so deep, that it feels like I've seen a lot more of it than I actually have. I've got a general awareness of the lore, but second-hand.

So I decided to catch up, starting from the beginning, with Season One of The Original Series. Kirk & Spock - or as I think of it, real Star Trek.

I picked the remastered version with the CGI, and watched it mostly on a phone screen while doing other things, which is probably the worst possible way to enjoy it, but enjoy it I did!

Overall Impressions

It's corny, it's dated, it's nonsense, but it's also brilliant. The worldbuilding is incredibly loose, but it almost doesn't matter, because there are some fabulous scripts, and because Kirk is so iconic - an all time perfect hero. Plain sets and some shonky character actors are eminently overlookable. When 60 years old you reach, age this well you can only hope to. I'm very glad to have watched the season through.

Total spoilers from this point onwards.

Episode Index

Episode	Love Interest	Baddie	Baddie defeated by
Pilot	Vina	Talosians	Humans being uniquely violent
S01E01	Nancy Crater	Salt Monster	McCoy's phaser
S01E02	Yeoman Rand	Thasian Incel	Deus Ex Parentes
S01E03	Dr Dehner	Gary the Evil God	Dropping a rock on him
S01E04	Nurse Christine	Mutated Water	McCoy's cure
S01E05	Yeoman Rand	Evil Kirk Clone	Transporter smushing
S01E06	Mail Order Brides	Irish Pimp	Kirk prescribes self-confidence
S01E07	Andrea	Androids	Androids being unable to love
S01E08	A literal child	Genetic Engineers	McCoy being a medical genius
S01E09	Dr Noel	An Asylum Seeker	Pure willpower from Kirk
S01E10	Yeoman Rand again?	Kodos as in Kang	Guile. Also: is it about my cube?
S01E11	Vina, for real now	Spock!	Find out next week...
S01E12	Vina, we assume	Spock!	Oh he wasn't bad after all
S01E13	Lenore	Actual Kodos	Lenore
S01E14	Angela, sadly	Evil Romulans	Battleship Enterprise
S01E15	Ruth (who?)	Irish Stereotype	In-ride exit
S01E16	Soft focus Mears	The Commissioner	Going slow
S01E17	Yeoman Ross	Proto-Q Cosplayer	Deus Ex Parentes again
S01E18	None?!	The Gorn	Homemade cannon. Or maybe mercy.
S01E19	None?!	A Black Hole	Zooming round the sun
S01E20	Areel (old flame)	Kirk, apparently	Spock playing chess
S01E21	None?!	Cultists	Talking the computer into suicide
S01E22	McGivers	Khaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan!	Hitting him with a stick
S01E23	None?!	War	Casual genocide threat from Kirk
S01E24	Leila Kalomi	Alien spores	Kirk getting emotional
S01E25	No women present!	Rock/acid monster	Spock's mind meld with the Horta
S01E26	No women present!	Klingons	Organians
S01E27	None?!	Lazarus	Lazarus
S01E28	Edith	Alt-history nazis	Killing the peace activist
S01E29	None?!	Alien brain cells	UV light

Episode Notes

S01E00 Pilot: The Cage

- Baddie powers: mind-control / illusion.
- No Kirk! What is this?
- Pike is dumbfounded whenever he sees a woman.
- The backstory is prescient and relevant: when all you care about is dreams, you forget how to repair your machines. A message for the outsourcing age, and the AI age.
- Body Horror: a woman being old.
- Weirdness: “time factor”, “broken the time barrier”. A lot of pilot-related weirdness. Spock is stiff, and smiles, and isn’t referred to as a Vulcan at all, though he has the eyebrows and ears.
- Technobabble: they’re on a collision course with a radio wave!

A great opener. Very weird having Spock as the only recognisable cast member, though we hear more from Majel Barrett in TNG at least.

S01E01 The Man Trap

- Baddie powers: shapeshifting, paralysis
- They're taking an exploration starship to do a routine medical exam of a civilian?
- The HD remaster is good QoL.
- He's dead Jim - the first one?
- Uhura asks to be objectified.

Why don't you tell me I'm an attractive young lady, or ask me if I've ever been in love?

- Damn U, this is a workplace!
- This is truly the women's rights episode. Two guys ogling Yeoman Rand. Then Spock full on punching Nancy in the face multiple times.
- The guy at the space station is named Dominguez - Latino representation! Oh wait, he just wants his chilli peppers. Kirk is probably storing them with the sombreros and tequila.

