

# Tight as a Drum<sup>®</sup>

## *Murphy's Law immunity for software change management*

### The birth of Murphy's Law

Edward A. Murphy, Jr. was one of the engineers on the rocket-sled experiments that were done by the US Air Force in 1949 to test human acceleration tolerances. One experiment involved a set of 16 accelerometers mounted to different parts of the subject's body. There were two ways each sensor could be glued to its mount, and somebody methodically installed all 16 the wrong way around. Murphy then made the original form of his pronouncement, which the test subject (Major John Paul Stapp) quoted at a news conference a few days later:

"If there are two or more ways to do something,  
and one of those ways can result in a catastrophe,  
then someone will do it."

Murphy's Law is a useful defensive design principle. For example, if it matters which way a two-pin plug is inserted into a receptacle, then it's far better to give the plug an asymmetrical design than to rely on a "▲THIS WAY UP▲" label adhered to the plug.

Here's the form of the axiom which is typically used today: "anything that can go wrong will go wrong."

### Information technology: fertile ground for Murphy's Law

Some humorous Murphy's Law corollaries for information technology are available [here](#).

Battle-hardened CIOs testify that each software change project invents at least one fresh, non-humorous corollary. Seasoned project managers know that the number of new corollaries tends to grow geometrically with project team size.

Veteran technical managers at Unbeaten Path recall with clarity how challenging it was to manage project teams for large Y2K remediation projects. One project with +/- 4000 objects hit a snag when we couldn't quite deduce which library 16 repaired AS/SET objects originally came from. So, we had to do some of the remediation work a second time to get it perfect.

Even one-man software change projects tangle with Murphy's Law because there are so many interdependent steps: definition of user needs, conceptual design, detailed design, coding, testing, debugging, fixing, testing again, introduction to users, design refinement, more testing/debugging/fixing/testing again, user acceptance, documentation, installation, cut-over, and going live.

### The implications of Sarbanes-Oxley

SOX auditors know all about software change vulnerabilities and Murphy's Law. So, they'll be asking questions about how that process is controlled at your enterprise. The "AS#2" interpretation of SOX authored by [PCAOB](#) demands that auditors test information technology controls because other business process controls are dependent upon them.

It doesn't take much imagination to see how a poorly controlled software change process can introduce internal control problems. Consider this scenario:

*In January '06, contractors deliver a modification to your order processing system which includes new pricing functionality which is both subtle and sophisticated. Later that same year, the Customer Service Manager asks for a revision to the format of an order processing screen display.*

*A well-meaning programmer accidentally grabs a version of the order processing source code from 2005. The screen display change is executed in that out-of-date object. When the modified object is compiled, the screen display looks great but the contractors' work has been wiped out. The subtle pricing errors aren't looked for nor discovered until early 2007 when the CFO spots erosion in some gross profit margins.*

That genre of internal control issue demands attention whether or not your enterprise has compliance requirements under Sarbanes-Oxley/PCAOB, FDA 21 CFR part 11, HIPAA, GLBA, or UCCnet. (Easy-to-read executive summaries describing the alphabet soup of compliance standards are available [here](#).)

## Immunity from Murphy's Law: how to maintain control

SOX auditors will be very impressed if your enterprise presents evidence that **Tight as a Drum** software functionality has been diligently applied. **Tight as a Drum** trumps Murphy's Law. Please take a look at the additional information presented below by clicking on the red-checked squares.

### *Tight as a Drum functionality*

- Here's a presentation of Tight as a Drum functionality. The destination URL will provide overview information about the current version and planned functionality enhancements. Links will drill down into considerable detail including a version 5.0 "What's New" users' manual and a listing of very interesting product attributes.

### *Toe-to-toe competitive comparisons*

- If your enterprise is authentically interested in purchasing a software change management product, then this red-checked square **must be clicked**. You'll discover that the content in these several comparison documents constitutes an excellent "check-into-it-with-due-diligence-before-you-sign-anything" list.

### *Three Tight as a Drum customer case studies*

- Achmea Holdings** is one of the largest insurance companies in the Netherlands
- Carlson Wagonlit Travel** has grown into an enormous international 'travel management' enterprise.
- LeasePlan Corporation** provides a broad scope of fleet and vehicle management services in 26 nations.

### *The European heritage of the product*

- In the Benelux countries, **Tight as a Drum** has a remarkably consistent track record of beating all the competitive brands in head-to-head comparisons. This link jumps to a display of European customer logos ... including well-known multinationals.
- This link will provide more information about Remain B.V., the inventor of the **Tight as a Drum** suite of software products.

## Learning more about Unbeaten Path

Unbeaten Path International has a rich heritage of providing high quality software products and professional services.

- Our vision for world-class quality and precision
- Dozens of recommendation letters

It would be a privilege to answer any questions about **Tight as a Drum** software; here's our contact information:

**Toll free North America: (888) 874-8008**  
**International voice line: (262) 681-3151**  
**e-mail: [contactus@unpath.com](mailto:contactus@unpath.com)**

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