

# 2012 The Year in Review

Monday, December 31,

Twenty-twelve was the first time in a very long time that I had thoughts of leaving [Autodesk](#) (rather than the other way around). It's a pretty cushy gig, but with yet another round of layoffs jettisoning people with decades of service – this time with the goal of transitioning the aggregate skill set into the web and mobile era – I'm looking to wrest more [control over my life](#). Could I do this for another 10 years? Sure, if I had to, but in the words of Billy Joel “there's someplace that he'd rather be”.

The family reunited in Macau and Malaysia over the Christmas break. Samantha is back in Cambridge finishing her masters in architecture at the [University of Waterloo](#). Alex is back at home after a year off teaching kitesurfing in the south of France (nice job if you can get it, eh) and now going to [ETH in Zurich](#) for mechanical engineering. Everyone is doing just fine – or rather I should say nobody is reporting any problems. Alex got her driver's license but commutes by train from our place near Bern to Zurich every day.

The number of my hobbies keeps growing. In addition to the 3D printer and Android phone, I now have a [Raspberry Pi](#) and I am programming it to act as an [ICMP Tunnel](#) using Google's [Go language](#). Unfortunately, I have nothing to show for it yet, other than a successful proof of principle demonstration. I'm slowly writing a [blog](#) and also practicing drawing when I can, and expanding my artistic side by doing PowerPoint (hey! don't laugh, that's my life now).

I'm still active on [Facebook](#), but slowly switching over to [Google+](#). The Facebook account is mostly to keep in touch with old friends and family, while the Google+ account is used for current topics of interest. I guess you could arrange your Facebook in circles too, but it would take a lot more work and I'm not sure of the overlap between the two social networks.

I've decided to give up on actively learning German, and instead just passively absorb it, after wasting another holiday attending a [language course in Berlin](#). There are a number of reasons for the change in strategy, besides the biggest one of course which is that my brain is just too old to do it. I can now (sort of) get by – I do my tax returns in German – and Jackie is better at it than me so I can rely on her. I have never really needed it at work because my entire team is in North America.

I'm still not smoking. I started again for a while at the beginning of the year, but have now quit for good. They say the first few years are the hardest – I'm getting past that now. It makes a big difference, in that now I can climb hills and even go jogging without losing my breath. Yes, I started jogging a bit before the weather turned cold. I'll be getting back to it too, probably as a New Year's resolution.

October marked 4 years in Switzerland and my 55<sup>th</sup> birthday. We had an apéro, which is kind of like a wine and cheese party, to celebrate. I invited everyone I know, and on the whole I think it was successful. Maybe I'll start doing that every year.

This year I learned, or relearned actually, how to make spanish rice and butter tarts. Butter tarts are tricky to make, and I still have to do a lot of practicing to get it right using ingredients that are available in Switzerland. I'm still making Greek or German potato salad nearly every Saturday and of course I make my two sandwiches for lunch every day.

I don't read many books outside of work related stuff these days - English books being harder to come by now - only some Steig Larsson "Girl with the Dragon Tattoo", a new Betty Edwards "Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain" and a few others. I did manage to go through the boxes and boxes of books in the basement, if only to be able to say that I actually did open them while I was in Switzerland. I got rid of some of the really dated computer books and uncovered some classic science fiction that I've promised myself I will read again (like Asimov's Foundation trilogy).

Other than that, things are pretty much the same as last year. As for New Year's resolutions, here's a short list:

- I bought a [solar powered bathroom scale](#) with the intent of losing 10kg
- I want to relearn statistics to better spot trends and as an inoculation against bad science
- I want to get really good at [Inkscape](#) and extend it with [Python](#) scripts so that I can leverage my drawing skills to do some cartoons with a better workflow than my current one
- I would like to do something more altruistic, so I'll look into opening a [fab lab](#) or execute some other cutting edge idea around the 3D printing revolution and do it yourself design

There are many more, but I'll leave it at that and just get on with it.

All the best in the New Year,

Derrick