A fun monster mystery.

S01E02 Charlie

- Baddie powers: disappearing things (similar to Stranger in a Strange Land?), various telekinesis effects.
- Uhura singing is very Holiday Special.
- Body Horror: a woman being old.

Ehh, never work with children or animals.

Interlude: Star Trek: Strange New Worlds S01E01.

Just because it happened to be on.

Interesting seeing Pike back, and it's not a bad show by any means, but it felt a lot more ordinary.

S01E03 Where No Man Has Gone Before

- Spock's ancestor married a human female. Don't we later find out that he's talking about his mother?

- They go to the edge of the galaxy, which they definitely de-escalated in later shows. Voyager would have been over quickly at this speed.
- ESP is real!
- Super reckless, bringing this random space object on board!
- The captain giving an order to destruct his own ship. Foreshadowing ST:III?
- What is this galactic barrier anyway? Did they bring it back in Star Trek V or was that something else? (Upon research: that was the great barrier, not the galactic barrier).
- Love interest: Dr Dehner. Not so much love interest as harrassment interest.
- Why does this feel like a submarine movie?
- They've accidentally got a godlike being onboard for the second episode in a row.
- It says James R Kirk on the headstone. Must have retconned the T.
- Kirk delivers a stirring speech AND a right hook.
- Gary Mitchell doesn't seem to be definitively dead... Does a falling rock really kill a god? His super-eyes were back so did he not still have some of his powers?

S01E04 The Naked Time

- Baddie powers: makes everyone drunk.
- Love interest / harrassment target: nurse Christine, maybe Rand.
- This planet breakup story is peak technobabble! Shrinking mass?
- First time Scotty can't change the laws of physics?
- But they can accidentally invent time travel!
- I'm sure they re-used this plot in TNG.

S01E05 The Enemy Within

- Poor Rand, again. Kirk is far from his best.
- Baddie powers: pure distilled willpower (a.k.a. Evil?)
- Do they not have shuttlecraft?
- They can work wonders of innovation on the transporter but they can't figure out a way to make heat on the planet's surface.
- Is this where Red Dwarf S05E05 Angels & Demons comes from? Or maybe they both go back to Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.
- Animal testing.

S01E06 Mudd's Women

- Oh god, three ladies in dresses and Scotty and McCoy are completely lost for words, as if they're starved mariners who haven't seen a woman in years.
- The computer saying Incorrect. Would you unhook him already, he doesn't deserve this kind of shabby treatment!

- Body Horror: women without makeup.

S01E07 What Are Little Girls Made Of?

- Feels like the first time we get a proper sci-fi background story. Dying star, ancient civilization, archaeological medicine - this is great!
- ANOTHER episode with a duplicate of Kirk?
- Really good tight sci-fi. Touches on themes that have only gotten more relevant as we approach the future. It's the setup for Blade Runner.
- Shame the androids phasered themselves. It would have been an interesting dilemma for Kirk as to what to do with them. Destroy them himself? Turn them over for study? They can't love but can they still feel somehow? Could they be redeemed?
- Best episode so far.
- Wait, that wasn't James Mason playing Korby?

S01E08 Miri

- Mad that they never even tried to explain why there was a clone of Earth.
- Were there really 300 years of food left over, readily accessible to kids who didn't seem to understand anything about how the world works?
- Not a fan of this one. The kids were too annoying and the disease was too gross. Maybe the BBC were right to ban it.

Ehh, never work with children or animals.

S01E09 Dagger of the Mind

Bureau of Penology, Stockholm, Eurasia-NE

NE?

- Is this the first time we get to see Kirk making an entry in the captain's log, and it's a physical recorder that he hands to a crewman, and he dictates it in public?
- First Vulcan mind meld?
- Dr Noel made a way better commando than doctor!
- Did Kirk get un-mind-controlled? Is he now forever in love with Dr Noel?

S01E10 The Corbomite Maneuver

- Why do I think this has a famous title?

- I'd like to know more about the three days they spent star mapping!
- Kirk's quarterly physical check - an excellent excuse for Kirk to get his shirt off.
- Mr Bailey is cheeky.
- Yeoman Rand is now a waitress?
- McCoy orders Kirk to be served salad, Rand obeys the order and serves him salad.
Kirk: women, amirite?
- Spock's first "fascinating"?
- I'm sure this alien voice is Harry Shearer doing Kang.
- Lots of staring at the viewscreen.
- An abrupt and weird ending.

