

# The 2014 Craig Report (Year 44)

*Know thyself*

## Executive Summary

This is a report on the qualitative and quantitative self information for the 44th year of Craig William "Ichabod" O'Brien. It covers the period from February 26th, 2013 through February 25th, 2014.

Personally there was progress for Craig on several fronts. The move toward vegetarianism continues slowly, as planned. Sugary, caffeinated drinks were eliminated from the diet. The long term obsession with quantitative self culminated in the production of this first ever annual report. To top it all off, Craig finally obtained the motorcycle he's wanted since he was told he couldn't have one as a teenager. Ironically, minimal progress was made on the minimalism front.

Professionally, Craig remains stagnant. He is still in the same position, although with the move of his division to the fifth floor he got a window cubicle. Two promotion opportunities presented themselves this year. However, due to factors unrelated to his job performance, Craig did not get either position. Craig has channeled his frustration into side projects at work; including the developing a SAS data set style object for Python and the beginnings of Obsessive Compulsive Productivity (OCP).

Quantitatively Craig needs to improve his data collection, mainly at work. His exercise for the year was scattered and chaotic, as expected. However, his time spent meditating was far below expected, and needs improvement. The motorcycle is doing well, and while there are data collection problems in terms of that area, there is little that can be done with them.

## Qualitative Self

The first significant event of the year for Craig was his office moving from the sixth floor to the fifth floor. This was an improvement in that he got a window cubicle, albeit one with a huge block of a column in the middle of it. At first it appeared this would not happen, as preference for cubicles was determined by grade and time in government. Management presented this as just the way things were done, although across the hall in Data Systems preference for cubicles was determined by grade and time in the agency. The Data Systems method would have shifted Craig from sixth place to fourth place. However, David Miller, who for some reason does not like window cubicles, kindly swapped with Craig.

One other odd part of the move to the fifth floor was the discovery of a Russell Richards art calendar that had been stolen during the 43rd year. It turned out it was not stolen, but rather removed from Craig's cubicle and hidden behind a storage cabinet. Why this was done remains a mystery. Craig's only theory is that one page had a woman with bare breasts in a

window in the background, which may have offended one of the women in the office. However, the calendar was not on that page when the calendar was removed and hidden.

Early in the year Craig made another shift toward reducing the amount of meat in his diet. With red meat almost completely out of the diet, the goal was to get all meat out of the lunch menu. This required some experimentation with alternate lunches, trying to find something that could be obtained at the grocery store near his office and able to be prepared and eaten in the half hour lunch break allowed by Craig's management. The final result was granola bars with carrots or an apple. A small breakfast consisting of a granola bar or two and a large OJ was also added. This is notable for being the first consistent breakfast Craig has eaten since grade school.

This further shift away from meat prompted an analysis of the food Craig is eating, to make sure he is not missing any essential nutrients. The full analysis was never completed, due to the obvious and shocking realization that Craig was getting one-third of this calories from soda. This precipitated another attempt by Craig to quit drinking soda. On June 21st, Craig had his last soda, and has not relapsed to date. While he has not had any caffeine since then, he does allow himself one sugary drink a week.

There were problems early on in the soda abstinence, as it became apparent that sodas provided a major role in relieving stress. Determined to quit soda, Craig held a brainstorming session to come up with alternate methods for relieving stress. The alternative chosen by the brainstorming team was to get a motorcycle. Based on this advice, Craig took a motorcycle class at Montgomery County Community College, got his M class license, and purchased a used Yamaha V-Star (a 650cc cruiser).

This has worked amazingly well. A public parking lot was discovered two blocks from Craig's office with free motorcycle parking, and motorcycles are HOV-2 vehicles. These two factors got Craig to start riding his motorcycle to work on days when the weather permits. He comes to work refreshed from a ride, and if work is stressful he has forgotten it by the time he gets home.

While Craig was learning how to ride his motorcycle, he also applied for a promotion to a program analyst position ostensibly overseeing the integrated teams in his agency. Craig had written the original integrated team application, he had be the main point of contact with the contractors for the current integrated team application, he had trained the integrated teams on using both applications, and he was a contributing member of two of the integrated teams.

It was a foregone conclusion that Craig would not get the job. Another individual had been on detail in the position based on the apparent qualification of having a Continuous Improvement Champion Certificate, and was clearly being fast tracked into the position. Craig still applied, feeling he was better qualified for the position, despite having been blocked by his own management from going on that detail and being able to show his qualifications. Craig did not get the position, not that anyone bothered to tell him that directly.

This loss to nepotism had a negative impact on Craig's morale at work. Craig was torn between a desire to be less productive for people he had less respect for, and an obsession with being productive in general seared into his brain as a child. To balance the conflicting psychological forces, Craig adopted the One-Eighth Compromise. The One-Eighth

Compromise involves working one hour out of every eight on whatever project Craig wants to work on, whether or not management has directed him to work on them or even knows about them. The restriction at the heart of the compromise is that they must be related to Craig's job, and in some sense making him more productive. This has led to the development of two projects: Sassy and Obsessive Compulsive Productivity (OCP).

Sassy is a package for Python which primarily emulates a SAS data set. Craig's main programming language at work is SAS, but it can be cumbersome for handling some data processing tasks. Python is a much less cumbersome programming language, but does not have good data types for handling two dimensional tables of data. The preliminary version of the package is complete, and is being tested sub-rosa on some data requests that have been assigned to Craig.

