

Does Visual = Nice?

Chris Poskitt

on behalf of *Team Visual = Nice*

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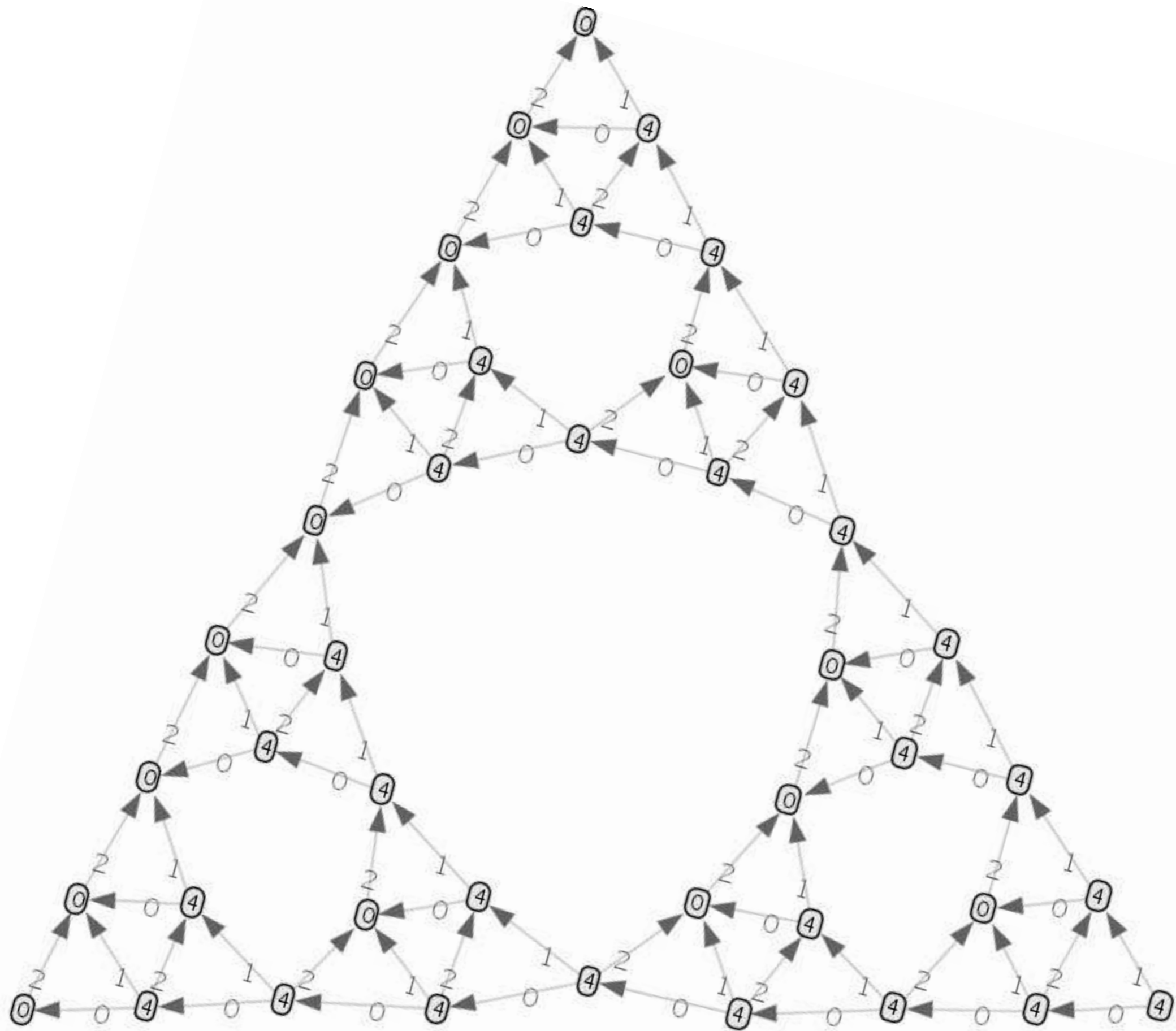
sometimes!

