

A dark, blue-tinted photograph of an office interior with large windows. The windows look out onto a city skyline, featuring a prominent church spire. The office desks and chairs are visible in the foreground, mostly in shadow.

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Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes!

Simon Gunton - Technical Lead Business Operations

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Hi I'm Simon Gunton you might remember me from...



A dimly lit office environment with large windows. In the foreground, a whiteboard is filled with handwritten diagrams, flowcharts, and mathematical equations. In the background, several people are seated at desks with computers, working. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

Isn't it just a game?

A modern office lounge with a green wall, ping pong table, and foosball table. The room has large windows, wooden ceilings, and modern lighting. People are sitting on a bench and playing ping pong. A foosball table is in the foreground.

Well yes....



But there is so much more to it
Communication is key!

Don't BizOps spend all day talking anyway?

Yes, yes we do.

#businessoperations ☆

282 | 4 | Hours of operation 0800-1700 On Call

opt 1 ! use @bot to highlight us ! Who is on call?

Details

Switching gcp cluster to AWS, zero-downtime move. Will be executing this within next half hour

Today



2



5 replies Last reply today at 14:15

10:50 **Kyle** 🏠 Web release complete, will monitor for 30 minutes before turning on feature flags



1

11:16 **Mark** @bot is there space this afternoon for a CRBMS release?

11:17 **Naeem** yes, what time?

11:39 **Mark** 2:30 as a placeholder? There is still some uncertainty on whether we will be ready

11:40 **Naeem** ok, ill put in a placeholder, please keep us updated

11:41 **Mark** will do



1

13:12 **Danny Corbett** hey can we do an out of traffic SE canary this afternoon?

13:13 **Naeem** yeah go ahead

14:20 **Mark** Hello, we are not going ahead with the CRBMS release this afternoon but should be ready to go tomorrow