OCP is a productivity methodology with a GUI application that is still in development. Craig's obsession with productivity has lead him to research several different productivity methodologies and software packages, such as Getting Things Done, Agile Productivity, and Task Coach. While using them piecemeal was working well, it was suggested that synthesizing the pieces with Craig's own ideas and making them a cohesive whole would improve productivity further. OCP is meant to do that, especially making use of Craig's obsessive compulsive feature to satiate his productivity compulsion. Currently OCP consists of a schedule tree, with schedules for the current day, week, month, year, five years, and life; with a review of successes and problems at the end of each scheduled period. In development is a tree of projects and tasks, with planning, time estimation, review after completion, and integration with the schedules.

Later in the year the Data Intake Branch Chief retired. This is a position that Craig's management has been using as a motivational carrot. Craig applied for the position, but did not make cert. Second hand information indicates that Craig's management was surprised Craig could not make cert. On the other hand, Craig was rather dubious that anyone except the woman retiring from the position could have made cert. In any event, the hiring official determined that no qualified applicants made cert, and closed the position without hiring anyone. It will be reopened after a mandatory waiting period. No one has been able to communicate clearly the length of the waiting period.

## **Quantitative Self**

During his 44th year, Craig collected 2,683 data points on himself. 1,337 were collected using Tap Log (an Android application by Tool and Die Co) and 1,346 were collected using Task Coach (a cross-platform application by Frank Niessink, Jerome Laheurte, and Aaron Wolf). This data was translated into a combined data set by a Python program, leaving 2,379 data points (1,033 from Tap Log and 1,346 from Task Coach). The combined data set was analyzed using R and ggplot2.

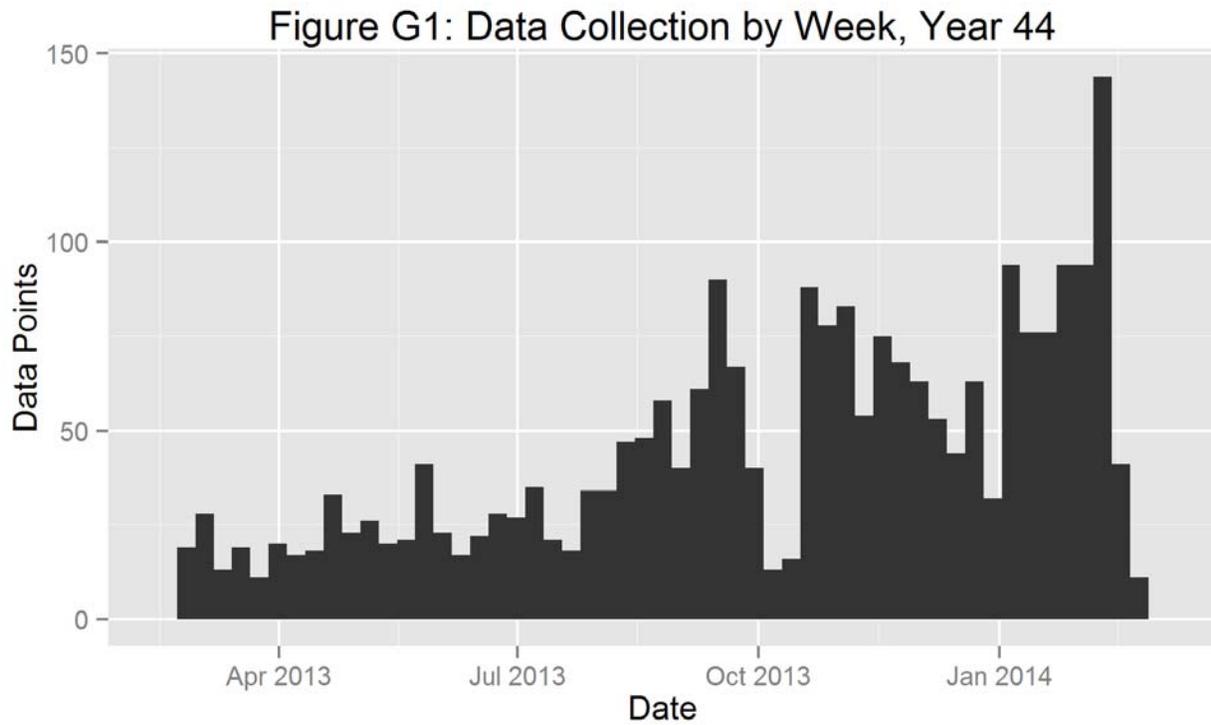


Figure G1 shows the data collection by week. There is a clear increasing trend over the year. Some of the increase is due to increased data collection efforts, especially with Task Coach. Some of it is due to motorcycle data collection not starting until August 8th. The low data collection at the beginning of October is due to the government being shut down. No Task Coach data was collected during that period.

