

## Current Events Unit – Exploring, Defining, and Explaining an Idea using Research

(Part 1 of a 2-part project)

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### Description

In industry, it is not uncommon for a group or an executive to identify a topic and assign the task of ‘assembling the current knowledge’ on that topic into a report in order to understand or address a specific problem. Sometimes the documents that result from these research expeditions are called “White Papers.” The goal is often to obtain the gist of what is known about a specific topic, area of inquiry, or process in order to make an informed decision or to propose a solution to a problem. While many white papers in industry are persuasive, the goal of the Current Events unit is to explore the research side of the white paper. Effective papers will focus on a very specific topic, demonstrate synthesis in the findings, and avoid a pro/con research question and structure.

For this assignment, you are to choose a research topic based on the criteria below. Then, you are to write a **1100 word minimum** report in which you synthesize the results of your research for an unknown reader. You should assume that this reader is in the same industry as you, and that they have some authority, so your report should be more formal than informal. You should also assume that your report might be used by others so accurate citation is an absolute must.

Part 2 of this project takes place in the Emerging Arguments about Technology unit where you will use this research to create a letter to a decision maker that proposes a solution to a problem or argues for some kind of change. Taken together, these two units result in a good approximation of a typical, real-world white paper. Your final presentation for our course will enable you to present this argument to the class for their feedback.

**A minimum of 5 sources are required**, all must be deemed credible for academic work. This means no news websites (CNN, FOX, ABC, NBC ..etc), no tabloids (NY Post, Huff Post, Daily Beast..etc), and at least 2 sources must be peer reviewed or from a recognized trade publication.

### Topic selection criteria\*:

Effective topics will

- focus on a specific current policy issue related to computer science from a specific stakeholder perspective (e.g. facial recognition; surveillance; environmental restrictions; data privacy..etc...) OR
- investigate the history and rationale for the design of a specific software or hardware technology that you wish to see improved, modified, or updated OR
- present a specific computer science –informed hardware or software solution to a real world problem

### Document Structure

Because these are reports, they should begin with a research methods summary followed by a well-organized presentation of the relevant information into a set of findings sections. **In-text citation must be used** within the findings sections. **See the document template** on the reverse side for additional guidelines.

### Citation Guidelines

**You should use ACM Documentation Style.** This includes both in-text and works cited citation entries.

\*The following topics are not available to be selected for this assignment: self-driving cars; the “Earn It” act; net neutrality;

Name

Date

# Title – (this should be an approximation of your primary research question)

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## Research Methods Summary

This section should present your main research questions and summarize your overall approach to the research. What kinds of sources did you consult? How did you select/narrow in to this topic? What smaller research questions/ subtopics played a role in your searches? Why did you select the sources you ultimately chose?

### Finding 1: (label the finding sections using topic titles or questions)

This section (and others like it) should synthesize ideas, using support from sources, findings based on your research. There are a couple of ways to approach this. You can organize your notes into 3-5 different subtopics or answers to specific questions. You can also use the findings section to discuss what you learned from each source – this approach works well if your sources represent different perspectives on the topic. These sections should be evaluative, but not persuasive or argumentative – only the conclusion section can contain an argument.

### Finding 2

### Finding 3 etc...

## Conclusion

This section should provide your overall answer to the research question based on the findings presented above. If an argument for a specific course of action has emerged through your research, you may include that here as well.

### *Works Cited (on a separate page)*

Make sure you list all sources cited in your paper using ACM Documentation Style