

Community Workshop

Storytelling for Technical Communication

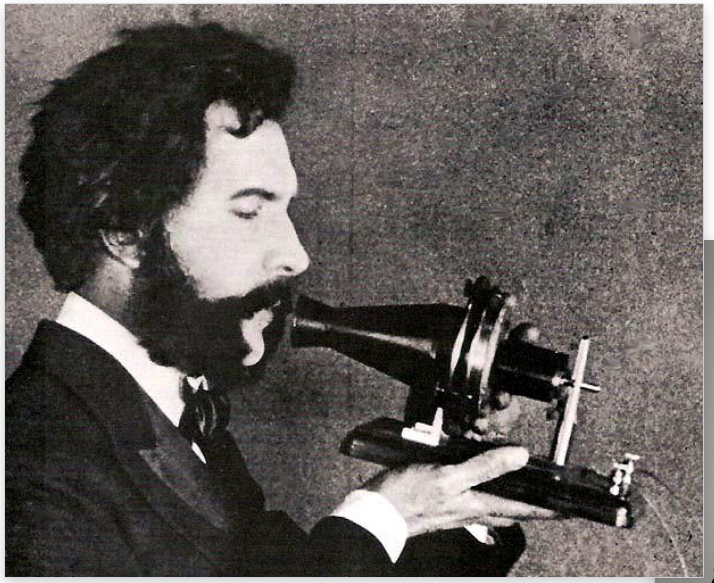
Teresa Lopes - Divya Sharma - Derk van Veen - Boriss Mejías



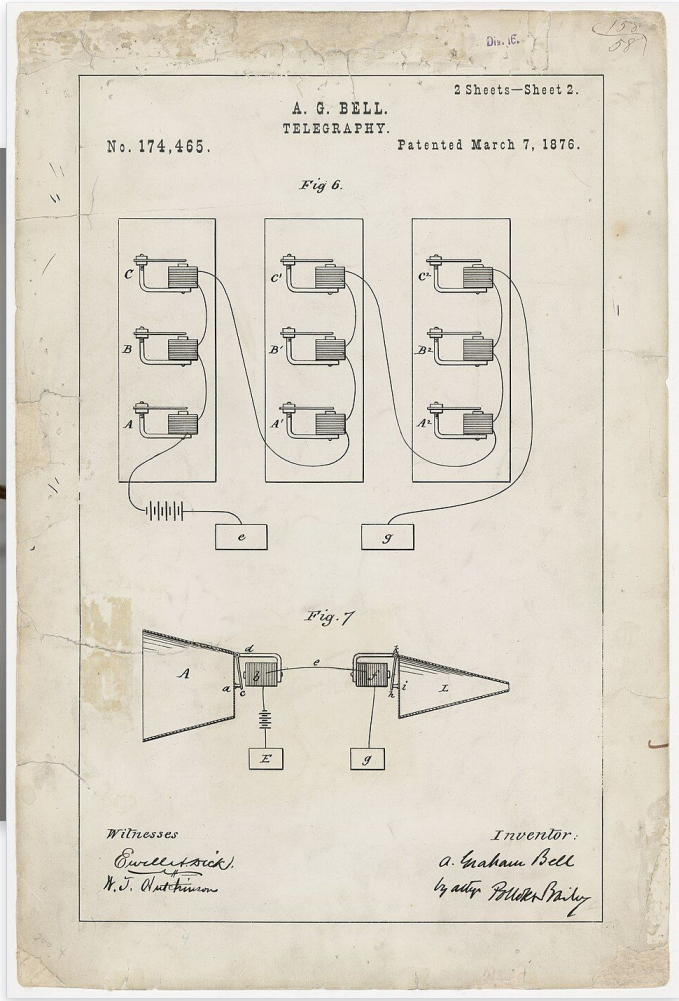
> “A good idea that is not well communicated gets lost”
>
> *a bard*

