

6 Digital Myths Debunked

A Survival Guide For Digital Debutantes

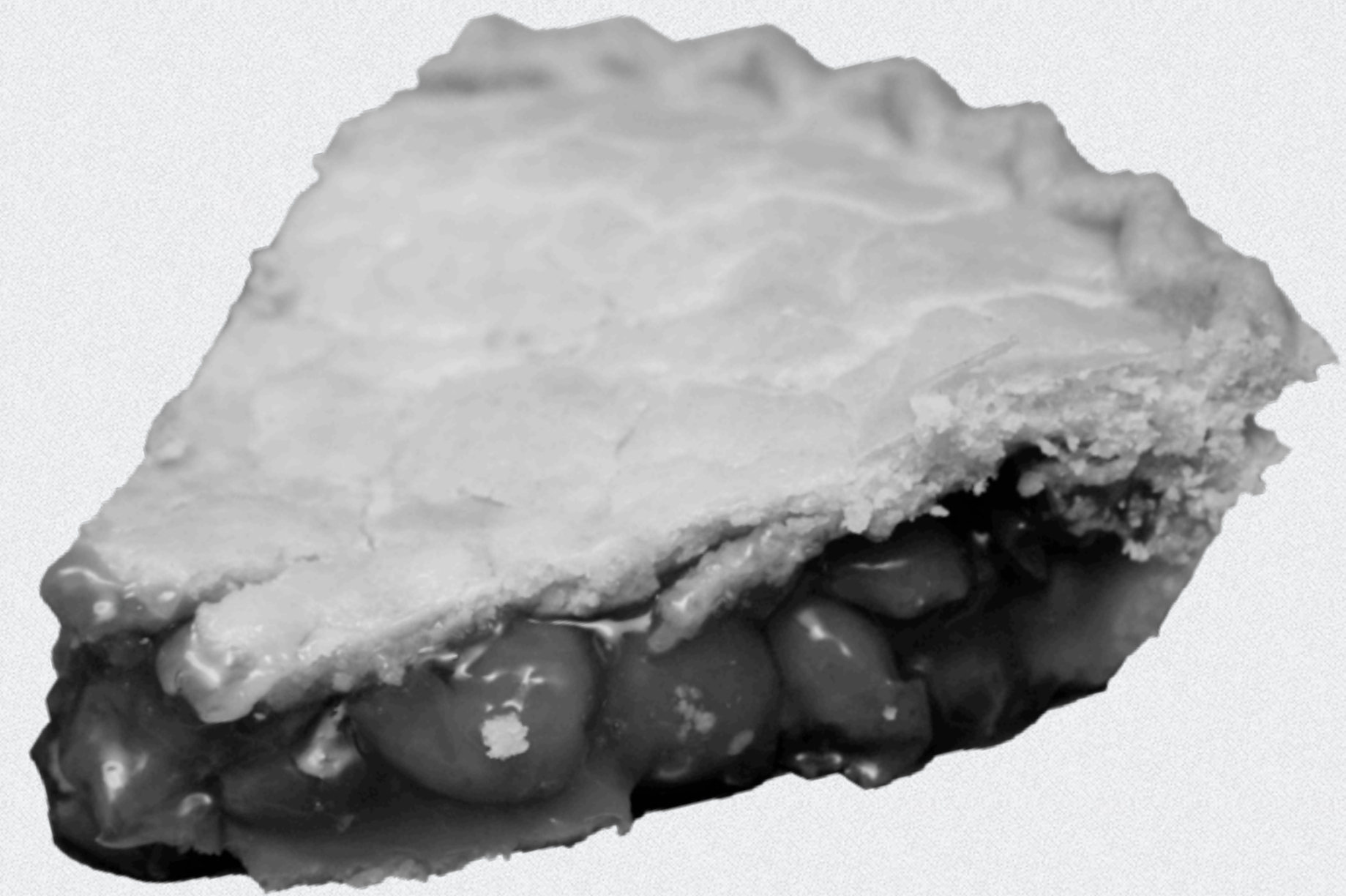
October, 2012

Are You A Digital Debutante?