Figure G2: Data Collection by Day and Source, Year 44

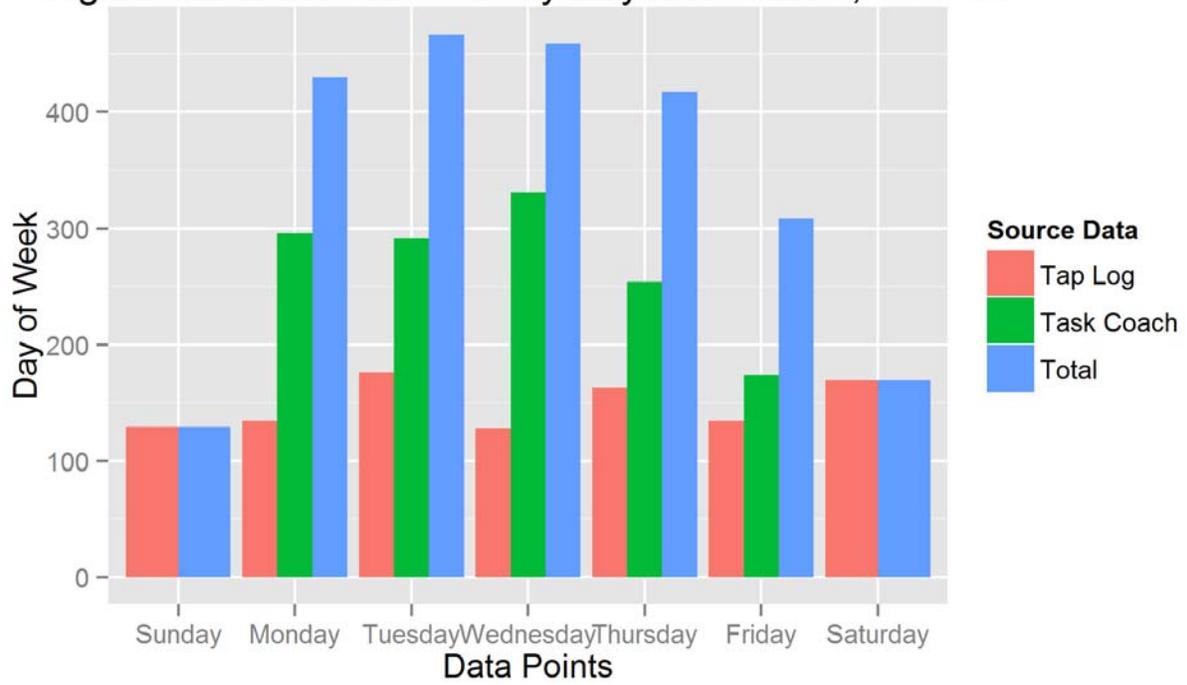


Figure G2 shows day collection by day of the week. This is skewed toward week days by the fact that Task Coach data was only collected at work.

## Meditation Data

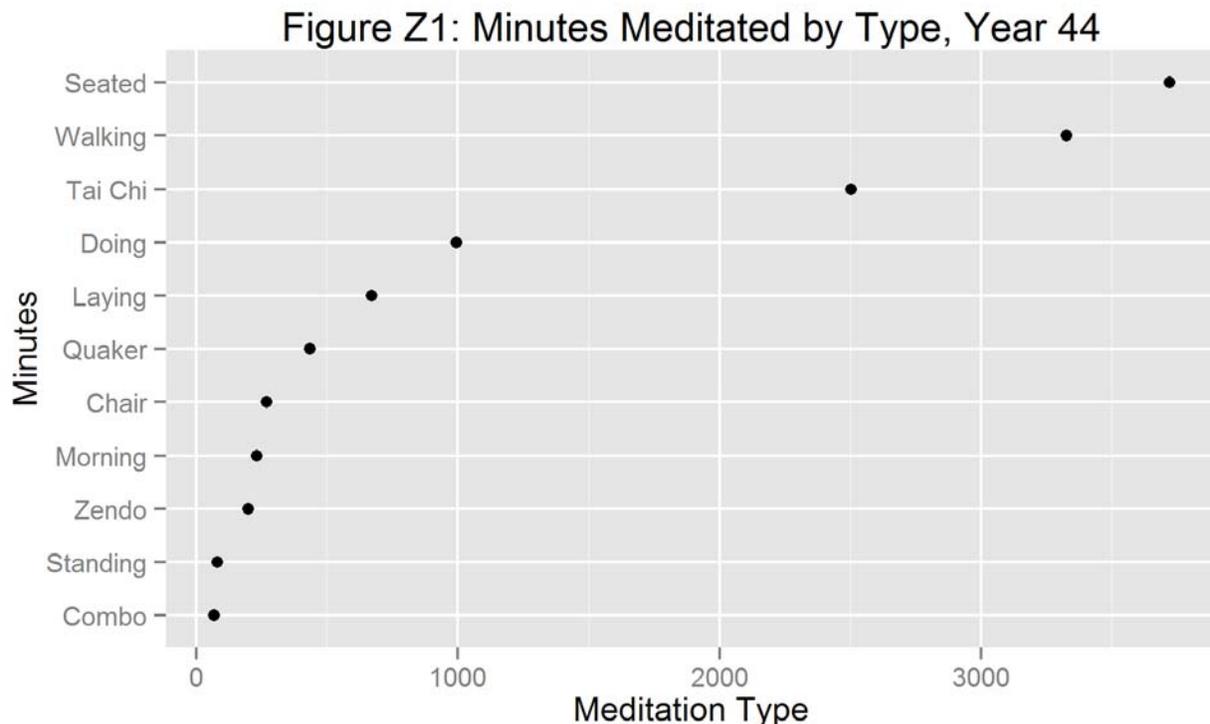


Figure Z1 shows a breakdown of time Craig spent meditating based on different postures. The ranking is mostly as expected. The top four categories are the ones practiced regularly: seated meditation is practiced on a daily basis, walking meditation is done as part of Craig's commute to work, Craig goes to a Tai-Chi class most Saturdays, and Craig tries to practice doing meditation randomly once every day.

