

VicMigMeetings/Five

Date: Thursday 5th May 2004, 3pm

- **Present:** MattDuignan, ChrisWatson, PippinBarr, RillaKhaled, TimWright, MikeMcGavin, JenniferFerreira.
- **Topics:**
 - Discussion of Chris's PhD and how Elvis might help.
 - Interrogation of Jennifer's honours topic, and exploration of semi-otic issues.

The meeting began with people discussing potential experiments for ChrisWatson's PhD thesis. Chris is attempting to study the effects that computers have on the musical composition process, so attendees of the meeting were attempting to suggest ways that these effects could be tested.

Matt suggested several ways by which this might be done. One possibility, for instance, might be to have perhaps 40 students in a course compose a 30 second jingle, with some of them using tools, and then comparing the results. Mike suggested that ThinkAloudTesting? could also be potentially useful, keeping in mind that it would be subjective. No solid conclusions about any ideal testing methods were reached.

The issue of ethical approval was also raised, since the university often requires such approval for experiments that involve people. One possibility suggested was that *our* existing approval (as the software engineering group) could be enough if the experiments were run in certain ways.

Jennifer then explained a bit about how she was applying PeirceanSemiotics? to NielsensUsabilityHeuristics? for her HonoursReport, focusing on what parts of Peirce's triad related to the various good things and bad things in user interfaces that the heuristics address.

This led to a more general discussion about semiotics, and everyone's varying understandings of both PeirceanSemiotics? and SaussureanSemiotics?. We concluded that semiotics were great because it's possible to write semiotics papers about virtually anything, resulting in a wide range of potentially publishable material.

Mike left at 4pm, while others stayed.

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