

Time Travel (for Scotty)

The Enterprise has had an inordinate amount of experience with time travel. This has made Chief Science Officer Spock and Chief Engineer Scott experts in the technology and science of the paradoxes and methods of travel through time.

The timeline appears to be subject to some sort of temporal inertia. “Changes” seem to be either things that would have happened anyway, things that were inexplicable but are now explained *by* time travel, or things that rebound back onto the cause of the change.

The latter is the most dangerous to the time traveler: it means that the most likely target of changes to the timeline is the person changing the timeline. The most likely effect is a cessation of existence. The most dangerous time travel effect is this self-perpetuating loop. The person changing the timeline has ceased to exist, thus not being able to change the timeline. This loop seems to somehow isolate timeline changes and protect the real timeline.

It is a very elegant effect, although its mechanism remains mysterious. It means that if the Enterprise or its crew cause a major change, such as killing someone, it is the Enterprise and its crew that are most likely to be affected—even erased—by the change. The parts of history most relevant to the Enterprise and its crew are the most likely to be altered.