



# 50 CI Excuses and Replies!

A COLLABORATIVE COLLECTION

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by ICiPS Twitter Members

# Foreword

“This e-book is the second in our series and is put together by our ICiPS Twitter members alone who are experts in the fields of Continuous Improvement.

We all hear objections from time-to-time around the reasons why people cannot engage in CI. These 50 excuses and replies show the myriad of excuses we all hear about why they can't move forward. I hope that by printing these excuses and replies, as professionals we will all have suitable responses to familiar challenges”

**THANK YOU!**

Debbie Simpson

CEO – ICiPS

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#1 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Our priorities  
have changed"

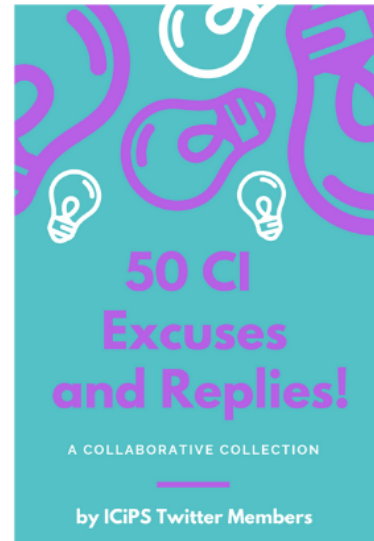


### Replies:

1. So, what's the improvement priority now?
2. Well mine haven't, so let me help you.
3. Then that's the perfect time to embed #CI into your new priorities

#2 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We have an  
urgent piece of  
work to do that  
takes priority"

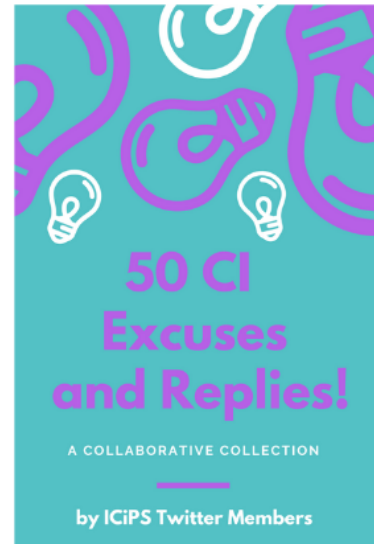


### Replies:

1. OK, let's take a look at that first then.
2. Why has it become urgent? Could your processes have saved you having to react to this? I'm here to help.

#3 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"It takes too  
long to change  
the culture, and  
we need  
savings now"

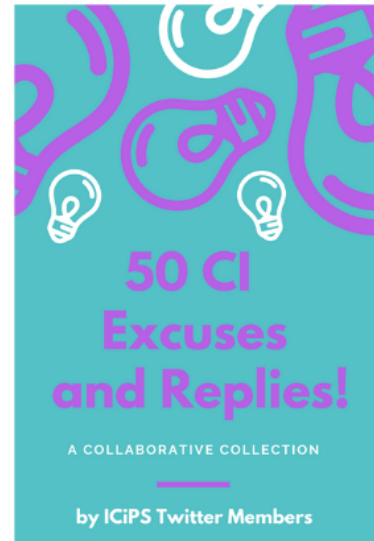


### Replies:

1. Tell them the first 30 years are the hardest.
2. They need to be the ignition of the fire that will burn slowly through the organisation. Show them the first dancer video.

#4 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We tried it  
before and it  
didn't work"

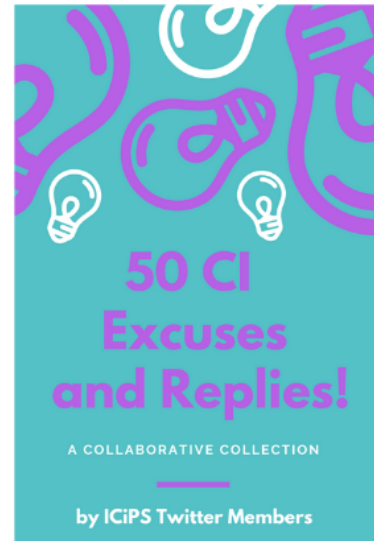


### Replies:

1. What are your issues, are there quick wins you could try? Look for early adopters - and trust that others will follow when they see things start to improve.
2. I'd ask to see their PDSA cycles.

#5 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We haven't any  
expertise in CI"

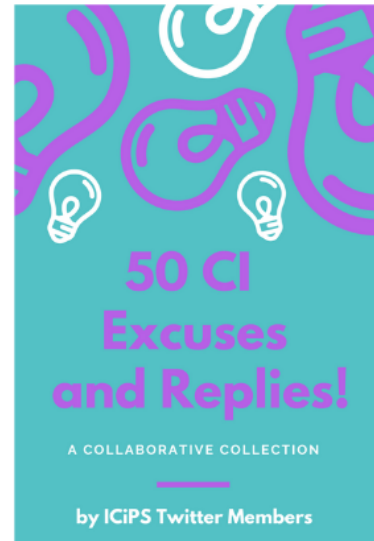


### Replies:

1. Invest in some and see the benefits.
2. That's why I'm here! How can I help?
3. Not yet! But you do have loads of experience and knowledge about what you do and therefore how to make it better.
4. I bet you know more than you think.

#6 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"I don't see it is  
necessary to  
train everyone  
when we have a  
Change Team"



### Replies:

1. The Change Team support staff. Staff see the problems and have the answers.
2. OK don't train everyone but at least have every area trained then we can start working together to improve.
3. What's that adage about give a man a fish ...? Although I have to agree you don't have to train everyone in everything, but you do need to create capability at the right time in the right people.



#7 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"No point in  
doing anything  
at this point as  
we are  
upgrading the  
IT"



### Replies:

1. IT just makes faster errors in bad processes. If we sort out the process it will work with stone tablets and chisels, pen and paper or with IT process first medium second.
2. Well why don't we get the current process to look more like it will with the upgrade and then people will be more ready for it? (Then when we start looking at the processes we might discover an even better way to do it than the upgrade!)
3. That's the tail wagging the dog – build the process first and IT solutions second.

