The Publication Campaign
or
Planning the Next 4 Years

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A Note on “Read Critically”

• “Critically” ≠ negatively
  – Think literary criticism
  – A better word would be “analytically”
    • We always should be analysing content!
      – (What does this mean?)
    • We should also analyse structure and style!
      – (What does this mean?)

• Some Analytical Attitudes (and their vices)
  – Charitable
    • Avoids mentioning or being clear about problems
    • Unrealistic
  – Tough, but fair
    • Too tough or too fair!
  – Appropriately Hostile (tough, but somewhat unfair!)
    • Discouragingly Nasty
  – Reflectively Critical
    • Self-hating, Imposter’s Syndrome, Despairing
What’s your goal for your program? aka The next 3-4 years of your life?

For most people here, the operational version will be “Get a PhD”
Necessary sub goals!

• Minor
  – Take some classes
  – Pass EOY interviews
  – Other sundry bits and bobs

• Major
  – Submit a thesis
  – Defend it at a viva
  – Correct, print, submit/upload
Subgoals for submitting a thesis

- Do enough research
- Write it up
- Deal with the crazy upload system

You need a strategy!

It’s not too early to start!

(Your supervisor will help!)
(As will other people if you ask)
Goals

• Minor
  – Take some classes
  – Pass EOY interviews
  – Other sundry bits and bobs

• Major
  – Submit a thesis
    • Do enough research
    • Write it up
    • Deal with the crazy upload system
  – Defend it at a viva
  – MARCH!
What’s your publication strategy?

or

What’s the publication component of your PhD strategy?
To strategise, you must understand

- What exactly is the goal?
  - What are the components?
  - What counts as achieving it?
  - What are the challenges or blockers?

- Let’s first consider a minor subgoal
  - EO3Y1/CDT2 Interview
  - One part is the SHORT REPORT!
Short Report: 3-Year EOY1

Summary Report: The Summary (or short) report is primarily a research proposal. It needs to make clear: what is the research problem, why it is important or interesting to address it, what is the approach the student intends explore to try to address it, and how success or failure is going to be evaluated. It should also contain a brief summary of progress so far and a plan for how the research is going to be carried out. Sept starters will taking the the scientific writing course (Scientific Methods III, COMP80142) prior to this, and may wish to use this report as assigned writing piece they will need to produce. Ultimately, it will need to readable by the end of year examiners, who will not necessarily be experts in your branch of computer science. Thus, it needs to be readable by an well-educated, general computer science audience

In addition to the summary, the report should include:

1. a research plan for the next year, concerning how the research should be carried out,
2. A plan as to how this will lead to a thesis (e.g. proposed structure of a thesis at the level of chapter and section headings),
3. a list of publications, published or submitted,
4. a plan for other activities, including any visits, internships, targeted conferences or journal publications, and public engagement activities.
Analysis task 3: CDT EOY 2

Summary Report: A short report will also be produced, which should summarise clearly the goals and achievements for the examiners, who may not be specialists in the student’s research area. In addition to the summary, the report should include:

1. a list of publications, published or submitted,
2. a research plan for the next year, concerning how the research should be carried out,
3. A plan as to how this will lead to a thesis, (e.g. proposed structure of a thesis at the level of chapter and section headings).
4. a plan for other activities, including any visits, internships, targeted conferences or journal publications, and public engagement activities.
EOY 3y1/CDT2 Short Report

• Audience
  – (You, Supervisors), EXAMINERS (non-experts in your area)

• Goals
  – To answer the following questions with high confidence:
    • The student has a topic which is “big” enough for a PhD
    • The student has a topic which is “small” enough for a PhD
    • The student is able to complete a PhD on this topic (on time)
  – Nothing else matters
    • YOU need the answers to these questions!!
    • For all members of the audience

• The short report mobilises evidence for these questions
  – Other sources of evidence: long report, class performance, interview presentation, interview questions, supervisor report
How do you show you have a right size topic that you can do?
Reason backward from a Thesis

• If we know what makes a minimally passing thesis
  – we can make plans
  – we can argue that we can do it
  – we can assess progress

