**IST 618**

**Reading Reflection Access and Affordability**

The purpose of a review essay is for you to answer an essay question using the main ideas from the required readings as well as other material you may have read on the topic.

**Essays** are to be up to 1,250 words, *excluding references and title*.

**References** should be in APA style or an equivalent that gives full reference data for the paper: author(s) year, title, journal titles, volume and issue number or, if it is a book, the title and editor’s names if relevant, page numbers in the journal or book, URL and/or DOI if available.

**Essay question:**

Information and communication technology systems (ICTs) are now almost routine for commercial transactions, banking, government operations, dissemination of public information, entertainment, and education. As more and more information and transactions go online, decisions about how information will be received and delivered can greatly affect individual’s opportunities to participate and fully engage with government, commercial and educational operations and services. Information policy draws our attention to issues of access – in terms of availability, affordability, and knowledge about use of ICTs.

Using the readings listed below, and other material you find, consider how the implementation of digital only operations are likely to affect a population of your choosing (US or in any other country). For the assignment, identify the case of one particular population that you believe may have difficulty accessing online content – for example, low income users, seniors, unemployed, homeless, disabled, rural – and one aspect of government operation – e.g., relating to voting, democratic participation, unemployment, welfare, social security, education, public service information (e.g., health or weather warnings), immigration, taxes. Discuss the (1) type of access this population will need for the particular government operation, (2) how new digital only access might disrupt current practices, (3) what policy decisions and resources could help support their information access and/or transition to the new platform.

**Readings (available on the class website)**

Warschauer, M. (2002). Reconceptualizing the digital divide. First Monday, 7(1). <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/967/888/>

Hargittai, E. & Walejko, G. (2008). The participation divide: Content creation and sharing in the digital age. (2), 239 - 256. DOI: 10.1080/13691180801946150 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13691180801946150>

Bach, A., Shaffer, G. & Wolfson, T. (2013). Digital human capital: Developing a framework for understanding the economic impact of digital exclusion in low-income communities. Journal of Information Policy, 3, 247-266.