# COMP495:
# Time Management

## Robert Dale
## Robert.Dale@mq.edu.au

# Time Management

- <u>Do</u> you manage your time?

- How do <u>you</u> manage your time?

- Do you think you manage your time <u>well</u>?

- How do you know whether you are managing your time well or not?

- What makes it hard to manage your time well?

# Three Key Elements of Time Management

1. Know where your time goes
   → Try logging your time
2. Know what you have to do and when you have to do it
   → Use a 'trusted system'
   → Externalise everything
3. Manage your commitments
   → Learn how to say no
   → Be realistic about what you can do: know how long things take

# Logging Your Time

- Come up with a set of categories

- Avoid content-free categories:
    - Strive to eliminate 'Miscellaneous'
    - 'Email' is not a category

- Aim for the smallest grain-size your tool will support

- Do regular 'error analysis' of your logs

- Revise your categories periodically

# My Categories

| 1997 | 2002 | 2007 | | |
|------|------|------|---|---|
| A Research | Macq U | CLT | DSTO | ACL Exec |
| B Research | LT Program | Dept | OpenProof | CL Editorial |
| Students | LTG | HCSNet | Thinking Head | Reviewing |
| Mgmt | Other | CMCRC | Ref Exprs | Community |
| Other | | Teaching | Asian NLP | Other |
| | | Students | Research | |

# Trusted Systems for Externalisation

- Beer mats and backs of envelopes

- Notebooks

- Day Planners/Filofaxes

- Desktop Calendar Tools

- PDAs

# David Allen's 'Getting Things Done'
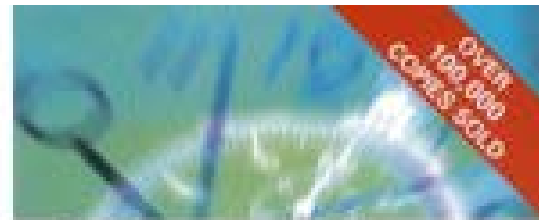
# David Allen's GTD System:
# Key Objectives

1. Capture all the things that need to get done now, later, someday, big, little, in-between

    – Externalise in a trusted system – get them <u>off</u> your mind

2. Discipline yourself to make front-end decisions about all inputs you allow into your life

    – Always have a plan for the Next Action

# The Basic Requirements for Managing Commitments

1. If it's on your mind, your mind isn't clear
   - collect all unfinished things in your trusted system
   - regularly visit and sort through the material in the system
2. Clarify exactly what your commitment is and what you have to do to make progress
3. Keep reminders of what you have to do in your trusted system

# The 'Martial Art' of Life and Work

- The goal is to have 'Mind Like Water'

- Mismanaged commitments create distraction

- Your ability to refocus, rapidly, on the right things at the right time is the central technique to managing productivity

- Use your mind to think about things, not to <u>keep</u> thinking about them

# To Do Lists

- A To Do list should not be a list of 'stuff'

- A To Do list should:
  - be organised in useful categories
  - identify the next action for each task or project

