

The meaning of the word 'error', in its origin, is neutral. In Latin, 'errare' means both 'to wander freely' and 'to wander from the right path'. After the seventeenth century, however, the word 'error' lost its ambiguity within English usage and became clearly understood as wrong-doing, as defect, as a way of missing a desired effect. When counting the letters of the words 'effect' and 'defect', one can see that they not only rhyme, but also share the same number of characters. But even though these words would fit in the same line of a crossword, only one would solve a proposed riddle—the former has a missing 'd' at the beginning, and the latter has one less 'f' in its middle. Their definitions also differ: a defect occurs as the result of an uncalculated surprise which leads to an interruption or a veering away from standardized functions, while an effect is the consequence of an action or the capacity to generate results. Interestingly, the deviation from planned processes has become recognized as a strategy for generating productive effects. Against this backdrop, one could say that there are cases of calculated errors which operate as principles of progression, functions of productivity, or conditions of success. Take, for instance, technologies with built-in expiration dates. As soon as the service life of the gadget is over and the product no longer works, the user has to go to the store and buy a new one (since a piece of technology can't walk to the shop on its own). The ninth issue of Pfeil Magazine focuses on the potential of erroneous processes to redefine the meaning of malfunction, and takes a look at aimless or non-productive movements. Through this reflection, 'error' is once again introduced as the possibility of wandering freely.