

Assignment #3:
Social Networks/Social Software/Network Society
Literature Review and Research Proposal
Anth 315, Fall 2006

The goal of this assignment is to conduct a literature review and concoct a research project proposal. You do not need to actually conduct the research you propose, so you are free to imagine complex and potentially problematic research if you wish. Be creative. The work will be graded on 1) the clarity and originality of the proposed research project, 2) the extent and depth of the literature review and 3) the quality of the organization, writing, and documentation/citation. The assignment is to be completed individually, but you are encouraged to brainstorm together and provide feedback on each other's work.

Proceed thusly:

1. Choose a topic: a form of "social" network
(a form of social organization and communication prior to the internet: postal system, secret societies, etc.)
(a form of networking using electronic networks prior to the Internet: BBS, the WELL, telephony or telegraphy etc.)
(a form of networking dependent on the Internet: email, MySpace, YouTube, Social Networking Software, etc.)
2. Conduct a literature review
(search for existing scholarly literature, from any fields, on the form of networking you have chosen)
The goal of this search is to find out what kinds of research has been done already, on the topic you are interested in, and to give you an idea of the kinds of research that are conducted. Depending on the topic you choose, your search may be more or less successful. You may need to broaden your topic to find more research--or narrow it in order to manage the number of different things you find.
3. Write a summary of the existing literature, and the problems raised by it
Once you have found a handful of articles that allow you to define your topic clearly, write a summary of the existing research, and the kinds of problems and questions it addresses.
4. Propose a research project based on your literature review.
Based on your literature review, propose a research project of some kind: what isn't being studied, what questions are not being asked? What kind of research isn't being conducted? The value of this exercise lies in coming up with a precise question we do not know the answer to, and a probable means of finding out something about the answer.
5. Present your review and proposal in class December 5th and 7th.

resources

Fondren

<http://www.rice.edu/fondren/collections/electr/alphaindexes.html>

Google Scholar

<http://scholar.google.com/>

CiteSeer

<http://citeseer.ist.psu.edu/>