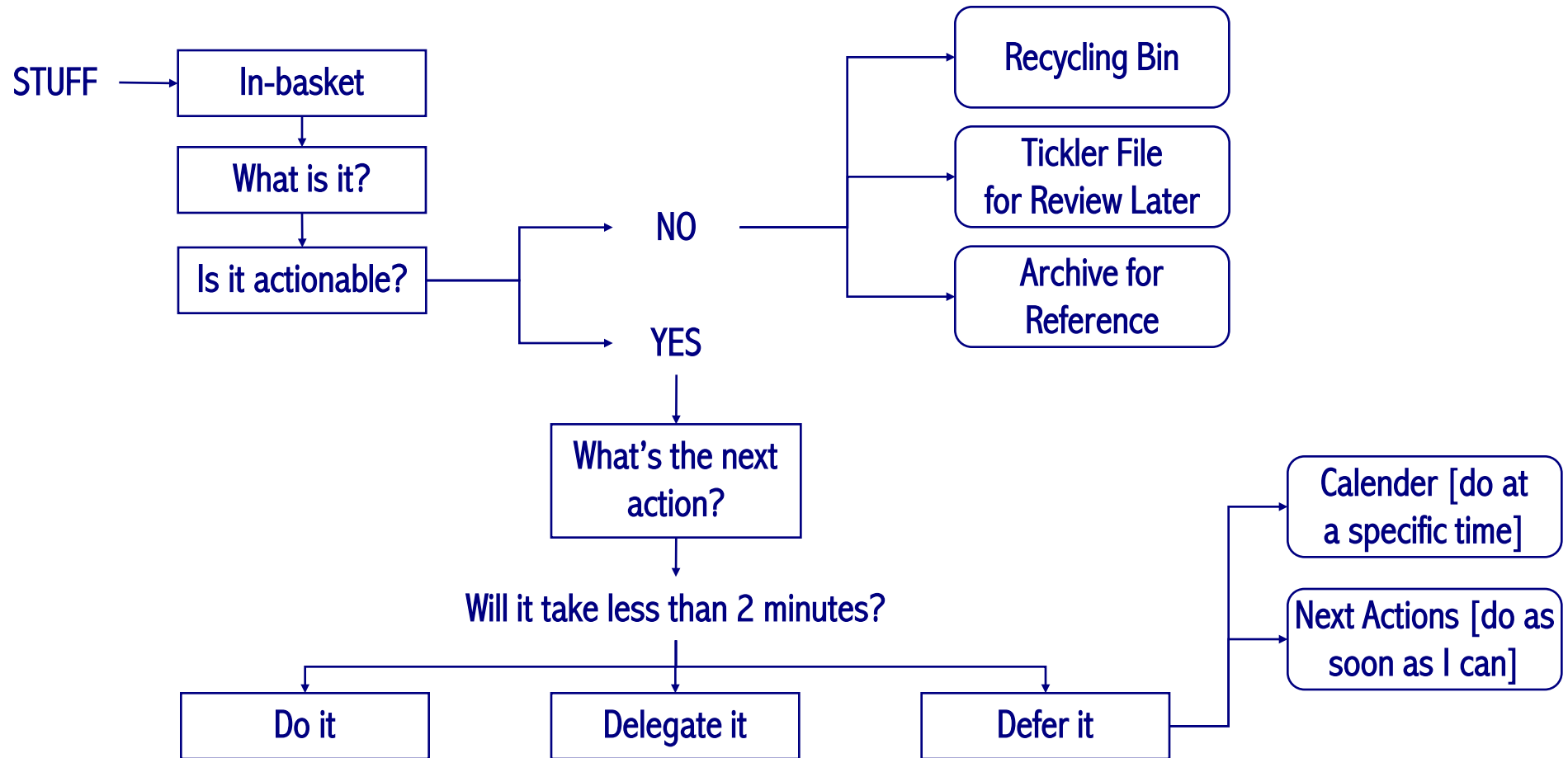- A To Do list is a list of <u>actions</u>

# Getting Control of Your Life
# Step 1:  Collect

- Collect everything that is incomplete
  - Every open loop must be in the collection system and out of your head
  - Have as few collection buckets as you can manage
  - Empty the buckets regularly

# Getting Control of Your Life
# Step 2: Process



STUFF → In-basket → What is it? → Is it actionable?

NO → Recycling Bin / Tickler File for Review Later / Archive for Reference

YES → What's the next action? → Will it take less than 2 minutes?

Do it | Delegate it | Defer it → Calender [do at a specific time] / Next Actions [do as soon as I can]

# Getting Control of Your Life
# Step 3:  Organize

- Maintain <u>a list of projects</u>

- Organize your project materials in a <u>storage system</u>

- Maintain a <u>calendar</u> for time specific actions, day specific actions, and day specific information

- Maintain <u>a list of next actions</u>

# Next Action Lists

- Organize by actionable context:
    - Things to do when near a phone
    - Things to do when near a computer
    - Things to do when on campus
    - Things to do when at home
    - Things to read
    - Things to do when at traffic lights

# Getting Control of Your Life
# Step 4:  Review

- Review your calendar daily

- Review your Next Actions lists when in the actionable contexts

- [Critical] Review all your projects and next action lists once a week

# Getting Control of Your Life
# Step 5:  Do

- How do you decide what to do now?

- Consider:
  - Context
  - Time available
  - Energy available
  - Priority

# Getting Control of Your Life

1.  Collect things that command your attention

2.  Process what they mean

3.  Organise the results

4.  Review options

5.  Do!

# Other Useful Tips

- Set aside a time every day to do some writing:  at first, measure success by time spent, not results achieved

- Organise paperwork to be dealt with in a 43-folder tickler file

- Use an outliner (eg Word's Outline mode) to organise your projects list

# The Six-Level Model for Reviewing Your Work

- The 20,000 metre view: Life

- The 15,000 metre view: Three to five year plan

- The 10,000 metre view: One to two year goals

- The 5,000 metre view: Areas of responsibility

- The 1,000 metre view: Current projects

- Runway:  Current actions

# The Bottom Line

1. Externalise everything you need to do in a trusted system

2. Always have a plan for the Next Action

# Assignments Reminder

- By next week, if you haven't already done so:
    - Send me your first draft of your three pager