

# Reflecting on my thesis

University of Maryland  
Fall 2023  
Caroline Berger









# Why did I do a thesis?

## **Caroline's Goals**

G1 Teach with you

G2 Improve writing

G3 Improve at conducting research

G4 Improve at reporting research

G5 Publish research at CHI

G6 Work towards becoming a professor

*From an early email with my advisor*



# Courses

- **Advanced usability testing**
- **Both research methods classes**
- **Practical Skills in HCI; Mastering Master's Thesis**
- Personal Health Informatics & Visualization
- Greek study abroad - Civil Engineering
- Indonesian study abroad - Public Policy

# Writing

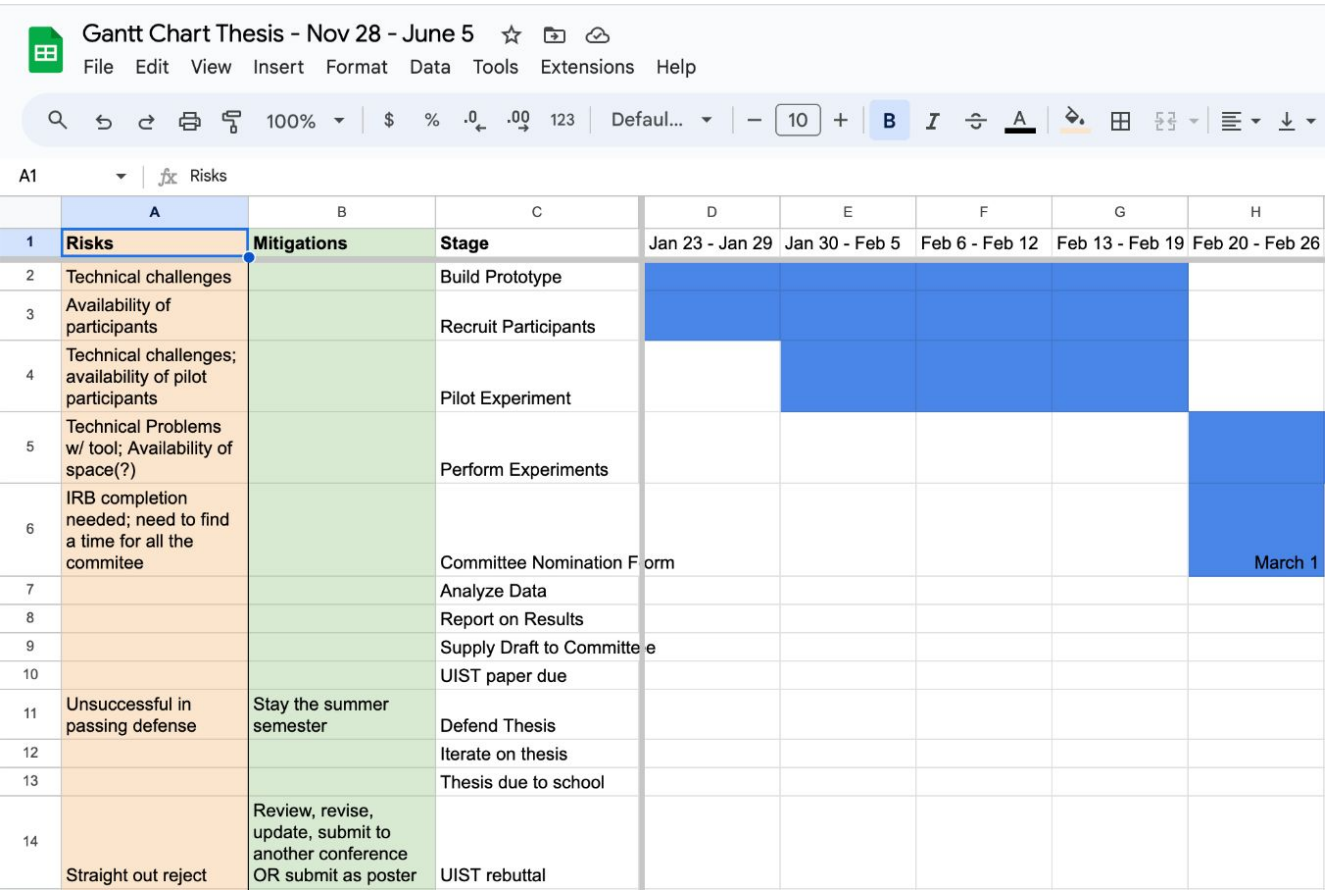
The screenshot displays a LaTeX editor interface. On the left, the source code for a document is visible, with line numbers 1 through 32. The code includes package declarations, document class settings, and content sections. On the right, the rendered document is shown, featuring a title page with the title 'Example', author 'John Hammersley', and date 'April 2018'. The document contains two sections: '1 Introduction' and '2 Conclusion'. A comment in the introduction section is highlighted in yellow in the source code and rendered in the document. A figure of a galaxy is included in the introduction section. The interface also shows a sidebar with file management options and a chat window.

```
1 \documentclass{article}
2 \usepackage{utf8}[inputenc]
3
4 \title{Example}
5 \author{John Hammersley}
6 \date{April 2018}
7
8 \usepackage{natbib}
9 \usepackage{graphicx}
10
11 \begin{document}
12
13 \maketitle
14
15 \section{Introduction}
16 There is a theory which states that if
17 ever anyone discovers exactly what the
18 Universe is for and why it is here, it
19 will disappear and be replaced by
20 something even more bizarre and
21 inexplicable.
22 There is another very nice theory which
23 states that this has already happened.
24
25 \begin{figure}[h]
26 \centering
27 \includegraphics[scale=1.7]{universe}
28 \caption{The Universe}
29 \label{fig:universe}
30 \end{figure}
31
32 \section{Conclusion}
33 "I always thought something was
34 fundamentally wrong with the universe"
35 \citep{adams1995hitchhiker}
36
37 \bibliographystyle{plain}
38 \bibliography{references}
39 \end{document}
```



