6.033 Spring 2015: “System critique” #2

This assignment builds on the analysis skills developed in the first critique. After reading “The UNIX Time-Sharing System,” use the same “Guide to Analyzing Systems” to write a 1-3 page analysis of the UNIX system. Use your knowledge from lectures (e.g. operating systems). Rather than writing short-essay answers to the questions in the “Guide,” you’ll write a standalone document modeled in part after a technical feasibility study. Your audience is a community of peers who have not read the paper. One key difference is that in a conventional feasibility study, you would compare multiple systems; here you will instead think about characterizing the system as it would work in various use cases, and assess whether it performs well in the specified use case.

☐ **Introduction** opens with a 1-2 line summary overview of your analysis.
  o Describes how the system works (see the first section of the “Guide”)
  o If appropriate, identifies the priorities or principles of the designers

☐ **Background** gives a more detailed description of the system as defined in the paper
  o Explains how scaling, failures, and security/trustworthiness are handled by the system
  o Uses evidence from the text (citation, section references) to support each claim; you need not cite lectures
  o Demonstrates your understanding of the system (and the paper)

☐ **Analysis** examines the system in a variety of use cases,
  o Evaluates claims made by the paper (e.g. of scalability).
  o Addresses key analytical questions as specified in the third section of the “Guide” (“Critique the system”)
  o Uses evidence from the text (citation, section references)

☐ **Conclusion** summarizes the system and its key advantages and disadvantages