

A man with a blue and white striped shirt is shown from the chest up. He has a small blue alarm clock on his forehead. He is holding a brown alarm clock in his left hand and a white alarm clock in his right hand. A large red alarm clock is positioned in front of his mouth, with the top of the clock resting on his upper lip. The background is a patterned fabric.

I'm too busy!

And other lies...

Ankur R Desai, AOS Dept Seminar

Wed Nov 28, 2012

With an assist from Jorge Cham

Cultivating Future Scholars

Proposing Ideas
Designing Experiments
Interpreting Results

Creativity



Teaching

Research

Presenting
Writing
Mentoring

Communication

Service/Outreach

Management

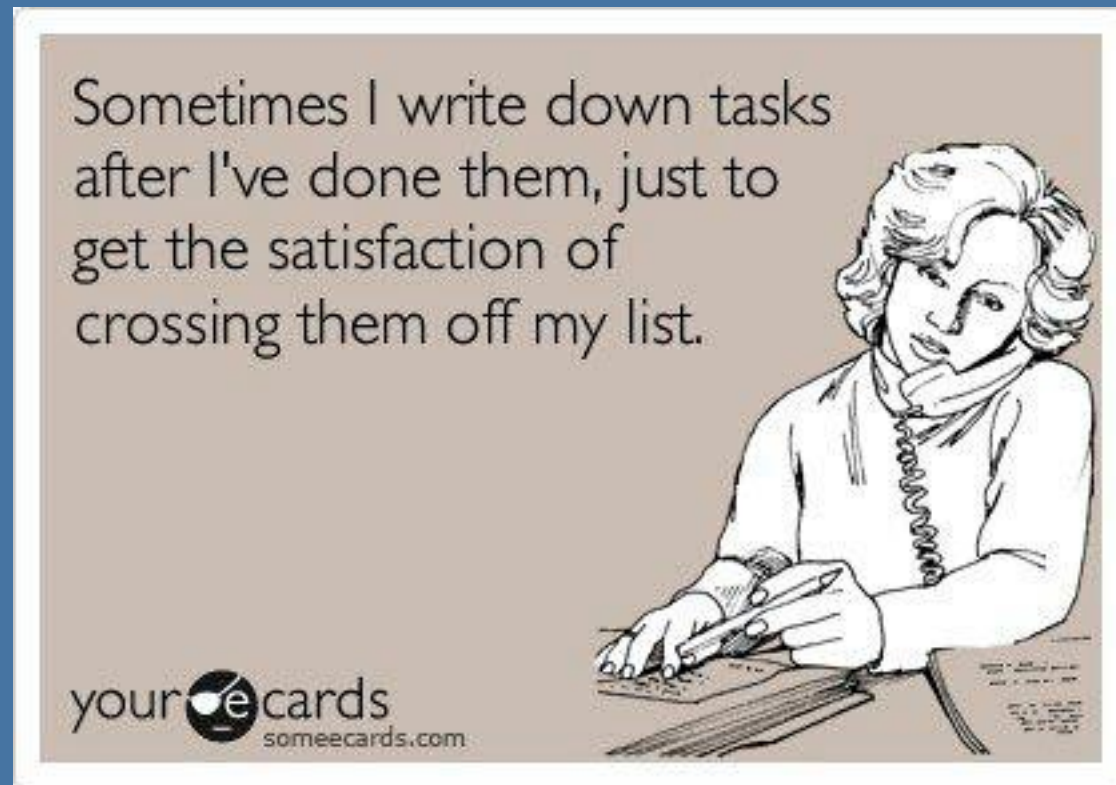
Time
Money
People

- Ahh, academia, where you are free to work any of the 80 hours of the week you choose...
 - anonymous

- Work
- Sleep
- Hobbies
- Friends
 - Pick 4-N, where N = number of young children you have