A closer look at the numbers shows more of a problem. Craig meditated an average of 34 minutes a day, and did seated (including zendo) meditation only 10 minutes a day on average. Meanwhile he thought he was doing closer to 30 minutes of seated meditation a day, with at least half of his meditation in that posture. Furthermore, while daily seated meditation is the goal, only 155 days (42.4%) had seated meditation.

The meditation postures in figure Z1 are:

### Seated

Meditation on a meditation bench or a zafu cushion, in seiza posture.

### Walking

Meditation done while walking, including waiting at street corners and riding elevators and escalators.

### Tai-Chi

Meditation done while practicing or learning Tai-Chi

### Doing

Meditation done while performing daily tasks. Some call this "mindfulness" meditation.

**Laying**

Meditation done while laying on the floor. This is often done as alternative to seated meditation when Craig is experiencing back pain.

**Quaker**

Quaker silent worship in a pew at Quaker meeting. This is the same posture as chair meditation, but with a different mental state. This posture is hoped to increase, as the motorcycle makes it less costly and more enjoyable to get to Quaker meeting.

**Morning Meditation**

Meditation while laying in bed after the alarm goes off. This meditation was thought to have a positive effect on getting up on time. However, further study has refuted this hypothesis, and this style of meditation is no longer practiced by Craig.

**Zendo**

This is a combination posture, including 25-30 minute sessions of seated meditation interspersed with short periods of walking or Tai-Chi meditation. This posture is hoped to increase, as the motorcycle makes it less costly and more enjoyable to get to the zendo.

**Standing**

Meditating while standing, often while waiting for a train or bus.

**Combo**

Combo meditation is a combination of walking and standing meditation sometimes practiced during Craig's commute.

***Motorcycle Data***

One of the things new motorcycle riders are recommended to do is to keep a log of the rides taken. To Craig, this seemed like a perfect chance to collect more data.

Craig had been using his car as little as possible out of concern for the environment. He noticed that this made him a worse driver. Use it or lose it, as they say. When Craig decided to get a motorcycle, he realized it was a dangerous vehicle. Rather than exacerbate the problem by becoming a crappy rider, he resolved to ride the motorcycle every day he could.



Figure M2 shows how many miles Craig rode each week. This shows that Craig's early rides were of shorter distances. This was because as a new rider he stuck to parking lots at first, then quiet residential neighborhoods, and so on, slowly working his way up to interstate highways. Figure M2 also shows the effect of cold days where Craig only rode to the Metro station, rather than all the way to work. The spike in mid-September is when Craig rode to Annapolis to attend the Maryland Renaissance Festival.

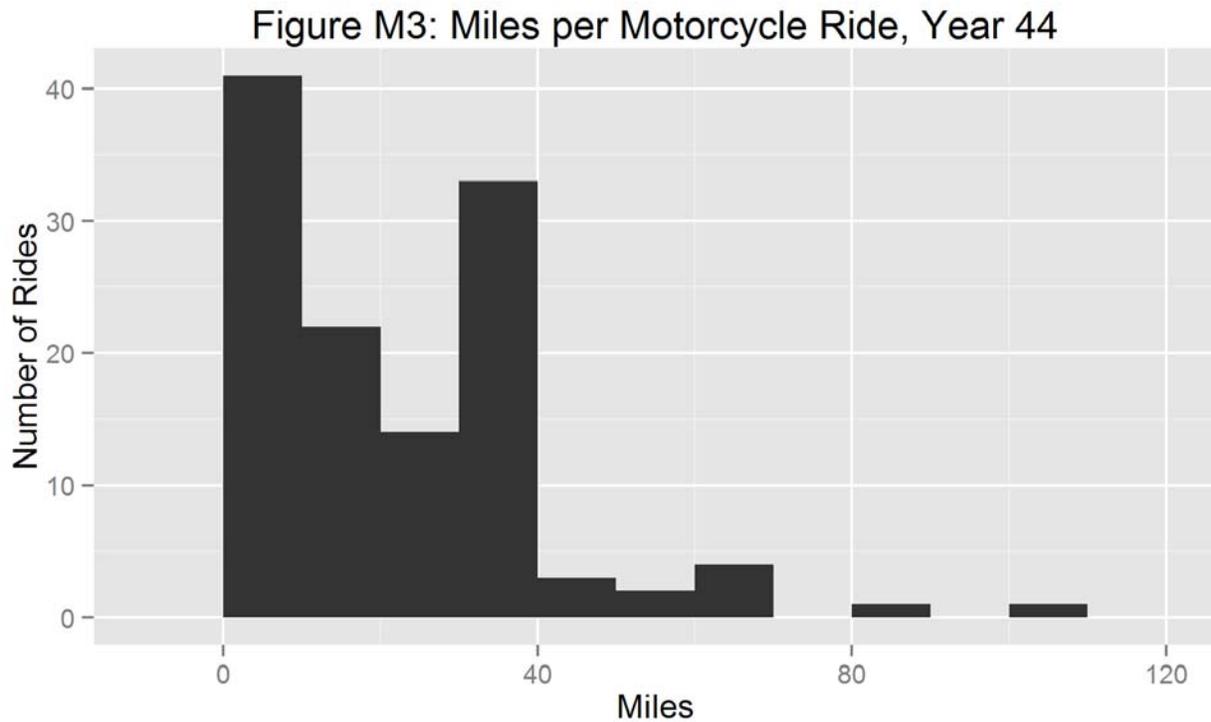


Figure M3 shows the number of miles per ride. A "ride" is defined as the time between leaving home and getting back home (a full loop). The distribution is bimodal, with a lot of short rides (especially at the beginning) and lots of rides in the 35-40 mile range (typically going to and from work). The two outliers are a trip to Virginia to see Fight Club on the big screen, and the aforementioned trip to the Maryland Renaissance Festival.