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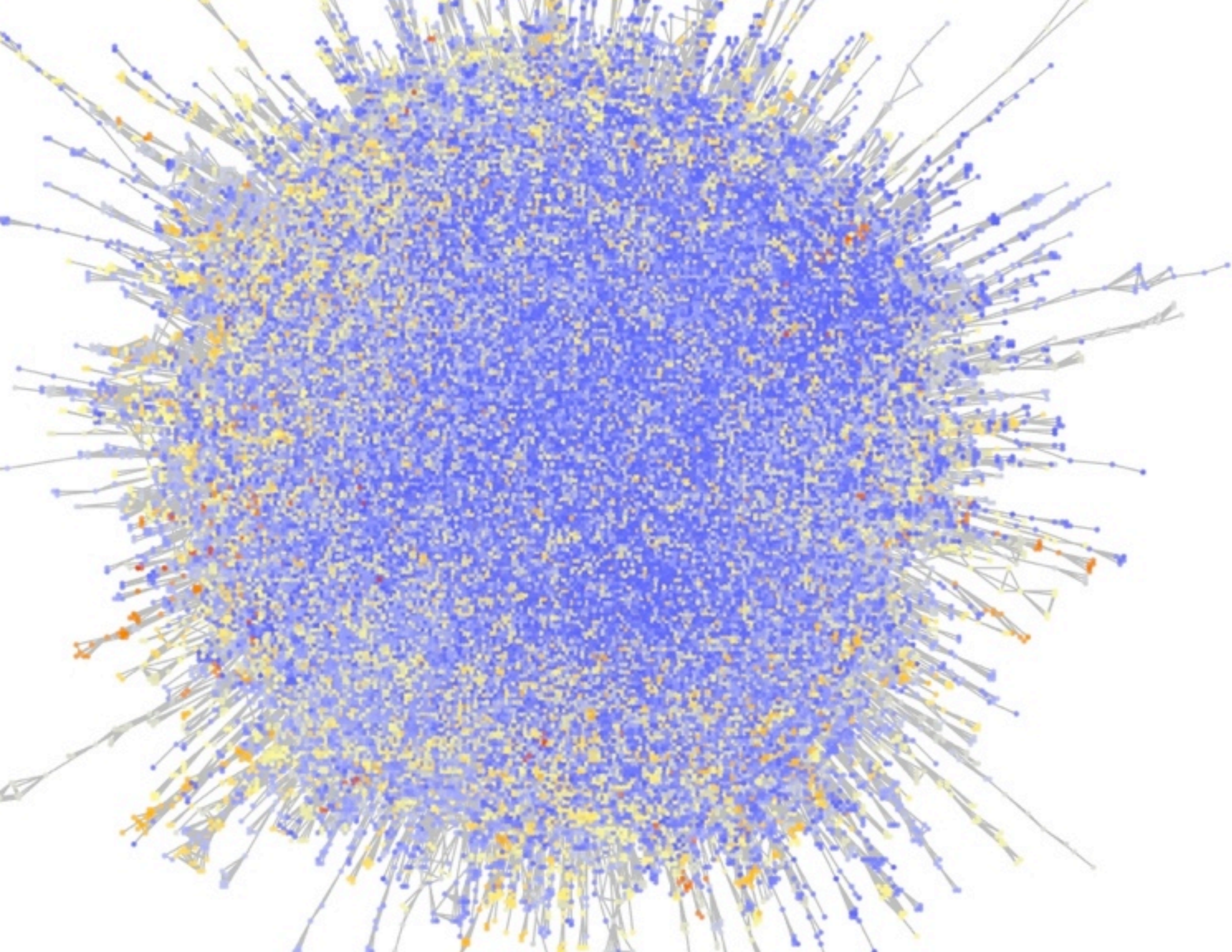
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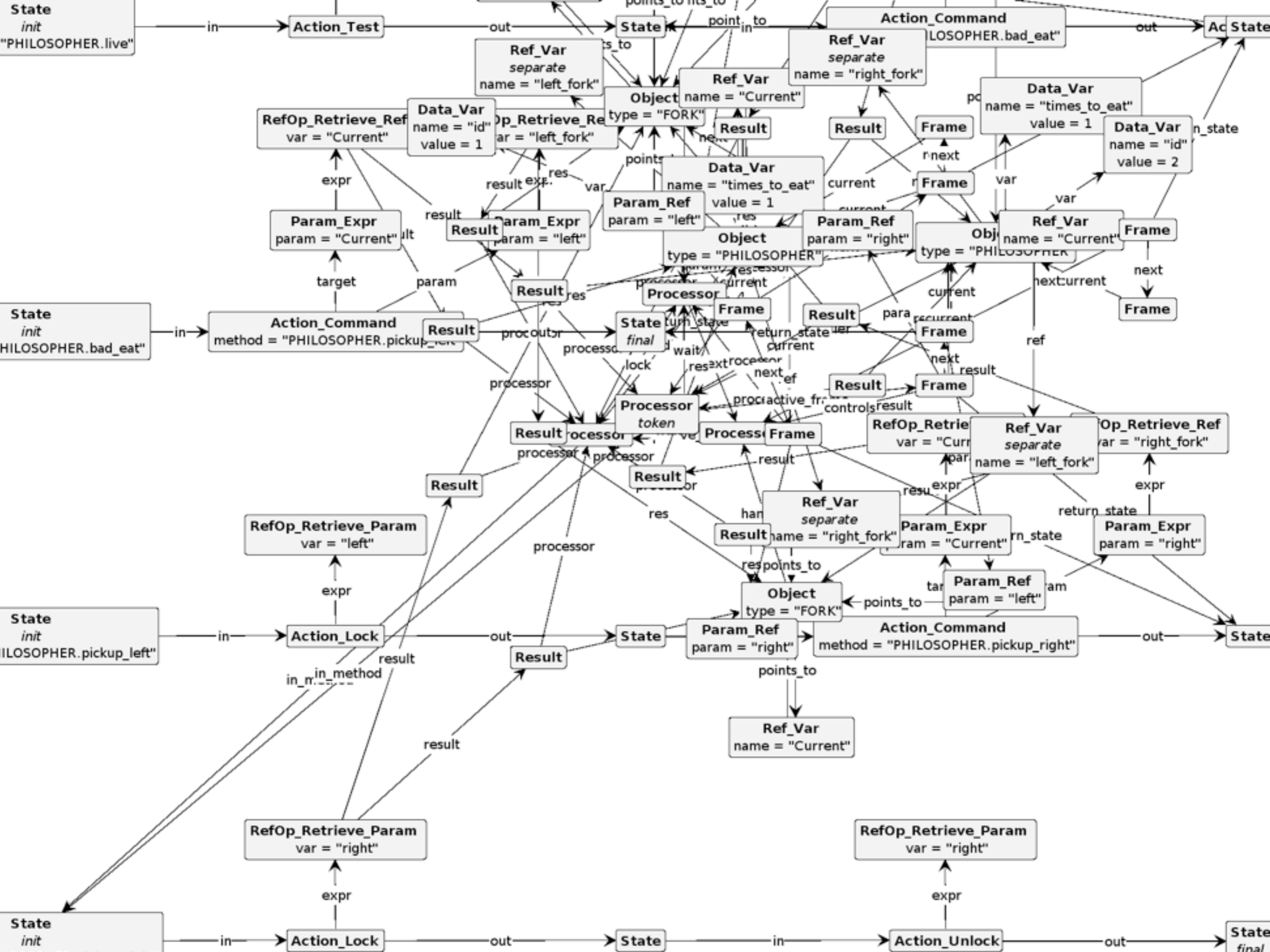
Benefits of visualisation

