INFM 600 Information Environments
Spring 2014

Instructor: Dr. Jessica Vitak
E-mail: jvitak@umd.edu
Office: Hornbake 2117G
Class location: SPH 0307
Class dates & times: Tuesdays 2:00 – 4:45 pm (January 28 – May 6)
Office hours: Tuesdays 12:30-1:30

1. Course Description
INFM 600 Information Environments will explore various models and methodologies used to capture and deploy internal and external information and knowledge in a number of settings. Students will analyze organizations in terms of information creation, flow, sharing, conservation, and application to problem solving. The course will take into account both internal and external influences on the management of information and knowledge. We will also examine how information flows, and is managed, in online settings, and examine a number of examples of successful and unsuccessful online information management.

Course assignments will give students the opportunity to review the interaction between information flows, organizational structures, and social relations, as well encourage discussion regarding how to improve existing information policies and operating procedures.

2. Course/Learning Objectives
By the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe major concepts and theories of information;
2. Define the general and specific features of information environments;
3. Characterize data, information, and knowledge, and understand how they are created and used in organizations;
4. Discuss the role that information plays in privacy, security, ethics, and policy decisions;
5. Critically evaluate the complex relationship between technology and information; and
6. Identify and assess information problems that arise in organizations and other environments and provide recommendations and/or solutions.
3. Course Materials
There is no required textbook for this course.

On Canvas (https://elms.umd.edu/), you will find the course syllabus and schedule, presentation materials, announcements, assignment details, and additional readings about the topics covered in the class.

Make sure your email address in Testudo and the University directory is accurate, as I regularly use email to send out reminders or updates about class and specific assignments.

4. Prerequisites
There are no prerequisites for this course.

5. Instructional Methods
In addition to information gleaned from required and recommended readings, students will gain insights about information environments from instructor and guest lectures, individual reports, and class and group discussions.

6. Course Policies

6.1 Attendance: Students are expected to attend every class and to be on time. If you will be unable to make a class, please email the professor beforehand and check with a fellow student following class so that you can catch up on anything you missed.

While in class, students are expected to be respectful of the professor and their fellow students and not engage in conversations or use their laptops or other electronic devices for non-class related purposes. Please silence your cell phone before class begins. **If you are bring too disruptive, I will ask you to leave for the day.**

6.2 Written Work: All written work should be proofread and revised as necessary before you submit it. Use a standard, 12-point font (e.g., Times, Calibri) with one-inch margins and single-spacing in all submitted assignments. For longer assignments, it is helpful to organize your papers, using section and subsection headings to identify portions of your work—much like the way the syllabus is laid out. For all assignments, do not include a title page or table of contents. Documents submitted online should be submitted as **Word** documents (.doc or .docx).

For assignments including citations, I do not require you a specific citation format, but **YOU MUST USE** a standard citation format, which includes an in-text citation (e.g., [3] or Smith, 1998) as well as a list of references at the end of each paper. Acceptable citation formats include, but are not limited to, APA, MLA, Chicago, and ACM. For more information on how to format references, there are many online guides; **here is one from UMD:** A note to help guide you: If you include a reference at the end of the paper, it should be included somewhere in the text (if not, there’s a problem).
For online discussion forum posts, please make sure you proofread and spellcheck posts before uploading them. I suggest writing posts in Word first, then copying and pasting the final (proofread) version into the discussion forum.

6.3 Late Work: Unless you are facing an emergency situation AND you request an extension from me at least 48 hours in advance of the due date, late work will automatically be graded down by one step (i.e., 5%) for each day it is late (unless otherwise noted in the syllabus). For example, an assignment that would normally receive an A- if submitted on time would receive a B if it was submitted two days late. Assignments more than five days late will not be accepted.

6.4 Grading Information and Criteria: Please keep in mind that assignments are the main way I can tell whether you comprehend the material covered. Use these as platforms to show me what you have learned. Please be sure to use references and appropriate in-text citations in all assignments submitted for grading. This shows me how you used the material covered and any outside readings to support your position.

In general, grading will assess graduate writing skills, understanding of course concepts, the linking of course material to practical situations, the extent to which the assigned question(s) have been address, and incorporation of scholarly support using appropriately cited references.