Figure M4: Motorcycle Miles per Gallon, Year 44

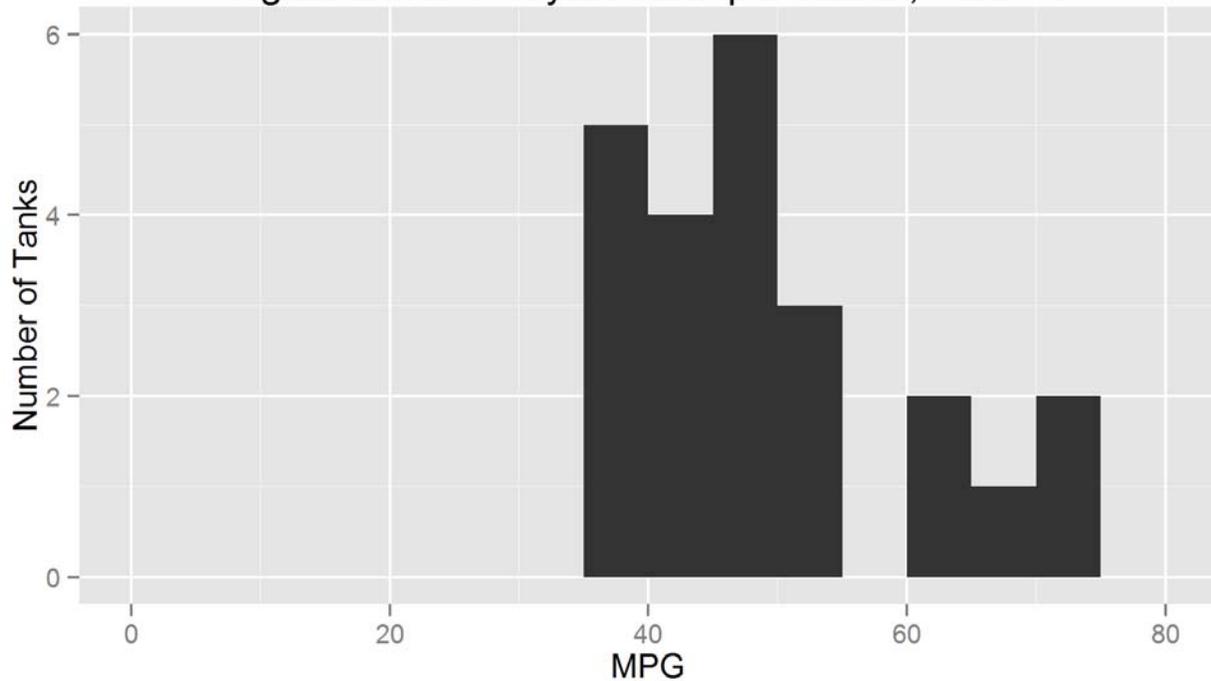


Figure M4 shows the fuel efficiency per tank of gas. There is significant measurement error in this data. The automatic shut-off function on gas pumps don't always work on a motorcycle, at least not on Craig's motorcycle. This means Craig has to watch as he fuels up for tell tale splatters as the tank is about to overflow. This over fills the tank and means that the gas used by the previous tank is over estimated, and therefore the mpg are under estimated. Likewise the gas used by the next tank (that is not over filled) will be under estimated, with the mpg over estimated. Given these unavoidable measurement errors, 40-55 mpg is probably a reasonable estimate of Little Thunder's fuel efficiency. (Craig's motorcycle was named "Thunder" by the live in engineer at his condo complex. Craig thought that was a little pretentious for a 650cc motorcycle, so he added the "Little.")