- modelling / formalising with a **non-expert**
- can be **formal and informal** at the same time
 - => what you would do on a whiteboard anyway!*
- visualisation for free (on certain examples)
 - => “certain” typically means “small”*
 - => ...but not always*



...and the problems!





Problems of visualisation

- can rapidly become incomprehensible
- sensitive to **layout algorithms, planarity**, and differences in **users**
- no obvious “**entry point**”... unlike text!

Some observations

- graphs are **inherently “global”**
 - => in what other domain do we interpret the whole state at once?*
- perhaps it's wrong to expect general tools to solve the visualisation problem without our help
- can we aid comprehension through **pruning** and **highlighting** strategies?

A principle?

**Developers must understand
and accommodate the
visualisation needs of users**

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Developers must understand
and accommodate the
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*just as important as getting
the rules right?*

Possible solutions and people to turn to

- adding visual dimensions to the existing graph
 - => *colour, shape, size, third dimension, ...?*
- pruning / collapsing the graph, i.e. information hiding
 - => *e.g. attribute projection techniques*
 - => *using GTS-based techniques to visualise the result of GTS-based techniques :-)*
- are we re-inventing the wheel?
 - => *can other communities help us?*
 - => *e.g. HCI, data visualisation, perceptual psychology*
 - => *let's make friends :-)*