

Prelude

While most papers ask you to write about a topic, this paper will integrate traditional writing (alphabetic text) with images, audio, and video about a particular topic. Please refer to the audio/video editing software I supply over Moodle.

The Assignment

For your next assignment, you are to investigate a website, a mobile application, or an online business of your choosing. Please choose only one. I am asking you to develop an investigation into one of these sites that is driven by research questions. Research questions are analytical questions (i.e., how, why, and to what extent) that aim to be answered using your ideas, the ideas of others, and other information that is applicable, such as interviews, metrics, pictures, and other data. You determine what information is applicable and what is not. While you are not producing professional research, I am asking you to take on the role of an amateur researcher. In this regard, you should have sections of your paper that outline its structure—both to guide the reader and yourself. The structure is extremely important because it lets your readers know what you did and what you learned—in other words, it allows your readers to trust you. The paper structure should be as follows:

- I. An **introduction** (no more than a paragraph) to your topic, such as:
 - a. A statistic, or
 - b. An anecdote, or
 - c. The importance of the topic
- II. A brief **background section**
 - a. What has been said about your topic?
 - b. Why has (IIa) been said?
 - c. For this assignment, I am asking you to find **four** academic articles and synthesize them together (look for similarities, especially in regards to their ideas). Please do not use more than four articles as the emphasis for this assignment is on quality of synthesis, not quantity of sources
 - d. Cite all sources according to MLA or APA
- III. **Methodology** (1-3 paragraphs), or a statement of your questions and the way you decided to answer those questions. You should answer the following?
 - a. What did you do?
 - b. Why did you do it?
 - c. Why is your answer trustworthy?
 - d. What is the importance of answering your questions?
- IV. **Findings** (the largest section, at least 1 page single spaced not including figures)
 - a. What are your answers or responses to your questions?
 - b. This section is the most malleable
- V. Your **conclusion** (at least one paragraph)
 - a. Why are your findings important?
 - b. What are new questions that have arisen during the course of your research project?
 - c. What additional research needs to be done?
- VI. Any **endnotes**
- VII. A **works cited** (all of the works your cited in your paper)
- VIII. A **bibliography** (all of the works you consulted, not including the works cited)
- IX. Any **appendices**

On Illuminating the Structure

While this is a general structure, you should illuminate, expand, and adapt this structure, drawing on your own thoughts and source material. You should develop specific sections and sub-headings based on your topic, your questions, and your findings. “I” is acceptable, although it should be used to emphasize your interpretations of source material.

On Using Multiple Media

You are strongly encouraged to use screenshots, screen-captures, links, video, voiceovers, and whatever mediums you believe necessary to convey your research most effectively. These are crucial aspects of Web 2.0. You must include at least two screen-captures (1-2 minutes long), four images (with labels/captions), and an edited video.

On Tone

You may choose to think about this paper in two ways: (1) as an academic research paper or (2) a business report. If you choose the former, your findings would emphasize critical ways of thinking about your chosen topic and further research questions/ideas. If you choose the latter, your findings would emphasize economic benefits or strategies that other writers/businesses could use.

The paper is to be no more than 2500 words long (approximately six pages double spaced or three pages single spaced). Your papers may be shorter. Due March 19th, 2015 via email (jobng@illinois.edu)

Poster Presentation (informal presentation)

Due March 5th 2015, I am asking you to bring a poster detailing the following:

- A. A preliminary background section, including three or more sources that you have read and synthesized. (“Tell us about what you learned”)
- B. Revised and focused research questions (no more than three)
- C. Provisional findings (“Now that I know X and Y, I believe we can conclude Y”)
- D. Your plans on expanding the project (“Where is the project going?”)

Hours Estimated

I believe this project should take you about 15-20 hours to complete. I estimate that you should research for 3-5 hours, read for 3-5 hours, note-taking/writing/revising should take 8 hours over the course of multiple days, formatting/preparation the manuscript should take 1-2 hours. My estimates are based on uninterrupted and concentrated time use. If you genuinely believe you exceeded this time, please come talk with me.

Business Website Analysis and Report

Rubric (i.e., Training Wheels)

Section	<25%	50%	75%	Full
Introduction (2 pts)	You don't grab my attention and are off topic. Passively written list of unrelated facts or supported claims.	Passively written, mostly organized paragraph. You are on topic.	Actively written, organized effectively, funnels the reader from broad to topic-specific.	You grab my attention. Engaging, thought-provoking, and well-organized paragraph. Also includes requirements for 75% credit.
Background (5)	You do not use four sources.	You use four sources. Your synthesis of the sources is tenuous. Tells a story but does not highlight the need for your questions.	You use four sources and have synthesized them so that their themes and ideas are related to each other. Mostly tells a story about the need of your questions.	You use four sources and have synthesized them so that their themes and ideas are related to each other. You critique the weaknesses of the sources. Tells a story that highlights the need for your questions.
Methodology (3)	You do not clearly describe what you did.	You describe, in detail, what you did.	You describe, in detail, what you did and have a rationale for doing it.	You describe, in detail, what you did and have a rationale for why you did it. You do so in such a way that is exceptionally trustworthy (references to other research methods).
Findings (8)	You have not developed categories based on your findings. You have findings, but they are not articulated clearly.	You have developed analytical subcategories based on your findings. Your findings answer your research questions.	You have developed analytical subcategories based on your findings. Your findings answer your research questions.	Everything from (75%). You have a rationale for the order in which you share your findings.
Conclusion (3)	Does not summarize findings.	Summarizes findings. Asks additional research questions.	Summarizes findings. Explains why the findings are significant. Asks additional research questions. Posits future areas of research.	Summarizes findings. Explains why the findings are significant. Asks additional research questions. Posits future areas of research. Applies findings to a broader audience.
Works Cited (1)	Does not use a formatted system.	Uses a formatted system (MLA or APA) but is not consistent.	Uses a formatted system and has only a few errors.	A rigorously detailed works cited that uses a formatted system. Devoid of errors.
Use of Media (3)	Does not use media (visual, audio, video, etc).	Uses media. Figures have captions. Figures are not clearly related to subject material.	Uses media with an identifiable purpose. Figures have captions.	Uses media with an identifiable purpose. Integrates the media into the text effectively. Figures have captions.

*Up to 2 bonus points will be awarded for transitioning smoothly between sections.