Figure M5: MPG vs. Legs per Tank, Year 44

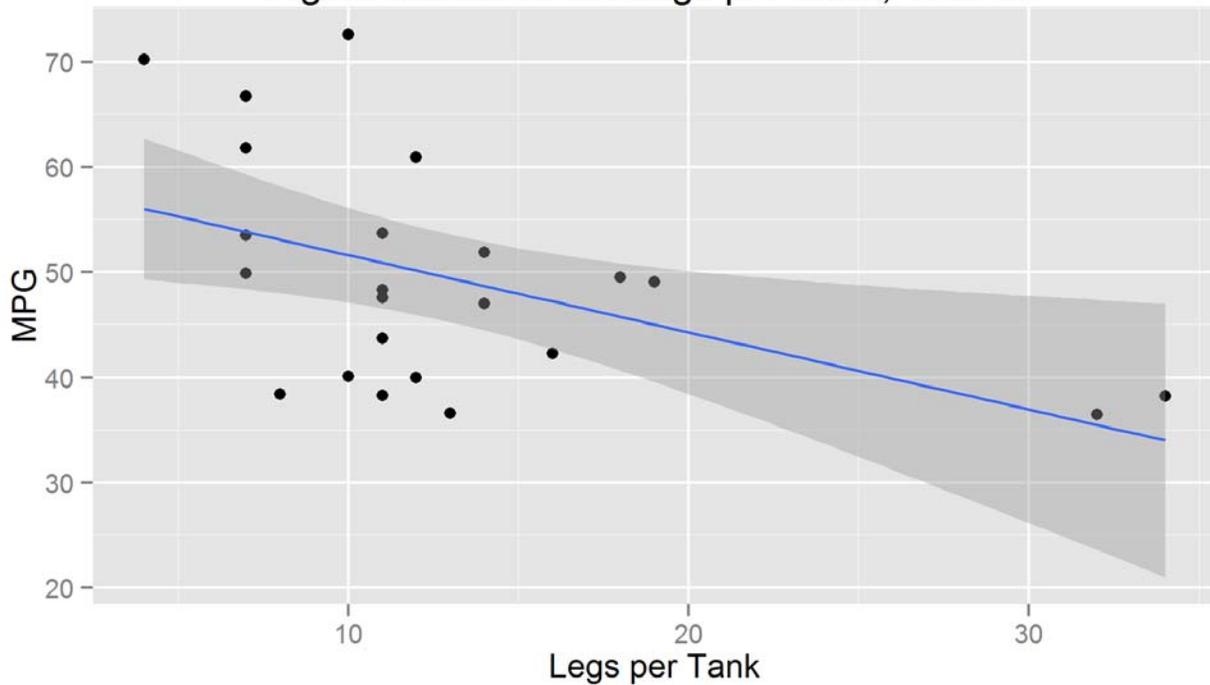


Figure M5 shows the fuel efficiency of Little Thunder as a function of the number of legs used in the tank. A "leg" is defined as getting on the motorcycle, going somewhere, and getting off the motorcycle. The line in the graph is a simple linear regression of the effect. It shows a slight and barely significant effect probably hurt by the two outliers from early rides. It predicts a maximum fuel efficiency of 59 mpg. There are several things probably interfering with this effect. One is that many of the middle range rides to work end up with Craig stuck in traffic, wasting fuel. Another is that during the winter, Craig often ran the motorcycle without going anywhere to keep the battery charged. And, of course, significance is hard to find given the variance introduced by the measurement errors mentioned before.

### ***Exercise Data***

Exercise is an important part of Craig's long term strategy: to retire and have the childhood he missed because so much messed up shit was going on. However, he has a long way to go.

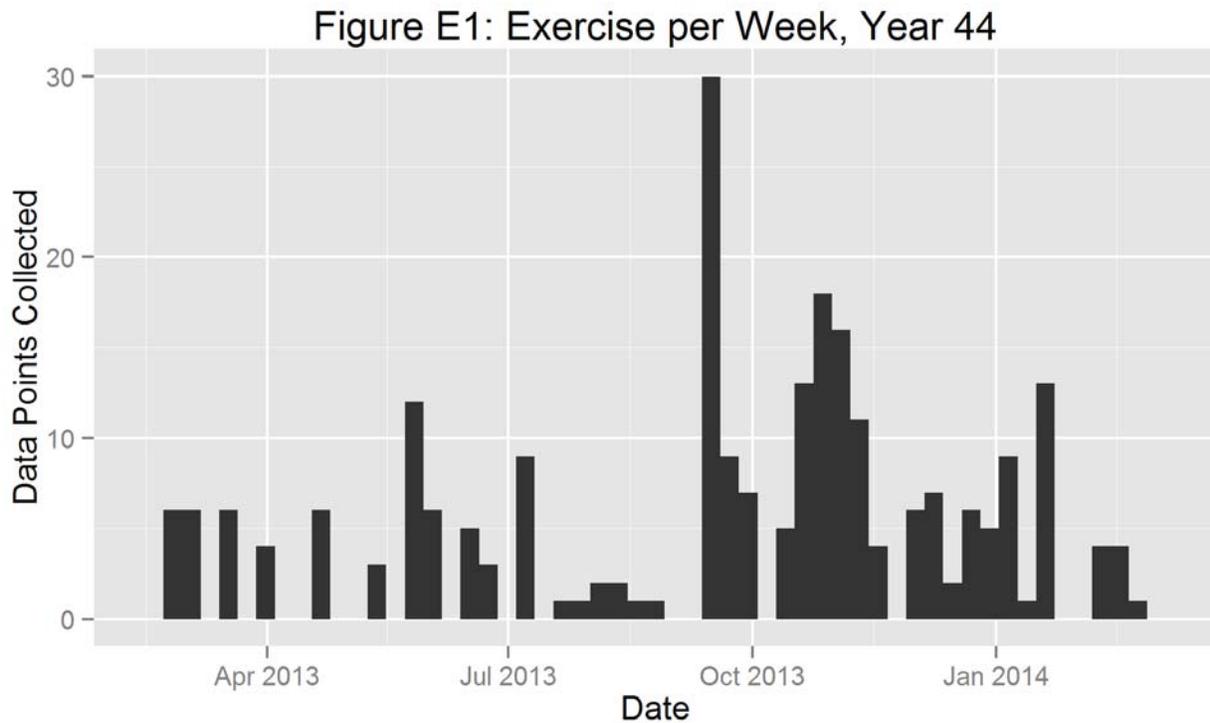


Figure E1 shows the exercise related data points collected during Craig's 44th year. Clearly, exercising is erratic. The graph is by week, which obscures the fact that Craig exercised on only 79 days (22% of the year). In addition, 18 different exercise categories were tracked. This is an indication of Craig hopping from one exercise method to the next, trying to find something that would keep him engaged.

***Work Data***

Craig's quantified self efforts arguably began at work. After a couple times of being asked the status of a project and not being able to give an adequate answer, Craig started tracking the efforts and status of his projects. Soon he found task coach, and began tracking the time involved as well.