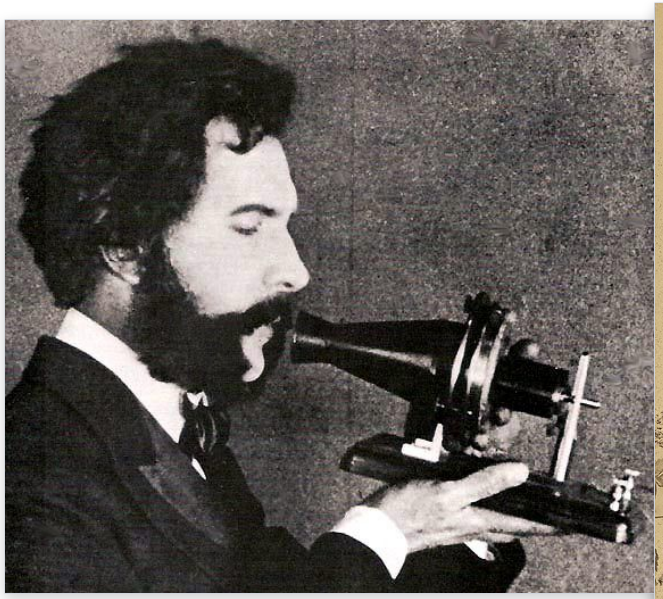
> “Even a brilliant idea that is not well communicated gets lost”
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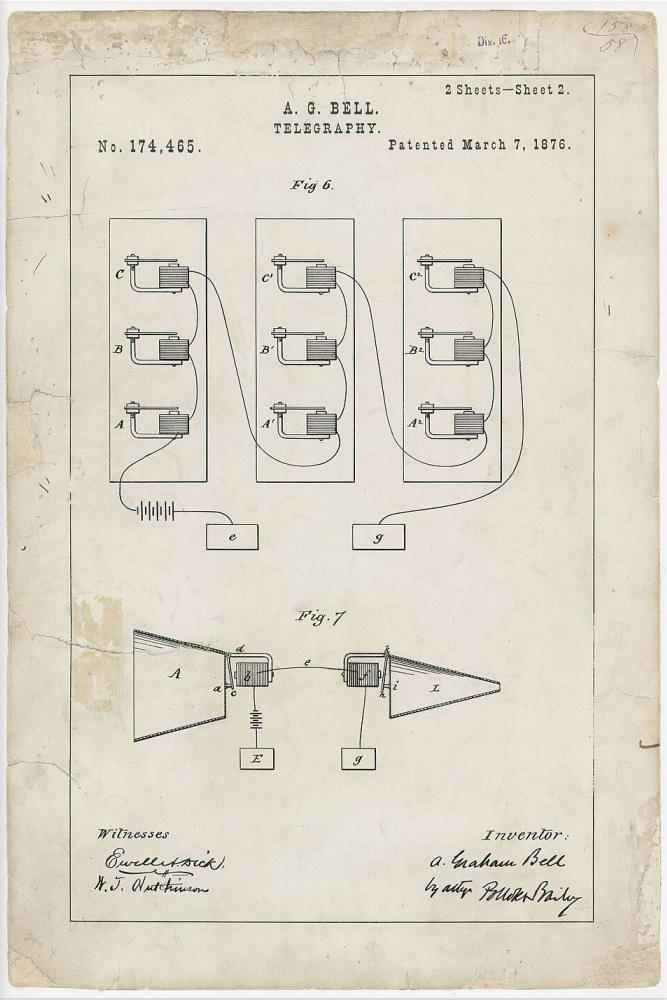





2 Sheets—Sheet 2.
A. G. BELL.
TELEGRAPHY.
No. 174,465.
Patented March 7, 1876.
Fig 6.
Fig. 7
Witnesses
Inventor:
a. Graham Bell







All images from Wikipedia

How do we communicate an idea?

How to make the audience remember?





Cueva de las manos, Santa Cruz, Argentina, picture by Mariano, taken from Wikipedia

How do we tell stories?