#8 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We'd better  
wait until the  
new leader  
comes in"

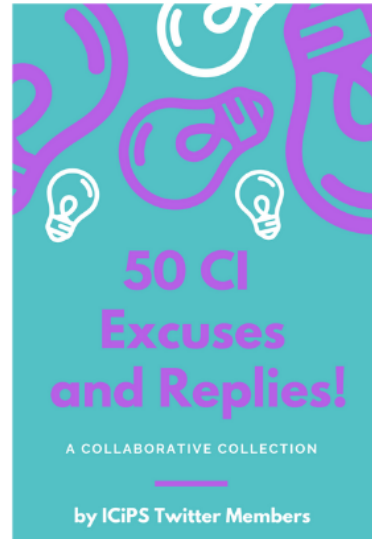


### Replies:

1. I agree. Nothing like a fresh pair of eyes to look over processes when are they in so I can meet with them straight away?
2. Why not show your initiative by getting a head start - I'm sure it would be appreciated by the new head?
3. What a fantastic opportunity to show them the work we've been doing in improving things and start to influence the way we need things to be. So, what do we need to show them first?

#9 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We may merge  
with another  
department, so  
no point"

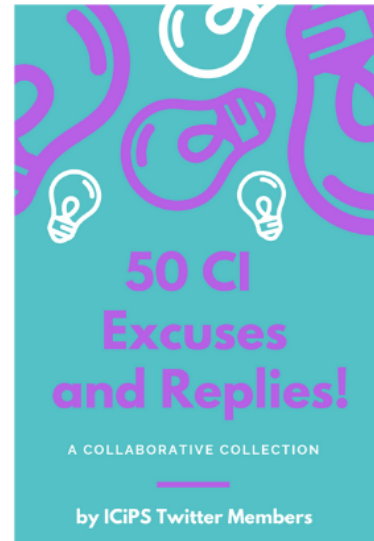


### Replies:

1. Great opportunity to share some best practice and also to cast a critical eye on how things are done.
2. So how are you going to merge your processes? Do they do everything the same way as you? Are you sure?

#10 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We know our  
processes work  
as well as they  
can, already"

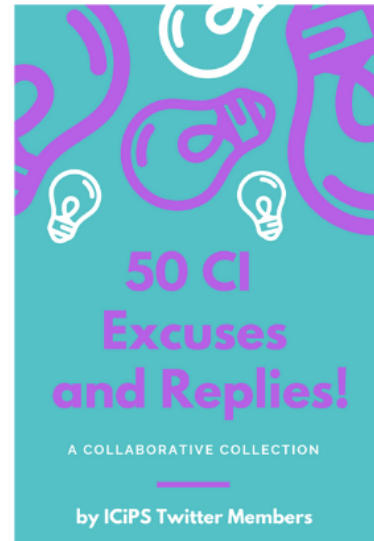


### Replies:

1. Ok, prove it!
2. Mmm, no that's definitely bullshit. It's an old one but a good one.
3. You ARE the process experts. How about we do some process mapping and challenge the norm?
4. That's fantastic. Let's document them so we can share best practice (what's the bets that when we start looking we find some improvements.

#11 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Our objective  
is to deliver  
services, and  
we need to  
concentrate our  
resources on  
that"

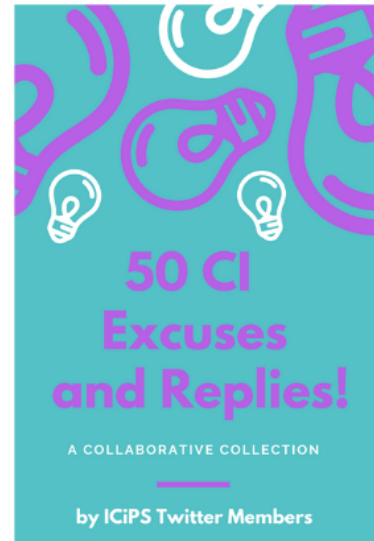


### Replies:

1. You are quite right but let's make sure they are focusing on the right services.
2. So, let me help you ensure you use your resources (which are probably limited) to address the services that need them. Then we can see what you have left over to expand further.

#12 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We don't get  
complaints so  
there isn't  
anything to  
improve"

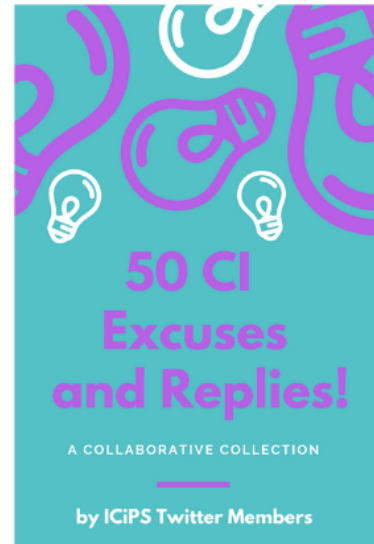


### Replies:

1. That's great. Have we asked them what they like about the service? And if we could make it even better for them?
2. They aren't complaining but is that because they aren't using your service and have gone elsewhere? Why not find out what you are doing well and see if we can use it in other areas.

#13 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We have too  
many people  
off, to release  
staff to do  
improvements"

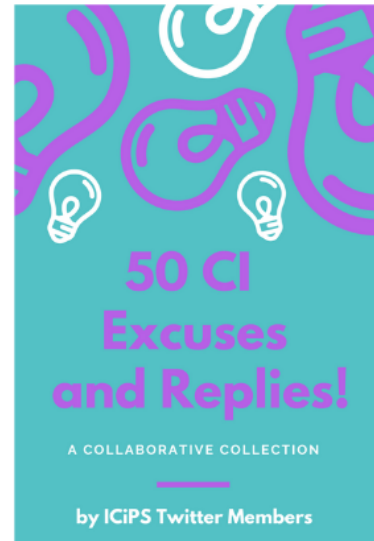


### Replies:

1. Why have you got so many people off? So how could we help you manage the work better at this difficult time?

#14 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We already  
work overtime  
to do what we  
do, without  
doing anything  
else"



