

File 20090121.1953: Email sent to Shamal re:sharing of data...

Sorry for the delay in replying, but I wanted to be able to think and give you a good answer. The assessors redirected me somewhat, toward fully developing the notional idea I had for a tool to automate the Common Criteria process, and then spending a lot more time validating the operation of the tool. My case study will be a smaller part of the research, and showing the validation of the tool will be a larger part. Dr Jirotko is a good source of information about ethnographic study, which I am going to need to learn something about.

I remain interested in the idea that my primary case study failed because of a change in its environment of requirements. That's an awkward way of saying it. Hmmm... what I mean is, the software's functionality at the time of the failure still matched exactly the customer's required functionality, but some new requirements (for Common Criteria) had shown up in the mean time. One problem was that the new requirements wanted some fundamental changes that conflicted with old requirements that were still in force. Maybe that's the right way to say it. These additional requirements appeared which were non-negotiable, but they weren't written at the same time as the original requirements, and if they conflicted, too bad. The original requirements at least had been internally consistent. The new larger set of requirements was not.

I would like to work with you if you have any thoughts on the matter of what happens to an existing, successful system when the environment changes and new requirements suddenly appear. In my case it was similar to what happens when laws change. In a previous lifetime I worked for a bank, writing software used in all of the local branches, so I got a taste of that. I got out before the real tsunami of banking and securities trading law changes hit in the US in 1999 or so, but I heard stories from my friends who were still in it. I can imagine there'll be a whole new set of banking laws passed after the past year we've had.

If I can help with your research through access to my data, just ask. I have severe proprietary information and legal difficulties with that, but I'm still offering. I can't give you straight access, but I might be able to extract specific information and give that to you. I don't know if it's even something you need, but if you do, I'll try to accommodate to the extent consistent with not violating anybody's NDA.

I wasn't at the MCR bar crawl on Friday after my viva because I was at the Sheldonian theatre listening to highbrow medieval music performed on period instruments interspersed with fart jokes. You think I'm kidding but I'm not.

I'm reading Drummond's book about Taurus now.

—Joe

In message <093AF994-C40D-4D68-9963-A20049F43454@wolfson.ox.ac.uk> Shamal Failly <shamal.failly@wolfson.ox.ac.uk> writes:

> Hi Joe,

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> I'm currently doing some work which involves managing inconsistencies
> between requirements and risk analysis artifacts in light of changes
> to contexts of operations. For example, if you have a wireless voting
> system for a conference and have valued security properties for
> different assets, how do you manage the changes if you decide to use
> the wireless voting system for electing a new president in an un-named
> southern African country...

>

> I recall your reading group presentation describing the work you were
> doing for your transfer report, i.e. understanding why a reasonably
> designed system would fare so badly when it comes to meeting CC
> criteria for a different context of operation. This has got me
> thinking about whether there were any analogies between what I am
> doing and what you are doing / will be doing? Are there any
> similarities?

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> By the way, I hope your transfer viva goes well or went well if it has
> already happened? I believe you will have / had Andy and Marina

> examining your work, so do let me know if you want any info on what
> sort of things to expect. Afterwards, Andy said that he didn't think
> I was given a hard time at all (even though it felt like I did), so my
> expectations of what to expect from the transfer viva were certainly
> challenged!
>
> Obviously, you will be attending the inter-college MCR bar crawl this
> evening (which starts at St. Cross at 7) so I'm happy to discuss any
> of the above then if you don't plan on being in the department today.
>
> Cheers,
>
> Shamal

References