Ah maybe I recognise the alien dummy from the end credits of episodes.

S01E11 & S01E12 The Menagerie

- Significant body horror.
- The episode came three years after the Daleks were first shown on TV. Influence?
- Great development of intrigue. Shame it's something of a clip show, though I don't blame it seeing as the pilot hadn't been aired to the public at that point. Love the courtroom drama. But the ending makes no sense. Spock says his actions were logical, but if it were all so logical, why couldn't he make his case in the open?
- Why did Pike keep saying no?
- Good mystery - why would Spock do this incredibly out of character thing! He must have an incredibly good reason and what could it be! - but it was a bit of a let down. We know Starfleet value reason and compassion. Surely Spock would have known this too?

S01E13 The Conscience of the King

- Kirk creeping on the war criminal's daughter... but it's for a good reason!
- As might be Kodos's butchery.
- Oh no, Uhura is singing again.
- Great episode - keeping it quite ambiguous to the end.
- Yes, this is where Kodos from Kodos and Kang comes from.
- Kodos did nothing wrong! He's the original Thanos. Hell bent on committing an atrocity that he genuinely believes is for the greater good. He's an excellent villain. Still a villain for sure, but also human, with remorse and shame - and now suffering from dementia. Would he have been fit to stand trial?

| *the greater good*

S01E14 Balance of Terror

- The one with the wedding.
- Red Dwarf S01E03 is called Balance of Power. Pretty sure there's no connection.
- Is that Spock's Dad??
- Is this the first time we hear about Romulans and the neutral zone? Before Klingons?
- Phasers seem to work like torpedos
- This is a submarine movie again. They are staying quiet because apparently they can hear each other through space!
- What??? No explanation? Why did they attack? Just Romulans being sneaky and evil and no further explanation necessary than that they are Romulans?
- Why introduce the wedding couple and then tell us almost nothing about them and then kill off the groom for no good reason?
- Yes, it's Mark Lenard playing the commander and also Sarek later! No wonder resident ship's racist Stiles thought Spock looked like him.

S01E15 Shore Leave

| ... uhh... point three.

They did the Zap Brannigan bit!

- Finnegan is a leprechaun-tier Irish stereotype
- Good job nobody thought of Mr Stay Puft.
- Kirk is a model of duty and competence until he gets a chance to stay and perv with robot copies of his ex lovers.

Not a great one. Too random for too long.

S01E16 The Galileo Seven

- Oh they do have shuttlecraft! True, they used one in The Menagerie, but now we see they can land on planets. Could have been useful when Sulu was freezing to death.
- The CGI here looks most anachronistic. Shiny reflecting 3D rendered objects look more 90s than 2000s or 60s. The quasar graphic is great though.
- They have to choose three people to leave behind - very convenient for one to die right away.
- This Commissioner is relentlessly critical and unhelpful.
- Baddie: spears thrown from off screen? No, the real baddie was the commissioner trying to get them to leave the shuttle crew behind.

Spock is irrational in expecting rationality from others. He does an emotional thing! Hah, silly Spock! The episode ends with everyone laughing at him, but we have heard that Vulcans /choose/ to suppress their emotions, so it's OK, it's not a protected characteristic (and the original NCC-1701 doesn't seem to have an HR department).

S01E17 The Squire of Gothos

- "Notify the Discovery" Same ship as the later series?
- For a ship whose mission is to explore where no 'man has gone before, they sure do end up on a lot of colony resupply missions.
- Is that a salt monster in the castle?
- The timeline is all over the place. He looks 900 light years into the past and sees Napoleon?
- Trelane is a bit of a Q character.
- Yeoman Ross gets a forced dance
- Hamilton mentioned.
- Kirk is always great when in dire peril and still standing up to power.

Apparently they retconned Trelane into an actual Q in one of the new series.

S01E18 Arena

- The world building in this series has a lot of colonies. Gives it a frontier feel.
- Instant death for the redshirt.
- Ohh this is the lizard alien episode. Monster goes raaaa.
- McCoy finds them being immobilised inconceivable!
- Again, powerful aliens have the ship at their mercy and are threatening to destroy it.
- Nice twist that the earthlings may have been accidental invaders.

Is there a mythbusters on whether that homemade cannon should have worked?