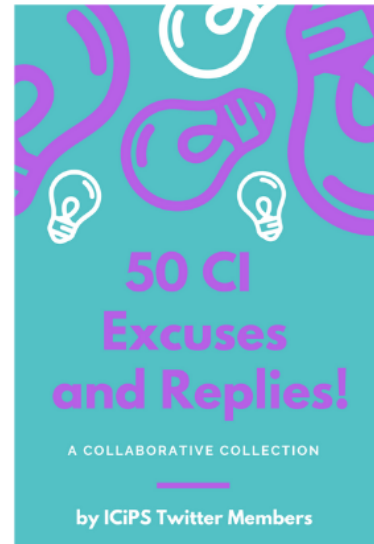
### Replies:

1. I can reduce the need for overtime.
2. And I'm afraid if you keep doing things the way you're doing them that's not going to change. How about we take a look at what's absorbing your time and see if we can do something about it?
3. Work smarter, not longer hours.



#15 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"That is the job  
of the Change  
Team"

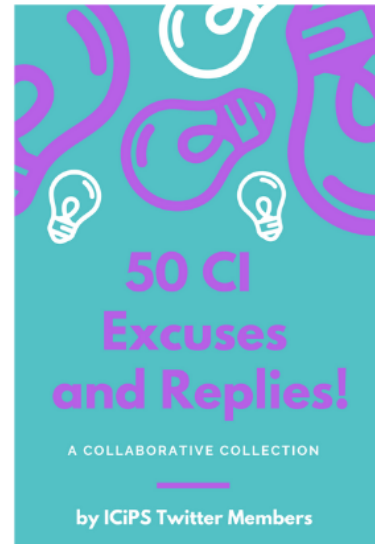


### Replies:

1. It's everyone's responsibility to contribute and I'm sure the Change Team would welcome your input too. Not one department has all the answers, it's a collective responsibility.

#16 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"I don't see the  
point, I do what  
I'm supposed to  
do already"



### Replies:

1. But I bet you are doing things you aren't paid for too. Let's see why and what we can do about it.
2. And I'm not asking you to do any more but maybe we could make it easier to do what you get paid for.

#17 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We meet our  
KPI's so that  
confirms we  
don't need to  
do anything"

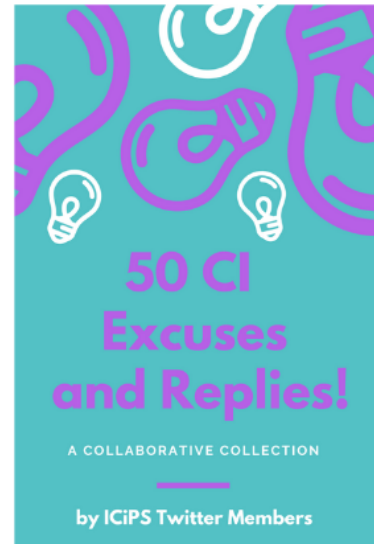


### Replies:

1. But could you exceed your KPI's? Once you set a target people will meet it, so if it's too low look at the potential business you are wasting!
2. Measures drive behaviours. Have you got the right behaviours?
3. How robust are your KPIs? Can they be gamed? Do they measure what the customer needs?

#18 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Our regular  
manager is on  
long-term sick,  
so we can't do  
anything until  
they are back"

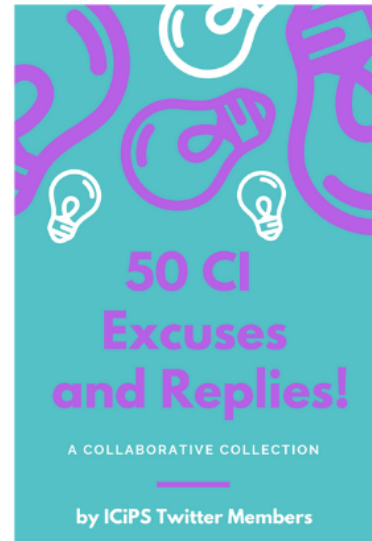


### Replies:

1. I'm sure they'll be pleased to see that you've kept things going whilst they are away.
2. Look we have no idea when they will be back. Wouldn't it be great if not only did you keep things ticking whilst they were away that you looked at how things could be made better?

#19 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"There are  
other areas that  
are far worse  
than ours"

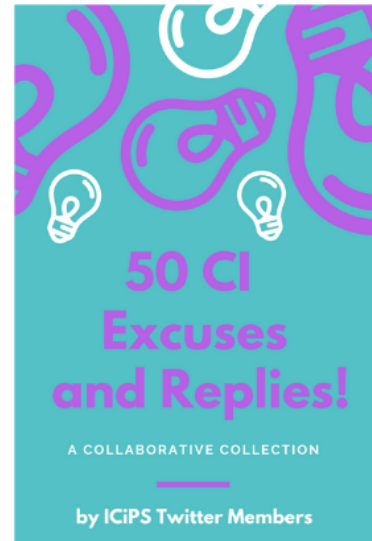


### Replies:

1. Well let's show them how well we worked with you then maybe they will ask us to help too.
2. I'm sure there are. But they aren't as open to change as you are. If we get you as good as you can be they can't throw stones at you and maybe they'll take a critical look at what they are doing.

#20 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Our processes  
are already  
automated so  
there isn't much  
we can do to  
change them"

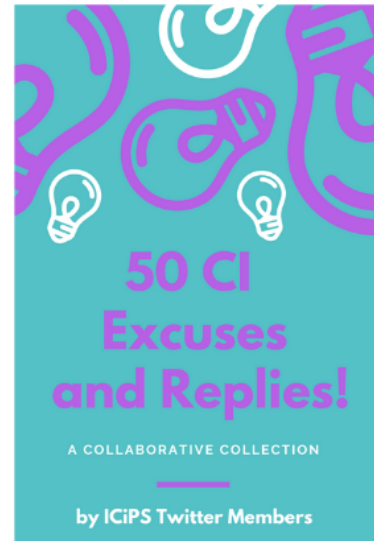


### Replies:

1. So why did you automate them before reviewing them, automation just makes the errors appear sooner. Process first automation second ... if required. Now let's look what needs changing and then speak to the software provider.
2. If a process is broken, it needs to be fixed regardless of whether it's automated. Compare the total cost of the current and proposed processes and you might find there are long-term savings to be gained by fixing it now.
3. Does that mean they are working well? Let's take a look and see what we can do around the system to make it better. We can also highlight to the software provider where the system could be made better.
4. What does the customer think of them?