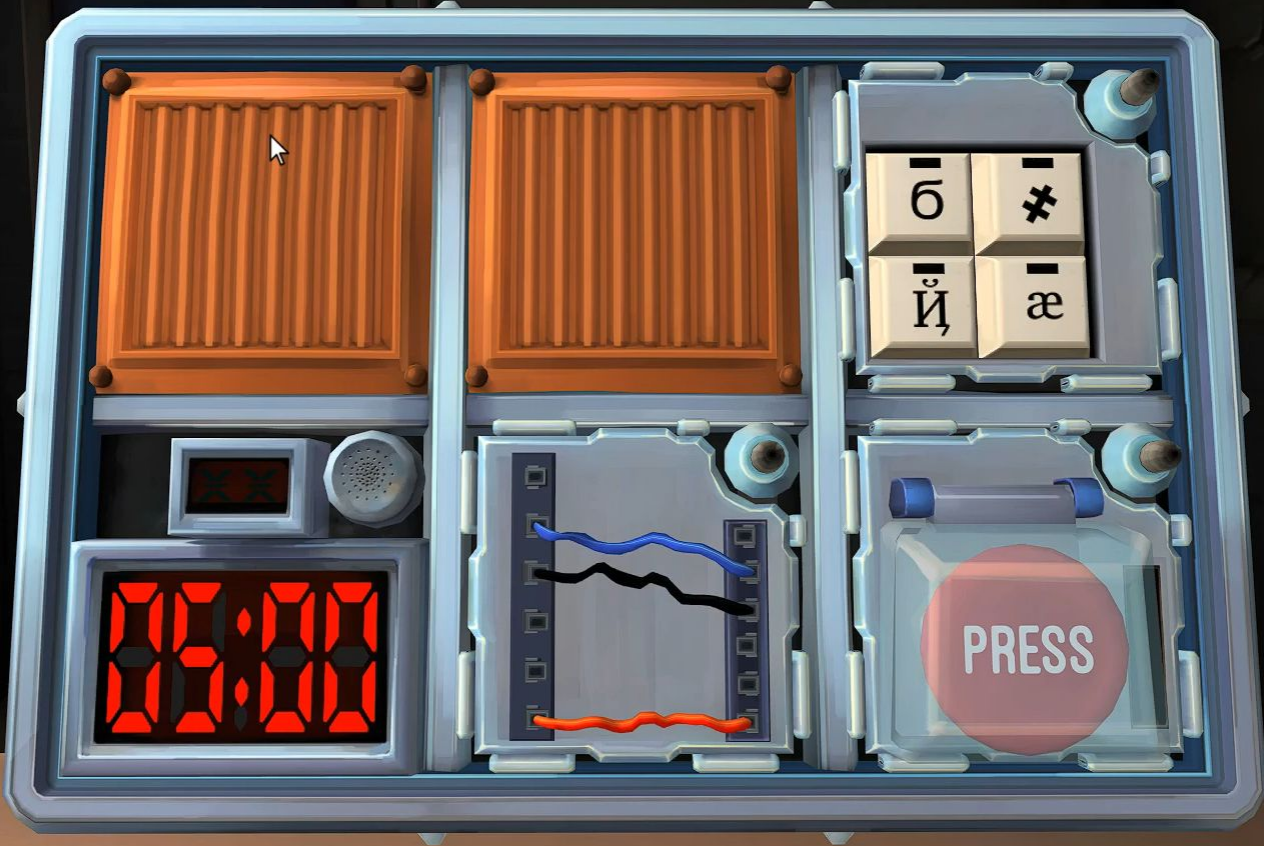


1

14:57 **Dave** 🏠 I also have a release for CRBMS which is ready to go in the morning, is it something you would want to merge into one or release separately? Our release ticket is

This screen is for your eyes only.

You are not allowed to look at
the Bomb Defusal Manual.



Looks simple enough?

- 3 Modules
 - 3 Wires
 - 4 Greek Buttons
 - A push button
- 5-minute timer
- 3 strikes

Welcome to the dangerous and challenging world of bomb defusing.

Study this manual carefully; you are the expert. In these pages you will find everything you need to know to defuse even the most insidious of bombs.

And remember — One small oversight and it could all be over!

Sounds like a live incident?

Yes!

The bomb manual is your run book

The bomb is your live incident

The modules are your broken services that need restoring

The strikes represent making wrong decisions

The timer is counting down until the business completely stop trading

Successfully Defused?

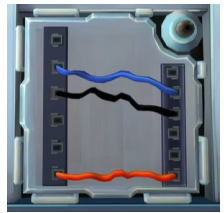


g1fb1n



Oh, not good!

What went wrong?



- I spent 44 seconds describing everything on the bomb
 - What the 3 modules are, the serial number, the ports on the bomb and the other indicators
- With 4:16 on the clock we tackled simple wires first
 - Described the order of the coloured wires and answered questions confirming what I had
 - Lee took charge of this and gained consensus that he had made the right choice
 - Success but it took us 54 seconds to disarm this module
- Now with 3:15 left on the clock we go for greek symbols
 - I had to get creative with my descriptions as I didn't know the names (or if the team would even know if I did) so i called them;
 - Odd shaped 6
 - Hashtag with a line missing
 - N with a mini U on top
 - An A and an E conjoined
 - The team understood these quite well
 - Time was spent working out in the manual the order they needed to pressed



What went wrong - Part Deux

- With less than a minute and a half on the clock we still hadn't disarmed the module
 - Everyone had the answer
 - Everyone was then trying to tell me everything at once and I got overloaded
 - Asking for the buttons in turn meant I could process the information
- Now left with 1 minute and 6 remaining success was within reach we tackled the button, simple right?
 - After describing Lee took on the challenge and starts working through the statements
 - I now have 30s left and the tension music builds in my headphones
 - It's now apparent the button is not simple as there is two stages to this module
 - With under 10 seconds left the pressure got to me and start calling yellow blue
- The bomb explodes





“*****!”