The grading scale (including corresponding GPA) for the final grade is as follows:

- A (4.0) 95-100
- A- (3.7) 90-94.9
- B+ (3.3) 85-89.9
- B (3.0) 80-84.9
- B- (2.7) 75-79.9
- C+ (2.3) 70-74.9
- C (2.0) 65-69.9
- D (1.0) 60-64.9
- F (0.0) Less than 60

6.5 Review of Graded Material: My goal for the semester will be to grade all assignments within 1-2 weeks of their due date and post those grades to Canvas. I try very hard to evaluate each assignment fairly, but I can only evaluate what you submit. I don't have the benefit of knowing all of the time and effort you have put into an assignment. Therefore, you need to make that effort stand out.

Because there may be times when I misinterpret what you have written, which is why I am always willing to clarify how I graded your assignment. If you have any questions about a grade you received, you have two weeks from receipt of the grade to contact me (in class, through a meeting, or via email) to discuss your grade. After two weeks have passed, that grade is “locked” and I will not re-evaluate it.

6.6 Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact me and Disability Support Services (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/) 301-314-7682), as early as possible in the term, but not later than the second week of class. Disability Support Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.
6.7 Emergency Preparedness: Please see the University’s Emergency Preparedness Website (http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/) for information about the current status of the campus. If a class session needs to be rescheduled, I will e-mail you as soon as possible.

6.8 Inclement Weather: In the event of inclement weather, students should check the UMD homepage (umd.edu) or call 301-405-SNOW (7669) to determine if there are delays or closures. Closures and delays will also be sent over the e2 Campus notification system. Follow the link to sign up for alerts: www.alert.umd.edu

6.9 Instructor Email Policies: If you need to email me, please include “INFM600” in the subject line. This will help ensure I do not overlook your email. If you send me an email, I will reply within 48 hours. If that much time has elapsed and you have not heard from me, please contact me again.

6.10 Syllabus Change Policy: This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice. If a change becomes necessary, I will announce the change in class and/or send an email.

7. Academic Assistance
If you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, please consider contacting the Learning Assistance Service, 2202 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7693. Their educational counselors can help with time management, reading, math learning skills, note-taking and exam preparation skills. All their services are free to UMD students.

8. Academic Integrity
The University of Maryland has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student, you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.shc.umd.edu.

As defined by the University of Maryland, Academic Dishonesty includes the following activities:
   a) “CHEATING: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
   b) FABRICATION: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
   c) FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this Code.
   d) PLAGIARISM: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.”

All assignments in this class must reflect your own original work. You must cite and properly attribute any material quoted or paraphrased from some other source (see Course Policies
section for more information on citation policy). Academic dishonesty also includes buying assignments, submitting the same paper more than once, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, etc. Infractions may result in a penalty, such as a failing grade on a specific assignment or for the entire course or even expulsion from the University. You may also find this Office of Student Conduct definition of academic dishonesty to be helpful: http://osc.umd.edu/OSC/AcademicDishonesty.aspx.

While cases of academic dishonesty (including plagiarism) will be handled on an individual policy, the general policy is “two strikes and you’re out.” For the first incident, the student will be penalized up to one letter grade (i.e., 10 points). If a second incident occurs, the student will automatically receive a failing grade and will be referred to the Honor Council. It is therefore essential that you understand how to properly cite text before submitting the first assignment. If you have any questions, please use any and all available resources, including the library, online sites, and your professor.

9. Course Assessment
Detailed instructions regarding each assignment will be provided. Assessment of all assignments is directly related to attention to the instructions, clarity of expression and presentation, and evidence of critical thinking.

9.1 Weekly Discussion Topics (30%): Beginning discussion prior to class tends to lead to more engaged conversations during class. Therefore, each week (starting with Week 2), I will post a discussion thread on Canvas for that week’s topic immediately following the previous class. This should be viewed as an informal form of interaction to get the conversation started about that week’s topic. The posts do not have to be long (i.e., a single paragraph that addresses the question/responds to a classmate’s post is sufficient), but they need to be (a) grammatically correct and (b) on topic.