I've copied my thesis so you are free to use it as a template. This is based off of UMD's latex template. Be sure to check with UMD's library style guide.  
[overleaf.com/read/hskcnyqwbgfw](https://overleaf.com/read/hskcnyqwbgfw)

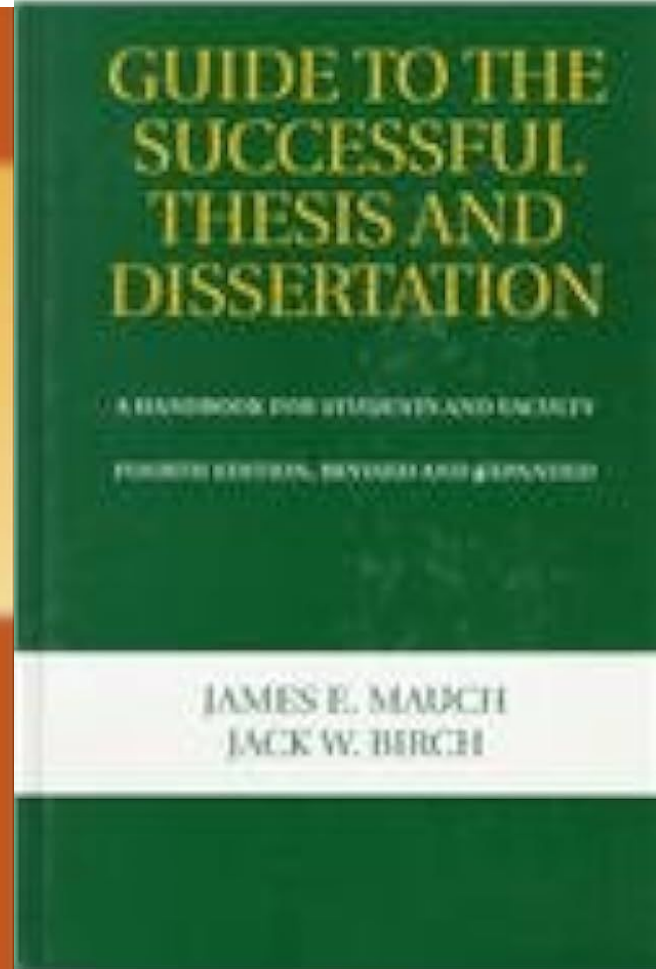
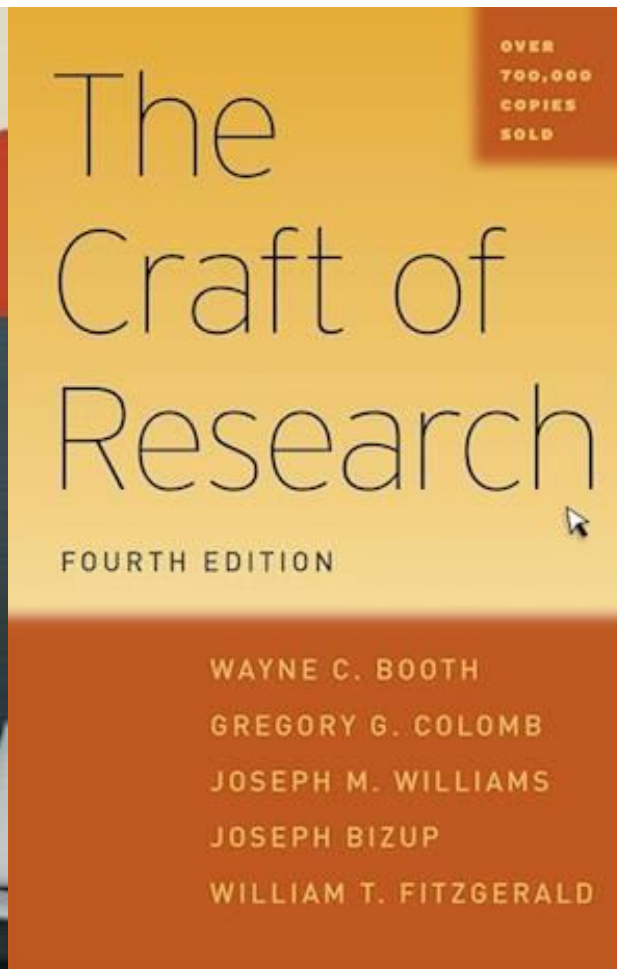
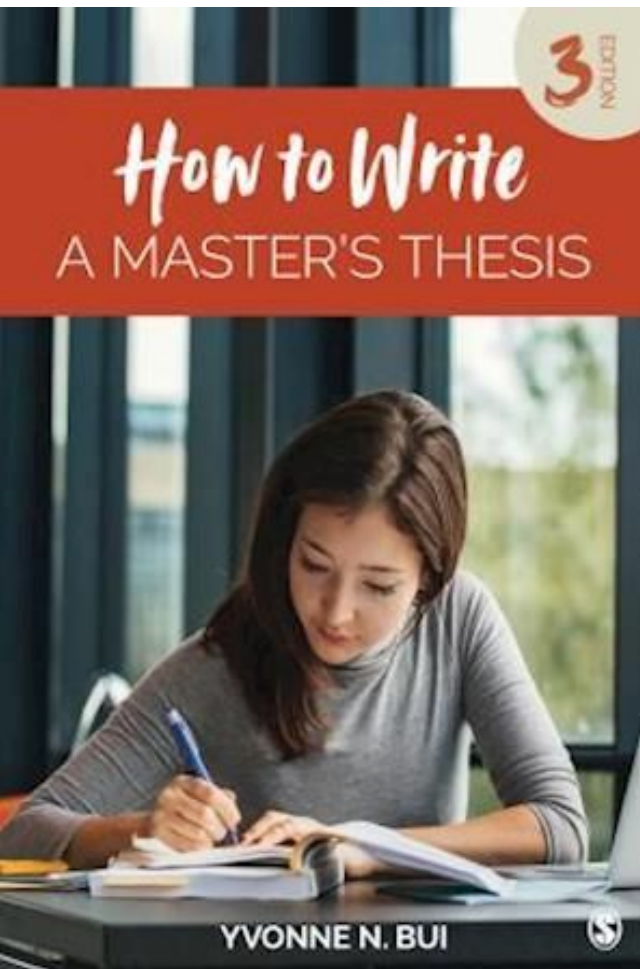
# Timeline & Planning - Milestones & Activities



I've copied my gantt chart, feel free to use.