• What’s the standard?
  – “The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is awarded by the University in recognition of the successful completion of a programme of supervised research and training, the results of which show convincing evidence of the capacity of the candidate to pursue research and scholarship and make an original contribution and substantial addition to knowledge.”
  – Easiest way to show you have this capacity is to have done so!
Category A ((i), (ii))

• “they are satisfied that the thesis is satisfactory in every way and that:
  – the candidate possesses an appropriate knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
  – the research which is reported in the thesis contributes an addition to knowledge;
  – the results of the research show evidence of originality and independent critical judgement;
  – the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
  – the thesis has been submitted in the form prescribed by University Regulations;
  – no part of the thesis has previously been submitted for the award of a degree at this or any other University;
  – the thesis and the work reported in it are the candidate's own.”
“How much?”

• Length?
  – “In accordance with the Regulations, theses submitted for PhD, EngD, MD and ChM degrees must not normally exceed 80,000 words of main text, including footnotes and endnotes."
  – Ok, it’s long

• Genre?
  – Typically a monograph
  – But ALTERNATIVE FORMAT!
    • “The Alternative Format thesis allows a postgraduate doctoral or MPhil student to incorporate sections that are in a format suitable for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.”
    • The FAQ says:
      – “10. How many papers should be included? The number of papers included in the alternative format thesis may vary according to discipline and is not prescribed, but should reflect the quantity, quality and originality of research and analysis expected of a candidate submitting a standard thesis. **There is no upper limit, but typically 3-5 ‘papers’ or equivalent results chapters is about right:** ultimately the examiners will judge whether the quantity and quality of the work, the critical analysis and originality of the research and the defence of your thesis in the viva, justifies the award of a PhD.”
This Suggests a Strategy

• Write up to submission at least 1 journal paper a year
  – 3 “ok” journal papers ≈ enough for a minimal passing thesis
  – (Still need to convert into chapters and write the rest or just write the rest for Alt Format)

• THIS IS NOT A REQUIREMENT!
  – It is a strategy
  – There are alternative strategies!
  – It has some advantages:
    • If you publish in reputable journals, you have a strong prima facie case that it contains an original, significant contribution of new knowledge
    • It will have to pass ≈ 2 reviewers (roughly equivalent to externals!)
    • It’s nicely “measurable” (EOY2, “I have 2 journal papers in submission.”)

– Disadvantages
  • Doesn’t fit all work or work patterns
  • Actual acceptance can take forever
Local Strategy “journal”

• How to get to “journal”
  – A classic approach:
    1. Have an idea, question, or hypothesis
    2. Do some very preliminary research
    3. Submit and present a poster or workshop paper
    4. Refine the idea or methods
    5. Up your research game (bigger better experiment; more proofs)
    6. Submit and present a conference paper
    7. Dot ‘i’s, cross ‘t’s
    8. Complain
    9. The definitive archival worthy work (30% more!)
    10. Add 30%, polish, and submit to journal
≈1/3 Done!
This is just a strategy

• One model among many!
  – Use it as a reference model
    • Have you done something equivalent
    • Or similar enough
  – If you can map back into the reference model
    • you need to have a chat with someone for a reality check

• Big advantage to the iterative development
  – REALITY CHECKS
  – Many different people will see and comment on your work
    • At various stages
  – YOUR SUPERVISOR IS NOT ENOUGH
    • Science is collaborative
    • Cognitive biases abound
    • Show early and often!
A brief note on tactics...
You need tactics for

- Formulating questions and hypotheses
  - I.e., developing your topic
- Assembling evidence
  - Conducting experiments
  - Literature review
  - Proofs
  - Conceptual analysis
  - (Read! Emulate! Ask! Record!)
- Writing up
  - How to communicate all these things!
- Publication
  - Venue shopping
  - Venue specific tactics
  - Dealing with criticism
  - Presenting!
Meta-cognition is your friend

• Devote some time to
  – Thinking about your goals
    • write down your thoughts
  – Working on your strategy
    • And alternative strategies!
    • Write it down!
  – Reflecting on your tactics
    • Are they working?
    • Do they indicate a problem with the strategy?
      – No plan survives contact with the enemy reality
  – Monitoring your progress
    • If you had to submit in a month...could you?
    • Have you passed the minimum level yet?
  – Finding a really cool hat