

Unit Two: Internet Communities and Social Networks

Overview

In the second unit, our class will be focusing on Internet Communities and Social Networks. As we read in Wu's blog post, the terms "community" and "social network" are not interchangeable; they each have distinct definitions (See our class's definitions under "Documents and Resources" for a refresher).

For this project, you will be asked to select either an Internet Community or a Social Network to research. The primary purpose of this research paper is to **inform**. That means you should imagine an audience that does not know a lot about your selected site and plan to provide them with an in-depth analysis. During your research you will complete the following steps:

1. **Overview:** Investigate and describe the community or network you've selected. First, share whether your selection is a community or a network and then explain why. Then, consider a few questions when investigating, such as: What is the history of this community/network? When was it created? Who created it? How has it grown or changed over the years? Who are the users? What do people do on this site? How is it used, or what is this site's purpose? Do people use this site for its intended purpose or do they deviate and find new uses for this site? (i.e. Inputting your kik ID into iFunny.) What is the future of this site?
2. **Societal Impact:** Consider the impact this community/network has on our lives. How has this site changed our lives? Has it changed the way humans interact or associate? How has it made life easier? How has it made life more difficult? How does this site impact our intelligence?
3. **Privacy Functions:** Consider this community's/network's privacy functions. How "private" is the information shared on this site? How can a user mediate the privacy settings? Do people "own" their posts or creations on the website or does the website own it? What are the effects of the site's privacy functions? Can a person ever be truly private on this site?

Each of the three prompts will be held under an individual header (the words listed in bold above). The questions provided above are starting points for your research. You cannot merely answer these questions to earn a passing grade on this essay. You should have a well-connected paper that contains a strong, organizing thesis statement that introduces the main themes of your paper.

Communities and Social Networks

Don't just pick the first community or social network that comes to mind. Peruse the list below and investigate a few of them. Select one that intrigues you and you feel will be manageable to research over the next six weeks. **NOTE:** This is not a comprehensive list, so if you have a suggestion for a community or social network not on the list, that's fine; you'll just have to run it past me.

Youtube

Classmates.com

iFunny

Wikipedia

Foursquare

Tumblr

Facebook	GetGlue	Twitter
Myspace	Goodreads	Flickr
Wordpress	Google+	4chan
Reddit	Instagram	Blogster
Snapchat	LinkedIn	Pinterest

Research

As this project is a research project, you will have to find and incorporate research into your paper. However, research is not simply articles found online--there are many types of research. For this project, you will have to follow the guidelines on research posted below:

Primary Research (must select one type)	Secondary research (must select at least two types)
Survey	Book (print or online)
Interview	Journal article (from EMU's Database or Google Scholar)
Observation	Article from a website
	Movie (documentary) or Youtube video

For the primary research you select, you must provide a transcript of the results, which you will put in an Appendix at the end of your essay. For the rest of your research, you will use MLA formatting guidelines on in-text citations and Works Cited page.

For the secondary research, you must select at least two of the options I've posted above. This doesn't mean you can select only **one** journal article and **one** article from a website, for example. To write a proper research paper, you should probably have more than one source for each type.

One form of research that is not on the list above is *Memory Work*. Memory work involves recounting a story from your memory that helps the audience relate to the subject matter; it is a form of narrative, meaning it should be creative and interesting. This type of research will not be required in this essay, but it is fair game for anyone interested.

Technical Guidelines

The criteria for this essay are as follows:

- 8-10 pages, typed, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 point font.
- Use proper MLA formatting for the essay (creative title, header, etc.) including proper in-text citations and Works Cited page. For a sample essay, see the Purdue OWL link posted on our class website.

- Revise and proofread for coherence and correctness before turning in your essay.
- Share your paper with me via Google Drive BEFORE the start of class on each of the dates listed in the timeline below.

Invention Portfolio

As with your first project, this project will also feature an accompanying Invention Portfolio. You will print out and compile all of your graded, smaller assignments and place them within a folder, which you will turn in on the date the project is due.

Timeline

Part one and two due via Google Drive before the start of class March 3.

Rough draft for peer review due March 10.

Final project and invention portfolio will be due at the end of class on March 12.

Grading

This project accounts for 40 percent of your overall course grade. Most broadly, the project will be graded as follows:

Paper:	320 points
Invention Portfolio:	80 points
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Total:	400 points