

The Software Teaches Toolkit

Help your users understand, recover and finish. Keep Gerald off the menu.

Start with one feature, not the whole product.

Pick a form, dashboard, approval, notification or API-driven workflow. Walk through a difficult path as a person who does not already know your system.

- Use the SURVIVE checklist to locate the uncertainty.
- Compare the before-and-after examples with your own interface.
- Rewrite one message so it explains the situation and a useful next step.
- Choose the communication level using the notification purpose matrix.
- Map the workflow, including who acts next and what happens when an action fails.
- Record one improvement and verify it through the difficult path again.

The teaching lens

- What does the user know at this point?
- What does the system expect from them?
- What could they misunderstand?
- What feedback would help them recover?
- What should they be able to do next?
- Is the product teaching one clear version of the rules?

If failure is possible, recovery is part of the feature.

The zombie incident examples are fictional teaching scenarios. Adapt the wording and next actions to what your own system actually supports.