S01E19 Tomorrow is Yesterday

- The first proper time travel plot - it's the same slingshot round the sun technique that they used in Star Trek IV.
- Time travel stories never really make sense, but this one really /really/ doesn't make sense. What were they doing at the end, beaming the Earth men into their own bodies? And that somehow resets their memories?
- And they just invent time travel on demand and then forget about it? I can't remember if they reinvented or remembered it in ST:IV.

- Still, hits all the key points about not wanting to unravel the space time continuum. Heavy.

Pretty good episode in terms of adventure and suspense.

S01E20 Court Martial

- One to the fourth power! Wow!
- A murder mystery with good suspense right until it gets silly with a Christie denouement at the end. Gather everybody on the bridge! I'll explain later!
- Glad I watched it in the 2020s when the idea of perfectly faking video isn't so far fetched.

Ben Finney narrowly avoided becoming Arnold Rimmer. He made one mistake that nearly killed the whole crew. But he did spend the rest of his career cleaning the chicken soup vending machines.

S01E21 The Return of the Archons

- Apparently unrelated to NetHack.
- Is this set reused from another show?
- Is this The Purge?
- Did Kirk sleep standing up? And Spock with his eyes open?
- Absorption? Sounds Borgish.
- Wide field phasers. Very useful!
- Why is "VLM" carved into the table in the hideout?
- Spock mentions the prime directive of non-interference. They don't seem to have been following that all too rigorously.
- Suddenly Marplon says Londru instead of Landru.
- Wait, what was the Festival all about then?

Apparently this episode was genuinely the inspiration for The Purge and all that followed. Influential!

S01E22 Space Seed

- Yes, it's Khan! Cuban?
- Kirk let Space Napoleon go? What could possibly go wrong!
- Great seeing the Khan origin story finally.
- McGivers gets a mention in the original script for The Wrath of Khan, but as far as I can tell, neither the theatrical nor director's cut include that line, instead just noting that she died.

[The Wrath of Khan script](#)

S01E23 A Taste of Armageddon

- Great matte painting of the planet.
- Cool concept. A virtual war.
- "Decibels - 18 to the 12th power" - now that's more like it!
- $18^{12} = 1,156,831,381,426,176$. Quite loud.
- Suicide booths from Futurama?
- Spock's "logic": happily making the assumption that there are no unknowns.
- General Order 24 - just a casual threat to genocide an entire planet. Exactly the kind of thing they would assign a general order number to, of course. And Scotty is happy to just go along with it, based on a one second blurted order from Kirk, whose voice was faked in the previous transmission?

| *Sir, there's a multi-legged creature crawling on your shoulder*

The old ones are the best!

S01E24 This Side of Paradise

- Spock is off the leash, emotions unsuppressed
- McCoy is off the leash, becoming more Southern
- Paradise is Amish?

S01E25 The Devil in the Dark

- This is one of the episodes I remember seeing before, maybe in the 1990s.
- The Horta's wound effect is surprisingly horrific for a creature that is supposedly made of rock and acid.
- The miners wear monochrome onesies that look like they should be sherbet flavours.

| *I'm a doctor, not a bricklayer!*

S01E26 Errand of Mercy

- Is this the first appearance of the Klingons?
- Kirk's sarcastic "you're welcome" gesture - amazing!

- Another godlike being.
- The Klingons are pure baddies. Absolutely no redeeming features whatsoever - pure domination and cruelty. Commie Nazis! Almost pantomime moustache twirling.
- Why is it called Errand of Mercy?

S01E27 The Alternative Factor

- Spock's computer must be terrible for his back. His working day is spent hunched over it peering into the tube.
- Nasty VFX.
- Kirk and Spock using Batman logic. The only possible answer!
- (Batman: The Movie was released only a little earlier, in July 1966)

Not a good one. The mystery just stagnates, with little development. Even at the end, the payoff is weak.

Worst. Episode. Ever. So far.

S01E28 The City on the Edge of Forever

- McCoy knows instant knockout karate chops.
- Interesting that Kirk gives the order to Begin Recording, as if they wouldn't be recording everything every moment. Recording used to be a deliberate act, not the steady background hum of our data capture world.
- Written by Harlan Ellison!
- Features the Goodnight Sweetheart song. Did the Nicholas Lyndhurst series reference this?
- Another time travel plot that is hard to make sense of. Why didn't the landing party blink out of existence along with the Enterprise?

Still, it's a good one.

S01E29 Operation - Annihilate!