Throughout the semester, students must contribute to 12 of the 13 weekly discussion topics by posting at least TWO posts on each week’s topic, one with their response and one responding to a fellow student’s post. Therefore, it is extremely important that students not wait until the deadline (Tuesdays @ 9 AM) to post. We will then try to spend some time each class talking about the topic and students’ related discussions.

Important grading notes: Discussion posts will not be accepted “late,” as they feed into class discussion. The forums will close promptly at 9 AM each Tuesday, so make sure you have submitted your posts by that time as late assignments will not be accepted. In addition, you can use the extra week’s post to “replace” a lower grade; for example, if you receive half-credit on one assignment, you can complete all 13 discussion posts and the lowest grade will be dropped.

9.2 Data Analysis Assignment (15%): While it is unsurprising that organizations are constantly processing, interpreting and applying data, the average consumer is presented with data from a variety of sources every day. Therefore, it is important to be able to recognize and interpret datasets we encounter and be able to use the data to gain the insights we desire from them.
For this assignment, you will choose a dataset from the Pew Internet Project’s Data Tools page, which typically provides five documents: the original questionnaire file; raw data in SPSS (.sav) and Excel (.csv) formats; a Word document with cross-sectional data; and a Topline file with the percentages for each question. See: http://pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Data-Tools/Download-Data/Data-Sets.aspx. Each dataset is generally labeled with for the broad topic the questionnaire covered (e.g., Online Video; Mobile Shopping), but all questionnaires include a number of questions about general Internet use.

Once you have chosen a dataset, you should first review the questionnaire to see which questions were asked, then think of FIVE research questions you can answer by analyzing the data. See the Appendix for a detailed example of this assignment.

For the assignment, students should include the following:

1. **A link to the dataset**, along with a summary of the questions asked in the survey (do not list the questions; rather, summarize what the questions are asking).

2. **Your five research questions.** For each question, briefly describe why this is an interesting question to ask. Note: the five research questions do not have to be related to each other (i.e., in this case, I wouldn’t need to have four other research questions related to politics of information).

3. **Your analysis plan.** For each research question, describe how you plan to analyze the data and draw a conclusion. **Note:** Make sure that your research question and analysis plan matches your statistics skill level. I will be going over some basic statistics (e.g., correlations) in class, but you need to make sure your question is something you can answer through analysis methods you can perform! (Also, if you want to use SPSS, it is installed on the computers in the iSchool student computer lab.)

4. **Your results.** Present the results from your analysis.

**9.3 Information Problem Analysis (15%):** Three recent “information problems” (faced by organizations or individuals) will be posted to Canvas by Week 5. Incorporating knowledge gained from class, evaluate the information problem in a **1000-1500 word** (excluding references) critical paper that addresses all questions included in the chosen scenario. Analyses should include a minimum of **five references**, which can include but are not limited to readings from class. You will be graded on your ability to evaluate the problem and provide a well-researched response, not your ability to offer your own opinion (unless it is directly asked for in the question). Please see above regarding proper citation techniques. Wikipedia is **not** a valid reference. A grading rubric showing how points will be assessed is posted on Canvas—I strongly encourage you to review this before completing the assignment. This paper will be due at the beginning of Week 9’s class, March 25, which will mark the beginning of the Third Part of the semester, Shaping the Information Environment.

**9.4 Information-Seeking (10%):** Each student will pick a topic or issue related to one or more of the information applications discussed in Part II of the class. For example, a student interested in information security may pick the issue of whether biometrics provide a sufficient level of
security on personal devices like phones. A student interested in information policy may pick the issue domestic drones. A student interested in collaboration and cooperation in the workplace may choose to evaluate the decision by several companies to end work-from-home policies. Students unsure of a topic may want to review business and tech news sites, such as Wired, TechCrunch, Businessweek, or ComputerWorld, among others (I've included links to these sites and others on the “Useful Links” page of the Wiki on Canvas). Students should then do some background research (i.e., information-seeking) to learn more about the topic. See below for specific requirements.

