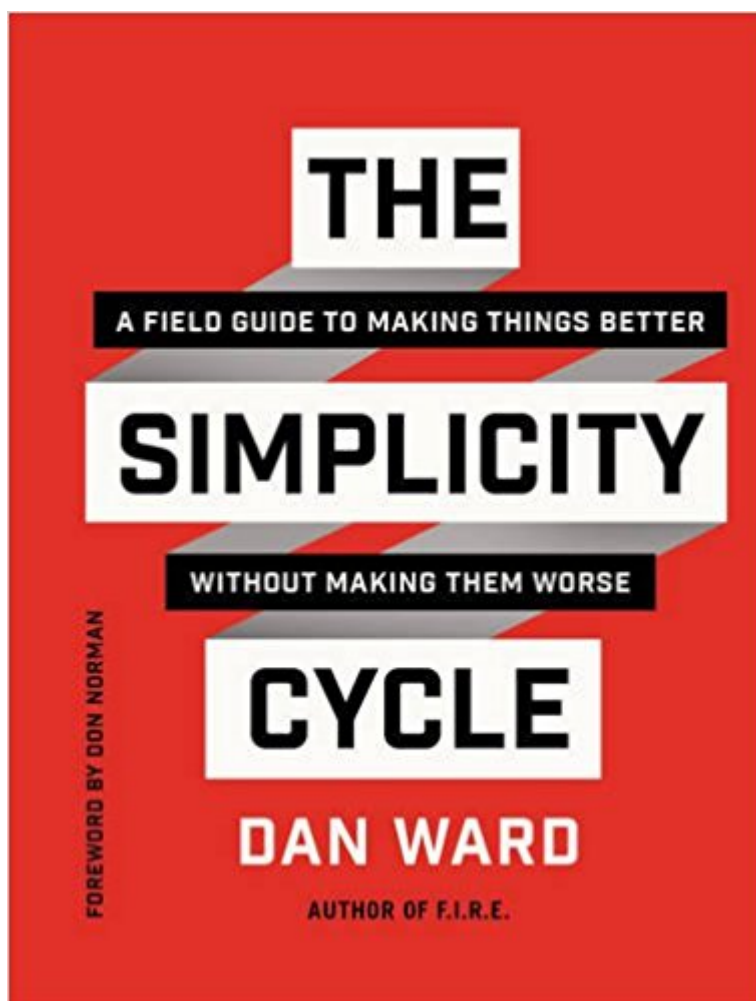


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The Simplicity Cycle: A Field Guide To Making Things Better Without Making Them Worse



Synopsis

The award-winning engineer, Air Force lieutenant colonel, and author of F.I.R.E offers a road map for designing winning new products, services, and business models, and shows how to avoid complexity-related pitfalls in the process. With a foreword by design guru Don Norman. Humans make things every day, whether it's composing an e-mail, cooking a meal, or constructing the Mars Rover. While complexity is often necessary in the development process, unnecessary complexity adds complications. The Simplicity Cycle provides the secret to striking the proper balance. Dan Ward shines a light on how complexity affects the things we make for good or ill, taking us on a journey through the process of making things, with a particular focus on identifying and avoiding complexity-related pitfalls. The standard development process involves increasing complexity to improve the outcome, Ward explains. The problem comes when the complexity starts getting in the way "but often we don't know where that point is until we pass it. He suggests a number of techniques for identifying the problem and fixing it, including how to overcome several types of wrongheaded thinking "such as the idea that complexity and quality are the same. In clear, compelling language, and using his trademark mix of examples from research, personal experience, and pop culture, Ward offers a universal concept, visually described with a single, evolving diagram. Ideal for business leaders and technologists, The Simplicity Cycle is helpful for anyone looking to simplify and improve everything we do, whether we work in an office, at home, or at the Pentagon.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dan's new book was featured in a college magazine article last year. While the topic of his book sounded intriguing, I took extra interest since we both graduated the same year from the same upstate NY engineering school (not sure I can promote that school by name here, but it provided a great foundation for both of us). So I decided to make the small investment and, at a minimum, help out a classmate with their dream. Usually when I read a book, I'm asleep in the first 5 pages and it takes me way too long to finish. But I picked up this book and couldn't put it down. After 20 years working for an engineering consulting firm, every few pages reminded me of a struggle I'd had during those 20 years and perhaps a better way I could have approached those issues. I now have his trademark Simplicity Cycle figure memorized and use it on a regular basis as I start new designs or work to refine previous designs. My plan is to buy a few more copies and send it to other alumni who also work in this firm (one of which also graduated in the same class) because I know they'll appreciate it and find value in it, too. Great work, Dan!

I suspect this book is marketed to too narrow of an audience. Yes, I can definitely see how it is an effective field guide for those in the design world, BUT it is just as helpful for those of us who work in the social sciences. Far from being stuffy, the Simplicity Cycle is laced with wit, humor, and helpful anecdotes. I felt like Ward was my personal coach standing by my side as I contemplated the best way to approach projects at my organization. I also really appreciated how richly documented this book is. Ward provides the reader with numerous options for further learning on several topics. Whether you are looking to cut costs, maximize profit, save time, or sharpen your interpersonal skills, this simple book will be worth your time.

Dan Ward really nails home a point in this book--that our tendency to confuse complexity with goodness creates significant problems in systems design. This rule applies whether you're a writer or a rocket scientist. If you can do it (whatever it is) with less, then you reduce the risks of unintended consequences, design flaws, mistakes, and the rest. In the spirit of the book, I'll keep it simple: buy it, read it, learn it, do it.

Excellent resource! This book is applicable to practically everyone. I often read book and find the author's main points early, only to see them waste pages to fulfill a magic page number, but this book is filled with wisdom from cover to cover!

Within the world of software application development I work, the patterns to achieve a harmonious balance and resulting goodness that Dan has so beautifully captured provides an understanding of the heartbeat of the software development lifecycle. The rhythms, peaks and valleys, that comprise the natural progression of creating value for users is one that needs to be understood and shared. The manner in which these concepts are captured and rendered to the reader provides a great set of tools to lead and inspire teams that may not be aware of this normal repetitive cycle within the context of their projects.

This book alongside his others are mandatory reading for startups to enterprises alike. Highly recommend his work & he answers questions on twitter :)

Good book. Its a quick read and has some great concepts especially if you are in the product development business.

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