

Podcast: The Therac-25, buggy software that killed.

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As part of an ongoing project to learn more about what we've got wrong to help us improve, I look at the Therac-25 incidents, a devastating collection of software failures that often rank in the top 10 of civilian radiation accidents. The Therac-25 radiation therapy device killed or injured 6 people across Canada and the United States.

[Diagram of the Therac-25 operation room, from \(Wang, 2017 ...](#)

(https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jonas_Gouraud/publication/329830040/figure/fig2/AS:706200387715074@1545382701502/Diagram-of-the-Therac-25-operation-room-from-Wang-2017.ppm)

The Therac-25 was a room-sized machine, in this cut-away, you can see the computer terminal in the near-bottom left.

I look into two of the most severe bugs. Why the manufacturer didn't fix them and what we can learn from their mistakes.

The MP3 (Audio) file is [available here](https://github.com/phoughton/podcasts/raw/main/therac/therac_25_0_ed8_normalized.mp3) (https://github.com/phoughton/podcasts/raw/main/therac/therac_25_0_ed8_normalized.mp3).