It had to be said. It's time to wake up and smell the pixels. Digital undertakings are too often underestimated. Face these realities, and you'll begin to develop a sense of what you're up against—the first step in any successful digital enterprise.

Myth #1

It's Easy



Reality #1

It's Hard

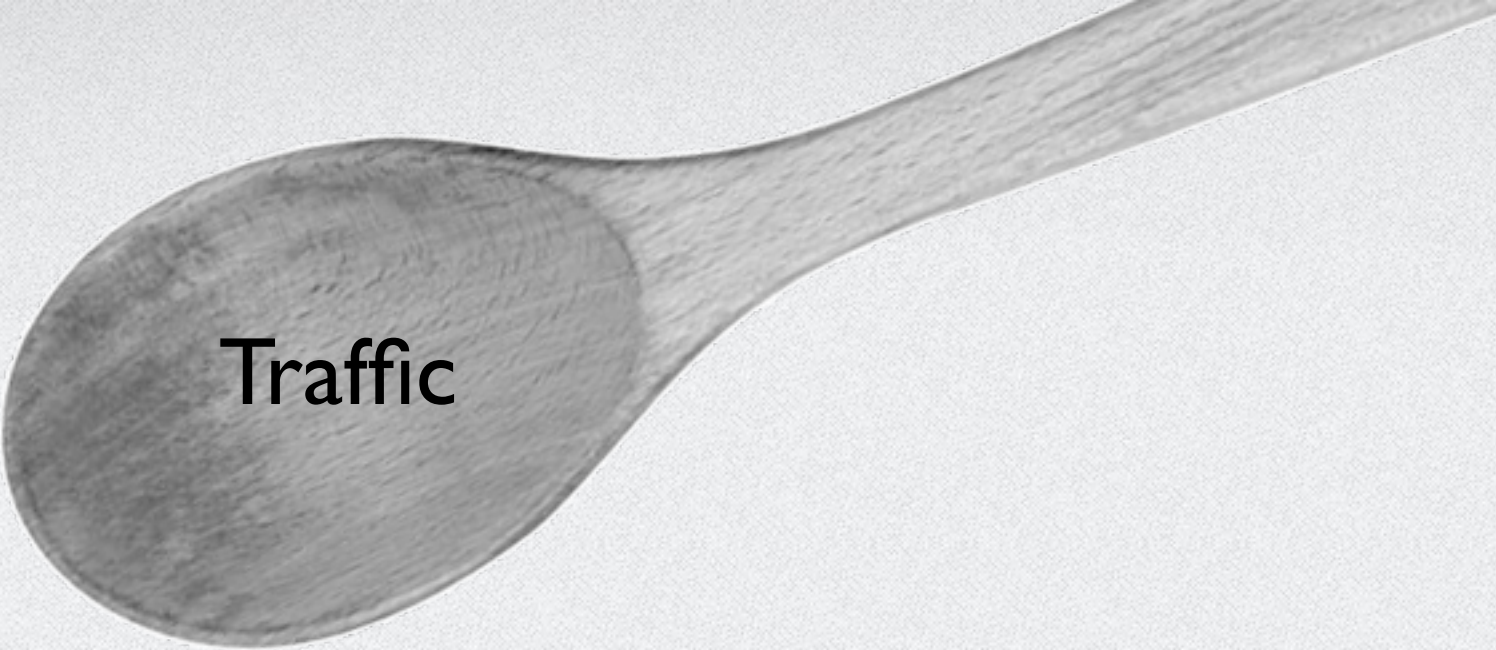
Apart from the cholesterol and sugar, there's only one bad thing about pie. Having to bake one. The closest most of you have probably come to doing so is pinning a recipe on Pinterest. That's also the closest most of you have probably come to developing a website.