For this assignment, students must include three things:

1. A 1-2 paragraph description/rationale for their topic choice that shows how the topic is related to one or more of the topics discussed in the second half of class.
2. A list of at least five articles (include title, source, and link) that provide information related to that topic. Examples of appropriate sources include The New York Times, Harvard Business Review, Wired, Business Week, etc. Wikipedia is not a valid source.
3. At least five questions that an in-depth analysis of this topic should address (students only need to provide the questions, not answer them). To return to the work-from-home policy example, one question a student may ask is, “Do communication technologies help or inhibit remote collaboration in the workplace?”

This assignment is due Week 4 (Feb. 18) and should be submitted online, through Canvas. A full example of this assignment is posted on Canvas (this topic cannot be used by students).

9.5 Team Project: Organizing, Analyzing, and Creating Information Knowledge (30%)
From the projects submitted for Assignment 9.5 (Information-Seeking), the professor will select 10 that represent a diverse set of topics and that provide questions that are interesting, have a significant relationship to the class material, and will provide for a useful research and learning experience for the class. The professor may also provide feedback on the direction of these projects. The 10 projects will be announced and posted to Canvas during Week 6.

The individuals responsible for the 10 projects selected will become team leads for the final project; they will each choose two additional team members. A list of team members should be submitted (via email) to the professor before Spring Break begins.

Each team will be responsible for analyzing the chosen research topic and research questions provided by the project lead and creating a dynamic deliverable that showcases the results. This project will include:

1. A progress report “brief” summarizing progress to date, submitted in Week 12 (April 15).
2. A short (~2500 word) problem/solution white paper, submitted on the last class.
3. A PowerPoint poster that will be shared will your colleagues on the last day of class.

See the Appendix for full details on this assignment.
## 10. Class Schedule
Below is a weekly schedule of class with an overview of each topic we’ll be discussing, the assignment (if any) that is due that week, and the assigned reading for that week.

### Part 1: Information Perspectives
*In this part of class, we’ll survey a number of broad theories and perspectives on information that will be applied in the second part of the semester.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1—Jan 28</strong></td>
<td>Introduction to Information Environments</td>
<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Course Introduction and Administration&lt;br&gt;• Information, Technology, and Society&lt;br&gt;• Data vs. Information vs. Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>Buckland (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2—Feb 4</strong></td>
<td>Seeking Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relational Components of Info Seeking&lt;br&gt;• Newcomer Strategies on Socialization&lt;br&gt;• Information Seeking Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Borgatti &amp; Cross (2003)&lt;br&gt;Bauer &amp; Green (1998)&lt;br&gt;Ramirez et al. (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3—Feb 11</strong></td>
<td>Producing, Consuming &amp; Interpreting Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4—Feb 18</strong></td>
<td>Organizing Information&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Guest Lecture: Katy Lawley</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5—Feb 25</strong></td>
<td>Analyzing Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How Organizations Use Data&lt;br&gt;• Introduction to Statistics&lt;br&gt;• Information Visualization (NodeXL)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Davenport (2013)&lt;br&gt;Wilson (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6—March 4</strong></td>
<td>Envisioning Information in the 21st Century</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part 2: Information Applications
*In this part of the class, we will take what we have learned from the first half and apply those lessons to specific environments and situations in which information is a critical factor.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 7—Mar 11</strong></td>
<td>Collaboration, Cooperation, and Competition</td>
<td>Data Analysis (9.2)</td>
<td>Olson &amp; Olson (2000)&lt;br&gt;Abele (2011)&lt;br&gt;Amabile et al. (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making Collaboration Work&lt;br&gt;• Role of Distance&lt;br&gt;• Online Community Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 8—Mar 18</strong></td>
<td>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS – Submit team member names by break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 9—Mar 25 | Information Culture in the Workplace | • Organizational & Information Cultures That Work  
• Learning from Failure | Goffee & Jones (2013)  
Catmull (2008)  
McGrath (2011) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week 10—April 1 | Social Media as an Information Environment | • Affordances of Social Media  
• Business applications (e.g., IBM’s Social Blue) | Leonardi et al. (2013)  
DiMicco et al. (2008)  
Lampe et al. (2012) |
| Week 11—Apr 8 | Information Security | • Penalties vs. pressures in organizations  
• Facial Recognition  
• Current issues in information security | Herath & Rao (2009)  
Acquisti & Gross (2009)  
Washington Post cyberwar special report |
| Week 12—Apr 15 | Information Privacy | • Private vs. Public Disclosures  
Hartzog & Selinger (2013)  
*Additional reading TBD* |
| Week 13—Apr 22 | Information Ethics | • Ethics & Privacy  
• Ethics in Research  
• Internet’s Impact on Information Policy | Zimmer (2010)  
Culnan & Williams (2009) |
| Week 14—Apr 29 | Information Policy | • Political Economy of Information  
• Rise of the “choice engine”  
• EU’s Facial Recognition Policy | Benkler (2003)  
Thaler & Tucker (2013)  
Hall (2012) |
| Week 15—May 6 | Future of Information | • Mobile/WiFi in business & personal life  
• Semantic Web  
• Big Data Analytics | Readings TBD |
| Week 16—May 13 | Final Presentations | • Sharing results from team projects (see Appendix for details) | White Paper/ PPT Poster (9.5)  
n/a |
12. References


