Standards (code and otherwise)

- often talk about code standards, but many teams also use document standards, version control standards, bug reporting standards, process standards, etc

- goal is to reduce confusion, errors, omissions in coding, writing, etc by having a consistent way "things should be done"

- trade off is a reduction in flexibility, and possibly creativity, for the people involved

Creating standards

- The more detailed the standards are, the more difficult it is to create them, learn them, and ensure they are being followed
- Stricter/more detailed standards may also create greater friction with the people who have to learn/follow them
- Looking for a sweet spot – the ideal tradeoff between improved comprehension/reliability and overhead and friction possibly caused by standards
- Different people will have different opinions of where that "sweet spot" lies

Enforcing standards

- Different groups have different processes and levels of formality about enforcing standards

- May simply be self-policing, everyone try to stick to them

- May be basic peer review – get another team member to read over what you write and give you standards feedback

- May be much more formal inspection process, we'll get into formal inspections later in the term

Documenting standards

- The longer/more detailed the standards are, the more important it becomes to have them well documented
- Need good indices, search tools, cross referencing so people can find the relevant standards quickly
- Need good examples of each aspect of the standards, so people can see what does/does not conform to standards
- Need good way to introduce new team members to the standards (not just throw an 80-page document at them and say "follow this")

Example: Google's C++ style guide

- Extremely comprehensive guide

  google.github.io/styleguide/cppguide.html

- Similar style guides for variety of languages:

  google.github.io/styleguide/

- Wide ranging and detailed, but difficult to learn it all

- Teams/groups often form their own standards by picking and choosing key items from other existing guides