

“Communicate effectively in a variety of genres for various audiences and purposes”

Literature Review

The pitfall of PoW is its excessive use of scarce resources -- namely energy and computer hardware. Critics cite the wastefulness of using PoW only to validate transactions as unnecessary. A 2015 study on Bitcoin estimated that the power consumption from mining accounted for 173 megawatts of electricity usage, or “approximately 20 percent of an average nuclear power plant” [5]. A 2017 estimate claimed that all cryptocurrency mining could account for up to 3-6 gigawatts of electricity usage, similar to that of a “small to medium size country such as Bangladesh and Denmark” [6]. The exchange of digital currency outpacing an entire country’s electricity usage is unacceptable for many, and this problem created the need for a better solution.

Argumentative: ★☆☆

By addressing others’ existing criticisms without directly making claims, I can discuss relevant controversy but avoid opinionated language that may distract from the informative purpose of the paper. Literature reviews are meant to be purely factual and derivative of other scholarly works, only potentially adding a pinch of opinion in the final section discussing future work. The literature review was the least argumentative of my papers, and it was admittedly difficult for me to maintain such a narrow scope as I have an all-American palette for controversy. However, the excerpt demonstrates what I believe is an effective presentation of an argumentative topic for a scholarly audience.

Informative: ★★★

Scattered with definitions, citations, and quotes, the literature review is the most informative of the three papers. Many terms used in this excerpt are defined earlier in the paper and are terms with which many computer scientists are unfamiliar. Cryptocurrency is complicated, and it is a concept that I struggled to grasp for a long time. Navigating this complexity resulted in my literature review being dense with information. Although this may make for difficult reading, it accomplishes the literature review’s goal of condensing pages upon pages of field research.

Forum Analysis

It seems that openness and integrity may be counterintuitive, specifically for the scientific community. The means of discourse and publication within science are typically reserved for those who prove themselves qualified enough to engage in its language and methodology. This usually has the side effect that only properly conducted studies make their way into the spotlight. It can be argued, though, that COS’s emphasis on collaboration -- treating each project not as owned by the author but as owned by the community -- can remediate the faults of open publication, since the reliability of the research is everyone’s responsibility. In addition, opening scientific publication to more people should not decrease the

competitiveness of top scientists who are attuned to the scholarly discourse, and it should rather draw attention to the quality of their work in reference to other, less disciplined public work.

Whether or not OSF's openness actually fosters integrity, perhaps papers from their website should be approached with diligence and skepticism regardless.

Argumentative: ★★☆☆

My forum analysis lives in a gray area between providing arguments and asserting arguments. In this excerpt, you see potential arguments that can be made either supporting or attacking the credibility of a free, open scientific publication service. It's important to run through the reasons for taking a middle ground in my last statement, where I urge readers of OSF publications to approach them with a grain of skepticism, as their authors are not guaranteed to have any form of academic prestige. This is a light argument and avoids heavy opinion that is irrelevant to a reader who simply wants to learn more about each forum.

Informative: ★★☆☆

Much of the information on the topic is contained within the articles. I do introduce and summarize the topic, but most of the informative components regard the publications themselves. The forum analysis was a balanced blend of information and analysis, which I believe is apt for its purpose of showing readers differences in rhetorical landscapes.

Written Commentary

Information is power. Information is money. Information is a business. It has regulations; it is manufactured, processed, and consumed. It is a brilliantly effective but specialized tool, and the leverage one gains over the uninformed by withholding information can be exceptional. Stockbrokers dedicate themselves to the information trade, exchanging predictions, expectations, controversies, corporate gossip, and truckloads upon truckloads of money. Insider information is the market's forbidden fruit -- sweet but, as with any good thing the government touches, illegal. Fighting for the ultimate prize -- freedom from the shackles of scarcity -- stockbrokers nevertheless spelunk deeper into the intricate boundaries of regulation, sometimes finding light at the end of the tunnel. I offer my congratulations to those lucky individuals! They have just discovered what's known as a loophole, and loopholes are *very* profitable.

Argumentative: ★★★

I knew my professor, Justin, made a mistake when he allowed us to incorporate opinion and voice, because I can be very opinionated and vocal. In my commentary, I make no attempt to appear impartial, writing in very sarcastic first person and making direct assertions rather than chickening out with hesitant language. This was partially for the purpose of entertainment but also because I hold strong opinions on misinformation. Since this paper targeted the most general

audience -- it was meant to be read and understood by pretty much anyone -- I wanted to write something that could hold your attention throughout even if you have no prior attraction to the topic. My use of sarcasm and humor ideally engages readers throughout and allows for my entire argument to be presented.

Informative: ★☆☆

My commentary is heavy with argument and only uses the relevant information that supports it. That is not to say that it lacks information. In fact, I hope my paper proves insightful as I was unaware of the findings myself before starting research. However, it is definitely the least informative of the three papers, which is appropriate for the genre.

Summary

The excerpts and descriptions demonstrate the many forms that my writing can take in their respective contexts. These assignments ultimately improved my understanding of how to stylistically adapt my writing to common situations.

“Incorporate knowledge and ideas in a coherent and meaningful manner”

Forum Analysis

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A Closer Look

at the articles' introductions

BBC

The BBC's intro is brief and straightforward, immediately establishing their topic as Ofqual's reversal of their decision to algorithmically adjust student's grades. The BBC also notes that this followed from an "uproar," grabbing readers' attention to a conflict that may be of interest to them (or already has been of interest to them). Two sentences is all that the BBC needs for their hook -- a dramatic event of national importance that involves children's well-being and the mysterious inner-workings of new technology. It's likely that they kept the intro brief under the reasonable assumption that many readers would be invested in the situation already.