Appendix: Assignment 9.2

This assignment is focused on information analysis. As noted above, you will identify a data source from Pew Internet (pick one that interests you!) and review the questionnaire. Below, I provide some examples of how to complete this assignment using the Online Video Data Set. If you choose to use this dataset, you cannot use the examples I provide here (and would need to rewrite the description of data).

The assignment has four required components:

1) A link to the dataset + description of the data
Include the name and a working hyperlink to the main dataset so I can easily locate it. Then, in a few sentences, summarize the dataset in terms of the types of questions that were asked. For example:

The survey asked participants questions about their ownership of cellphones, as well as their video watching and uploading behaviors. Participants were asked if they (a) watched and (b) posted a variety of different categories of videos. They were also asked if they had ever regretted posting a video or posted a video with hopes that it would get a lot of views.

2) Five research questions or hypotheses.
What is a research question? A clearly defined question that addresses relationships between two or more variables. See this page for more details on both research questions and hypotheses.

As noted above, the research questions and/or hypotheses do not all need to be related to each other; some of the larger datasets cover a large range of topics. The important thing to make sure is that they 1) are clearly defined and 2) can be answered through an analysis of data. You should also (briefly) state why each is a good question/hypothesis to analyze.

Here are two examples:

**RQ:** What are the demographic characteristics of people who watch political videos?  
This RQ could be useful for campaign strategists to know who is most likely to be watching the campaign videos they are making—and who is not—because they can use that information in developing more targeting advertisements.

**H:** Age is negatively correlating with the practice of posting videos that one later regrets sharing.  
Testing this hypothesis could provide some useful data to help support (or disprove) the idea that young people tend “share without thinking” online, which is more likely to lead to regret. It may actually be that skill level is the more important variable of interest, but that won’t be measured in this initial test.
3) Description of how you will analyze the RQs/hypotheses.
4) Present your results.

The last two sections can be presented together, but it is important for you to describe how you will analyze the data before presenting the results of that analysis (i.e., thus answering your RQs/Hs).

I can analyze the above RQ in a couple ways. The easiest is to look at the crosstabs file for Question VID01f and look for meaningful differences between groups (males vs. females, age groups, races, etc.). Here’s how I would present results:

While 35% of all online video-viewing adults watch political videos, men (40%) are significantly more likely to watch videos than women (30%); there are no significant differences across racial groups; those with more education (college grad-44%, some college-37%) are more likely to watch political videos than those with less education (high school or less-23%); and those in the highest income bracket ($75,000+) are more likely (42%) to watch political videos than people making $50,000-$74,999 (26%). Finally, there are no differences in watching political videos between people who self-report as Democrat, Republican, and Independent.

For the H, I want to run a correlation comparing AGE with question PIAL5 (about regretting posting a video). This can be done in SPSS or Excel (to run a correlation in Excel, see here). If there is a significant positive correlation (because YES=1, NO=2 for PIAL5), the hypothesis is supported. Here’s how I would present results:

The correlation (r=.20, p<.01) provides support for the hypothesis that age is negatively correlated with posting and later regretting online videos.
Appendix: Assignment 9.5

The team project is an opportunity to get experience with information seeking, analysis, and synthesis, skills that will be important in a management position. Organizations often ask project teams to conduct research and produce short white papers presenting the results of their work; for this project, teams will conduct research on an information-related topic and present the results in a short problem/solution-style white paper of approximately 2500 words.

