Research Paper

Documenting the Media Revolution

Mass media is redefining itself at a speed and depth unmatched in human history. Basic definitions of various long-established mass media are rapidly evolving to include digital formats that would have seemed the stuff of science fiction a few years ago. Furthermore, as mass media becomes more pervasive and powerful, its impact on individuals and the larger society have increasingly become topics of scholarly research. Your paper will be written about one of the mass media topics listed below. Choose a topic that interests you and for which you can find a variety of high-quality sources.

1. Online Radicalization
    - 1.1 What does scholarly research have to say about the power of the Internet to radicalize some people into extreme and potentially dangerous beliefs? What are some of these extreme beliefs?
    - 1.2 According to the research, what sort of people are most likely to be radicalized?
    - 1.3 According to the research, who are the people spreading these extreme beliefs online? What are their motives for doing this?
    - 1.4 According to the research, what can you do to lessen the possibility that you or those around you are not radicalized online?

2. The End of Privacy?
    - 2.1 What does scholarly research have to say about the power of the Internet and other media to erode or eliminate personal privacy?
    - 2.2 Who is invading our privacy? Is it corporations, government, other people, or ourselves?
    - 2.3 How does "The Internet of Things" have the potential to create a further erosion of our privacy?
    - 2.4 According to the research, what types of privacy are most endangered in the years ahead? What can we (as individuals or as a larger society) do about it?

3. Battling Misinformation Through Lateral Reading
    - 3.1 According to the scholarly research, what is Lateral Reading? How does a person engage in lateral reading?
    - 3.2 According to the research, why is lateral reading a particularly relevant skill in the internet age? How does it decrease the destructive power of misinformation?
    - 3.3 What are some examples of lateral reading being successfully taught in schools?
    - 3.4 Find an internet site devoted to a current political or social issue. Engage in lateral reading to determine the truthfulness and general fairness of the site. Describe what you did and what you found.

This paper will be an analysis based upon your research. Research the four questions as they pertain to your research topic. Divide your paper into six segments:

A. Introduction
B. Answer to Question 1
C. Answer to Question 2
D. Answer to Question 3
E. Answer to Question 4
F. Conclusion

Find credible sources to research your answers. You will be graded on the quantity and quality of your sources, and how well you use them in your text. Cite your sources, MLA style, as you use them in the text. Be sure to use full MLA-style citation information in your works cited section. Students who merely provide a list of web addresses will be marked down.

Length: Around 1500 words (plus works cited section).

Research

The depth and quality of your research matters. Citing your textbook or what is said during class really isn't impressive in a college research paper. Your research should branch out beyond the classroom and the textbook. Dictionaries and encyclopedias (including Wikipedia) have some value as background information, but should not be cited as sources in the text. Be careful about using web sites as sources; many of them are not credible. If you cannot clearly state who is the writer of the material on the web site and what qualifies that person or persons to be an authority on the subject, then you probably do not have a credible source.

There is no "correct" opinion about any of the research topics. Whatever your topic and your opinion on it, make sure that you find credible sources that support your case. Remember: (1) more sources are better than fewer, (2) high-quality sources are better than low-quality sources, and (3) cited sources that clearly enhance your paper are better than sources that make no apparent impact on the text.

Due Date
Friday, Nov. 5

Early Bird Special: Turn your paper in one week before its due date (or earlier) to receive two extra points.