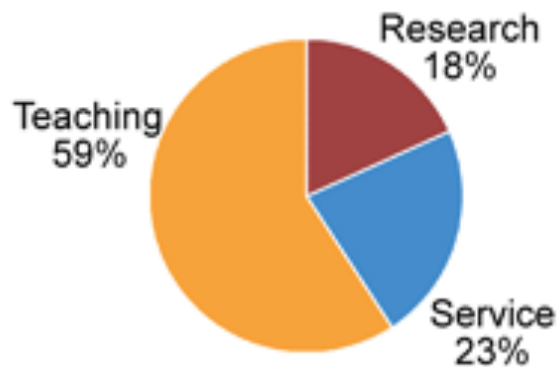
- Time is what we want most, but what we use worst.
 - William Penn

- It's not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is, what are we busy about?
– Henry David Thoreau



HOW PROFESSORS SPEND THEIR TIME

How they actually spend their time:



Source: Higher Education Research Institute Survey (1999)

How departments expect them to spend their time:



How Professors would *like* to spend their time:



What Time Management Is Not

- Minute accounting of every activity in your life

THE KEY TO LEADING A PRODUCTIVE LIFE IS TIME MANAGEMENT.



CHOOSE GOALS, BUILD A SCHEDULE, AND HAVE THE WILLPOWER TO FOLLOW IT— OR BE LEFT BEHIND BY THOSE OF US WHO DO.



SCHEDULE	
7:00 AM	WAKE UP
7:15 AM - 8:00 AM	POST ON PRODUCTIVITY BLOGS ABOUT MY SCHEDULE
8:00 AM - WHENEVER	FUCK AROUND

I never trust anyone who's more excited about success than about doing the thing they want to be successful at. – Randall Munroe, xkcd.com

What Time Management Is Not

- Minute accounting of every activity in your life
- A cure for procrastination (a positive thing)



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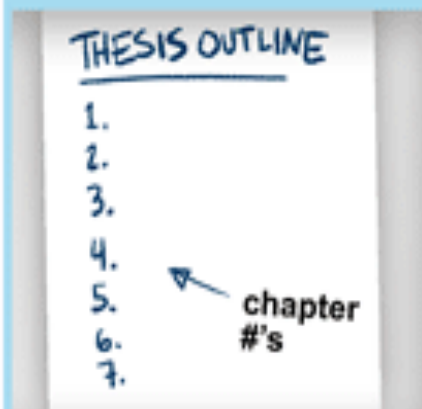
Why manage time?

- You want to graduate on time!

WRITING YOUR THESIS OUTLINE

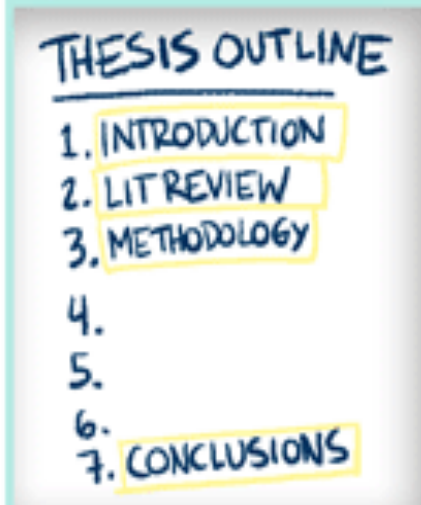
NOTHING SAYS "I'M ALMOST DONE" TO YOUR ADVISOR/
SPOUSE/PARENTS LIKE PRETENDING YOU HAVE A PLAN

STEP 1 Aim for a respectable number of chapters:



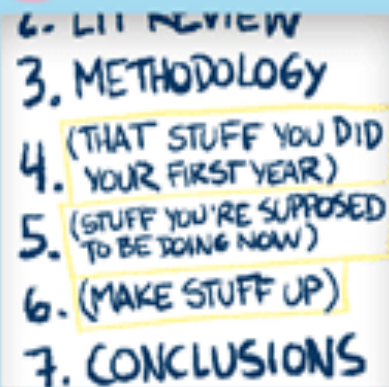
5 = "That's IT??"
6-7 = "Not bad"
8+ = "Are you crazy??"

