

File 20110418.1235: Notes from meeting with Dr Martin:

Dr Martin was at home in the evening after a long day getting ready for the Info Security Europe show. The display boards got left in the cupboard and didn't get in the car to London, so Dr Martin has to drive them to London tonight or early tomorrow.

He approved my application for COS. We talked about TOC, outline and chapters. Dr Martin does not know what the date on the MAT.3 form (I put 5th September 2011) means. He concurred with putting in the application now, then following it up with written work soonest. Not knowing what the rules are, he expressed concern that I might be forced to confirm earlier (like in the next few weeks) rather than having the luxury of waiting until summer. It all depends on what Julie says. I asked Julie today by email for her advice.

The new DGS might not want to be seen immediately as a softie. Professor Kwiatkowska was forced out by some of the senior members of the department who did not like the changes she was making. So it is not possible to know how this will affect me. But Dr Martin did not appear worried. He seemed like he was OK with my progress. I described now having a thread of an argument running through my dissertation that was lacking before. I described how I have an outline detailed down to the level of having a few words representing every paragraph in the dissertation. Not exactly typed up yet, but it's all in my head. When I started writing, I realised there were things I did not know, so I had to go look those up in the library. I have done that now, and I am back to putting sentences one after another. I got some schedule relief on the Air Force quarterly reports so that I could concentrate on school, but now I have to go back and finish the Air Force work. I will do that today and tomorrow.

I am focussing on writing a good argument. The argument, in this case, is that specific things went wrong in each case study, and on the surface, they appear unrelated. But there are fundamental similarities that are not apparent at first. I can show how these similarities emerge, and then make predictions about the next security accreditation effort. And once you can make predictions, you can try to alter the future in a controlled way. It's a first step towards questioning the way we are doing security accreditation.

I promised to send Dr Martin a completed chapter by Easter. Also, the rest of the outline at the same time.

Send the PDFs to Julie and ask her if she would prefer paper by Fedex.

Update: I sent the PDFs to Julie and asked her for advice on the COS deadline.

Meet with Dr Martin right after Easter. Set it up by email.

Afterwards, we just talked for a while about 'stuff'. I mentioned the CERIAS panel that Dr Martin sent out an email about last week, and how I was struck by Rogers' (of Purdue) point that 'there are no natural laws' in cyber security. I disagree with that. Consider the entropy limits of black holes (the limit is the area of the event horizon in square Planck lengths, expressed in bits) and Feynmann's computation of the smallest amount of energy required to compute one bit. I brought up Brian Greene's lecture on multiverses, and Prof. Roger Penrose's recent paper on large circular structures seen in the cosmic microwave background when measured at microkelvin resolution. About ten or fifteen years before those were recently observed, someone wrote in the literature a prediction that just such circular features would be found, indicating the presence of other universes outside our own and colliding with it. Right now cosmologists are arguing over whether the circular structures are real or only in the imagination of those looking at the data.

Back to work on the Air Force quarterly report, then to the grocery store. Jasper is not doing well but we are going to give him another 24-48 hours on the double dose of pills. Dr Pepmeyer said he probably bled out again internally from his tumour. If it stabilises, he could get better for a while. If not, he could crash rapidly.

I weeded the vegetable garden and Andrea thinned the sunflowers. Plant corn and pumpkins in May. We should start the giant pumpkins inside now.

References