OSF

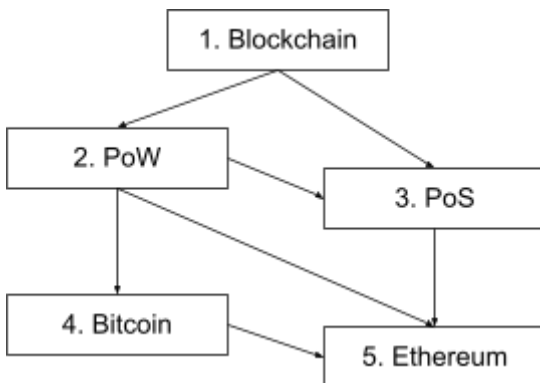
The scholarly article's introduction first covers basic background information and the extenuating circumstances leading to Ofqual's controversial decision. Then, identifying its three main topics in a numbered list, the paper plans to explore the impact and fairness of the grading algorithm along with an evaluation of the support systems available for affected students. The introduction also emphasizes the gravity of the situation, stating the importance of GCSEs and their weight over the direction of a young student's life.

Comparison

The most glaring difference between the two articles' introductions is how they introduce the grading algorithm. The BBC sees no need for background information behind the decision, instead introducing it as a failed plan tainted by public outcry. The scholarly article, however, identifies the unprecedented challenges that arose from COVID-19 as a precursor to multiple tough decisions that administrators encountered much difficulty trying to solve. The scholarly paper seems to regard the algorithm more as an *attempt* rather than as a *failure*.

My forum analysis contained six similarly-formatted sections for specific areas of my analysis. Every section (except for the background section) included two forum-specific analyses and one overall comparison. This consistent pattern makes sure readers know what to expect and makes it easy to immediately identify exactly what each paragraph is talking about. My forum analysis had the best structure of my three papers, most likely because it took the form of a website.

Literature Review



The chart shows the ordering of the major sections, with arrows showing which topics you need to understand first in order to understand the topic it points to. Information snowballs throughout the paper so that readers can refer to information they have already read to recall terms used to explain the section they are reading. This demonstrates effective logical flow needed for a literature review to be coherent.

Written Commentary

- a. Create doubt about the health concern without actually denying it
- b. Advocate for the public's right to smoke without actually urging them to smoke
- c. Encourage objective scientific research as the only way to resolve the controversy
- ...
- a. "Studies have warned COVID-19 vaccines may result in more serious disease when exposed to the virus by way of pathogenic priming and immune enhancement" [6].
- ...
- b. "My goal is to empower you to Take Control of Your Health® by providing trustworthy natural health information and advocating for your right to making informed health choices" [5].
- ...
- c. "I am the lead author of a peer reviewed publication regarding vitamin D and the risk of Covid-19 and I have every right to inform the public by sharing my medical research" [4].

Earlier in the paper when discussing big tobacco's strategy for spreading misinformation, I outlined their three major tactics. Later when talking about vaccine misinformation, I show three quotes from Dr. Mercola that align well with these tactics. This connects the two sections and emphasizes the comparisons I want to make between the two eras of misinformation. This is my paper's main point and I believe the structure and presentation drives it home.

Best paper that represents “ability to apply new and complex writing concepts”

My written commentary is my best paper. The vast majority of my writing education has involved expository writing, so writing papers like the forum analysis and literature review feel almost formulaic at this point. Because of this, I enter autopilot and sort of rehash descriptions and analyses that I have made countless times. Even when I have been asked to write persuasive essays in the past, they were still very formal, with MEAL paragraphs stacked upon MEAL paragraphs turning what could have been an interesting essay into the literary equivalent of an excel spreadsheet. The freedom to create my own structure, include humor, imagery, and opinion, and allow for entertainment was new and exciting.

The commentary was the first ever paper I wrote using *my* voice rather than my writing voice. At times, I do think I went a little overboard and entered rant territory. But overall, I delivered an interesting argument in a fun way, and I discovered a new style of writing for which I have a newfound affinity.

Piece I revised, what I did, and why it’s better

I was happy enough with my grades on my papers and did not choose to revise a piece for this final portfolio. If I were to revise a piece, it would be my literature review. There are so many areas of cryptocurrency that I wasn’t even able to touch on, and I think I could shorten/lengthen sections to talk about more relevant topics.

Goals from beginning of class

My last writing class was in high school. I really enjoy writing -- especially analytical writing that deals with philosophy and rhetoric.

I want to do something impactful and meaningful that involves computer science as a means for problem solving and mathematical modeling. There are a ton of jobs out there so it really just depends on where I land first!

I want to enjoy the writing I do in this class, have meaningful and fun discussions, and not let myself get behind or overwhelmed with the workload.

I'd obviously like to cover something in the math or computer science realm. One interesting topic I have seen is the debate on the ethics of algorithms that attempt to quantify an individual's qualifications for or performance in their job.

I achieved my goals of enjoying writing and having meaningful, fun discussions. I did let myself get behind with the first two papers; I started and finished those in the couple of days before the deadlines. I started the written commentary earlier, so it made for a less stressful experience and a more finished paper.

Exploring the topics I write about in this class gave insight into what is meaningful to me in my career and set the stage for my ethical beliefs in my fields.