STEP 2 Fill in the "freebies":



You're half way done!

STEP 3 Make up titles for the "meat" chapters:



(It'll be years before you actually have to work on that later chapter, and by then your thesis topic will have changed anyway)

STEP 4 Voilà! You just bought yourself another two years



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www.phdcomics.com

Why manage time?

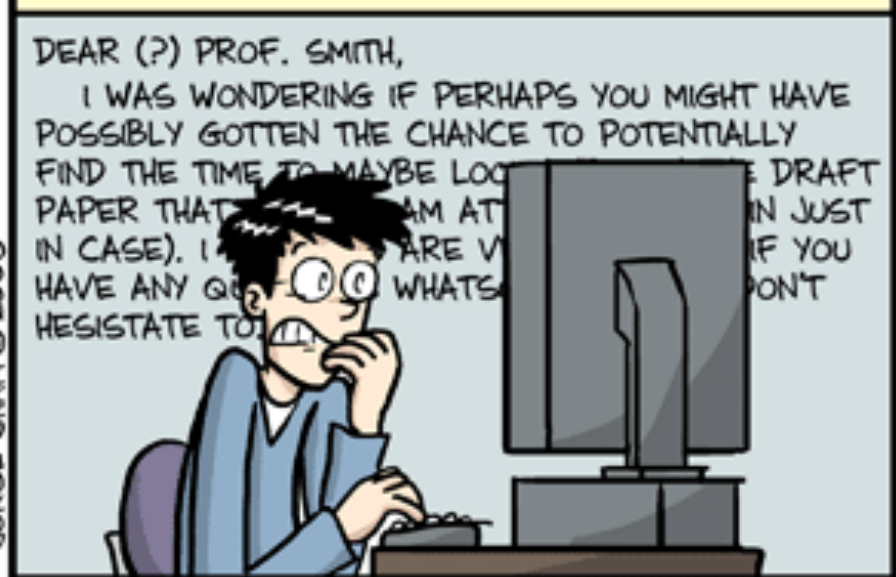
- You want to graduate on time!
- You want to get things done!

