Research Paper

Write a 7 – 10 page paper that investigates one of the topics listed below. All citations must be done in APA format. The APA stands for the American Psychological Association. Most scholars working in the social sciences use APA format for citations. Most style manuals (e.g., Kirschenz and Mandell’s (1986) The Holt Handbook, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston) will summarize APA format. You can also find summaries online. This does not mean that the paper is, strictly speaking, an APA paper. For instance, an abstract is not necessary. The paper is to be double-spaced with reasonable margins. It must have a title page with the paper’s title, your name and email address.

You may use “I” instead of the rather stodgy “the author,” as in, “I think,” as opposed to, “it appears to the author.” In order to make your paper more lively, avoid impersonal verb constructions (“it seems”), write in the active voice (“I did” rather than “It was done by me”), write with verbs rather than adjectives. Pay attention to the relationship a comma and enclosing quotation marks. Explicitly divide the paper into sections. These sections may either be numbered, named, or simply indicated by a longer than normal break between paragraphs. Somewhere towards the end of the first or second paragraph, write a topic sentence or two telling the reader what you intend to argue or demonstrate or tell about. Towards the beginning of your ultimate or penultimate paragraph, recap, in a subtle way, what you’ve argued or demonstrated or told about. By “subtle,” I mean don’t produce an explicit list of your arguments. Scientific writing is often done this way. But scientific writing is about conveying information and is usually not a pleasure to read. Make your work a pleasure to read.

You must have at least five sources in your bibliography.

The following are all fine (but do not exhaust the list of acceptable sources):

- *The New York Times*
- *The Washington Post*
- Important international newspapers like *The London Times*
- *The Economist*
- *The New York Review of Books*
- Any peer-reviewed journal or conference proceeding
- Any book whose author is a recognized expert in the area you are investigating
- Trade journals are OK, but they should not form the bulk of your sources.
- Flagship journals from professional societies like *The Communications of the ACM, IEEE Computer*.
- Any Sage periodical
- The ACM publication, *Computers in Society*. 
This does not mean that you cannot cite web sites. They can give a flavor for what is going on in an area. Nevertheless, you must have five sources that are from the acceptable list.

This is a formal paper. This means that you may not cite your friends, your teacher, or some other personal source, newspaper fashion. You should also avoid citing someone’s opinion to buttress an argument. Something like this is interesting in a newspaper, but not OK in a formal paper: “Harry Smith, 49, CEO of Internet Dynamics, says that ‘within five years you’ll be seeing an XYZ device in every household.” Even if Harry is an expert, this is still his opinion. Instead, look at government, academic, and, yes, trade sources for actual data.

Here are thirty-five suggested areas of investigation. I used the phrase “areas of investigation” deliberately. You have to specify your topic within the area after some initial reading. You may, of course, investigate a topic of your choosing. Before you do this, you must check it out with me first.

1. Voting Machines. A lot of attention has been paid to voting machines lately. What are the problems, promises? What is done in other countries. There are articles the ACM Queue (10/2004) and The Communications of the ACM (10/2004) that should get you started.

2. Identify theft is gathering increasing attention. What is it? Why now? An article in The New York Times (10/24) should get your started.

3. Blogs. The 12/2004 issue of The Communications of the ACM is a start as is article 17 in my Computers and Society, 05/06.


5. File sharing software. What is it? What is its history? Has it hurt the recording industry (see, for example, The New York Times, 11/21/04)? How does it relate to similar controversies over VCR and photocopying machines?

6. Walter Ong had lots to say about the distinction between oral/aural cultural forms and written/read cultural forms. Marshall Mccluhan, a teacher of Ong’s had lots of interesting things to say in the late sixties about electronic media. What did Mcluhan say? What are people saying about Mcluhan now?

7. Do an Ong-like analysis of a particular computer-mediated communications technique like email.

8. Who are Robert Tappan Morris and Kevin Mitnick. What did they do? What did commentators think about what they did? What are they doing now?
9. Ellen Ullman has written a novel plus a lot of other essays. Review her novel in light of what she tells you about herself in her essays.

10. What has Chomsky said about the media since *Manufacturing Consent*. Who is Edward Hermens? What to commentators say about Chomsky?

11. Many companies are outsourcing their tech jobs to India and other places. How is this working out in practice. See articles in my *Computers in Society, 05/06* for starters.

12. Economists have differing opinions about computers and productivity. Investigate the current thinking. See article 6 in my *Computers in Society, 05/06* for a start.

13. How private are electronic communications? See articles 13, 14, 15 in my *Computers in Society, 05/06* for a start.

14. What is the origin and current meaning of the term “multitasking”? How does it relate to productivity? See article 19 in my *Computers in Society, 05/06*.

15. How does Google work and what effect is it having on discourse. See articles 21, 22 in my *Computers and Society, 05/06* for a start.

16. Why are there so few women in computing? See article 28 in my *Computers in Society* for a start.

17. Is it true that women make up the bulk of text-based on-line game players? Why?

18. What affect is spam having on email. See articles 34, 35, 36 in my *Computers in Society, 05/06* for a first look.

19. The Sherry Turkle article we read in class is from the mid-80’s. What has she said recently about computer-mediated communication? Her latest book, I believe, is called *Life on the Screen*.

20. A lot has been said about pedophiles on the Internet. What is actually known?

21. How large is the Internet pornography business? What part of Internet traffic is devoted to pornography?

The following topics are taken from the text. To use any of these, adapt them to a research paper format.

22. Question 2, p. 34, Thurlow.
23. Question 1, p. 44, Thurlow
24. Question 2, p. 44, Thurlow
25. Question 3, p. 44, Thurlow
26. Question 1, p. 56, Thurlow
27. Question 2, p. 56, Thurlow
28. Question 1, p. 80, Thurlow
29. Question 1, p. 93, Thurlow. The question has a misprint. “1900s” should be “1990s.”
30. Question 4, p. 94, Thurlow
31. Questions 1, 2 p. 106, Thurlow
32. Questions 3, 4, p. 117, Thurlow
33. Question 2, p. 128, Thurlow
34. Question 4, p. 147, Thurlow
35. Question 3, p. 159, Thurlow