# Circle Language Spec Plan | Planning + Black Box Spec Part A | 2009-06 | Evaluation

*September, 2009*

## Reflection On Strategy, Time Planning & Progress Monitoring

It was not clear at the beginning of the project how much work it was going to be. There was a ton of ideas to organize before you could know the extent of the project.

The project span out of control.

It was not so much the quality of the work that was the problem. The planning was.

The moment at which problems started to arise, was when starting to redo the *System Objects* article group. Functional decisions were made at the whim of the moment. Planning was neglected. The amount of work was out of proportion.

The functional source of the problem was as follows. Ideas for the Black Box article group were organized. The main topics were almost finished up. Much of the Black Box material now contained too much explanation about System Objects. The explanation of Black Box could be so much simpler if it did not attempt to explain System Objects too. Therefore, the System Objects explanations were moved to the System Objects article group. However after that, the System Objects article group was so hard to read, that the simplification in the Black Box article group resulted in a too hard-to-read System Objects article group. So then it was decided that the System Objects article group was to be reorganized. It was basically rewritten. Then there was a lot of cross-out material left. At the whim of the moment it was decided to also process all this cross-out material. That swallowed up a ton of time.

Even though the time-planning spun out of control, the creative process *was* important. This is because redoing the other article groups was required to make sure all the concepts and notations matched again.

It was clear at multiple moments in this project that the scope was to get clear as I went along. It was actually foreseen in advance, that things could spiral out of control. It was actively decided to ignore the planning until the ideas were straight again.

What went *wrong*, is that when the ideas *were* straight again, time planning was not immediately straightened out again. I forgot I was supposed to start working in a more planned way, as soon as the concepts were clear.

Other distractions that negatively influenced the planning: personal illness and other projects in between.

I recognize in this, the errors I have made in the past, years and years ago, when at the whim of the moment I felt something functional was so important, that I started to work it out completely and completely put aside any proper planning and any previous goal. That happened now too, inspired by the creative-versus-productive approach. The problems in the past always had to do with giving a non-main issue too much priority and letting it take up all of your time.

One thing does need to be mentioned is that the *Planning* part of the project, in which the whole of *New Computer Language Functional Design* project was replanned, went very well. But the making the *Black Box* article group spun out of control.

The current project will be discontinued. The remaining work will be turned into a new project. Right now it is important to get overview over what to do again and any proper planning to it. A new set of work items needs to be made, that are individually well to handle.

To kick off reprioritising: the System Objects cross-outs was what I was last working on, but that might just have to be given lower priority.

## Personal Feeling

I was getting an overall feeling of messiness in the time planning and step-by-step planning.  
It did not feel good to work at it anymore. I had lost touch with proportions of work and felt I had lost control over the amount of work. I did not know what laid ahead anymore and how much work it was still going to be. The good in-control feeling you get from finishing up one phase after another was completely gone.

It is no wonder that I got this feeling. It was supposed to be a 10 day project and 2 ½ months had passed since project initiation. That will give you a feeling of getting stuck…

## Reflection On Functionality

The thing is: the material produced is not that bad. But I was not going straight towards my goal anymore.

The problem was that I took work upon myself, that took way too much time, while there were other things with higher priority that were not getting done.

I should not feel ashamed for it taking up so much time. It was a LOT of material to organize. But the work should be better managed from now on.