AVERAGE TIME SPENT COMPOSING ONE E-MAIL

PROFESSORS: 1.3 SECONDS



GRAD STUDENTS: 1.3 DAYS

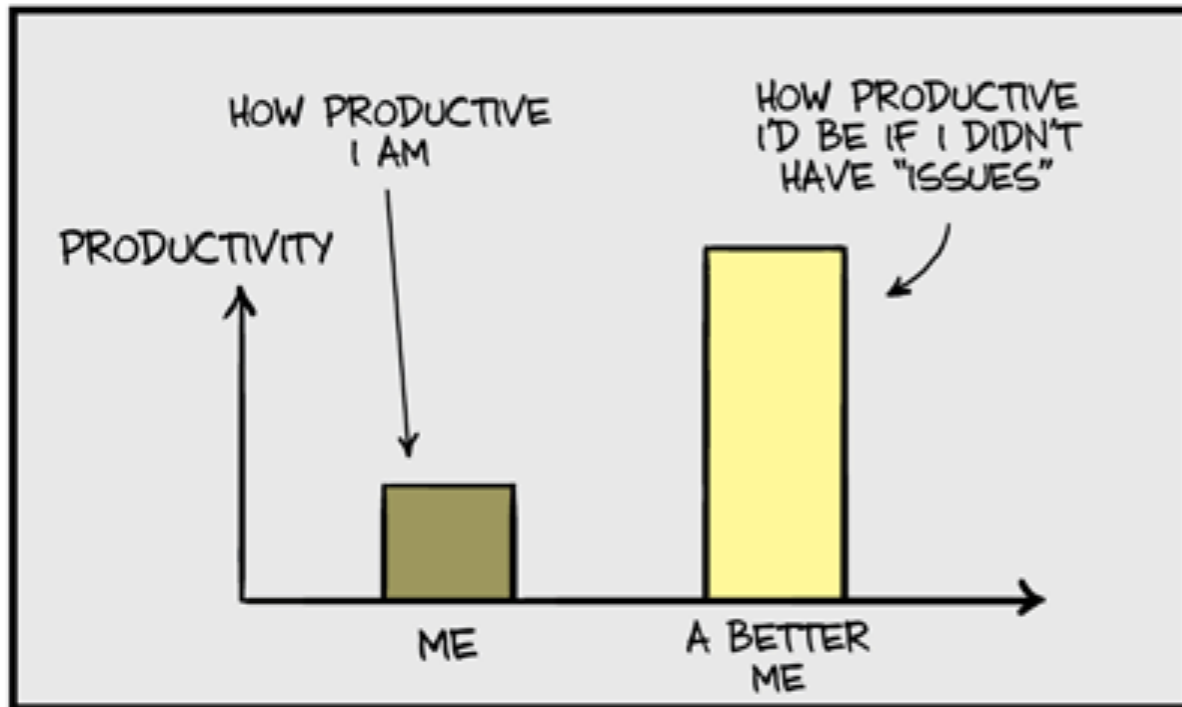


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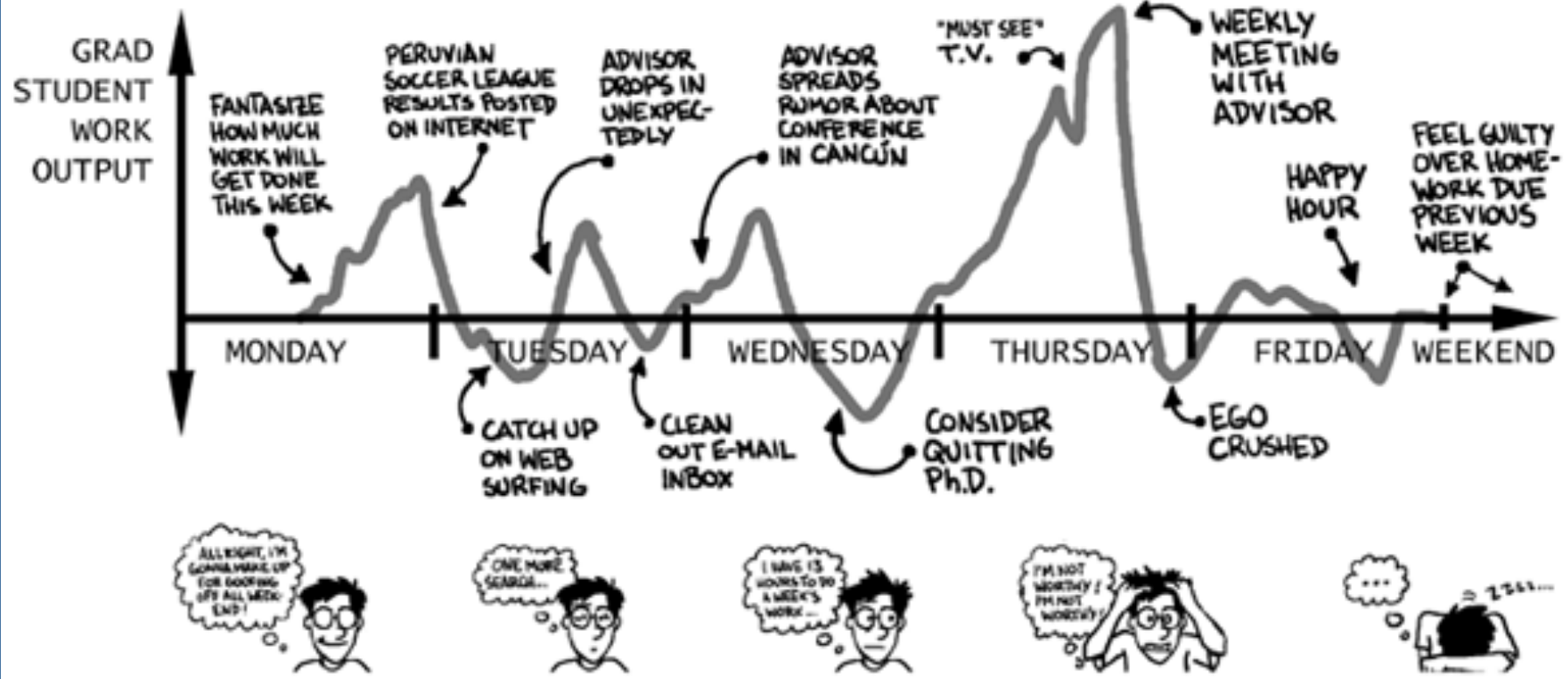
What's keeping you from doing so?