A story needs a conflict



From the conflict there is a plot



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO

SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
A cave person living in a wild world trying to survive day by day	to teach the young hunters and gathers how to survive, find food, and avoid dangers	they didn't have a written language to write notes of things to remember, things to eat, and things to avoid	they created storytelling, turning vital lessons into memorable tales that could be passed down for generations. 



SOMEBODY

A cave person living in a wild world trying to survive day by day

WANTED

to teach the young hunters and gathers how to survive, find food, and avoid dangers

BUT

they didn’t have a written language to write notes of things to remember, things to eat, and things to avoid

SO

they created storytelling, turning vital lessons into memorable tales that could be passed down for generations.

Some “Somebody Wanted But So” examples

Some “Somebody Wanted But So” examples

and a quote from Chopin...



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
Frodo Baggins, a hobbit living with his uncle in a beautiful house in an idyllic village.	to live a quiet, safe life in the Shire	he inherited the One Ring, which the Dark Lord Sauron seeks to conquer Middle-earth	he joined the Fellowship to bring the Ring to Mount Doom and destroy it.



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
Luke Skywalker, a bright-eyed, impatient teenager, living on a farm in an isolated desert, with a talent for racing and a deep sense of loyalty to his friends.	to leave his aunt and uncle's farm and join the Rebellion to become a pilot	his uncle wouldn't let him go, and the Empire killed his family while searching for the Droid schematics	he escaped with Obi-Wan Kenobi, learned the ways of the Force, and joined the Resistance.

Storytelling in context



This workshop is different than…

Using stories as metaphors
Storytelling that focus on the emotion
Storytelling for the sake of the story

Want we want is to…

Communicate our ideas in the form of a story
Storytelling that focus on communicating an idea, concept, features, project…
Storytelling as a mean to understand and share knowledge



Image from https://www.shutterstock.com/video/clip-23944195-4k-young-man-running-alone-city-night

The introductions



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
I am Álvaro Herrera, a PostgreSQL developer and committer since 2005	to spend my afternoon working on the new PostgreSQL 19 release	Boriss asked me to talk about REPACK, I new feature that I implement for the upcoming release	he now owns me a drink



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
I am Derk van Veen. An introverted person who loves predictability and quiet time	to share his knowledge with the rest of the community	I was afraid to speak in front of others and travel to unfamiliar places	I did a multi day training for public speaker and signed up for a conference in Chicago



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
I am Teresa Lopes, an engineer who values owning my time	To retire early, sip espresso, and never get paged at 3am	Economic reality requires me to earn a living	I chose to make work as enjoyable as possible by building with PostgreSQL



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
I am Divya Sharma, a database reliability engineer	I wanted to become a doctor, because I loved helping people and learning about the human body	But, I freak out when I see blood.	So, my I did computer engineering, got very interested in databases, and here we are.

