MAS 201: Communication Technologies and Society
Research Paper Assignment
Due Date: Thursday, April 19, 2018

The purpose of this paper is to engage you an in-depth research project in the field of telecommunications. As you have learned from the first few weeks of class, this is a broad field, in which many exciting developments are occurring on a daily basis. There are many topics you might choose to pursue. The topic selection up to you – you may have some burning question or area of interest we haven't addressed in class. Be creative in your approach to your topic. If you are unsure or simply not particular, you will find a list of possible topics at the end of this document from which you may choose.

You must use at least ten sources other than the class readings in writing your paper – more would be better. You should use primary sources whenever possible. Primary sources means original works on the subject, such as original legislation or FCC regulatory documents, findings of state public service commissions, interviews with key sources, your own original research, and so on. Also, you should spend a significant amount of time in the library finding as many sources as you can on your topic, such as books, academic and trade journal articles, and technical documents.

DO NOT rely in large measure on articles from magazines like *Forbes, The Atlantic, or Wired* These sources can be helpful, but they usually do not provide enough in-depth information. For that reason, at least five of your sources must be primary sources, in-depth books or academic and trade journal articles or their electronic versions

You can certainly use the Internet for your research, but remember that it is sometimes difficult to determine the credibility of the information on a website. Carefully cite these sources by noting the URL and the company or individual listed as the web page creator. Limit your use of online sources to no more than five sources. There are exceptions to this rule for items that are merely reprinted on line, like journal articles, newspaper articles, and so forth. However, you MUST visit the library for this project, and any paper with no resources but those found on the net will be a failing paper.

You must properly cite your sources. Go to the library and look at the *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association* or buy one at the UK bookstore. For a quick reference, I have provided a link to an APA formatting and style guide on the class website. Each citation in the list of references must have the name of the author, the date of publication, the title of the publication, page numbers and journal name (if an article), and publisher information. Any direct quote or idea taken from a source must be noted as such within the text. Use the style manual for directions for citing within the text, and be VERY CAREFUL! Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Don't bother with any kind of folder or report cover. They are a waste of money, paper, and plastic, and they make it difficult to carry and file your papers. Your paper should be a minimum of 9-10 pages of text in length. Save a copy of your paper on a flash drive or some other backup (or on hard copy) so that if it mysteriously disappears you can provide another copy. Remember – this paper accounts for one fifth of your course grade.

Organize your paper carefully. Include an introduction, with an identifiable thesis statement, a body, and a conclusion. Connect your ideas together with good transitions from paragraph to paragraph. Write clearly, and proofread carefully (computers have spell checkers for a reason, but a spell checker won't correct you when you use "to" instead of "too" or "two"). Following is a suggested outline:

I.   Introduction to the topic
          - What is the issue under discussion?
          - Why is it an important topic at this time?
                    (Is it currently a hot topic? Has it been a hot topic for some time? Is it a new
                    technology that has just come on the scene? Make it sound interesting.)
          - Thesis statement: "This paper will…"

II.   Historical perspective on the topic
          - What did your extensive research reveal about this topic?
          - Where did this issue/topic originate, and what is its history?
          - Organize your review of the info so that you address several topics in an orderly fashion.
          - Try to address the issue from both the consumers' and the producers' point of view.

III.   Current perspectives on the topic
          - What's going on right now with this issue/topic?
          - Why should we be interested in this topic today?
          - What are the positions of the competing interests?
          - What are the forecasts for the future of the relevant technologies?

IV.   Conclusion
          - Brief restatement of the thesis
          - Brief summary of what you found, and why it is important to study it

Here is a list of topics for your consideration and possible adoption.

Information Superhighway – effects on various aspects of society
Computer-mediated communication – effects on business operations
Cable television – entry into broadband data and phone services
Telephone and information services – transforming effects on society
Satellites – impact on telecommunications industry and services
Microwave transmission – history, impact, and future in telecommunications
Social effects of interactive communication devices – history, major areas of study
Censorship on the Internet – pornography, content restrictions, advertising, children's issues
Regulation – FCC and the role of regulation, common carriers, natural monopolies
Ownership of electronic information – copyright, intellectual property, fair use
International issues – development in Third World countries, Europe, and Asia
Interactive and on-line services – impact on society
Consumer personal communication devices – technology, uses and gratifications, impact on society
Important figures in the history of telecommunications – profiles, influence, innovations
Netiquette – e-mail, listservs, and newsgroups
Spamming – methods and responses to it
Phone services – caller ID, block, waiting, etc.: changes in communication patterns, control
Virtual community – MUDs and MOOs, computer games, virtual reality
Privacy – surveillance and monitoring, government and commercial databases, anonymity
Security – firewalls and controlling access, encryption
Illegal activities – hacking, cracking, theft of services, child pornography, chat room predators
Industry structure – competition, convergence, cable, telephony, Intranets
Psychological effects – identity and impersonation, Internet/computer addiction, on-line relationships
Information overload – managing databases, media literacy, push services
Technical issues for hardware and software – capacity and growth, standards