- Mental/physical roadblocks!



What's keeping you from doing so?

- Understand your mental/physical roadblocks!
- Bad work rhythms



JORGE CHAM © THE STANFORD DAILY

What's keeping you from doing so?

- Understand your mental/physical roadblocks!
- Bad work rhythms
- Lack of sleep



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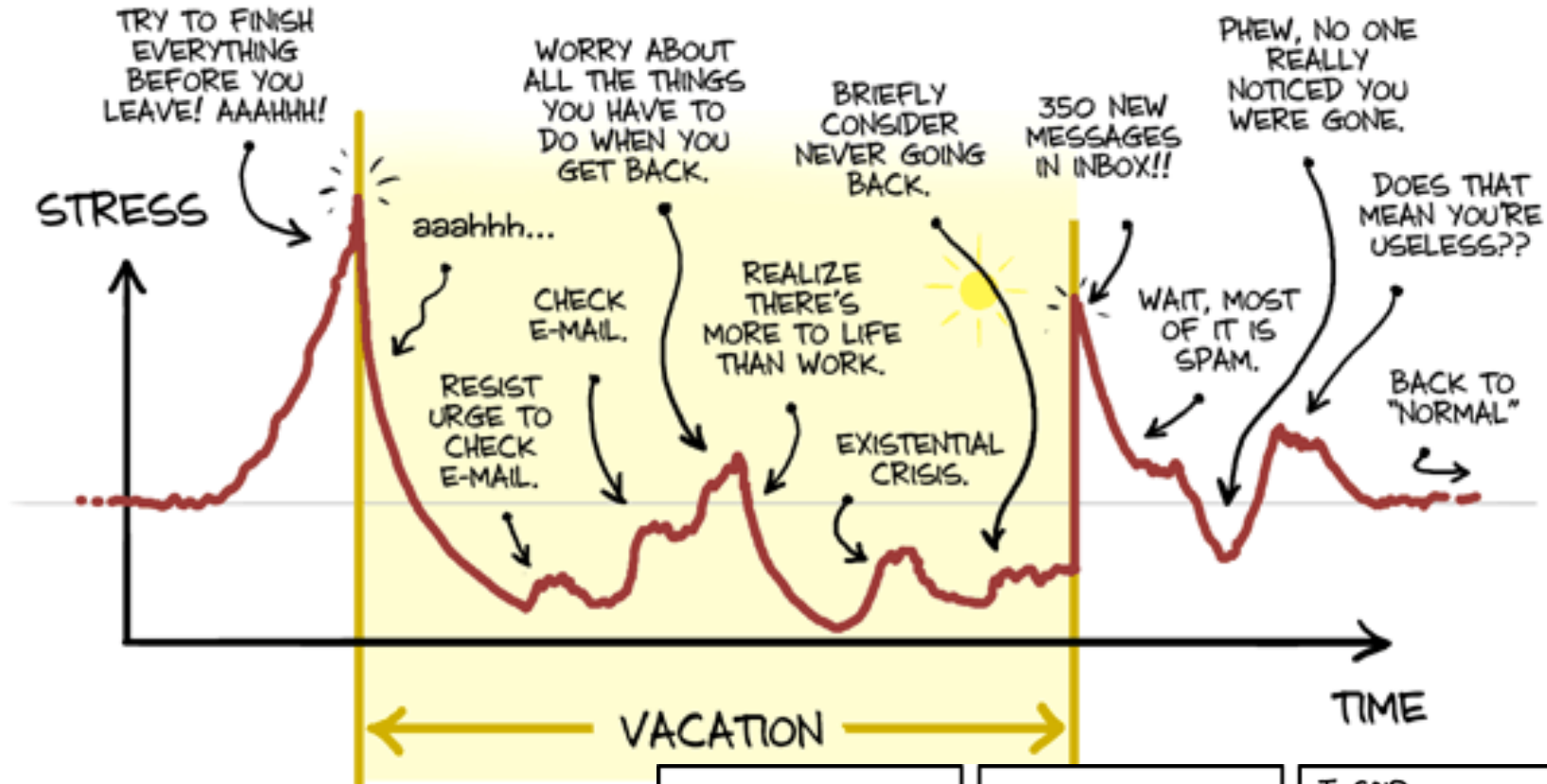