#21 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Our priority is  
making sure the  
public are  
protected, and  
we do that fine"

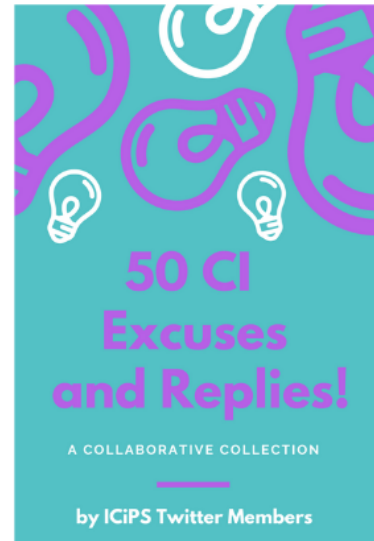


### Replies:

1. And so it should be, so it won't hurt just to go over what you are doing and check it is still relevant, remember things outside your control (legislation) often change so does this impact your service?
2. That's brilliant. Let's make sure you can continue to do that in the easiest way possible.

#22 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"If I'm under  
budget and  
performing well,  
then why should  
I do more?"



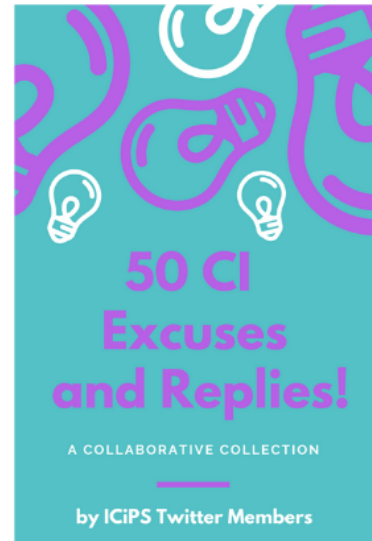
### Replies:

1. It's not about doing more it's about doing it better. Think of the extra savings you could make and how could you capitalise on that?
2. Good for you. Now how do we keep it that way without driving your staff into the ground?



#23 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"The problems  
of how things  
are done, do  
not lie with this  
team"

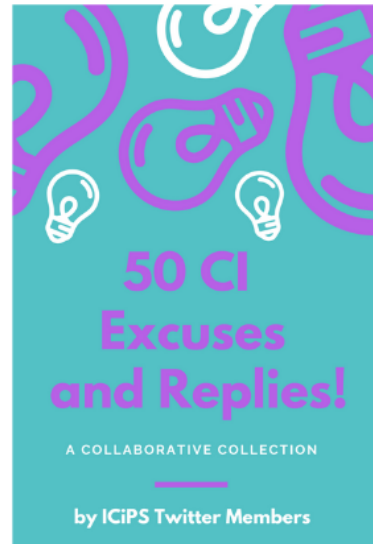


### Replies:

1. So, let's get together with the other departments that feed into your work stream and those you feed into and make sure that we all understand the impacts of our actions. This way we can help support each other and improve how we interact to make things flow across the organisation.
2. Do you know I'm beginning to think we should have the what goes through your head when people say these things VS what you actually say? So, I would say let's help them understand the impact they are having and then work together to make something that works for all.

#24 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We already  
apply systems  
thinking, and  
we don't need a  
new approach"

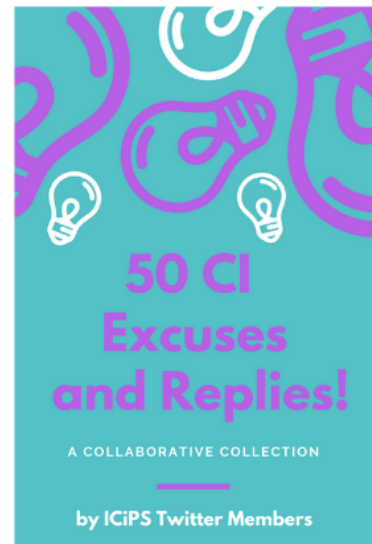


### Replies:

1. There is nothing to lose and everything to gain by looking at things in a different light, as they say, the same old approach gets the same old result!

#25 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We use team  
information  
boards so are  
well aware of  
what's working  
and what needs  
to be done"

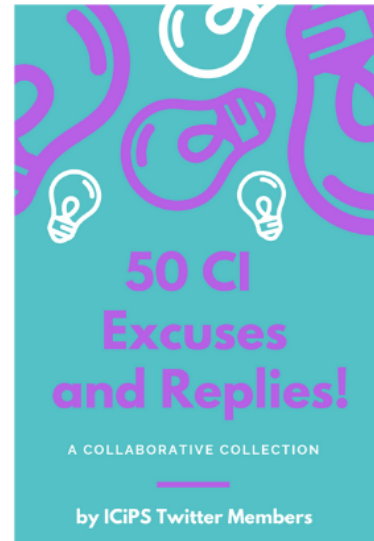


### Replies:

1. That's great Visual Management is one of the key skills we need in.  
#ContinuousImprovement so are they working well & does everyone use them?
2. So, what have your boards been telling you?
3. Not quite the same, that may be a local view but #CI is about the whole, so look wider and you may see things differently.