Lee - Manager

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LEADERBOARD (FRIENDS ONLY)

| RANK | PLAYER | TIME REMAINING |
|---------|--------------|-------------------|
| TOP 17% | MIZERY | 3:33.93 |
| TOP 53% | CESSLE | 2:34.53 |
| TOP 83% | MRWHITWOLF | 1:25.69 |
| TOP 85% | ULTRAE VIRES | 1:17.39 |

VIEW ALL

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION: Exercise Security Policy S-8

DO NOT DISCLOSE

1. Identifier

The First Bomb

2. Bomb Configuration

5:00 | 3 Modules | 3 Strikes

3. Result

EXPLODED

Time Remaining:

0.00s

Cause of Explosion:

Time Ran Out

BACK

RETRY

OFFICIAL DOCUMENT
Official government document for internal use only.
Issued by Directorate C-03 on the 24th day of January, 2014.

A dimly lit, modern interior space, possibly a lounge or office. The room features a brick wall, a large potted plant, and a wooden table where two people are seated. The text "We learnt a lot" and "We repeated" is overlaid in white. The background includes a brick wall, a large potted plant, and a wooden table where two people are seated. The text "We learnt a lot" and "We repeated" is overlaid in white.

We learnt a lot
We repeated

Takeaways.

- Lee stepped up instantly as the lead (and got told to take a back seat in the subsequent exercises)
- Taking notes helps (serial number, number of batteries, what ports the bomb has etc)
- Parallelism is key (be ready with your section when called upon, use information captured early to remove unneeded options)
- As we repeated bombs we learnt our strengths and played to them (we did 6 modules faster than 3 by the end)
- Gaining consensus eats valuable time, ask does anyone disagree with a decision is much faster
- Ask concise questions
- Avoid rambling
- Multiple people speaking makes it near impossible

Team Feedback.

"Initially, I was a little apprehensive about the prospect of using a game like this remotely, but decided to remain open minded given the circumstances. I'm glad I did, because it was a really useful exercise. I liked the comparison of the bomb being a live issue and the manual being a runbook. It was interesting to see people initial approach, it helped us learn a little about ourselves and each other in a general sense. After some exploded bombs I enjoyed shifting strategies and eventually defusing a bomb successfully. I'm not committed to any one strategy as the best, more that communicating better and having the benefit of experience is important to success. Thanks Simon, great idea."

Lee - Master of Leadership

"Great team building exercise. Really interesting to see how people naturally took certain roles and how certain skill sets stood out for different team members. There is some work to be done on effective communication, working remotely makes this challenging. Looking forward to similar activities and curious to see how this would play in the office environment."

Mat - Simple Wires Master

"So reflecting on yesterday's 2 approaches discussed 1) play strengths 2) rotation system : playing strengths could give results quicker BUT rotation has its own pros longer term. In which when each member has gone through different processes a number of times you have a team that can handle any situation no matter who's on or off. Always playing strengths could mean some members never develop knowledge in some areas and could be a problem if they have to face situations they never played."

Giambattista - Maze Master

"I think for me was the fact that we did play to our strengths - working as a team - in regards my strengthen in letters it was more the fact the first letter simon always called out ironically was single on the page - some others where dupes so allowed me to focus on one column than more. Found some of the maze harder to understand when described which possibly put me off those areas Agree with Giamba that playing to our strengths leaves us open to failure in some areas of the team and perhaps ended up being a partial team win rather than a full team win."

Huw - Greek Letters Master

The thing I learnt from yesterday exercise is by playing to our strength is a smarter and safer option, which in any task would give a good result. what went well was once we broke the tasks between the team and worked as a team, we were more successful.

Naeem - Notes Master

A glowing lightbulb hangs vertically in the center of the frame. The background is dark blue with out-of-focus bokeh lights in shades of yellow, green, and blue. The word "Questions?" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the lightbulb.

Questions?