Reality #1

It's Hard

A website consists of a lot more than design, content and code. There's a long grocery list of additional ingredients that go into the mixing bowl, even if you leave out the gluten. So next time you bite into a tasty website you stumble across on the web, take a moment to think about what went into it.

Reality #1
It's Hard



Traffic



Client Services



Strategy



User Experience



Content Strategy



Writing



Hosting



SEO



Design



CMS



Back End Development



Front End Development



Project Management



Reality #1

It's Hard

The digital process is easier to swallow when your expectations are realistic. Generally speaking, more features = more ingredients = more time = more money. And by features, we don't just mean the heavy duty stuff, like databases and content management systems. Even a measly little button can create heartburn.

Reality #1

It's Hard

So you say you want to add a new button? Maybe you should think about it.

Think about the the experience	Think about the the design	Think about the the writing	Think about the the programming	Think about the budget, people & the timeline
Why are we adding a button? What does it do? Will in support the goals of the site? Will it distract users?	What will it look like? How can I make it look nice? Where will it go? Will it confuse users? Will it take focus off other important actions on the page? Will it have a rollover?	What will it say? Will it match the tone of the site? Will it fit on a button? Will users understand what the button does?	What will the PHP do? What will the HTML do? What will the CSS do? What will the Javascript do? How will it affect other code? What will happen on mobile? What will happen on tablets? Will it have a rollover? Will it be editable in the CMS?	How much agency time will it take? How much outside time will it take? Is it in scope? When can I schedule it? When can I create an estimate?

Myth #2

The Digital Process Is The Same As Traditional



Reality #2

The Digital Process Is Different



Reality #2

The Digital Process Is Different

When it comes digital and traditional processes, the two are like cats and dogs. There are lots more differences between them than there are similarities, and failing to adjust to those differences is like presenting a puppy with a scratching post. That's just ridiculous.

Reality #2

The Digital Process Is Different

The main difference, and this goes for all digital projects, can be boiled down to one word: More. Digital projects require more from your team.

More Communication.

More Specifics.

More Accountability.

More Planning and Management.

More Flexibility.