#26 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"There is little  
point if no-one  
else is doing it"

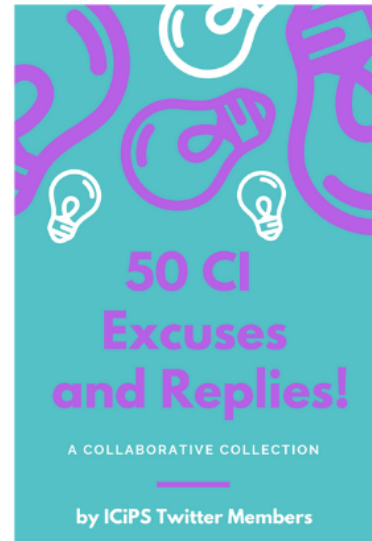


### Replies:

1. We all have to start somewhere. Imagine when they see you improve quality whilst cutting costs and saving time. Think of the prestige as they want to follow the way you work. #ChangeLeader
2. Since when did you become a sheep?
3. What about your own satisfaction and pride in knowing you are doing things as well as possible?

#27 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"My objectives  
demand that I  
already deliver  
quality, so as  
long as I do  
this, I don't  
need CI"

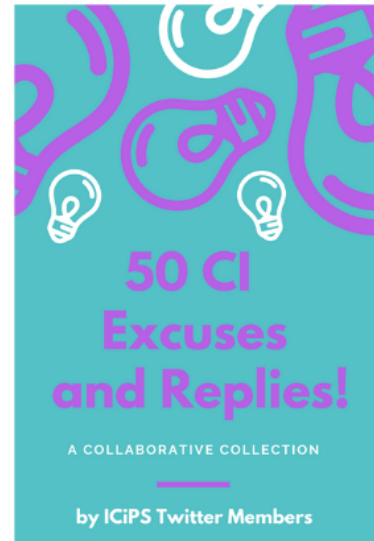


### Replies:

1. #CI is a way to develop quality whilst helping to reduce costs, waste and time so they will help you meet your objectives and give you that flex to explore further opportunities.
2. Focussing on quality is fantastic but you need to make sure you are not losing sight of other aspects of the job. So, let's have a look at the bigger picture and make sure we keep everything in balance.
3. It's not good it being of a high quality if it doesn't address the objectives and the needs of the customers
4. Quality may be achieved but that doesn't mean it is the best way, dare to do things differently.

#28 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"I already keep  
a record of  
everything we  
do, so I know it  
works well"

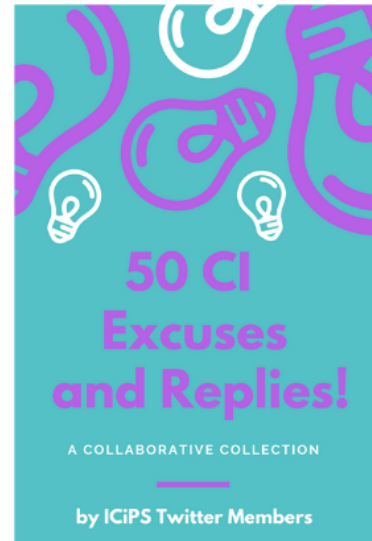


### Replies:

1. You know what you do but are you doing it the best way?
2. You know but does everyone else? And do they feel the same as you?
3. But you need to do things with this information, data is used to improve not prove.

#29 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Our priority  
has to be, to  
meet budget  
cuts"

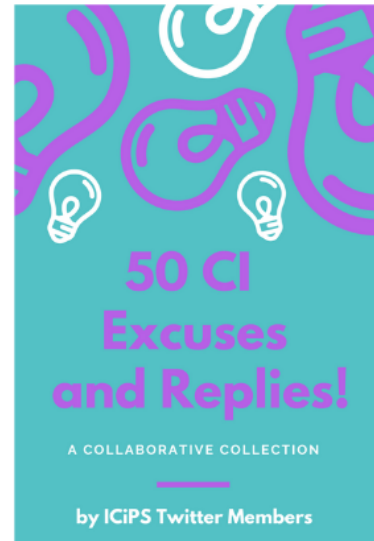


### Replies:

1. Then let me introduce you to #MudaMole he will help you identify the 8 Wastes that, when eliminated, will reduce costs and improve quality.
2. Look I have tools and techniques that will help you do that but it will be a one-off activity and may leave a bitter taste. How about we look at not just meeting the immediate challenge but sustaining it and improving morale at the same time?
3. But that doesn't mean you should cut improvements or quality
4. If you continually improve you will continually drive out ineffectiveness and the costs that comes with it.

#30 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"I can't afford  
the time for  
team members  
to do CI at this  
moment in time"



### Replies:

1. #ContinuousImprovement is not something extra we are asking them to do it should be "just the way we do things". Also, if your staff are so busy have you asked why? Are they doing things they shouldn't because the old processes don't meet the current needs?
2. Doesn't have to be anything huge; every little helps and can add up to something significant.



#31 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We've already  
had consultants  
come in to do  
this"

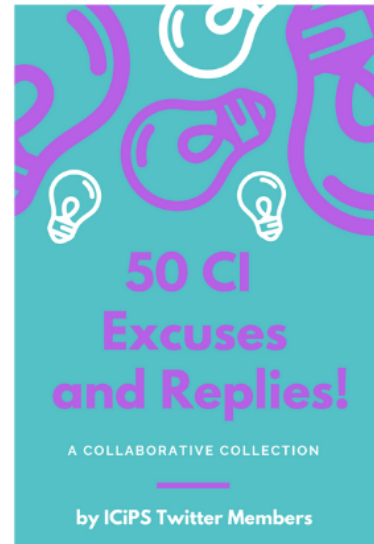


### Replies:

1. They may have been in at some point in time, but things evolve so you can't ever assume the job is done.

#32 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We haven't the  
budge to train  
people"

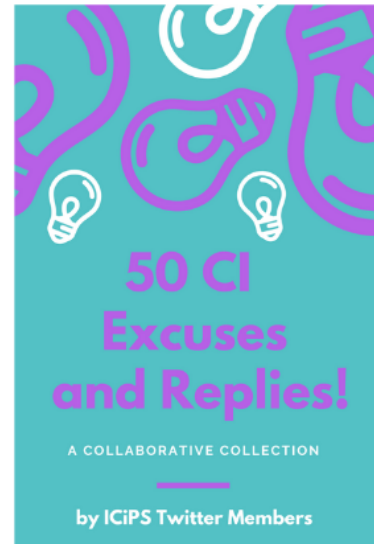


### Replies:

1. Do you have a budget for waste? No then maybe we need to look at how we can cut out the waste and the money saved will pay for the investment in training your staff.
2. Doesn't have to require formal training, apply the tools you do at home where you try to make your time and money go further.

