File 20111222.1740: I sent the following letter to Dr Fléchais before writing my weekly activity report:

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Dear Dr Flchais,

Merry Christmas to you, and wishes for a successful new year.  I have a
question and need to update you on a few things outside of my routine
status report.  The question is regarding my newly proposed solution
to the problem I raise in my thesis.  (Briefly, I propose using the
Security Content Automation Protocol to measure and report existence
and correct operation of all of the required security controls in the
baseline configuration of a certified and accredited cross domain system.
It is a win because I have learned of an approaching mandate on CDS
developers---not official yet, but leaked in a session at the UCDMO
conference---for SCAP compliance to a limited extent for continuous
monitoring purposes.  No one has put forth the idea yet of pulling an
entire certification test body of evidence out through the SCAP report
interface, but I believe it can be done.  It would simplify Beta 1 and
Beta 2 testing enormously.  More later.)

The question is: does having a solution in mind during coding risk
contaminating the grounded theory analysis?  I did not find the answer
in a couple of books I consulted just now.  Do you have any advice?

On another topic, a couple of important things just happened and I
had to react quickly.  My college's Senior Tutor reacted to the GSO.15
paperwork for extension of time by standing firm on deadlines.  I was
asked to provide a new schedule that shows me finishing in Hilary term.
I have strong concerns about doing it in that amount of time, but I
provided the requested schedule, reproduced below.  I talked with Dr
Martin by Skype yesterday and we thought of a way of tracking progress on
coding CS-1 that will give everyone immediate notification if progress
seems insufficient to meet the new deadlines.  My new goal is fifty of
the timestamped 'entries' in my notes file coded per day.  Presently,
I am below that line but I expect to get faster at it soon and catch up.
It's a simple metric but fine grained enough to work, I think.

Now, another thing just happened.  I received a phone call today
from a Lockheed executive asking me to reconsider my resignation from
the company.  I declined as politely as I could, stressing that I must
finish my dissertation, and now this new deadline makes it more urgent.
Regardless, that finalised it.  I was given a termination date two weeks
hence and that's it.

Could I ask for another bit of advice, about ordering of events?
The SCAP solution needs to go in Chapter 6.  I can write that chapter
in short order, I think, because I have all the relevant standards and
implementations guides in my head right now.  Permission to write that
chapter as quickly as I can and then get back to coding in ATLAS.ti?

Thanks,

-Joe
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The revised schedule, which I forgot to include in that email, is here:

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21st Dec--27th Jan (4.5 weeks): continue coding the first case study in
ATLAS.ti; categorisation and analysis.

    21st Dec--15th Jan (3.5 weeks): coding at the rate of 50 time-stamped
events/day.

    16th Jan--27th Jan (11 days): categorisation step and iterative
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refinement of grounded theory.

28th Jan--5th Feb: one week to write Chapter 3.

6th Feb--4th Mar (4 weeks): coding of 2nd case study and analysis.

5th Mar--25th Mar (3 weeks): coding of third case study and analysis.

26th Mar--4th Apr: one and a half weeks to write Chapters 4 and 5 on the latter case studies.

5th Apr--12th Apr (one week): write Chapters 6 and 7 describing the SCAP solution, conclusion, and future work.

13th Apr--18th Apr (5 or 6 days): final polishing and editing.

19th April: submit dissertation to examination office.

I am worried about lack of time in the schedule for validation of the SCAP solution. Dr Martin has suggested that one possible way to handle it is by publishing a separate article on that aspect of the problem immediately after completing the dissertation. I am planning to do it that way, to make the 20th April deadline.

Respectfully,

Joe Loughry
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References