

Matthew's Personal Operating Manual

Introduction:

Software engineer and stroke researcher, with a strong signal processing/math/stats/machine learning background; have worked closely with a lot of biological researchers through my career, mostly human and plant biology. On the 2nd of October 2022 I had a severe haemorrhagic stroke, and have since recovered well, but:

- While I can think clearly enough, but this is not always reflected when I talk—I sometimes stumble over long words and sentences, but the ideas are there, I just can't express them verbally as well as before. Although I am a bit slower at touch typing, and make more frequent typos, I prefer written communication to get my ideas across.
- My main issue is post-stroke fatigue, which means I get mentally tired a bit easier than before, and when I do, I get worse at speaking and typing.

I was, just prior to my stroke, working as a software engineer for a company, who talked the talk but didn't walk the walk when it came to supporting a healthy work life balance and that was one of the factors leading up to my stroke, so I have strong feelings about the team maintaining a healthy work life balance; you can't get any work done if you end up in hospital! And well-rested teams make for more productive engineering and general decision making.

A constant focus and theme of my work through my career has been thinking about how technology can best serve people, and not have people serve technology, and trying to always write code / work on projects with that in mind. Since my stroke, and given my background in academia, I have turned my life's work to the investigation of technology for stroke rehabilitation.

Core Hours:

Monday–Thursday, 8:30am-4:30pm.

Meetings only in the mornings, and a meeting break every hour, please don't think I am being rude if I step out for a break at any time, I need to closely manage my fatigue. Casual chats in the afternoons are fine. I listen to music when I need to focus, so when the AirPods are in is a good sign that I am busy, otherwise feel free to chat to me! Despite my verbal language difficulties at times, I love a good in-person chat.

I sometimes have work through my own company for existing clients, have various commitments to stroke research, and do stroke lived experience volunteering on the first and third Thursday morning of the month.

Communication Preferences:

Email for longer comms, in person for quick response. Text message or phone only if urgent, like a critical server that has fallen over—though I try as an engineer to design and build robust fault tolerant systems and work to achievable deadlines.

Feedback and Interaction Style:

Open and honesty are key. Please tell me if you think I'm wrong on either a technical matter or personal issue and we can sort it out; I'd rather have the discussion than letting things bubble under the surface.

Work-Life Balance:

I have hard boundaries around work hours, and school holidays are the only time I get to spend with my kids (since they live interstate) so I will not be working at all during those. I believe strongly in respect the boundaries of others — I value that you have lives outside of work, and take your time

with getting back to me, I not only respect your time but appreciate a well thought through response as I believe that makes for better engineering.

Professional Development:

I am keen to learn, especially about new technology, and learn best by playing / doing / reading examples.

Additional Preferences:

Nothing is so urgent that it can't wait until we are all able to come at it well-rested and work effectively and efficiently on it. I am driven and keen to work on things that make a difference to the lives of others, and can work to deadlines, but will push back strongly on anything that I think is too tight a deadline and will not expect work from you / a response outside of core hours nor should you expect work from me outside of my core hours.

Closing Statement:

Happy teams are effective teams.