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What's keeping you from doing so?

- Understand your mental/physical roadblocks!
- Bad work rhythms
- Lack of sleep
- Overwork/perfectionism

VACATION RELAXATION?



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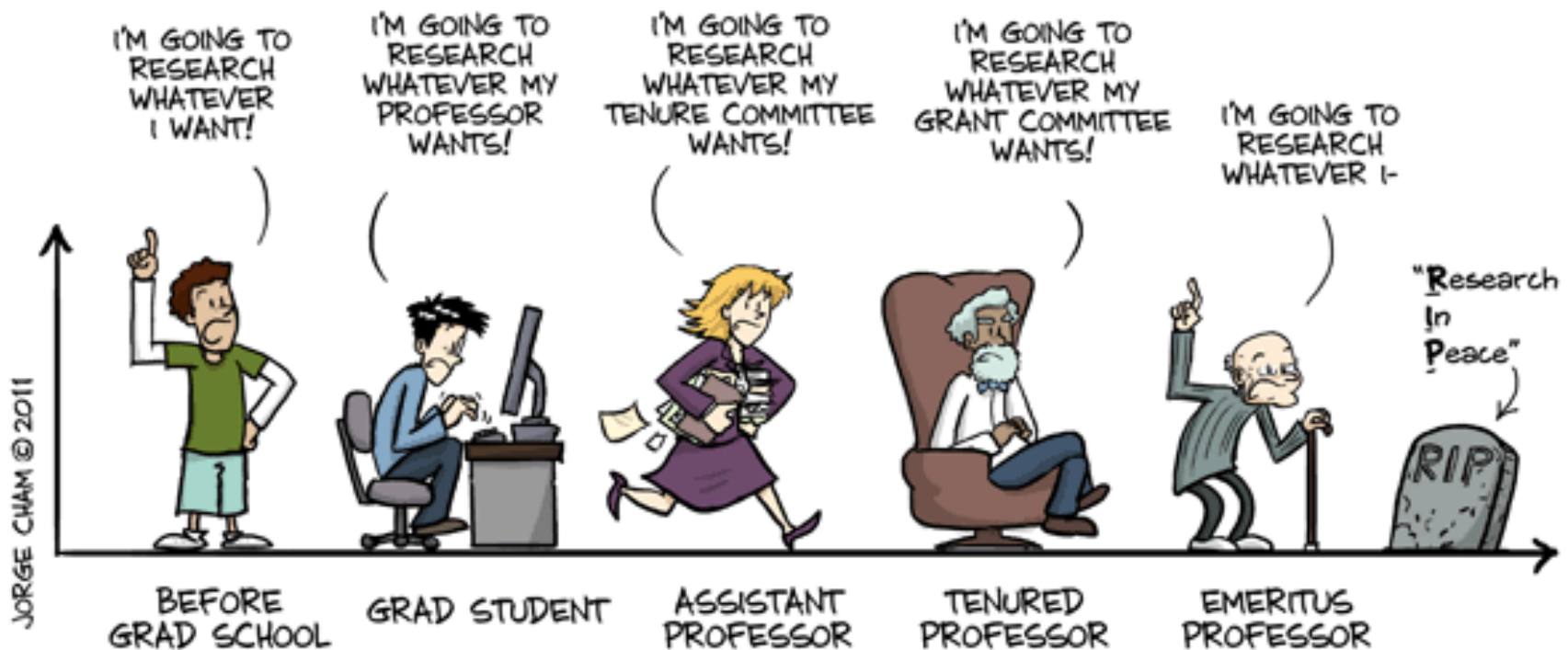


