With Great Humor Comes Great Developer Engagement

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Problems to solve

- New perspective: exploration of humour as a tool for engagement and collaboration in software engineering.
- How is humour used in software engineering?
- What impact does humour have in software engineering?
- What do people think about humour in software engineering?

New Ideas

- Analyze humour's role through case studies
  - Testing (**Faker**)
  - Commits (**Lolcommits**)
  - Continuous Integration (**Volkswagen**)
- Conduct the very first survey in the software engineering literature focusing on the practice of professional humour by developers.
  - What do you think about humour within software development?
  - Where does humour belong in Code?
  - What is humour good for?
  - Responsible humour?

Faker

- Fake input data generator
  - Name
  - Address
  - Sentences
  - Barcodes
  - Dates

- More engagement

```
1  seeder.create_if_none(Comment, num_comments) do
2    num_comments.times do
3      attributes = {
4        # hashtag hella art party.
5        body_markdown: Faker::Hipster.paragraph( sentence_count: 1),
6        ...
7      }
8      Comment.create!(attributes)
9    end
10 end
11 ...
12 seeder.create_if_none(Page) do
13   5.times do
14     Page.create!(
15       # We need to override the haptic JBOD pixel!
16       title: Faker::Hacker.say_something_smart,
17       ...
18       # The wise animal blends into its surroundings.
19       description: Faker::Books::Dune.quote,
20       ...
21     )
22   end
23 end
```

Listing 1: The developers of the Forem project seed their development database with some humor using faker.

Lolcommits

- Takes a photo of you when you make a commit

- Rewarding,
  Fun culture,
  Tradition (onboarding)

Volkswagen

- Humourously mimics Volkswagen scandal (false emission data during test)
- Manipulates Continuous Integration testing processes by making all tests appear to pass regardless of actual outcomes.
- IS-CI
  - provides a simple way to check whether the current runtime environment is a CI server

```
1 const isCI = require('is-ci');

2 // from arduino/arduino-ide
3 if (!isCI) {
4   console.log('Skipping notarization: not on CI');
5   return;
6 }
7 .................................................

8 // from salesforce/observable-membrane
9 if (!isCI) {
10   console.error('This script is only meant to run in CI.');
11   process.exit(1);
12 };
13 .................................................

14 // from videojs/video.js
15 const progress = () => {
16   if (isCI) {
17     return {};
18   }
19   return progressPlugin();
20 }
```

Listing 2: The development of volkswagen triggered the development of is-ci, which has since found legitimate use cases.

Developer Survey

- What do you think about humour within software development?
  - More than 93% of the respondents (117/125) say they would react positively
- Where does humour Belong in Code?
- What is humour good for?
  - A cheerful aid
  - A sense of community
  - A common understanding
  - Increase in developer engagement
- Responsible Humour?
  - Impact on performance and quality
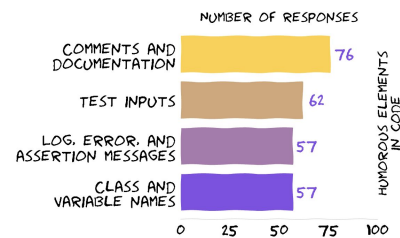 - Offensive (Faker - South Park)

Figure 3: According to the survey respondents, the practice of humor in software is appropriate within documentation immediately followed by test inputs.

Positives

- **New insight** to the field of software engineering on how humour create positive effects through multiple case studies and surveys.
- The paper did a great job promoting humour as a strong weapon for software engineers but it also went over some **potential consequences** as well.
- The paper also highlights impacts beyond software such as positive effects on **organizational culture.**
- **Very relatable**

Negatives

- Although the paper went over some potential consequences that were mentioned by developers through the survey, **more concerns could have been observed**.
  - What about security and privacy issues?
  - Cultural sensitivity?
  - See Future Works
- It **lacks in-depth analysis** on how effective humour is to software engineering but the paper provides a solid foundation for future research in humour-based software engineering.
  - See Future Works

Innovative perspective

5 / 5

Strong case studies!

Future Works

- Potential **case study that covers failures/backfires/harms in usage of humour** in software engineering settings:
  - Where's the line?
  - Is humour for everyone?
  - Security and privacy risk?
  - Inclusivity? (People with different cultural background)
- Performance analysis between teams with humour vs no humour
- Comparison analysis between different fields of software engineering:
  - Finance?
  - Healthcare?
  - Gaming?

Discussion Points

- Should there be a guideline for incorporating humour into software engineering?
  - How to ensure humour is respectful and inclusive, especially in a global communities?
  - Potential security or privacy breach?
- Do you think humour degrade code readability over time?
  - Boomer!
- Points from Future Works:
  - Humour in different fields? (Finance, Healthcare, Gaming, etc.)
  - Thoughts on the gap of performance between a SE team with humour and no humour