#33 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We are setting  
our goals soon,  
so we should  
wait until then"

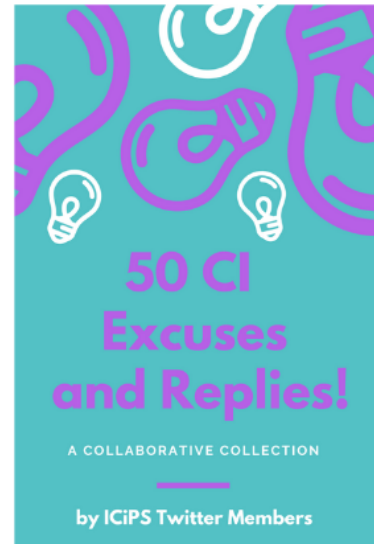


### Replies:

1. Let's look where you are now and where you would like to be and then we can use the data we collect to develop realistic goals that you can meet or even exceed.
2. You could do, but why wait? #CI is a way of working and a never-ending goal.

#34 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We need  
specialist help  
now we have  
implemented  
the easy wins"

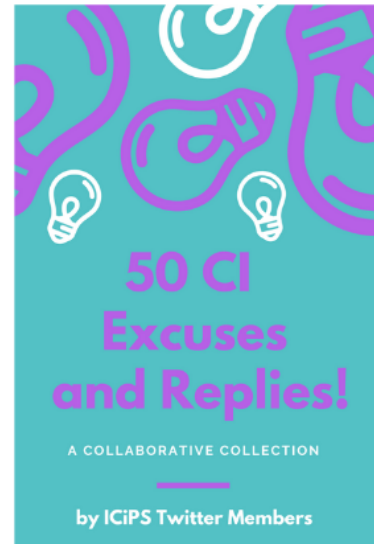


### Replies:

1. You'll be surprised how much you can actually do, but I'm here to support you. The quick wins have started your momentum now let's keep up with the changes and see just how far we can go.
2. You can do a lot yourself to continually improve, it doesn't have to be big things, just keep looking for small things and look along the process not just in your area.

#35 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We don't have  
enough trained  
staff to do this"

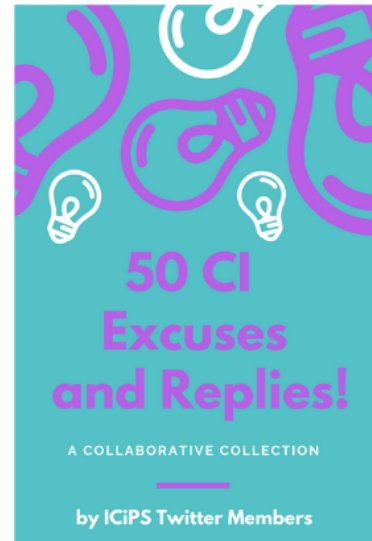


### Replies:

1. It isn't about how many trained staff you have, all it takes is one person with an open mind to see what could be done differently, ideas are all you need.

#36 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"It isn't our end  
that's the  
problem, it's  
the suppliers"

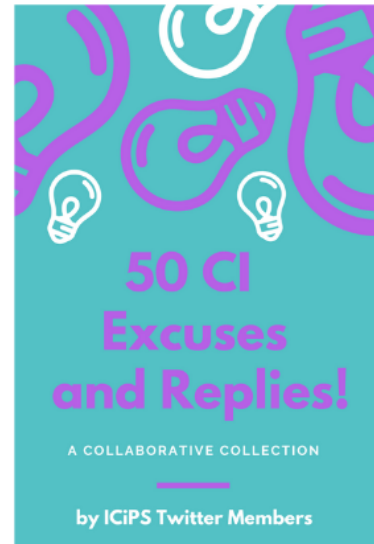


### Replies:

1. Have you spoken to them? Did they involve you in their changes? Well let's open some dialogue with them and see what you can do for each other.
2. Never!! Annoyingly the public sector tends not to hold their suppliers to account and they tend to treat them as partners or even worse, as customers.
3. Don't let that stop you, find a way to engage with the suppliers, you may save them money and time and I am sure they would be delighted by that.

#37 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"If we don't all  
do it, then  
there isn't any  
point"

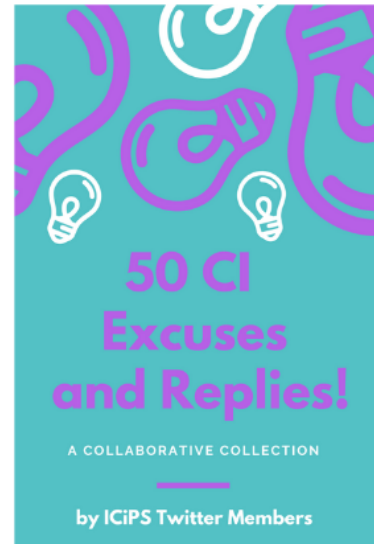


### Replies:

1. Quite true we need all those involved in the process to take part and be willing to change, but do you know that they won't take part? Are they just waiting for someone to start the ball rolling? Here's the ball!
2. Values are great but they are often just words so if they relate to improving, then you need to bring them to life and start to improve.

#38 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"The leaders  
don't get it, so  
there isn't any  
point"



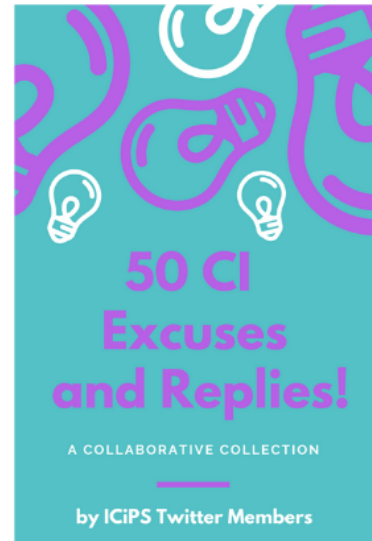
### Replies:

1. Put together a solid business justification and convince them.
2. Let's help them get it then.
3. There will be plenty point with evidence to back up
4. You shouldn't be doing it for the leaders you can get so much out of it in terms of self-development and satisfaction and you never know, what you do may gain the leaders attention and this may help them to get it.