xckd

What's keeping you from doing so?

- Understand your mental/physical roadblocks!
- Bad work rhythms
- Lack of sleep
- Overwork/perfectionism
- Wanting to have it all! Trying too hard to please

THE EVOLUTION OF INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM



What's keeping you from doing so?

- Understand your mental/physical roadblocks!
- Bad work rhythms
- Lack of sleep
- Overwork/perfectionism
- Wanting to have it all! Trying too hard to please
- Avoiding big tasks

YOUR "TO DO" LIST

TO DO

- ~~WRITE TO DO LIST~~
- GET REIMBURSED FOR CONFERENCE EXPENSES
- WORK ON THESIS

TO DO

- ~~WRITE TO DO LIST~~
- ~~GET REIMBURSED FOR CONFERENCE EXPENSES~~ GO TO BANK
- WORK ON THESIS
- SEND SLIDES TO PROF JONE
- SUBMIT PAPER REVIEW
- GRADE FINALS
- MEET WITH UNDERG

TO DO

~~CLEAN APARTMENT? DENTIST?~~

~~BUY MORE COFFEE!~~

~~ORDER SUPPLIES~~

~~WRITE TO DO LIST~~

~~GET REIMBURSED FOR CONFERENCE EXPENSES~~

WORK ON THESIS

SUBMIT PAPER REVIEW

SUBMIT POSTER

GRADE FINALS

CALL MOM!!

MEET WITH UNDERG

HELP LABMATE WITH RESEARCH

LAUNDRY

MEET WITH UNDERG

TO DO

- WRITE NEW TO DO LIST
- WORK ON THESIS?

SIGH...



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What else?

Common Practices

- Focus To-Do on small concrete tasks
- Set self-imposed deadlines
- Find accountability partners/writing groups

Summer's almost over!
Time to check...

YOUR SUMMER TO DO LIST

THAT ONE THING YOU DID AT THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER.

Submit reimbursement claim for last year's conference.

STUFF YOU COULD HAVE DONE... BUT DIDN'T.

Clean up desk area

Calibrate instrument

STUFF YOU FORGOT YOU HAD TO DO.

Sort reference papers

Finish draft of chapter

Work on seminar presentation

STUFF YOU ARE WAITING ON OTHERS TO DO.

Resubmit rejected paper(s)

Start class notes

STUFF YOU WOULD HAVE DONE IF YOU HADN'T TAKEN UP A NEW HOBBY THIS SUMMER.

Literature review

Design new data analysis

Roam around and click on things on the internet

STUFF YOU DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO DO.

Scrap old lab equipment

Install new operating system

STUFF YOU HAD NO CHANCE OF GETTING DONE.

