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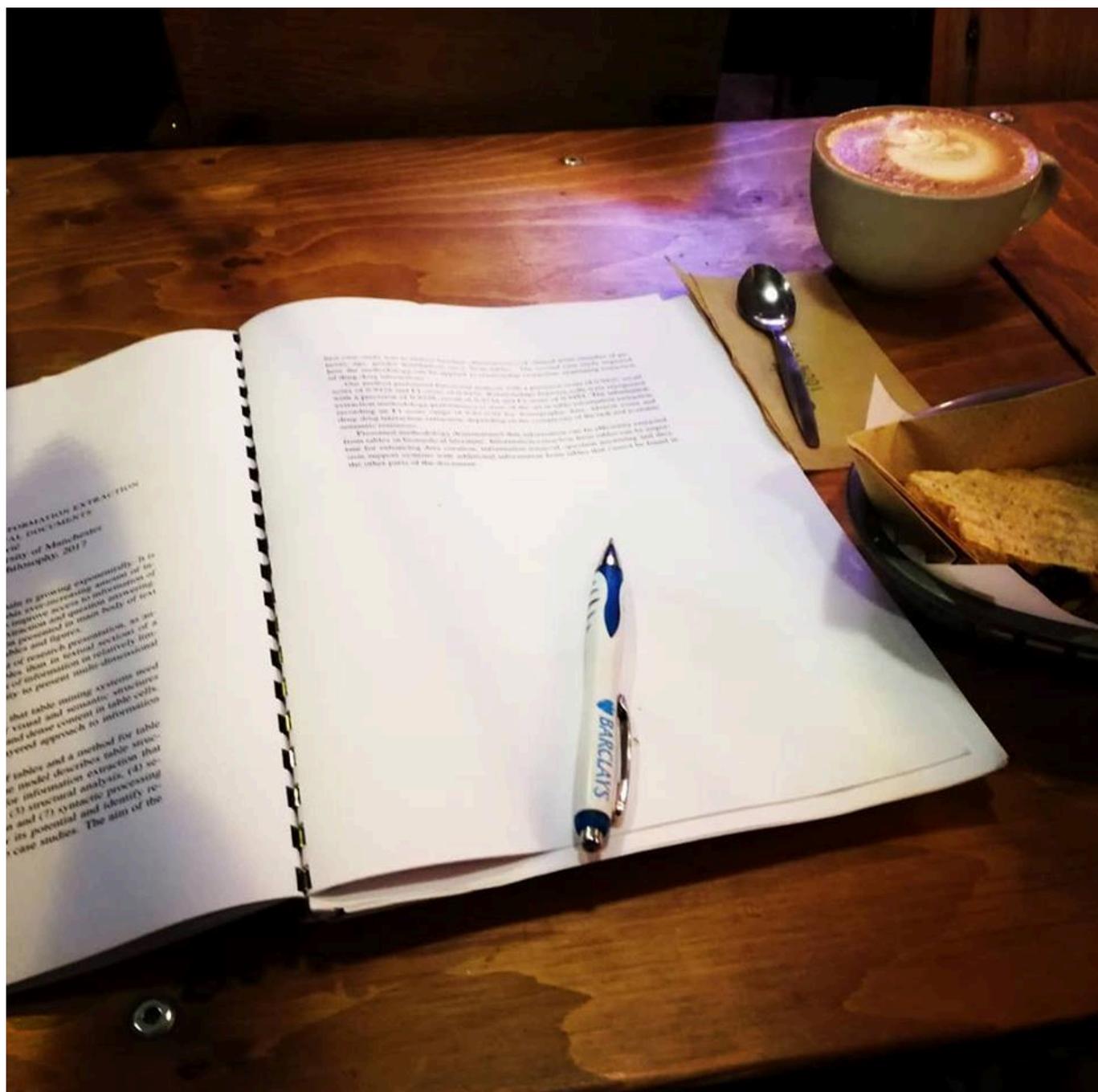
Submitted PhD thesis

by Nikola Milošević - Monday, December 25, 2017

<https://inspiratron.org/blog/2017/12/25/submitted-phd-thesis/>

As a title says, it is finally done, my PhD thesis is submitted. It was submitted on 18th December 2017. However, as overwhelmed with feelings as I feel, I wish to tell a short story how I felt in the last week before submission, during the submission and a few days after the submission.

