**SI 310 Fall 2017 Final Exam**

You can start working on the exam at 5:00pm Monday December 4, 2017. It is due at 5:00pm, Tuesday December 12. That’s it – the final part of SI 310. Good luck finishing your classes, and have a great break.

The final exam is like the mid-term: open everything, meaning books, papers, notes, on-line stuff, etc. Pay attention to the quality of sources, and cite appropriately. You may discuss any/all of the exam with others, including your group members, but submit your own writing. You are not obligated to use other materials, talk with others, or use all the available words. (Short and good is better.) All questions have an upper bound for words of 350, not counting citations. The exam is worth 25 points. The first question is one point; all others are three points. Answer all the questions. As with the mid-term, the quality of writing (*e.g.,* spelling and grammar) will be considered. Ask for help if needed. Read through the questions and jot down preliminary answers before discussing with others. Beware groupthink: others could be wrong.

Question One (1 point)

What is your name? Putting your name in the file name is *not* putting your name on your exam answers. Put your name on what you turn in. This should be an easy point.

Question Two (3 points)

You go home after your first semester in the BSI. Someone corners you and asks what the BSI is about. They say it is not like chemistry or math or English – topics they *understand*. What *is* it? They will stop listening at about 350 words. It might come down to the backup mentioned at the beginning of 310, (“It’s a secret”). But what do you say before you have to resort to that? This *person* is not a stand in for *all people.* One person represents one stakeholder view, not all stakeholder views. Explain that stakeholder view at the beginning of your answer to provide some context. Then answer in terms that stakeholder would relate to. Produce something that makes sense in terms of what that stakeholder thinks. This is sometimes talked about as “finding common ground,” a topic in [communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_ground_(communication_technique)) theory. Once common ground is established the channel is open to explain what the BSI is about. It is doubtful that the same message works for all stakeholders. The question does not ask about all stakeholders.

Question Three (3 points)

This pertains to the BSI as well. History helps with understanding context, and context helps with disambiguation. Look for the most recent common denominator, the “back-bearing” where the key branching occurred and from which the current state of things evolved. See how the back bearing shaped what happened thereafter. In the Arab Spring case the Ottoman Empire served as back-bearing – Caliphate, national borders, British and French mandates. Tawfiq Ammari provided the “[You Are There](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/You_Are_There_(series))” commentary. As a student in the University of Michigan School of Information you wish to understand something about the *context* of UMSI, starting with the *history* of UMSI. Search <umsi history> where you’ll find [this](https://www.si.umich.edu/aboutsi/history-and-mission) document. Don’t stop there – keep looking. UMSI was founded in the 1920s as a librarianship program. It changed to SI in 1996. Treat that change as a back-bearing. (There would be no BSI without SI.) Why the change? Why did it make sense to those involved? A lot happened in the “information” world since 1996 that had to be incorporated “on the fly,” as they say. For example, Google was created in the late 1990s, Facebook in the early 2000s. Why they became successful could inform the story.

Question Four (3 points)

UMSI is about information organization: information organized on the way into storage and information organized on the way out of storage. This sets the study of information apart from other fields. What does this mean as you understand it?

Question Five (3 points)

Distinguish between *topic* and *domain*. The topic in the Ford Fiesta Case was advertising with social media, and the domain was automobiles. The topic in the Security Case was human behavior, and the domain was the security issue of two-factor authentication. The topic in the Data Mining Case was programmatic analysis, and the domain was investment banking. Domain helps one understand the topic as the “case in point.” The topic can be applied to other domains. Choose something from your experience in school (*e.g.,* other classes), work, social life, or whatever and draw the distinction between the topic and the domain to demonstrate that you understand the concept (*topic* and *domain*) and how to apply it.

Question Six (3 points)

Simple description of a system: a process that takes in inputs and puts out outputs. Search and read up on <system>. The BSI can be described as a system. Describe inputs, processes, and outputs in the BSI. Some things (like students) have elements of all three. Search <open system> and <closed system>. Is the BSI *as it functions* (that is, irrespective of an ideal) an open or closed system? This is a “stretch” question, not easy to answer. Take a shot at it. The concept of “system” (especially as used in terms like “system thinking”) is very powerful.

Question Seven (3 points)

The target of a system building effort is often called the “user.” In 310 the user is portrayed as a stakeholder, but while the user is part of the class stakeholder, the class stakeholder might contain more than users. For example, an administrative assistant acting as a high-level administrator’s agent might be both a user and a stakeholder of the calendaring system, but the high-level administrator might be a stakeholder but not a user. Explain how the administrative assistant can be both a user and a stakeholder of the calendaring system, but the high-level administrator can be a stakeholder of the calendaring system and not a user of the calendaring system.

Question Eight (3 points)

Advertising is the primary source of revenue for giants such as Google and Facebook. Yet, advertising is *inherently* ambiguous. All the effort in the world cannot render advertising unambiguous at this point. It might happen someday, but that is not *this* day (as Aragorn might say). What makes advertising inherently ambiguous? Recall what John Wanamaker said, and how Eric Schmidt of Alphabet elaborated on that with respect to Google. Has anything made advertising less ambiguous over the past 50 years?

Question Nine (3 points)

There is an expression in journalism, “Man bites dog.” You can search on <man bites dog> or you can go straight to the [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man_bites_dog_(journalism)) article on it. Of course, you can do both, and that might be a good idea. The expression never came up formally in 310, but it is akin to *anomaly* that did come up. If you search [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anomaly) you end up on a disambiguation page. Yet *anomaly* as used in 310 wasn’t very ambiguous. Look for anomalies because they usually reveal an opportunity to learn. To understand the noun *anomaly* better look at the online edition of the third Oxford English Dictionary, available free to U-M students. Description 2a is useful. Think about what ties the journalism expression “man bites dog” to the noun *anomaly*. Think about why following up on an anomaly is a good trick for learning. Now you are ready for the question. Find in the news somewhere (it can be on-line, print, whatever) something that exhibits for you the “man bites dog” story, and describe what you learn from it. You don’t have to turn in the story – just repeat the headline and whatever else you wish and describe it very briefly. Students will work in groups and are likely to come across the same stories even if they work separately. It is OK to use stories that others found and benefit from discussing them. We expect to see the same stories across multiple students. Just remember to describe what *you* learn. Juicier stories usually work better. Amaze your friends by finding the juiciest story.