Whiteboard

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A significant amount of detail added. No changes, far as I can see, to the first half
of the old proposal.
That's a little unusual, since usually with this much time to think and explore
realities, the original vision and emphases get modified too.

Remember your job is not to be reactive to me and what I suggest as much as it is
to push the project forward into reality, with details adapting to experience, so that
every stage of the writing reflects the complete and up to date situation plus any
new thoughts on what's working and what will be deemphasized, what is a selling
point and what should be quietly dropped.   Also, think of every new writing stage
as being one draft closer to a final report, so details like explaining terms, adding
more references, more graphics, etc. are important.

In my experience itemized lists (bullet points) are good. They're easier to read,
more committing, more authoritative-sounding, and easier to modify than a big
wadge of prose. They force you to wonder if they're too large or incomplete,
whereas a paragraph of prose is sort of weasly… maybe it's complete, maybe it's
not…

Example of up to date situation reports… 6.1 says you will rent a dedicated server.
Haven't you actually done that? This is a very important section and I'm glad you
put it in: very much in the spirit, shows progress and specificity and technical
decisions being made.

6.2 Probably needs more prose. Impressive diagram, but pretty small font and
rather hard to make out. Maybe make it a full-page landscape? Every figure needs
a caption that explains what we're seeing. By the time I dropped my Scientific
American subscription, you could basically "read" every article like a graphic
novel, looking at the illustrations
and reading the captions. Not a bad goal. You could imagine a full-graphic
proposal with illustrations of Life Before whiteboard, pictures of system
organization, of the interface the user sees, of sample interactions, etc.
Proposals are meant to be compelling and hard to put down, so big figs with small
fonts and no captions don't belong.

You say: the database dictates how the …code is organized and implemented."

How so?   what are we looking at exactly in this diagram? Is this a relational database and are these relations ? Are they classes and the arrows are methods? What ARE those arrows anyway? Say how this diagram relates to the overall goals and the various applications that use it.

"the relationships [which? are those the arrows?] follow fairly closely…how back end …implemented and integrated". Weasel words! what are you saying? what ARE the relationships, what is this 'follow' relation,
what is the back end like, how will it be implemented and integrated? AND used? What is the back end?
No fair explaining that some monster diagram is explained by some other mysterious entity (back end does not seem to be mentioned again!)   Why doesn't the back end follow from the database? In short, this section is tantalizing and frustrating and may be bullshit, we just don't know. I'd think another 3 pages, along with examples and some illustrations of information flow, examples of how user interactions cause database
interactions, etc., could be provided.

6.4 good start but seems a little empty at this point. any way to itemize the queries (lists again!) and user interaction possibilities?

6.5 I feel I'm in a 1950's TV series (Lassie) and Lassie's "trying to tell me something".   You seem to have a design in mind but 4 lines isn't doing it, they're just making things worse. what does "organizing students with their teachers and grades" mean? In the database diagram Courses are connected to "users" but well-separated from grades and teachers. What exactly do you mean by scaling? I'd say 6.5 is worth a page. You have to have a coherent and explicit story about what's going on, otherwise people will never finish reading your proposal.

6.6 Ok, you're subcontracting announcements and comms to email: that I understand. Maybe (and perhaps this is a generally good idea), pick the BB functionalities needed (create announcement, send email) and say how you'll implement them. Is "directs to" enough? are there issues to address with you being some sort of email-forwarding site? System diagram? details?

6.7 For me, calendar is a candidate for excising. The world is full of calendars that are sold or given away all over the world in 200 languages by corporations that could buy and sell all of UR 100 times before breakfast.
I'd lose this and maybe say something interesting (but no code) about your ideas about a brand new calendar system (if you think you can compete against the forces mentioned above) or your ideas on schedule optimization (I don't know what that means -- lots of ways to optimize schedules, so what do you have in mind?).

6.4, 6.8
Are these sections the same and if not, why not? Probably should merge these too sections and the obvious questions you need to answer are:

- what's wrong with BB's presentation?
- if BB is too clunky, what's wrong with Google's "presentation"? (a text box).
- Is your new presentation at the right level of detail and generality?

If we're going to judge your user interface (presentation), it'd be nice to know what you're aiming at and why and how you fit into the huge universe of GUIs for more or less complex systems. I'd say a couple of pages and some references would be appropriate here, and a final figure with commentary on what's there, what's missing, (compared to BB and google, say) and why.

General rule:
Number all figures, refer to each numbered figure in the text, provide captions for all figures.