

# Benefits of Ensemble Programming for Remote Teams

David Legge and Oli Wennell





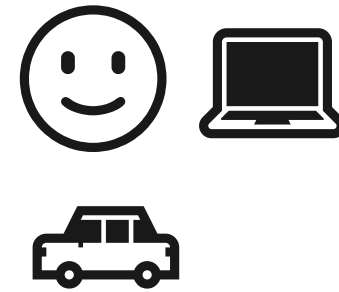
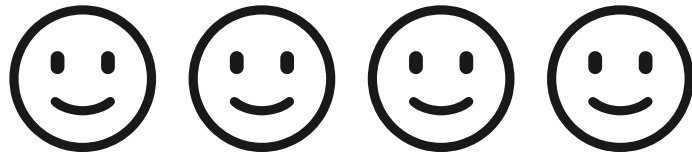
@owennell

@TheCodeCleaner

 Open to questions!

Ensemble...mob...what?





Once upon a time an Agile Cambridge...





Amplification 

Amplification  

☹️ Intense, exhausting

☹️ Uncomfortable



☹️ Intense, exhausting

☹️ Uncomfortable

💡 Pomodoro


💡 Core hours

💡 Kindness, consideration, respect

 Always mobbing  
 Flexible approach

 Coding theatre

 Changing roles

 Lack of direction

 Facilitation

2010  
the power  
(and exhaustion)  
of pairing











Fast-forward six years





2016 - Woody Zuill - 2018





2016 - Woody Zuill - 2018



2019





@Mob\_\_Mentality

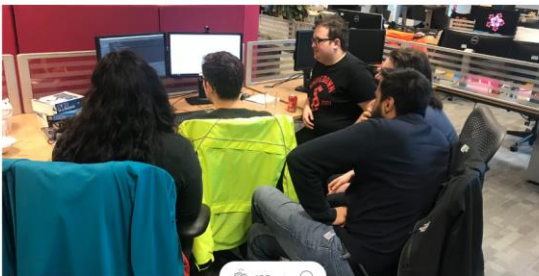

 Mark Jordan  
 Jan 30, 2019 · 4 min read · [Listen](#)

## A mob of Orcas

This year we've started a new team with some pretty crazy expectations. When we started working together at the beginning of the month, we had a clear goal but only a vague idea of what we needed to build. One of the team was an imported expert from another team working in the same area, so really everybody needed to be working with them most of the time.

Our main task this month has been to work through a couple of technical spikes. Our first spike we built from scratch to get used to some of the concepts involved. This proved we can build code for Oracle on linux platforms, neither of which we've done before in the team. That done, we've started spiking into the existing versioning codebase, trying to figure out what seams we'll need to put in to switch between different platforms.

With that context, we've been using mob programming across the team for pretty much the entire month, and it's been working really well.



The new Orca team around a single computer.


 TheCodeCleaner  
 Jun 7, 2019 · 4 min read · [Listen](#)

## ... something on mobbing by default

We're now approaching half way through the year, in a team established in January. When we started, we used mobbing as a way to learn new domains and spread knowledge around the team, but also as a way to keep a laser-like focus and (deliberately) minimise work in progress.




 TheCodeCleaner  
 Jun 26, 2019 · 5 min read · [Listen](#)

## ... something on Mob Programming with Woody Zuill



A team mobbing

On Monday, having met [Woody Zuill](#) a couple of times at conferences, I was able to arrange for him to come in and run a day's workshop on Mob Programming. In





Plot twist! 😱

23/3/2020

Full-time remote   

How did you feel? 

!!

- ☹️ Lack of coordination
- ☹️ Knowledge silos
- ☹️ Isolation
- ☹️ Incoherent team
- ☹️ Individual ownership

Fast-forward one year 

Accelerated onboarding  

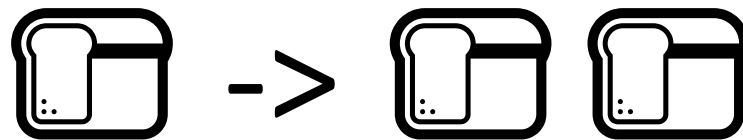


- 🧠 "Just in time" explanations
- 🧠 Learn what matters most
- 🧠 Part of the team

# Forging a team whilst remote

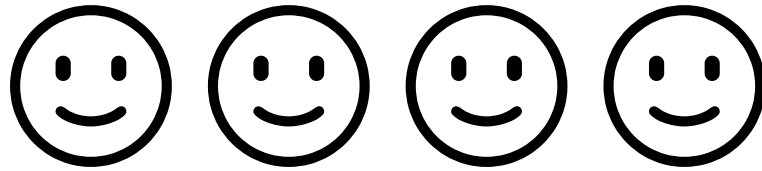
Every  
change in  
membership  
of a team  
is a new Team

# 2021: Grow team to split



# The Splitters








Mob on main task 

- ✓ Core hours, with law of two feet
- ✓ Limited WIP
- ✓ Signal intent (with emojis 🥕 )



- 👍 Keeping focus
- 👍 Bonding
- 👍 Reduced isolation

-  Traffic lights
-  Daily retro
-  Gaming

*"The object isn't to make art, but be in that wonderful state that makes art inevitable"*

- Robert Henri
- via Woody Zuill

Your experiences 

Is remote easier?... 🤔

mostly...