#39 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"I've never had  
any complaints  
about my work"

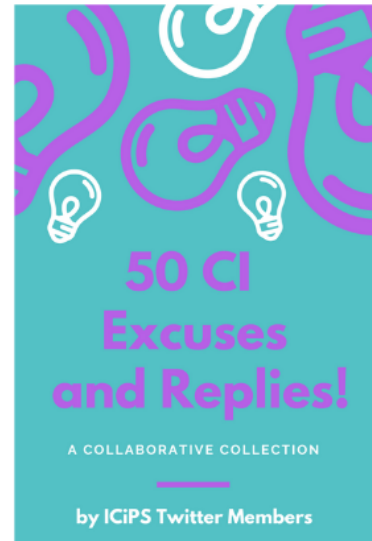


### Replies:

1. Good. Let's look at any further improvements to keep it that way and to make sure your customers tell others about you.
2. Even if you do everything right, it doesn't mean to say it is the optimum way of doing it.

#40 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"I've always  
done it this way  
and it works  
perfectly"

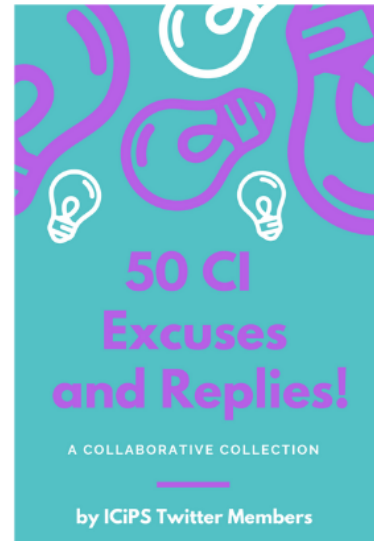


### Replies:

1. For now, but what happens when something outside your control changes? I'll be here when, not if, you need me!
2. Maybe and I expect you can do your work quickly as a result, but when was the last time you took an objective look to see if there is a better way?

#41 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Why change  
what isn't  
broken?"

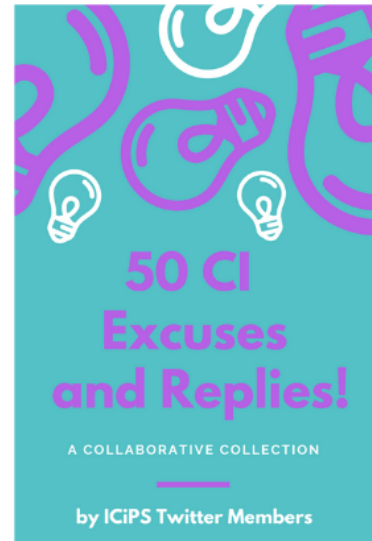


### Replies:

1. I totally approve of "If it ain't broke don't fix it" but there is nothing wrong with "If it's working can it work better?" Let's see if there are savings to be made, improvements in quality or a shorter time we can do it in.
2. Gas lamps, hot air balloons and phones come to mind – both worked but better solutions were found.

#42 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Until the policy  
is changed, we  
can't change  
the process"

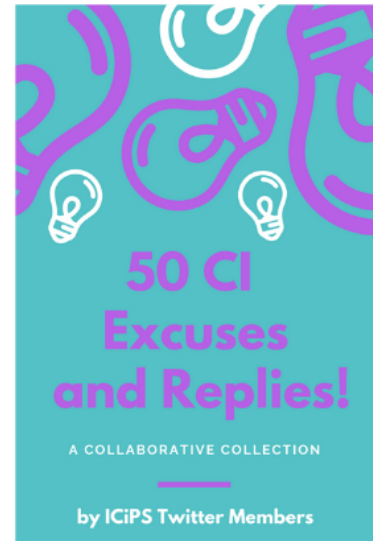


### Replies:

1. Let me introduce you to the chicken and the egg! If the policy is going to change don't you want it to reflect the process you need to carry out?
2. Well it may be worth it as you don't want a bad process set in stone by policy, the process needs to work.

#43 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Audit wouldn't  
let us simplify  
the process"

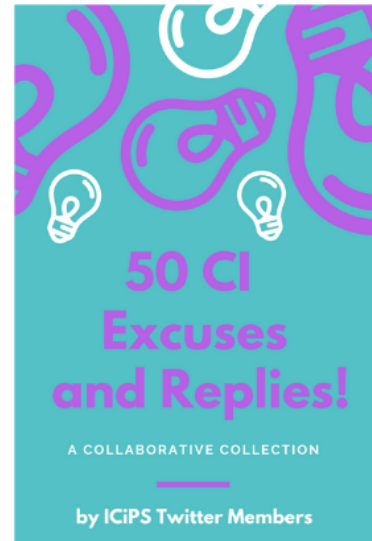


### Replies:

1. I'm confused are Audit a dept? If so what authority do they have over your processes? Improving a process doesn't mean you stop being compliant it is just how you ensure that compliance it the most efficient way. So, who do I speak to in Audit?
2. Audit would probably welcome a simpler process as long as it is robust.

#44 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"My boss is  
only interested  
in what is  
happening  
today"

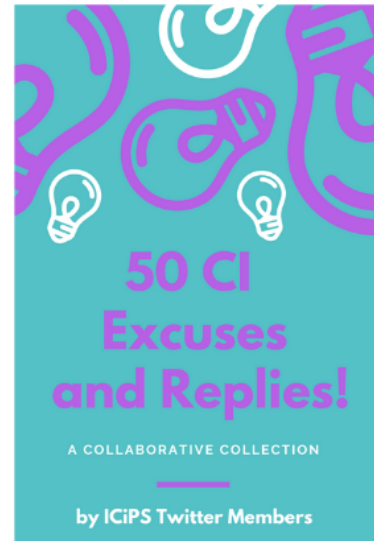


### Replies:

1. So, let's make sure we can tell them with certainty. #ContinuousImprovement needs us to have data which reflects what is going on and when we add in Visual Management your boss will be overjoyed.
2. #CI isn't just about long projects or the future, it is about evolving. And evolution starts now.

