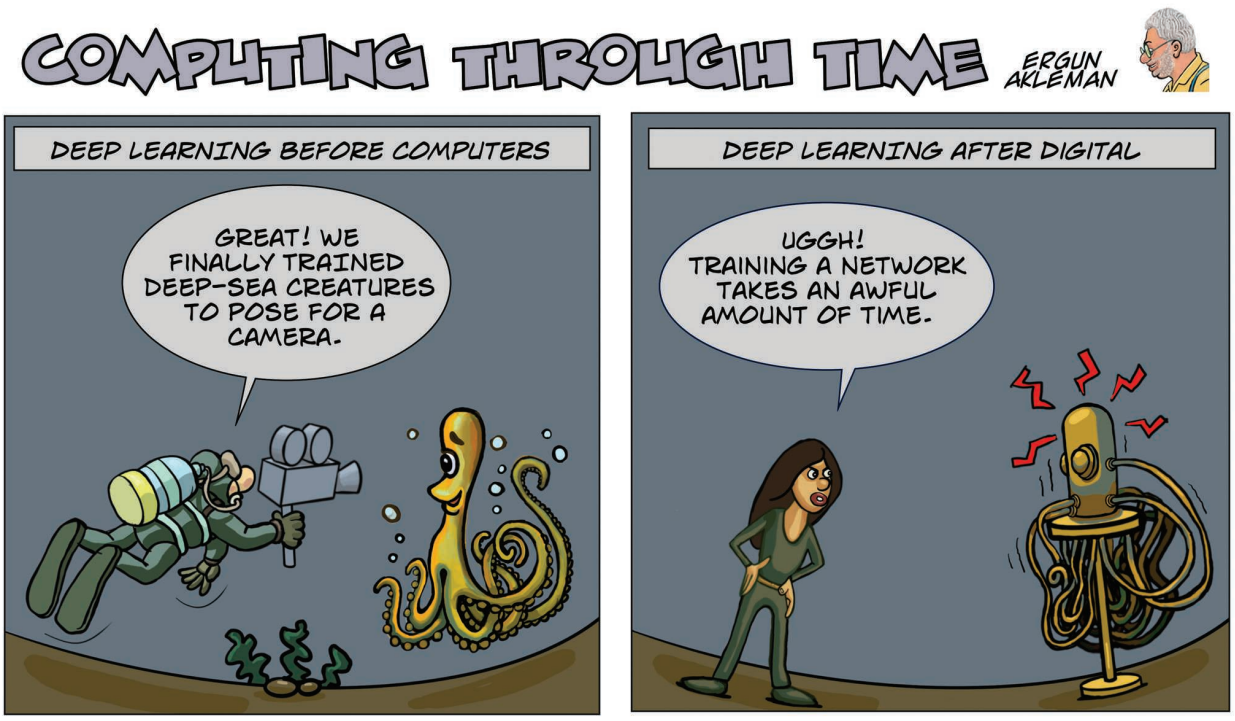

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three main steps: query feature selection, formulation of possibly similar shapes, and formulation of the final response set." (p. 61) "The user can read a shape from a file or manually sketch the query shape with the mouse. Once a query shape has been read, the system automatically selects the best query feature via selection criteria favoring features that are more robust with respect to distortion and noise. The user can select another feature by pressing the appropriate button." *[Editor's note: The described system requires, based on a library of shapes, the selection of features of an object to be entered into the library that are deemed to be relevant for possible queries. Queries, on the other hand, need a lot of human activity to select features of importance. Those are then used to retrieve relevant objects.]*

End-User Programming; Capers Jones (p. 68) "The end-user programming population seems to be growing at more than 10 percent per year worldwide, but the growth rate for software professionals is now down to a single digit in industrialized countries such as the US, Japan, and Western Europe. ... End-user software development would not occur without advantages, and the following beneficial results have been noted. ... Many useful business software features start as end-user prototypes. Financial end-user spreadsheet applications are common and often useful." (p. 69) "Because typical end-user applications lack any kind of quality assurance or formal testing, their quality is often marginal (or even worse). ... Maintenance of end-user software is often a nightmare, even for the original developer." *[Editor' note: This interesting article investigates end-user programmers but defines them in the environment of corporations. It mostly ignores programmers who produce software not directly related to their jobs or even on their own computers. In 1995, however, the now ever-present apps started to play a role, and as it turns out, many of the described problems (for example, quality, maintenance, and liability) also play a very important role in this environment.]*

Office of Technology Assessment to Be Abolished; Fred W. Weingarten (p. 82) "Who needs technology assessment? Apparently not the US Congress, since it has just closed down its Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), effective October 1, 1995, after only 20 years of existence. ... In so doing, it forged a pragmatic compromise between the rigor and depth of academic policy research and the needs of its political clients for quick, readily understandable answers. In the process, it invented a new analytical style, one that made numerous contributions to the public policy debate. All OTA studies were conducted in the public spotlight. Through advisory panels, workshops, contractor reports, and reviews, OTA was able to tap the most knowledgeable people in the country on any topic under study." *[Editor's note: The article, in my opinion, identifies one of the problems of the current political climate that may already have been rampant in 1995 and led to the closing of the OTA. Laws/regulations/decisions are prepared behind curtains, consequences are not analyzed openly, lobbyists are not controlled by anybody, and self-interest of all is rampant.]* C