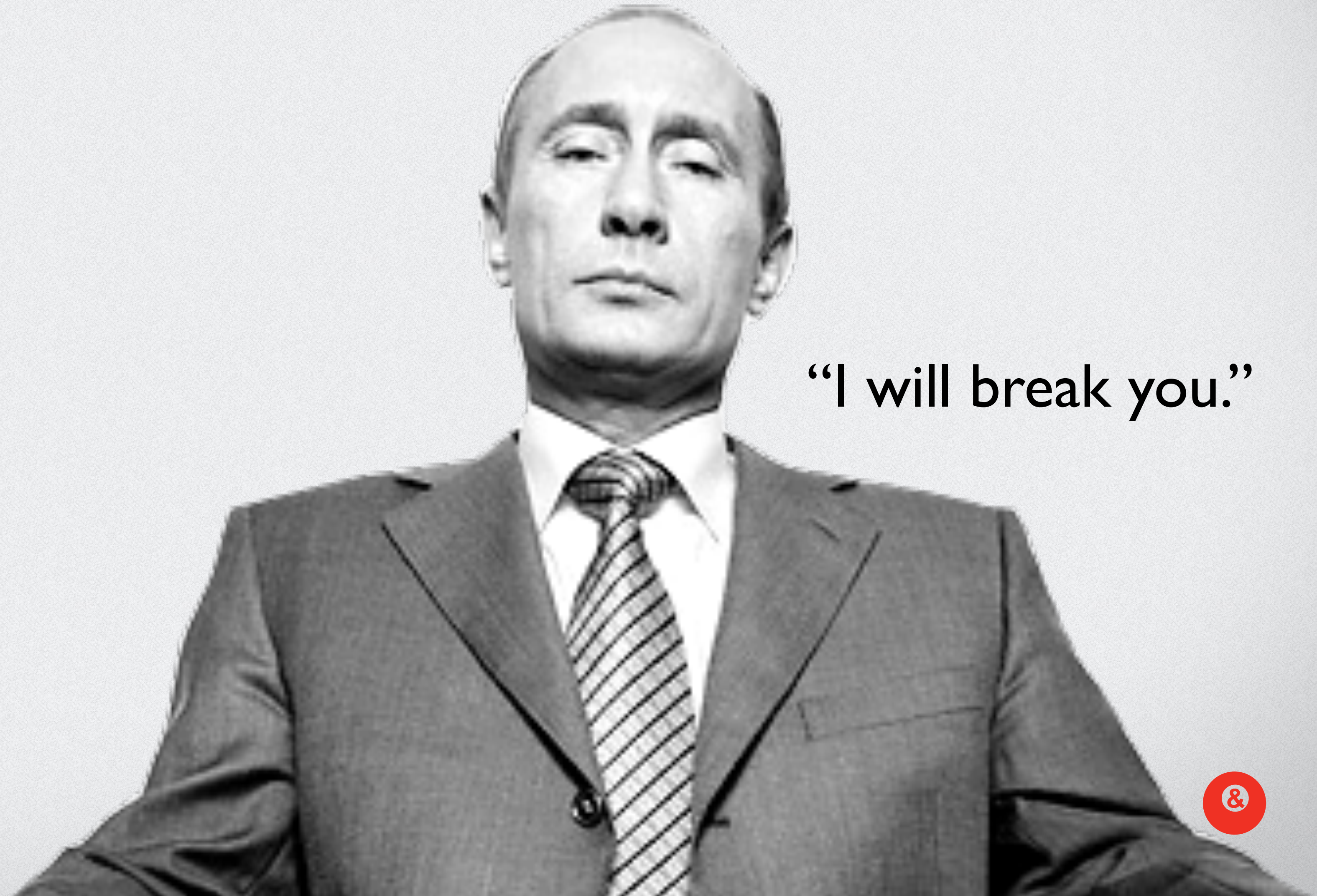
Reality #2

The Digital Process Is Different

So before you jump into your next digital endeavor, do everyone a solid and give it the consideration it deserves. Which probably means, give it more consideration than usual.

Myth #3

You Have Full Control



“I will break you.”

