

A. CANVAS:

Explore the course Canvas site. If you have not already done so:

1. **set up your profile on Canvas.** You only have to do it once, and it applies to all of your courses. Be sure to include a photo, avatar, or other image that will represent you to me.

B. ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS INTRO:

1. Read Chapter 1 of the text – Networks, Crowds and Markets: Reasoning about a highly connected world by David Easley and Jon Kleinberg. The text is available in the Resources module of the course Canvas site or downloadable online at <http://www.cs.cornell.edu/home/kleinber/networks-book/>
2. Listen to the presentation for this week: Online_Social_Networks.mp4
 - a. The associated PPTX file is also posted on Canvas.
3. Check out the Wikipedia site, which has a list with nearly 200 social networking sites: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites

C. DISCUSSION:

1. **Post a discussion comment in the Introductions discussion.** This does NOT count toward this week's regular discussion requirement.
 - a. Introduce yourself briefly -- anything you wish to share.
 - b. Discuss your online social network use.
2. **Post another discussion comment or start a new discussion.** Discussion board participation accounts for 6% of your final course grade. You will receive .5 point for each week with at least 1 meaningful posts (up to 12 weeks and 6 points max), 0 points for each week without.

D. GOING VIRAL:

This is about the effects that social media had on the case of Alfie Evans, a little boy from Merseyside England, who had a degenerative brain condition and had been in a semi-vegetative state for more than a year before his doctors decided to withdraw life support. Alfie's parents lost all legal challenges, and the boy had his life support withdrawn on Monday April 23, 2018 and died on April 28. If you are unfamiliar with the case, you can read a summary on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfie_Evans_case

This was a heartbreaking situation regardless of anyone's personal feelings about the many factors involved in the boy's treatment and the decision to discontinue life support. We are not going to address the pros or cons of how this was handled. This assignment is only

about the social media involvement by so many people around the world, and its effects on the case.

Tasks:

1. Read these articles that are provided on the Canvas site.
 - "How Facebook's fake news fix made the Alfie Evans story go viral"
 - "Here's How Facebook Groups Made Alfie Evans the Biggest Story On the Internet"
2. **Write a 200-word minimum summary** of the social media involvement in the Alfie Evans case. This should be a factual summary, not your opinions

Facebook decided to tweak its news-feed algorithm:

"The update will prioritize posts that trigger 'conversations and meaningful interactions between people'. But how will this actually change what you see when you scroll down your feed? Essentially, it means you will see more posts from people that Facebook considers to be your friends and family, and less from public pages and publishers." (Wired magazine)

3. **Answer the following 4 questions briefly** (you may express your opinions here), using complete sentences:
 - a. What do you consider some of the positive effects of the viral social media involvement in the Alfie Evans case?
 - b. What do you consider some of the negative effects of the viral social media involvement in the Alfie Evans case?
 - c. The Facebook news-feed algorithm tweak is being credited (blamed?) for the Alfie Evans case going so viral. Do you think Facebook could have anticipated this effect?
 - d. Do you have any thoughts on how this might have been handled differently? [no right or wrong answers here, I just want to hear your thoughts]

Written Assignments: Written work should be submitted in .pdf or Word format, in a document **labeled with your last name**, eg: Dugas_HW3.pdf. You may include legible hand-drawn diagrams in your document, but **all other text must be typed**.

All written work must use complete sentences and proper grammar. Written work will be screened for plagiarism; plagiarism will result in a zero grade and possible reporting to the administration. Be sure you understand plagiarism and reference citation. Quoted material will not be counted toward word count requirements. If you need help with writing, Stevens has a Writing and Communications Center that – despite its misleading URL – is available for both undergraduate and graduate students: [The WCC site is also reachable through MyStevens] <https://www.stevens.edu/academics/undergraduate-studies/writing-communications-center>.