Eat well, sleep

Become more organized

Investigate jobs outside academia

Learn LaTeX/SAS/Python

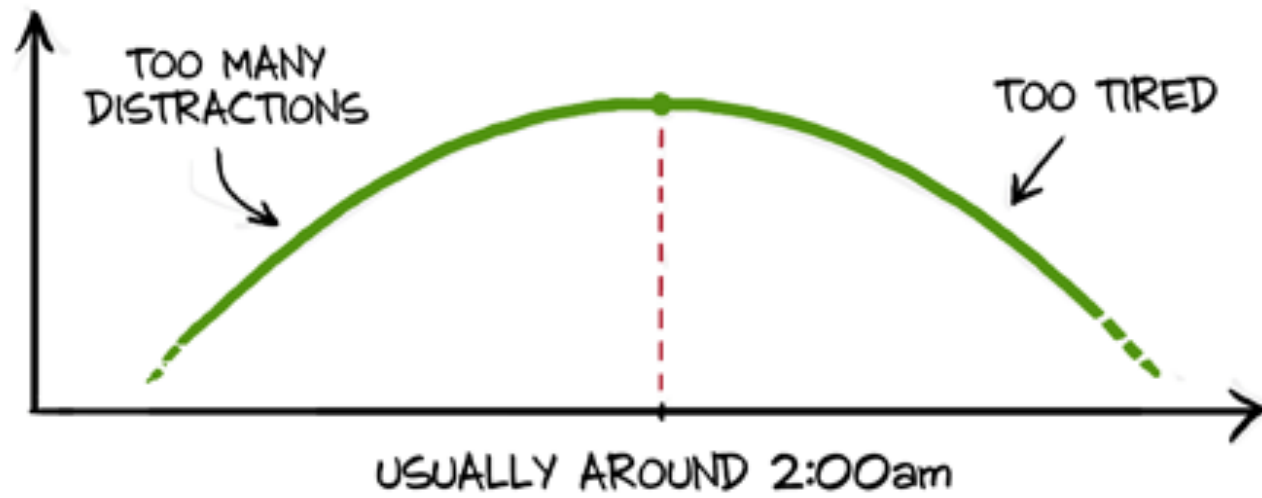
~~Graduate~~

STUFF THAT IS NOW IN YOUR FALL TO DO LIST.

Common Practices

- Focus To-Do on small concrete tasks
- Set self-imposed deadlines
- Find accountability partners/writing groups
- Write everyday, even in short chunks
- Prepare parts of tasks before you need to deal with them
- Work in multiple places

MY PEAK PRODUCTIVITY



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Common Practices

- Focus To-Do on small concrete tasks
- Set self-imposed deadlines
- Find accountability partners/writing groups
- Write everyday, even in short chunks
- Prepare parts of tasks before you need to deal with them
- Work in multiple places
- Recognize that scholarship is a creative profession that requires positive procrastination, time flexibility, slumps and bursts of productivity

And inspiration isn't something you can schedule, harness, or control.



6 hours later



Inspiration is more like food poisoning: it sprays out uncontrollably when you need it the least.

I'VE GOT IT! IT'S GENIUS!
BEST IDEA EVER!
SOMEONE GET ME A PEN SO I
CAN WRITE THIS D-



fuck it...
too sleepy...
zzz ... zz ...



I have found, however, that I can plant the seeds of ideas in my head. Hours, days, or weeks later these seeds will grow into ideas I can actually use.

Think about it. Deeply.
Then forget it.
And an idea will jump up
in your face.



Goddamn right, Draper.



http://theoatmeal.com/comics/making_things

My Approach

- Short term (week)
 - ical for appointments, textfile based todo list, check daily, setup weekly
- Medium term (semester)
 - Set of goals/milestones on wall and textfile, check weekly, setup each semester
- Long term (5 year)
 - Journal of ideas, check yearly
- Other things
 - Pending email box, purge biweekly or so
 - Write almost everyday
 - Be willing to say no, periodically review workload, work-family balance, travel schedule
 - Avoid extraneous multi-tasking



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Your approach?

Thanks!

- You will never find time for anything. If you want time you must make it
 - Charles Buxton