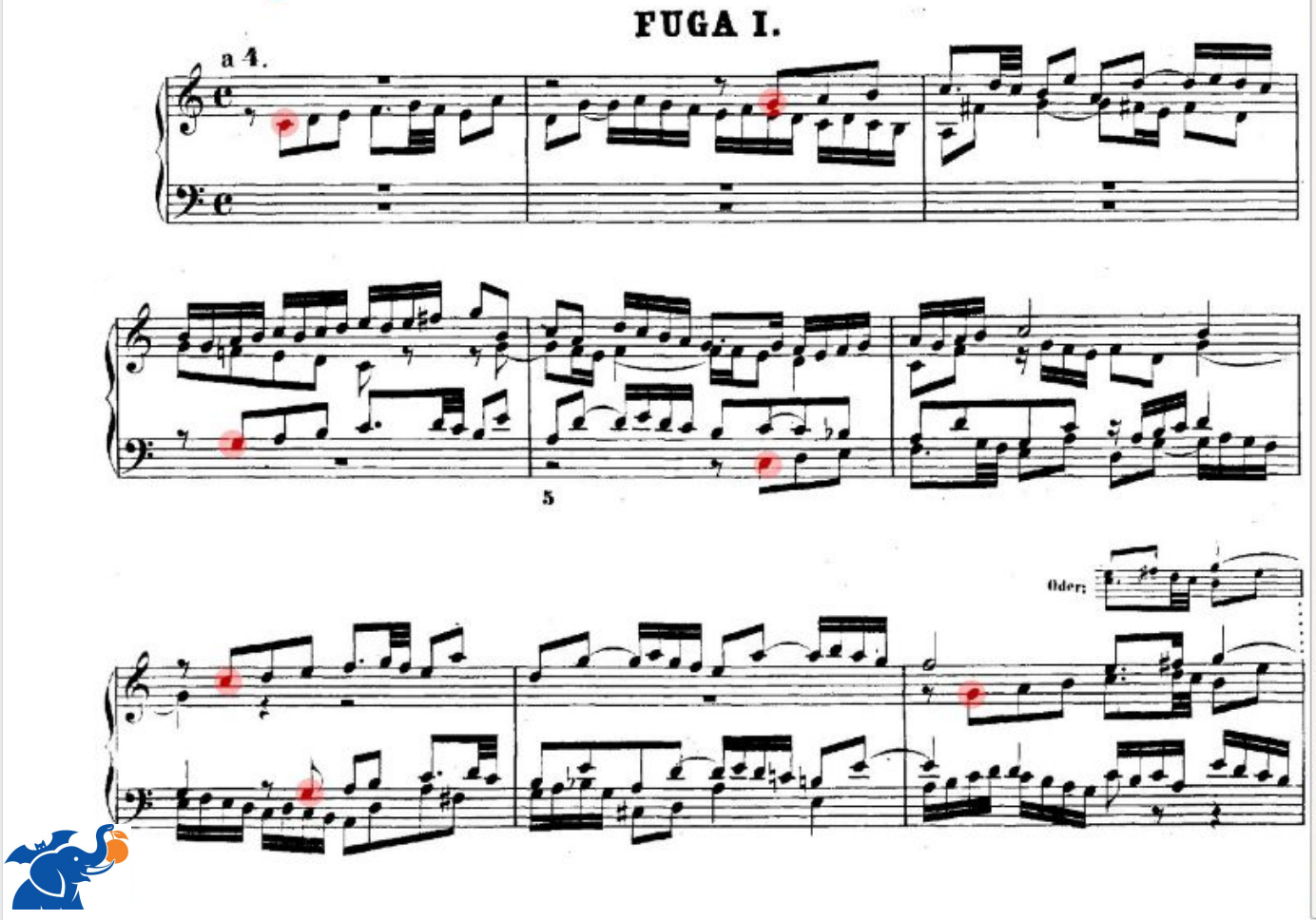
Exercise



Introduce yourself

A project “just for fun”?