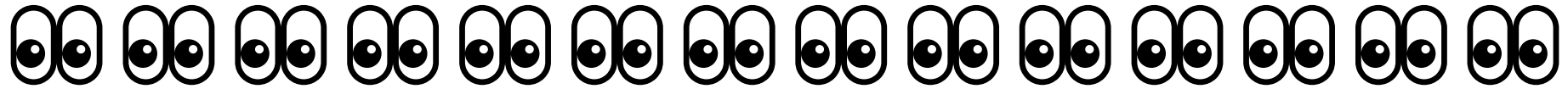
but...

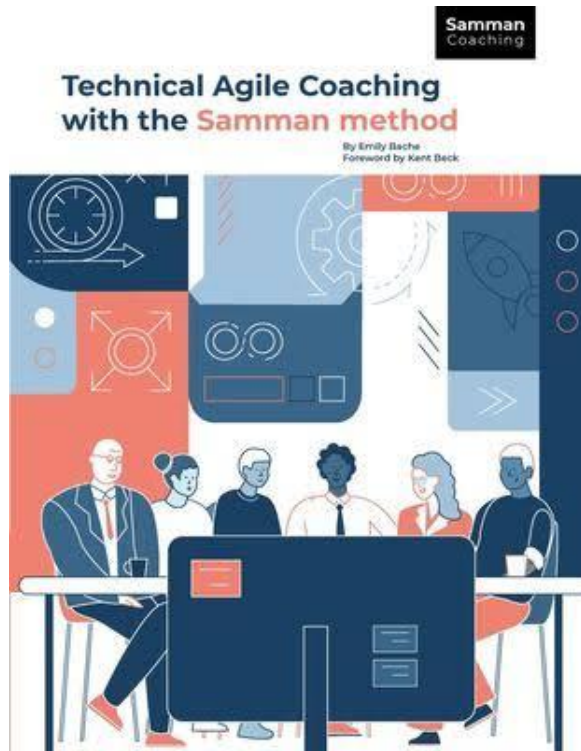
it depends...



- 💡 Needs Psychological safety
- 👎 Harder to switch driver
- 👎 Internet bandwidth
- 👎 "Zoom fatigue"

!! The unbearable loneliness of driving





1 Intention  
2 Location  
3 Details

When is a team 🙄 😏 😱 😞 ...

...not a Team 😊 😊 😊 😊

"The Discipline of Teams", Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith,  
Harvard Business Review, 1993

## **Not All Groups Are Teams: How to Tell the Difference**

### **Working Group**

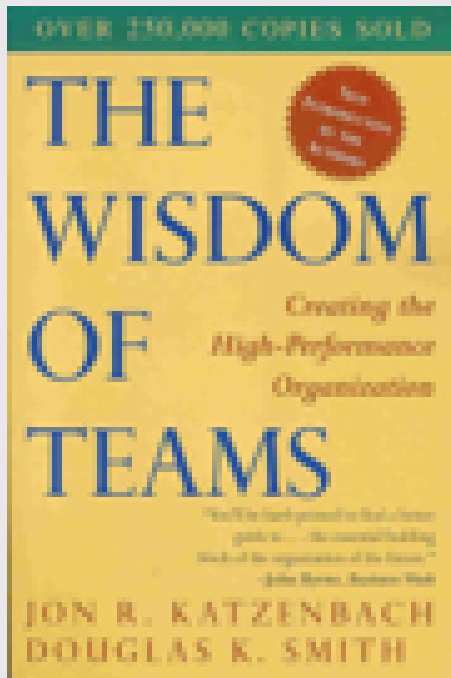
- Strong, clearly focused leader**
- Individual accountability**
- The group's purpose is the same as the broader organizational mission**
- Individual work-products**
- Runs efficient meetings**
- Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others (e.g., financial performance of the business)**
- Discusses, decides, and delegates**

### **Team**

- Shared leadership roles**
- Individual and mutual accountability**
- Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers**
- Collective work-products**
- Encourages open-ended discussion and active problem-solving meetings**
- Measures performance directly by assessing collective work-products**
- Discusses, decides, and does real work together**

