#### UBLLY7-60-M Masters Dissertation Proposal Feedback

#### Student Number: 115008632

#### Student name: Jacob Williams

#### Programme: MSc Cyber Security

**Supervisor:** Dr Phil Legg

**Ethical check list completed?** YES / NO

#### Feedback on the dissertation proposal

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| --- | --- |
| **Aims and objectives** |  |
| **Clarity, complexity and appropriateness of aims and objectives.** | Aims and objectives are clear – I would suggest that you revise this slightly as we have discussed before. The aim of the project is to better understand malware propagation characteristics through the use of visualisation. The objectives include the development of a visualisation system, and the assessment of these tools to identify similarities and patterns of behaviour.  (The following link may be useful:  <https://learn.solent.ac.uk/mod/book/view.php?id=116233&chapterid=15294>) |
| **Clarity and effectiveness of research question** | I would try and identify your primary question, supported by secondary questions. (What you have currently look like secondary questions, but none of them would appear to be the “killer” question of why this research is important) |
| **Rationale and justification in relation to current ideas/ theories** | Some good rationale and justification given so far as to why this is important or useful – address the points above and this will likely become clearer. |
| **Literature review** |  |
| **Range of works considered: any key omissions? Sufficiently up to date?** | A very good literature review so far – whilst you have a variety of papers identified, what are the “key” papers? (most important works, most commonly cited, etc.?) Is there some structure or relationship between works in terms of how best of classify or categorise them? What are the conclusions as a result of the literature review? You should be able to defend that your work is addressing shortcomings in the literature as it currently stands. |
| **Extent of critical reflection** | Some good critical reflection shown |
| **Is the consideration of the literature clearly linked to the aims/objectives/research question.** | Yes |
| **Research Methodology** |  |
| **Appropriateness of research strategy to project aims** | Generally good – however you will need to consider the testing further. How will you judge whether the project is a “success”? What are you comparing your result against? Will it involve a user study to gauge user perception on your tool, or will you present case studies of how the tool can be applied to different investigations?  Whilst the tool development is important, you need to think what you will do once the tool is available. |
| **Evidence of understanding of link between theory and practice** | Some – may consider planning of network infrastructures for testing this, how will testing be performed in practice? |
| **Evidence of reflection on methodological issues** | Some reflection but this can be developed further when underway |
| **Does the research plan address a clear topic within the scope of cyber security?** | Yes |
| **Does the project have the potential to contribute novel research in cyber security?** | Yes |
| **How does the research strategy align with similar research in the cyber security community?** | Appropriate methodology – just remember to consider how you will test this. Are you drawing comparison with existing malware analysis tools? Who is the intended user of this system, and what is the hypothesis of how they should use it? |
| **Is the suggested timeline realistic?** | Stages seem appropriate however timescales are not given |
| **Further guidance** |  |
| **Quality of Presentation and standard of literacy** | You have opted for a journal article layout – a report format (one column) would be more appropriate for a dissertation. |
| **Any further comments** | Generally the proposal shows that you are progressing with the dissertation. You have considered the literature well, and now need to think how you will position your work within this, and how you will validate your work against it.  Remember that the development of the tool is effectively the first stage of your ‘methodology’, but that your methodology needs to consider what you’ll do once you have a tool in place.  What do you expect to be able to do with the tool? How will it be beneficial for end-users? Who are the end-users? (is this something for a SOC?) What level of knowledge are the users expected to have? You will need to consider these pointers when it comes to testing the system.  To what extent are you considering real-time usage of this? If it is real time then speed and performance are critical. If it is for historical analysis then again, it comes back to end users and why they would do this? |

**In addition to working with your supervisor I would suggest you seek support in the following ways:**

Access the library web site for support with referencing <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/studysupport/studyskills.aspx>

Attend a library study support session on academic writing <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/studysupport/studyskills.aspx>

Contact Espresso Maths <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/studysupport/studyskills/mathematicsandstatistics.aspx>

Contact Espresso programming <http://www.cems.uwe.ac.uk/ep/>

Seek further English language support. <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/comingtouwe/internationalstudents/internationalstudentsupport/englishlanguagesupport.aspx>