

2015 – The Year In Review

As I often say, I love living in the future. I don't think a day goes by without some sort of “wow, that used to be impossible” sort of moment. Whether it's using voice input to ask Google a question... and getting the answer you're looking for, or buying exotic BIO fruits and seasonal vegetables from the market down the street, or ordering the right part on-line, or flying a drone, or taking a Massive Open On-line Course ([MOOC](#)): it's all gotten a lot easier. Life's good. Not unconditionally good of course, but pretty much.

That's also a segue to talk about my new [LG G4](#) smart phone – LG, Life's Good... get it? I chose it because of the camera and I'm very pleased with it. The battery life is adequate, and it's not too big to hold. There's a long story about my previous one; a [Nexus 5](#), that gets wet playing [Ingress](#) in the rain while being charged, and the USB port stops working, and how it was rejected by its new owner, and how it gets miraculously repaired and finds a new home with Jacqueline. She complains about the unified email in-box and having way too many Apps – but indirectly I've dragged her kicking and screaming into the 21st century, weaning her off my original [HTC Desire](#).

The company (9code) is doing well but I don't have that Ferengi obsession with profit any more, and we're taking it easy with time off for lunch, sometimes in Lausanne with Samantha, and now and then a day or two off to travel around. Currently, I'm doing a lot of interesting research with [Spark](#), learning [Scala](#), playing with [GPGPU](#) programming, making [CIM](#) models, programming in [R](#), as well as working on smaller [personal projects](#) involving [NoSQL](#), [BitTorrent](#), [Docker](#), [Node and JavaScript](#), [Android](#), etc. etc. With so much to do, any thoughts about retirement are speculative in nature.

We're traveling more now because of our General Abonnement (GA) rail passes which allow us to go most anywhere in Switzerland – albeit in 2nd class. We've renewed them for 2016, so the increased travel trend will continue. We also met up with Alexandra in Venice and Istanbul on her bicycle trip to China.

Our health is good. I won't bore you with the minor problems that we have from first world living and advancing age. I did get below [80Kg for a while](#), but couldn't hold it there; life is too short to skip seconds and dessert. For exercise I'm still playing [Ingress](#) (L15) by bicycling around on Sundays, but now I sometimes take the train and [trottinette](#) to widen the battle theater. For example, I used to visit Biel/Bienne regularly and recently I formed the Schwarzenburg Expeditionary Force and we took the fight to a very blue Resistance area south west of Bern. Poor Smurfs.

As artistic expression, I'm writing a short story, in the *Technothriller* genre, tentatively titled *More Stainless Steel Rat*, which I hope to be similar to the eponymous [Harry Harrison series](#). I have a couple of thousand words written, about one third done or so, but I get distracted a lot doing research for the story on the internet. I also sketch and paint on an irregular basis.

We had a few visitors this year. Mom and Dad came to visit us before going on their river boat cruise in March. It was good to see them in person, although we keep in touch pretty well by Skype. Mom thought it was odd to hear me speak German – but I still haven't really learned German. I get exposed to it more now that I'm not working at Autodesk, but people are usually anxious to practice speaking English, and I'm reluctant to stop them.

I finally divested myself of the Autodesk stock I accumulated via ESPP, since the share price rose north of US\$60 again. So now I feel even more disconnected from my prior life than before. Links to Autodesk stories in my [G+](#) feed rarely trigger a click-through, and I'm sad to say they don't seem to be executing well relative to their competition in the 3D printer and web based modeling market. Still, I would be surprised if that thirty year relationship is completely over.

Last year's [resolutions](#) were mostly achieved, except for passing the B2 level German exam and remembering birthdays.

This year, I'll mix it up, and step it up a notch...

- release one version (or prototype/alpha/beta) of a project every three weeks

- get to 75kg and stay there
- cut down social media time to 4 hours per week
- start on the 6 year 10,000 hour plan

That's it for this year. All the best to everyone in 2016,
Derrick