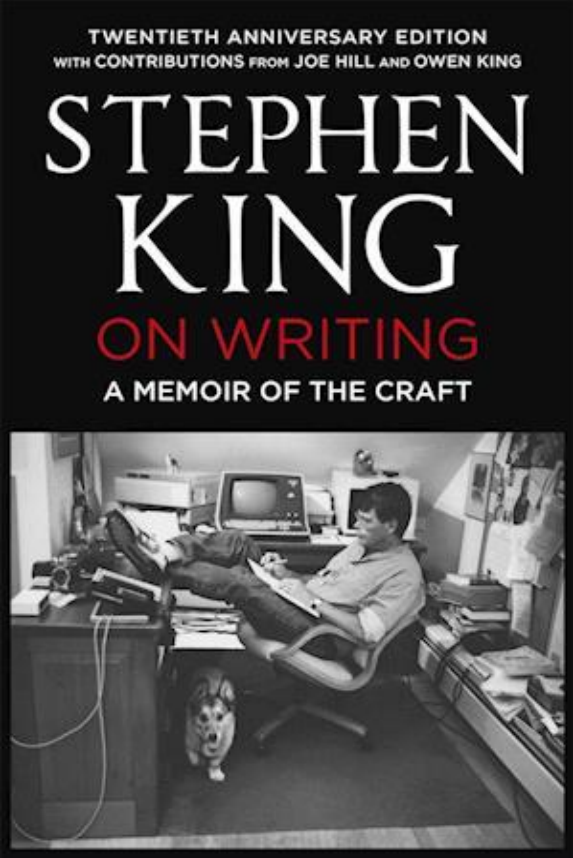
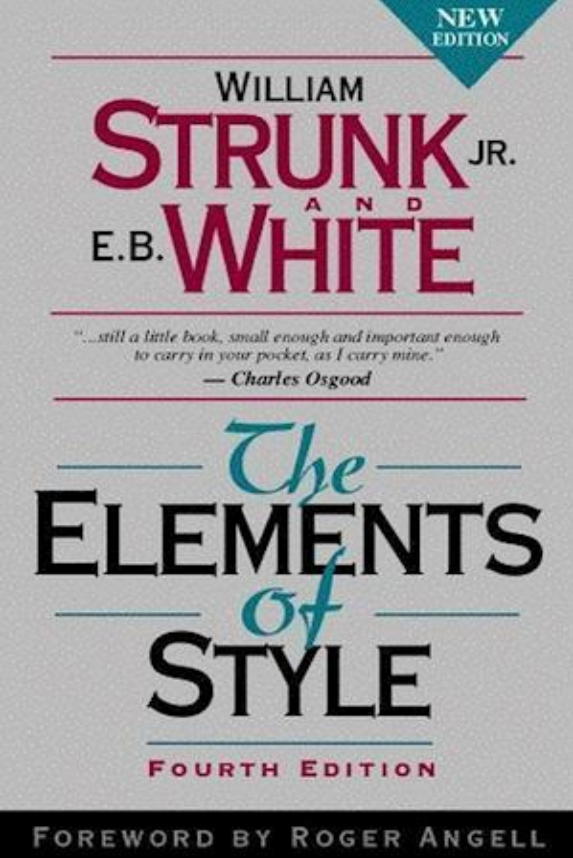
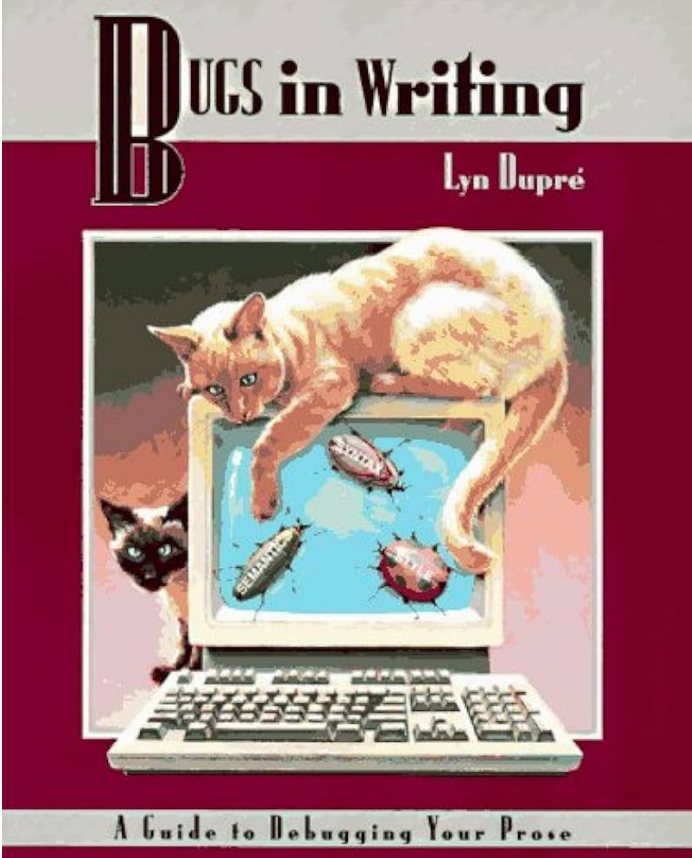
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1juLK6vm6L1WSVxFYs0oaQDap4lcaJV2Sxvqze44TLp8/edit?usp=sharing>