The first draft of my PhD thesis was finished somewhere in May, however, my supervisor took a bit to read it properly and it needed some serious restructuring. Therefore, I took a job at the University in August for a part-time that turned into a full-time job in September. The position was research associate at one EU funded project that aims on creating social innovation database using natural language processing, web crawling and machine learning. In September, I got back my thesis and restructured it according to the comments of my supervisor. I returned my thesis to him for the second reading in early October, and got it back December 3rd. There starts my intense final work on it. Again, two chapters had to be changed. For one of them, I had to write some substantial part, the rest was moving around parts. Around 10th December I finished with dealing with my supervisor's comments, had a meeting with him, where he went through a new structure and said it should be fine. Then I went on my own for a number of times through my PhD thesis. I was printing a new version every 2 days, in those 2 days I would read through it and correct errors that I found, moved some paragraphs around, even found things that were redundant, which I was deleting or things that were not explained enough, so I was adding explanations. However, in every version I was finding new and new things that needed fixing. This was quite frustrating, since I was getting closer and closer to the date I set myself for submission. I started losing a bit of confidence, even though every version was for sure better than the one before it. At the end I had 7 printed versions of my thesis. I even got a thought saying "How many trees have to be cut in order for me to get a PhD". At some point I got tired of reading at home, therefore I went down, next to my house to a coffee, called Grano, where I would order Mokka, sometimes tea or some meal and read my thesis for hours and marking with pen what needs fixing. Then go home and fix those things. Here is some picture of how that looked like:



The days started being even more busy, as I started getting calls from some recruiters, had some issues with girl that I was going out at that time and so on. However, somehow I tried to set my focus on this thesis. It is not always possible, but generally I am satisfied how it turned out. In the last 2-3 days, my parents got a bit involved, even though they don't speak English, however they helped with recommendations of how to position some images and similar things. I asked one friend to proofread one 2 page bit that was completely new.

Finally, on 18th December, I woke up in the morning, I went through a bit of it, yet found some typos, but decided that I have to submit it. So I started online submission and it was done in couple of minutes. From there I went to print shop to print it for the official hard-copy submission. On the way, I got this strange feeling "Is that it... like 4 years of work and you just do couple of clicks and print it and that's it. No fanfares".

In the print shop there turn up to be a slight problem, since I wanted them to print it with hard cover. University of Manchester accepts soft cover, with transparent first page. I wanted golden lettering on the front with the name of the thesis, however, they started telling me that that may be against University's policy and they may return my thesis. So at the end, I printed it with the soft cover. It was cheaper, but presentation is not amazing... at least regarding covers. From MU print on Cambridge street I walked to Stackville street building, but first decided to have a meal and some fresh juice at the place called Chez, where I went through my printed thesis to check for some potential

errors and take couple of photos of my thesis. Something like this:



Afterwards, I went to Stackville street building and handed the thesis. I went to city center to crawl a bit around Christmas markets and Ardnale. I was not buying anything, more of crawling and thinking of what just happened. They say, when someone dies whole his life passes in front of their eyes. I had a feeling that 4 years of my PhD are just passing in front of my eyes. All good and bad, all happy memories and all frustrations. All friends and people who did not turn up to be that (they were really few). All moments that I am happy to remember. After a bit of crawling, I messaged couple of friends, asked some for drinks (well only 2), none of them replied. However, on my way back home, I met one of them and we went for a coffee and spend couple of hours talking, which was fun.

After that day, I felt quite exhausted and spent next couple of days watching series and movies on Netflix, mainly The Suits. On 20th I had a flight back home to Belgrade, where for another couple of days, I spent resting from my work and thesis. Just now around Christmas, I am back on track to start doing things.

So, what to say for closing. I am really happy my thesis with title "A MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH TO INFORMATION EXTRACTION FROM TABLES IN BIOMEDICAL DOCUMENTS" is finally submitted. It was interesting project, that even had some commercial application. The thesis should become available online, probably after the Viva Voce. Viva should be sometime end of January or in February. So wish me luck.

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