Subject entries in BWV 846

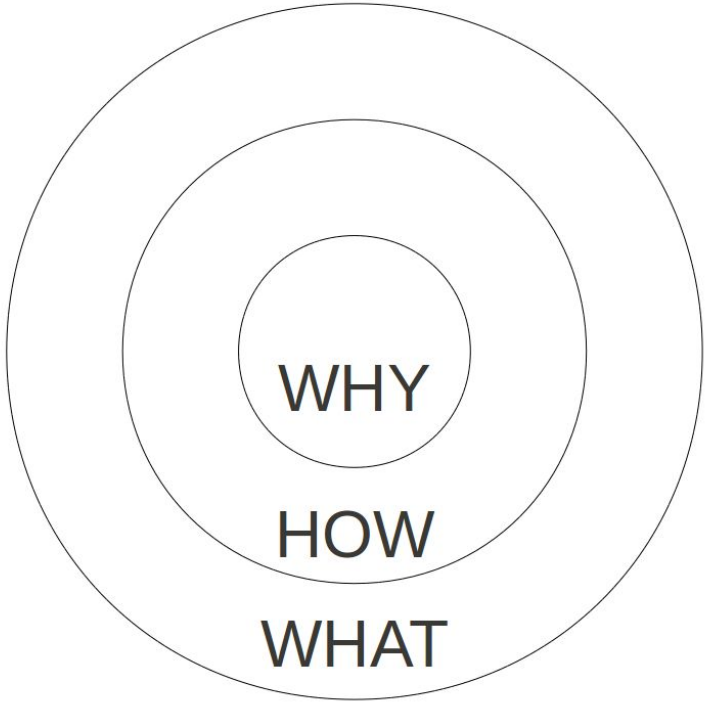



```
gciolli=# SELECT src,vox,initio
,pattern_id,lilypond_voice
FROM pgwtc.subject_occurrences_pretty
WHERE src = 'BWV846';
  src   |   vox   |  initio   | pattern_id |
--------+---------+-----------+------------+
 BWV846 | alto    |   1:1.500 | R0         |
 BWV846 | soprano |   2:3.500 | R4         |
 BWV846 | tenor   |   4:1.500 | R-3        |
 BWV846 | bass    |   5:3.500 | R-7        |
 BWV846 | soprano |   7:1.500 | R7         |
 BWV846 | tenor   |   7:2.500 | R-3        |
 BWV846 | alto    |   9:1.500 | R4         |
 BWV846 | bass    |  10:3.500 | R-10       |
 BWV846 | alto    |  10:4.500 | R1         |
 BWV846 | tenor   |  12:1.500 | R-5        |
 BWV846 | alto    |  14:1.500 | R0         |
 BWV846 | tenor   |  14:2.500 | R-3        |
 BWV846 | bass    |  15:1.500 | R-10       |
 BWV846 | soprano |  16:2.500 | R7         |
 BWV846 | alto    |  16:3.500 | R4         |
 BWV846 | tenor   |  17:1.500 | R-2        |
 BWV846 | bass    |  17:3.000 | R-6        |
 BWV846 | tenor   |  19:1.500 | R-2        |
 BWV846 | alto    |  19:2.500 | R2         |
 BWV846 | soprano |  20:4.500 | R4         |
 BWV846 | tenor   |  21:3.500 | R-1        |
 BWV846 | tenor   |  24:1.500 | R-7        |
 BWV846 | alto    |  24:3.500 | R3         |
(23 rows)

Time: 652.507 ms
gciolli=#
```

SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
Gianni Ciolli, a Postgres expert with formal training in classical music	to identify melody patterns in Bach's Well-tempered clavier, in all its different keys	this is a very tedious and exhausting tasks requiring long periods of observation and review	he wrote a Postgres extension to codify the Well-tempered clavier and let Postgres identify the melody pattern automating the task

Start with Why?



The 'golden circle' from Simon Sinek

Understand the why!

SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
Gianni Ciolli, a Postgres expert with formal training in classical music	to identify melody patterns in Bach's Well-tempered **clavier**, in all its different keys		

Understand the problem!

SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO
Gianni Ciolli, a Postgres expert with formal training in classical music	to identify melody patterns in Bach's Well-tempered clavier, in all its different keys	this is a very tedious and exhausting tasks requiring long periods of observation and review	

The solution will follow… maybe!

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Exercise



Release date: 2026-??-??, AS OF 2026-09-14

E.1.1. Overview

PostgreSQL 19 contains many new features and enhancements, including:

- A new REPACK command that reclaims disk space and reorganizes table contents, combining the functionality of the existing VACUUM FULL and CLUSTER commands. Its CONCURRENTLY option allows repacking without blocking reads and writes to the table.



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO

SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO

BUT	SO



A new feature on PostgreSQL 19

Personal project, idea, problem…



SOMEBODY	WANTED	BUT	SO

How to end a story?



The first and the last scene



The first and the last scene

Introduction and Conclusion



> **“A good idea that is not well communicated gets lost”**
>
> *a bard*

We all tell stories. We can all learn how to communicate ideas… even the cave dwellers did it

Exercise



References

How to Plot a Book - Brad Reed - Inside Creative Writing

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fwAtMC3YFY

How to present to keep your audience's attention - Mark Robinson

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmEiZadVNWY

The End



PostgreSQL Conference Europe 2026

Valencia

Oct 20th - 23rd