File 20110907.0948 (BST): Latest embodiment of grounded theory:

The incidents were mostly formal meetings. There were ninety-two of them in CS1. A few were one-on-one meetings that might be characterised as interviews. Out of this code book, ??? concepts emerged:

1. The developer just wants to get the system certified.

2. The programme office is primarily concerned with schedule. Cost, to them, is denominated in the currency of weeks.

3. The certifier comprises ODNI—who is the PAA, the pen testers, and IV&V. The certifier wants to accept a minimum of residual risk, but to do that, he depends utterly on the pen testers and IV&V.

4. Pen testers work like a covert channel analysis; i.e., they will not ever stop until told to. Their work is completely open-ended and terminates only when the money runs out. DNI CAT like to break things, and the NSA people in particular seem to assert all the time, 'we are better than you'.

5. IV&V just want to bill hours.

6. The Beta 2 site just wants a system that works. The Beta 2 accreditor, like the PAA, just wants to accept a minimum of residual risk. He'll preferentially do that by dropping functionality, which none of the other participants ever want to consider.

I can trace every one of those statements to one or more incidents in the code book.

The adjacency matrix, when reproduced as a series of thumbnails across a page, makes visible certain trends across incidents that lead to a successful certification. When ordered as a row of thumbnails, there is some resemblance to Edward Tufte's sparklines. You can see the meetings where information was evenly shared, and you can see the attacks and responses happen by characteristically visible patterns in the horizontal and vertical runs. These adjacency graphs have not been permuted yet, so you can't see the clusters very clearly.

I expect the grounded theory to change. CS1 was a successful certification and accreditation, after all. CS2 is going to modify that with some pathological cases. I can't wait to find out what happens.

Questions and responses: why didn't you write this up? Answer: I was hesistant to put it to paper before it was fully formed. These are preliminary results, and the grounded theory especially is going to change to explain the failed case study CS2. I wanted to run it by an audience familiar with grounded theory.

References