Below I have provided details for each deliverable for this project. Note that the 10 team topics will be announced at Week 6 and teams must submit a list of the team members’ names before spring break begins.

**Progress Report (5/30 points)**
At Week 12, each team should submit a one-page (minimum) report summarizing progress to date. This report can take the form of a draft white paper (with whatever sections have been written to date); it can include a discussion of questions and/or problems the team has encountered; and/or it can outline the team’s plans for completing the project. Just as project teams have supervisors review their progress, this is an opportunity for the professor to review each team’s progress and offer feedback to improve the project prior to its submission.

**White Paper (15/30 points)**
Each team’s white paper will evolve from the individual project and research questions that team is assigned. This project should follow a similar format to a problem/solution white paper, in which you identify the issue of interest, provide background on why it is a “problem,” offer a “solution,” and provide supporting evidence for your stance.

A general outline for the white paper is as follows. Your paper is not required to follow this exact format, but it is recommended you include the starred sections at minimum. You can include additional sections as you desire. Overviews and descriptions of white papers vary, but some examples can be found here and here.

- Title* (including authors)
- Executive Summary: short (150-200 words) description of the paper that describes the problem and solution
- Introduction*: Introduces the topic, provides overview of the white paper, i.e., what the rest of the paper will do.
- Background*: Where you describe the problem in detail based on what other research has found.
- Solution/Recommendations*: Where you argue for the best solution(s) (and potentially discuss alternative solutions and describe why the are inferior).
• Conclusion: Summarizes the paper; used as a way to enhance readers’ understanding of topic.
• Visuals: Charts, graphs, or images can be included to highlight or enhance your argument. Note: if you are using an image from another source, you MUST include cite the source.
• References*: Make sure these are formatted consistently (and referenced in the text).

Some important questions to ask when preparing your white paper/conducting your background research:

1. **What is your overarching research problem?**
   -- Think about how these research questions are related and come up with a problem you will focus on. From the sample assignment for 9.4, the research questions could lead to focusing on assessing whether the benefits of teleworking outweigh its drawbacks.
   -- What are the most important variables (factors) related to this topic? Make sure you define/describe all key topics that relate to your problem/solution.
   -- Provide enough details in your backgrounder that a lay person feels comfortable with the topic.

2. **Why is this topic interesting/important?**
   -- How is it related to class? Try to explicitly relate course concepts to your discussion of the topic and solution. You may be interested in how a number of concepts tie into your topic (e.g., privacy, security, ethics); it’s fine to discuss all of these.
   -- What is the role of information in this topic? This should be clear throughout the paper.
   -- What value do we gain by researching/sharing information about it?

3. **Is your solution the “best” one for the problem?**
   -- Consider/present counter solutions.
   -- Why is the one you chose better than the others? Be able to defend your choice.

**PPT Poster (10/30 points)**
During the final class session, we will hold staggered poster presentations in which several teams at a time will present their posters to the rest of the class. Each team will design a creative and informative PowerPoint poster to share the results of your white papers with your colleagues. This set of PowerPoint slides (6-8 slides printed one sided) should address the main points of the analysis including (but not limited to):
• the research “problem”
• background on the topic
• the role of information
- the role of technology
- the team’s proposed solution(s)

Each team will be responsible for (a) submitting an electronic copy of their slides to Canvas by the start of the final class (May 13) and (b) preparing a printed full-size (i.e., one slide per page) presentation copy of the sides and bringing them to class. The professor will provide materials to attach the slides to the wall for the poster discussion sessions.

There will be three 45-minute sessions (two with three teams and one with four teams), with 10-minute breaks between sessions. During each session, the teams will secure their posters in their designated part of the wall. Each team will give a 5-7 minute “brief” on their project, then the class will spend the rest of the time browsing the posters and interacting with the team members about their projects. All students are required to attend this class and are expected to be active participants in this session, as this is an excellent opportunity to both learn about a variety of information topics and practice valuable presentation skills that will be important in the workplace.