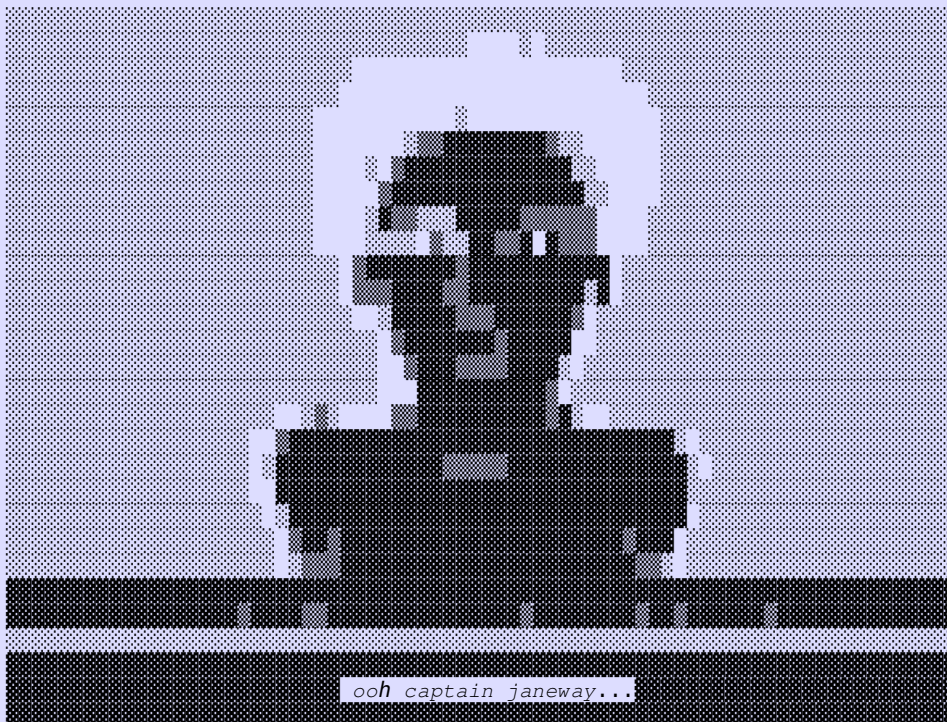
- Another Body Horror episode.
- A light so intense it can affect even people in closed dark areas?? Through walls? Better put goggles on! Not for the actual patient though. Maybe the goggles do nothing.
- Kirk is a bit of an ass for blaming McCoy for an experiment they all agreed to... but he comes around later. Kirk is normally the first to take responsibility so this seems out of character.

- Sam Kirk introduced as a dead body. Is that the best they could have done for the brother of the main character?

Not bad, but it would have been stronger to end the season on The City on the Edge of Forever.

What next?

TOS Season 2? Being a nerd on the internet practically demands it.



PART II:

NORMAL

SERVICE

FORENSIC.ZIP hall of fame

There is at least one person making progress on the CTF challenge from [issue 0](#), and doing it on Windows, which is playing on hard mode to say the least.

Therefore, it's about time we had a page commemorating the efforts of those attempting it.

Name	Depth reached so far
<i>anonymous</i>	19

Clues are available on request.

Tombstone of the Druid

v0.9.0 Changelog

An update from our founder.

Loyal fans of Tombstone will be wondering what the roadmap to v1.0 looks like. Our mission to provide innovative roguelike gaming experiences for everyone has never changed – but the world around us has evolved beyond recognition. Global political and economic turmoil, energy security concerns, and the ever-increasing pace of AI have forced us to ask some hard questions. For this reason we're excited to share the next step in our journey, as we pivot the project towards becoming an egg farm.

While this may come as a surprise to current players, we're confident that you will join us in this new opportunity, and that we will reach entirely new players. We will unlock growth for our community, and deliver exactly the outcomes we've always aimed for, just in a slightly different way.

Please enjoy a sneak preview of some of the upcoming changes we have planned.

- NEW: replace entire game with egg farm.
- CHORE: staff retraining underway; significant shift from legacy engineering skillset to coop-building, carton manufacture, and packing.
- CHANGE: no longer available on Steam, but soon available as Tesco Meal Deal snack item.
- REGRESSION: vegan conduct now unlikely.
- DEPRECATED: system requirements.
- ENHANCEMENT: around 72kcal per egg, good source of protein.
- TODO: fix ethical issues in build pipeline.
- RISK: salmonella can now affect player directly.
- ENHANCEMENT: cockatrice no longer stones on touch, is much more realistic, in fact is actual hen.