# Books that helped me to research





# Books that helped me to write





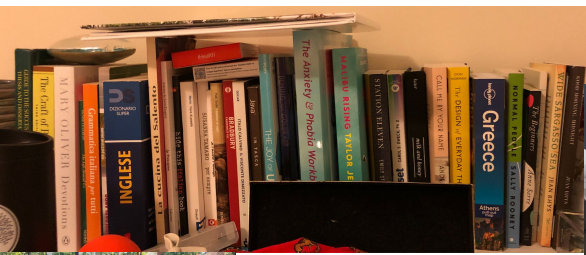
# What else helped?

●● Draft in Caroline Berger

Title

⊕ Tell your story...

Writing in my free time



My support network:  
Christina, my sister/room mate  
Ben, my fiance

Reading for fun



Getting outside



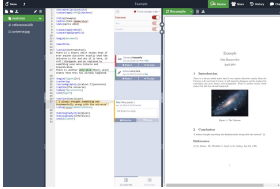
Working out at Eppley



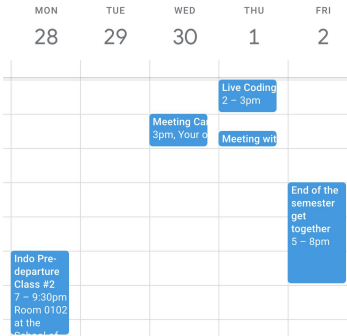
Librarians at UMD & their workshops:  
[lib.umd.edu/about/events](http://lib.umd.edu/about/events)

# Habits that helped me

Writing early and often



Meeting with my advisor  
1 hr / week



Sending a weekly update to my advisor 24 hr before we meet

Weekly Update Nov. 17, 2022 Inbox x



Caroline Palma Berger <cberger2@umd.edu>

to Niklas

Fri, Nov 18, 2022, 1:20 AM

Hi Professor Elmqvist,

Thanks a bunch for submitting UW, UMD, and UCSD recommendation letters, will definitely let you know the results of the applications.

**Questions**

1. Should we build personas or journey maps representing the as-is state?
2. Should we recruit participants that are non-CS students taking a programming course? Rationale being conversational programming/CS for All is a hot topic right now

**Summary of work performed**

1. [Gantt chart week by week stage-based timeline with risks and mitigations](#)
2. [Drafted methodology](#)
3. Drafted list of requirements user stories backed by literature see [chapter 4 of the draft of my thesis](#), I'm pulling in some best practices on foreign language learning as there's overlap between acquisition of a second language and programming  
Aside: if only we could speak to our computers aloud and get rid of all the prescriptive rules and writing requirements of the programming languages du jour, I think we'd see a lot more people using programming to make their lives easier

**Updates**

1. I found a few fellowships that I'd be eligible for in case that changes anything re:funding & pursuing a PhD under your supervision; there is the MITRE funding option, but that has many strings attached

**Plan for next week**

1. Principally taking a break for thanksgiving
2. Going to the Tufts library while I'm in Boston to read a book that's there "Professional Development for In-Service Teachers: Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning"...

Getting to know my labmates





# Key Administrative Tasks

- IRB approval
- Committee nomination form
- Scheduling defense
- Sending document to advisor for revisions
- Sending document to committee
- Defending thesis
- Revising
- Submitting to library



**You** are the project manager of your thesis

# Challenges

- Deciding what to research
- Imposter syndrome
- IRB application revisions
- Aligning expectations - committee involvement
- Running studies
- Formatting



**You** are the project manager of your thesis



So, would I do it again?

**YES!**

### Caroline's Goals

- ✓ Teach with you Information Org. (TA)
- ✓ Improve writing
- ✓ Improve at conducting research
- ✓ Improve at reporting research
- ? Publish research at CHI
- ✓ Work towards becoming a professor



# Remember enjoy the ride

- Brown Bag luncheons
- Prof. Choe's classes
- Greek and Indonesian study abroad
- Sports events
- Bike rides around Artemesia lake
- Access to DC (Embassy Events, Concerts, Kennedy Center, DC Bike Party)
- Pottery at STAMP