Figure W1: Work by Project Area, Year 44

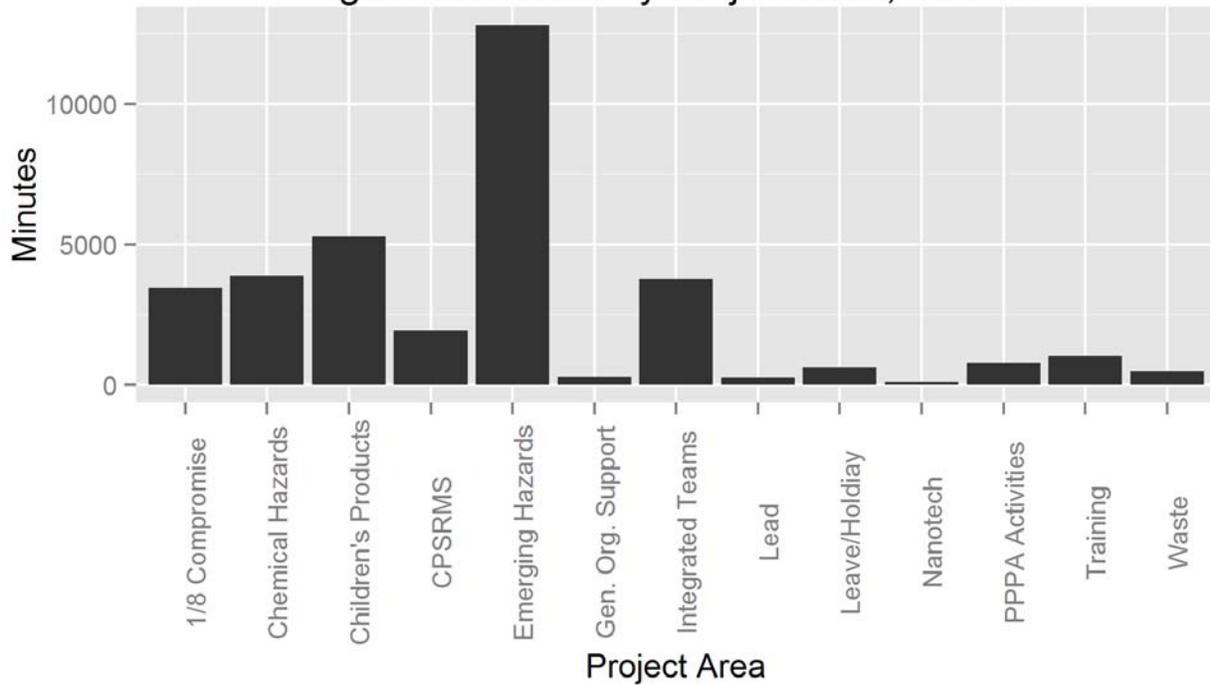


Figure W1 shows the minutes worked this year in each project category. These project categories correspond to the codes used on Craig's time cards. It should be noted that the data for this graph is incomplete. The total of all the bars in the graph is 34,549 minutes. However, one would expect 120,000 minutes for a full-time worker such as Craig. Therefore only 28.8% of Craig's time at work is recorded. Certain categories, such as Waste and Leave/Holiday are thought to be under represented relative to the other categories, while Emerging Hazards and 1/8 Compromise are probably over represented relative to the other categories.

Figure W2: Top 10 Work Projects by Minutes Worked, Year 44

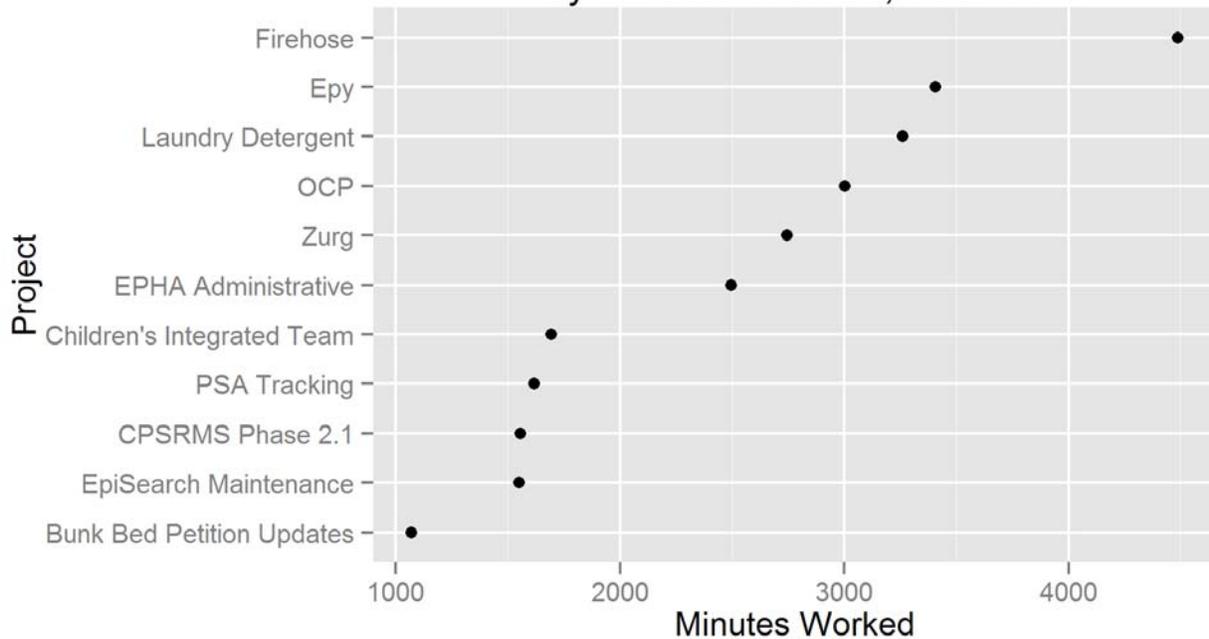


Figure W2 shows the time recorded for the top ten projects in terms of time spent. In order to help relate figure W2 to figure W1, here are the project areas for each project:

**1/8 Compromise**

Epy and OCP

**Children's Products**

Bunk Bed Petition Updates, Children's Integrated Team, and Zurg

**Chemical Hazards**

Laundry Detergent

**CPSRMS**

CPSRMS Phase 2.1

**Emerging Hazards**

EPHA Administrative, EpiSearch Maintenance, Firehose, and PSA Tracking

Figure W2 would make it seem that the 1/8 compromise are taking a large portion of Craig's Time. However, Figure W1 shows a different story. This discrepancy is partly due to the work in the 1/8 compromise category being concentrated in two projects, where the other project areas have several projects under each. Part of it is also due to more scrupulous time tracking of those two projects. Details on the individual projects are below:

**Firehose**

Fire Hose is a rewrite of the earlier Automated Batch System for the new Consumer Product Safety Risk Management System (CPSRMS) database. It shows up here largely because of the development time that went into it. It categorizes the past week's incoming data into various searches to which individuals in the agency can "subscribe." It then sends an email to each individual with the data in their subscribed searches. It is

at the top of the list due to have been developed this year. While periodic maintenance and weekly runs and reporting continue, it is not the top time suck currently.

### **Epy**

Epy was the development of a set of Python programs to facilitate Craig's work. In addition to CPSRMS coding look ups, it includes sassy, a SAS style data set implemented in Python for more hands on interaction with the data.

### **Laundry Detergent**

This project is data tracking on single use laundry detergent packets. This was the major chemical hazard of Craig's 44th year.

### **OCP**

OCP is Craig's new productivity system. It is currently implemented in a OneNote, Task Coach, and a Python scheduling program Craig developed. Craig is hoping to move it entirely into Python when he has time. This project includes both the development time and the time spent implementing the system on a daily basis, and tracking of certain tasks such as reading email.

### **Zurg**

Zurg (recently renamed Buzz) is a toy surveillance system developed by Craig. The primary data tracking and coding is currently done by Adam Suchy, but Craig continues to review his work. The time on this project included upgrading Zurg to handle CPSRMS data, at which point it was renamed Buzz.

### **EPHA Administrative**

This project contains most of the administrative work related to Craig's job, including filling out time cards, biweekly status updates, and Emerging Hazards team meetings.

### **Children's Integrated Team**

This project involves weekly meetings of one of the Integrated Product Teams, an interdisciplinary team reviewing miscellaneous children's products.

### **PSA Tracking**

One of the primary functions of the Emerging Hazards team is to fulfill data related Product Safety Assessments (PSAs). This year Craig took over tracking the incoming PSA requests and sending out the collected data.

### **CPSRMS Phase 2.1**

This project has become a catch-all for continuing work on the CPSRMS database and it's internal web application, CPSC360.

### **EpiSearch Maintenance**

EpiSearch is a program Craig wrote to unify and simplify searches of the multiple databases involved in his work. EpiSearch is used by several individuals in Hazard Analysis, and is the search engine for all of the PSA searches. Most of the work shown in Figure W2 is related to updating the testing of the searches EpiSearch performs.

### **Bunk Bed Petition Updates**

This project involves data memos to support briefing packages on two petitions related to bunk beds before the commission. It is probably in the top ten because the data requirements keep changing. Four memos had been written by the end of the 44th year, with a fifth having been requested just before the end of the year.

## **Future Directions for the Craig Report**

Craig is working to address some of the data collection problems highlighted in this report, and to move the data collection into other areas.

On the improvement side, he is working hard on fuller time tracking at work. This is driven as much by the early work in OCP highlighting how much waste there is in his job. Fuller tracking of his time at work will help quantify and classify the waste, hopefully informing ways to reduce it.

The same Task Coach software Craig uses for time tracking at work he is now using on a limited basis at home. Once development on OCP allows it to track time, data collection in both contexts will shift to OCP.

New data collection is being done on itemizing every penny that Craig spends. There are also attempts to track the status of his investments more closely. Both of these efforts are being done manually at the moment, but may progress to more computer aided systems in the future.

Another new manual data tracking Craig is performing tracks his progress on habit change. Craig came up with a list of 20 priorities for habit change, and broke them into five minute increments to get 46 steps to work on toward those changes. Progress toward those priorities is being tracked with a daily checklist, and entered into a computer for analysis.

Craig also is expanding his Tap Log data tracking to include time spent in bed and how often he masturbates. He is also using the Tap Log interface to help Task Coach tracking in the home context, and to help keep track of money spent.

On the qualitative side, Craig is making a short log entry every day. This was inspired by the [one sentence diary](#) web page. However, when Craig learned of the web site, he could not connect to it. Then he began to wonder why you would need a web site for such a thing, and just got a Moleskine notebook. Every day he writes two lines of text about what happened that day.

Craig has also started to document other thoughts in a pocket sized Foray notebook. It uses a disorganized category system based on doubly linked lists.