Download links obsolete, for your convenience

Back Issues

This document is certified as PDF/A-3b, does not process your personal data, and does not store any cookies anywhere. Its hexadecimal SHA-256 hash begins 0x09, identifying the issue number. Its primary URL is <https://lab6.com/9>, but it can also be found at <gemini://lab6.com/9>.

When this host goes down, you may be able to find mirrors using this handy random 128-bit integer that appears in every issue:

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SHA-256 hashes & IPFS links for previous issues:

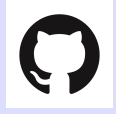
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issue 8 available by sneaker net only



Back Issues: Slop Troughs

Issue 0		YouTube https://www.youtube.com/shorts/A4ankMqOpiE 108 views, 0 comments, 0 likes, 0 subscriptions, \$0.00bn advertising income received
Issue 1		Apple Podcasts (audio only) "We're still processing your show details. Check back later and then click Publish."
Issue 2		TikTok https://www.tiktok.com/@lab6zine/video/7596349107053022486 0 likes, 0 comments
Issue 3		X https://x.com/realLab6/status/2012636371098255769 14 views, 0 likes, 0 replies
Issue 4		Factorio https://mods.factorio.com/mod/pdf-documents 32 downloads
Issue 5		Instagram https://www.instagram.com/p/DToEVxIkYzH/ 0 likes, 0 comments
Issue 6		Nectarine https://scenestream.net/demovibes/song/50272/ 14 plays
Issue 7		GitHub https://github.com/lab6zine/lab6 0 stars, 0 watching, 0 forks
Issue 8		No trough, no slop

Comments

Send your feedback to comment@input.lab6.com and it may be published in the next issue.

You can also type your comment into the URL bar of your browser, immediately after the issue number, like this:

<https://www.lab6.com/9Your Comment Goes Here>
<gemini://lab6.com/9or here>.

For the Web 1.9 experience, you could even add a comment to the mlog post announcing this issue:

<gemini://lab6.com/mlog/2026/07/14/nine/>

Comments will also be mucked out of the social media troughs mentioned on page 115.

Full names and email addresses will not be published, unless requested.

Known Defects

Sorry, Firefox for Android users will have to avoid using spaces.

Issue 6

2026-02-03 14:31:53 Bonkers-ILoveIt

↳ **Lab 6 Official Response:** Nice! 💖

Issue 7

2026-05-07 02:23:14 How to access 8?

↳ **Lab 6 Official Response:** Find someone who has it. They'll be delighted to share if you ask.

Tracking

OEIS entries	397,396
English Wikipedia entries (edits)	7,208,613 (1,359,367,773)
RC5-72 keys tested (% complete)	773,879,326,081,592,328,192 (16.388%)
Bitcoin blocks (hash)	958042 00000000000000000001ab45d53d6b1448eb57f1f0ba592f436573488a0c414f
XKCDs	3,271
IPv6 adoption	50.05%
Abe Vigoda Status Page Status Gone	But not forgotten .
Cliff Stoll status update	Alive
Largest Prime	$2^{136,279,841} - 1$
BTTF Movies	3
World population, from the US Census Bureau even so, it could be true	8,200,325,888
Latest stable Linux kernel	7.1.3
Color Names	4,552,557
Tilde Quilt entries	231
Count of University of Queensland pitch drops	9
Project Gutenberg eBooks	79,084
OCRemix Releases	4,849
Atmospheric CO2 ppm	428.85
Pantone Color of the Year 2026	They haven't changed their mind

RIP Sam Neill, and the CIA World Factbook

The Smol Print

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I always thought it was just people trying to be Swedish, but apparently it's people trying to be cute, and we can't have that.

Lab 6 Official Coin Flip

For when a pseudorandom RNG just won't do.

This time, it's 10 Brazilian centavos, dated 1997.

It was heads.

Commitment Scheme

For emergency use only

```
885ea88922bc3b475be6fbe258ae90880b3545634426d48de6e3a312b7d76113
37d8b259bebbb69d3e006f57f2e7ff03f4385aef859cef48d253688ed11d28f4
343b362cfb8ceafebf21476b17e7c8695d82b837b47ba75a9b9449a554285e2e
ad64f2437966d6d6458740db952a10c96091acd2578e400ba15f5c5cf13ae4a6
28f8a0956289246599d0993ffa24870783bc4a862dfbe236553b39f8bc4708c6
4877d2504959536a25cac0ef2810b87ae4c1e9ed60aa1d119d7364d238a51cf4
```