#45 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"There are not  
enough hours in  
the day to do  
CI"

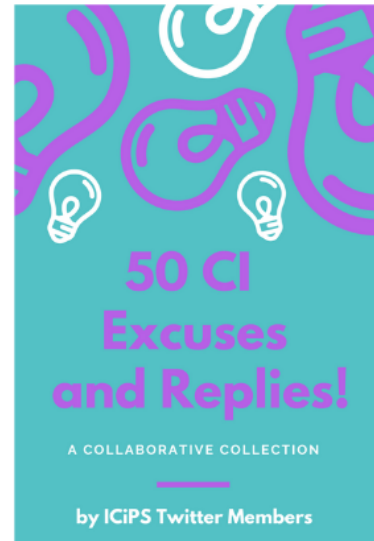


### Replies:

1. #ContinuousImprovement is not something extra you "do" it's how you should "do what you do" all the time. By ensuring you remove the waste in your processes you will have "more hours in the day" to do other things.
2. There aren't enough hours in the day not to do #CI, invest now and benefit later.

#46 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"No one listens  
to our ideas, so  
why bother?"



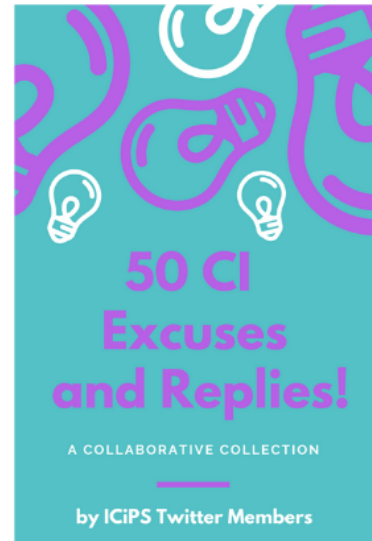
### Replies:

1. If you have ideas it shows you are a creative and innovative thinker, so see what you can think of that you could do yourself, empower yourself and feel pleased that you have made a difference.



#47 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"It would only  
work if we all  
had the same  
outlook"

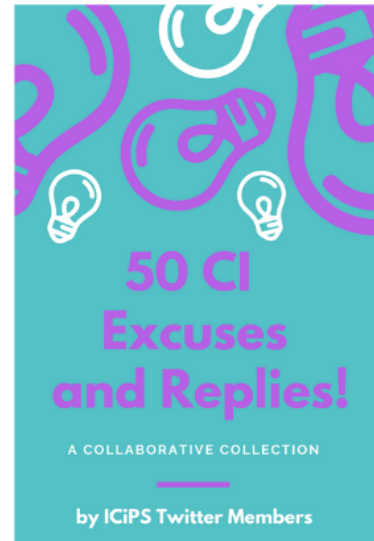


### Replies:

1. Be the change you want to see!
2. That isn't always the case if you have the same aspiration to do everything well.  
You may find some approach it in a slightly different way and that doesn't matter.

#48 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"Culture change  
would take too  
long and we  
need to save  
money now"

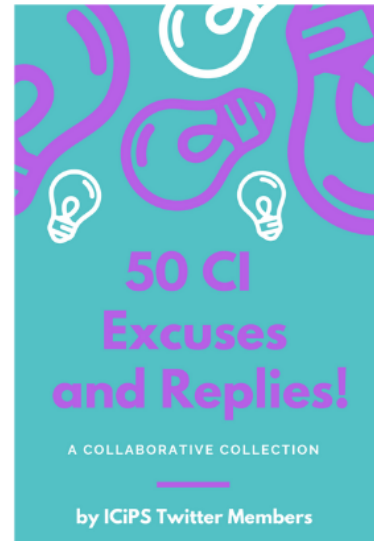


### Replies:

1. If everyone made an effort to do it from Day 1, culture change can be achieved as quick as we want it to.
2. Do things to get your savings now but get the messaging and communications around this right and start to shift the culture when they see the benefits happen.

#49 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We don't know  
where to start,  
so we don't"

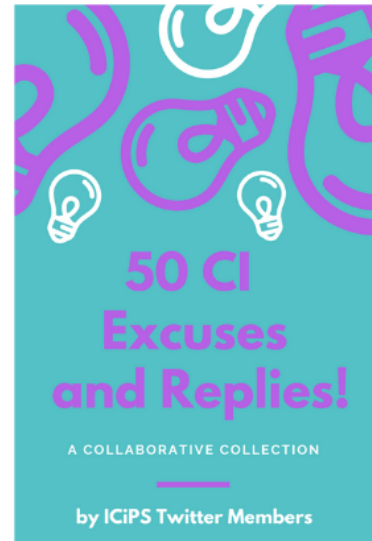


### Replies:

1. That's why I am here. It won't be easy but I will take you through it all step by step. You couldn't walk before but you run now so it just takes time.
2. Start at the very beginning, keep it simple, keep it obvious, look at complaints, think what frustrates you, look around and you will see things.

#50 What's your  
reply  
to this excuse???

"We've never  
had the basics  
right, never  
mind looking at  
CI"



### Replies:

1. #CI is the basics! We look at how you DO something not how you are told to do it, so we can ensure everyone knows the best way and this becomes the standard for all.
2. We all start somewhere so we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. A bit of #CI is just a loop of improvement; one problem fixed. Let's fix a basic problem because that will make our lives better and also help our customer get a better service. What can WE just fix?
3. #CI is as much about getting the basics right, as the larger scale changes some associate it with. It is about getting everyone always having an eye on opportunities to improve.

We hope you have enjoyed this ebook and have taken something away from it.

Our aim is always to add value to #Continuous Improvement.

Debbie Simpson - CEO  
ICiPS

Twitter - @ICiPS