Reality #3

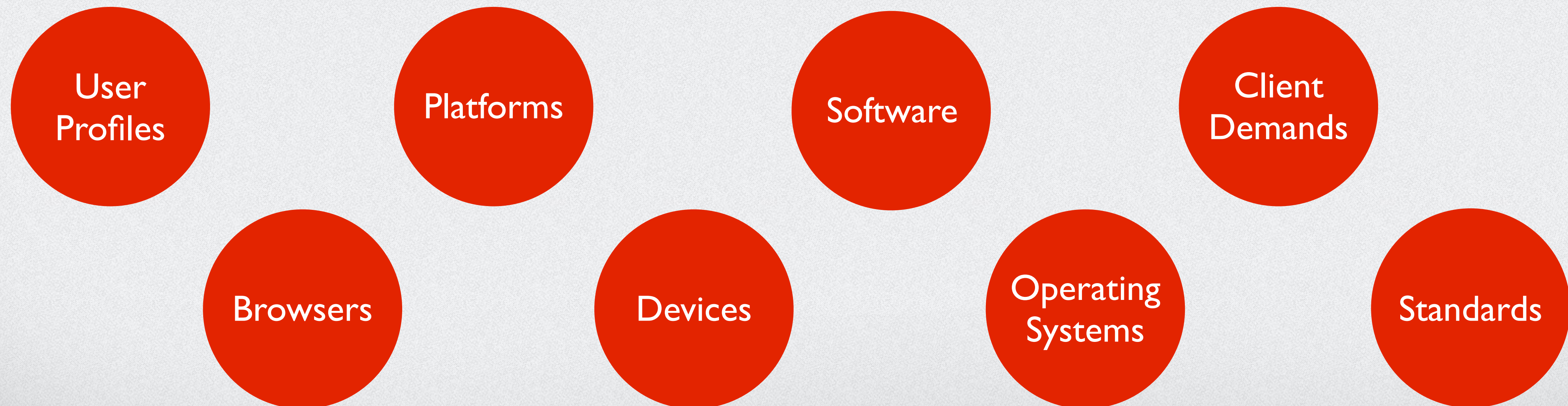
You Have Partial Control

It's not easy being a despot these days. The power has shifted. Back in the day, you could rule media with an iron fist. Nowadays, you're at the mercy of Google's newest algorithm, or Wordpress's latest update. What's a person with control issues to do? Anticipate challenges, respond nimbly to surprises and avoid conflict at all costs. That formula's worked wonders for the Swiss.