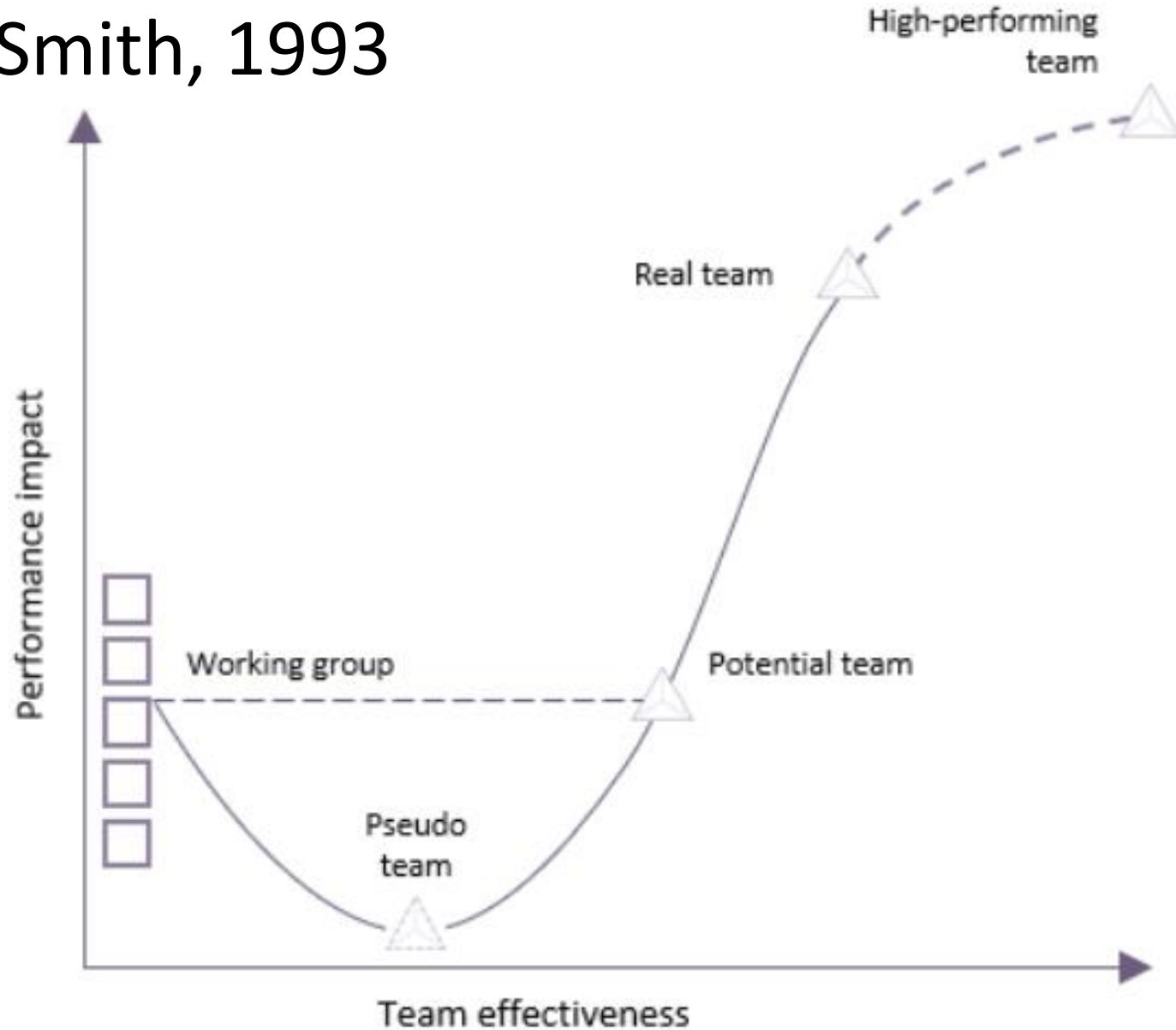
<https://hbr.org/1993/03/the-discipline-of-teams-2>

# "The Wisdom of Teams", Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith, 1993



“a small group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they are mutually accountable”.

# "The Wisdom of Teams", Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith, 1993





# Working Group

"This is not a team; it is a group of individuals whose outputs rely on the sum of "individual bests". They don't pursue collective outputs that require joint effort.

Members of a working group interact primarily to share information and practices that enable them to act within their own sphere of responsibility."

# Real Team

It is the team where a small number of people with complementary skills are equally committed and hold themselves mutually accountable for a common purpose, goals and working approach.

The End? ✨

- 🗨️ Shared machine?
- 🗨️ Single navigator?
- 🗨️ Video on? Or Avatar?
- 🗨️ Remote-hybrid?

- #mobprogramming on Twitter
- [leanpub.com/mobprogramming](https://leanpub.com/mobprogramming)
- [remotemobprogramming.org](https://remotemobprogramming.org)
- [@Mob](#) [Mentality](#) podcast
- [Katzenback and Smith model](#)

We're Hiring!



Thank you!