

Tuning fork!

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Sometimes I dream that after driving away I find that the road network management has changed all signs at night. The priority sign means, for example, stop. A yield line means you can just drive. Car parts and hospital beds would, I fear, be quickly "sold out".

In my leisure time I play guitar. On my smartphone, I have an app - Guitartuner - that produces a beautiful A of 440Hz. Everywhere I go I tune my guitar (or bass) on the tone generated by this app. To me it is a handy tool. There are tuners in the stores that can be clipped on the head of the guitar, indicating

whether a string produces the correct pitch. The hearing of the musician is eliminated here, and the tuner is certainly not precise enough, because tone depends on many more factors than just the loose strings. Now I am a very careful person when it comes to updating my apps (I usually skip updates consistently), but last Saturday when I was in the studio to complete recordings for a new CD with my love and a few friends, I found out that my digital tuning fork had been updated to a perfectly working chromatic tuner, but without tuning fork. The ears of the musician are now completely out of the game...

One moment you have something, the other moment you've lost it. Digital technology is beautiful but, unfortunately, is also incredibly unreliable. Imagine, after a night of good sleep, you enter your car where you find that the brake pedal is on the right and the accelerator pedal on the left. An update, with kind regards from Volkswagen. Or that the manufacturer of your piano - for example Steinway or Grotrian Steinweg - decided to do an update, inverting all the keys: on the right the basses and on the left the high tones. Of course this would never happen I hear you say. If that is true, why does this happen almost continuously with updates of apps?

Handy pieces of tools are assimilated by humans in their action repertoire. During development we learn to work with it. A person adapts to the possibilities and limits of such a tool and eventually mastery arises. If the tool constantly changes, mastering and developing skills disappear into the background. Apps aren't skill-centred but technology-centred. Of course it can be didactically very good to use a tool temporarily "differently", for instance to play guitar with the non-dominant hand, or to use the hockey stick the other way around. From the disruption this evokes, sometimes a "breakthrough" can be forced into "normal" use. But sustainable development

is virtually impossible if the sustainability of a tool or a relevant aspect of it has become a question mark for every update of the app.

My grumbling about the lack of a good voice tone didn't make the atmosphere good at the recordings. As good and bad as it went, I tuned my guitar on the recordings of last Saturday. During the break I decided to visit the music store. I asked for an ordinary, old-fashioned tuning fork. You guessed it: sold out!

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