Reality #3

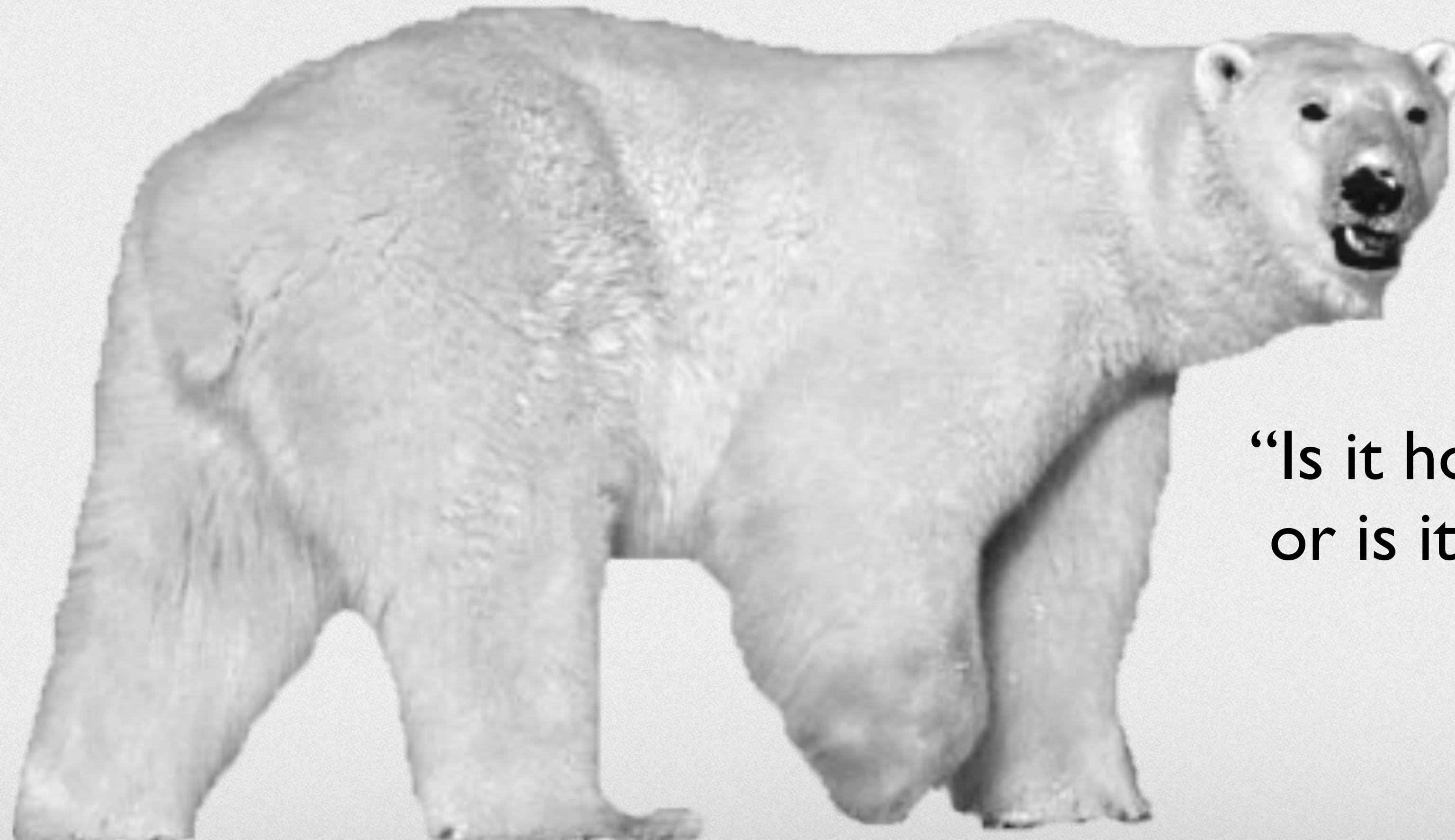
You Have Partial Control

The digital landscape changes more often than a neat freak at a mud wrestling tournament. It requires a lot of time and resources to stay on top of things.



Reality #3

You Have Partial Control



“Is it hot in here
or is it just me?”

Reality #3

You Have Partial Control

Relax. The heat's on, but you're not on the verge of extinction. In fact, you're better fit for survival than ever before. But you do need to adapt to an environment that's rapidly changing. If you want to rule the digital tundra, you'll have to anticipate challenges, then overcome them. (Try cutting down on the CO₂ emissions while you're at it.)

Myth #4

Anyone Can Do It



Reality #4

Leave It To The Experts

It doesn't take much to get any old website up. Every day, digital becomes more accessible to more people than ever before. And with studies having shown that the genetic blueprints of chimps and human are 98% identical, how long will it be before apes start making apps?

Reality #4

Leave It To The Experts

There's no shortage of tools out there to help non-experts create digital debacles.



ExactTarget®



Reality #4

Leave It To The Experts



When amateurs attack.



Reality #4

Leave It To The Experts

An elderly Spanish woman recently ruined a 19th century fresco in a misguided attempt to touch up the fading work of art. The results speak for themselves. Like a digital dabbler who fancies herself a developer, this wanna-be Picasso had just enough access and tools to create an unmitigated disaster—despite her best intentions. Let that be a lesson to us all.

Myth #5

If You Build It They Will Come



Reality #5

No One Is Waiting Around For The Launch Of Your Latest Creation

There are a bazillion websites, apps and blogs launched every month, and twice as many cat videos. Is it realistic to expect that people are anxiously awaiting your fancy new microsite?

If an app falls in the forest and no one's around to hear it, does it make a sound? Discuss.

Reality #5

No One Is Waiting Around For The Launch Of Your Latest Creation

Perhaps you've created a cool digital experience. How do you get the word out? If you answered, "Make it viral," deduct two points. If you were rubbing your hands together when you said it, deduct four.

Reality #5

No One Is Waiting Around For The Launch Of Your Latest Creation

Here's a few things you can do to make sure your latest digital concoction gets the attention it deserves:

- Have the right target in sight.

- Get your distribution channels in place.

- Carve out enough budget to get the word out.

- Measure performance so you can adjust.

Myth #6

Responsive Design Solves All Challenges



Myth #6

Responsive Design Solves All Challenges

Not long ago, responsive design swooped down from the heavens like a winged Shamwow to save us from the nightmare of designing mobile websites optimized for legacy Blackberry devices. It was the Swiss Army knife of web design that promised to deliver us from evil.

Reality #6

Responsive Design Creates New Challenges

As it turns out, responsive design presents nearly as many problems as it does solutions.

Still Evolving
Technology

Requires
A Lot More
Planning

Needs To
Adapt To Almost
Countless
Devices

Demands
More
Testing

Requires
A Lot More
Design

Initial
Investment Is
Higher

Takes
Considerably
Longer

Reality #6

Responsive Design Creates New Challenges

Responsive design is like that classmate you had a crush on when you were a teenager, only to discover that they listened to Lionel Richie. In other words, it's not perfect. Even though it practically sells itself, don't expect it to mop up all of your digital challenges. Make yourself aware of the fine print.

BE CAREFUL OUT THERE.



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