Jan Rehwaldt

University of Tartu, February 2012

*Find a Social informatics problem and indicate 3 different aspects of it to be analysed with SI tools.*

Some ideas:

* ~~Welchen Einfluss hat die Rot-Grün-Sehschwäche (oder vergleichbare) auf das Nutzverhalten von Software? Wie muss die Software angepasst werden?~~
* ~~Disabled people and IT – Does IT help them?~~
* How to construct a user interface, which is equally usable for professionals and beginners (parents vs. digital natives / MS Paint vs. Adobe Photoshop, …). Is it possible at all?
  + Current developments like Office Ribbons
  + Expert switch: simple / expert view -> users miss features
  + Do we need multiple software versions for different target groups? New questions arise: How to design the transition from hobby to power user software?
* How do new technologies (touchscreens, touchfloors, …) influence the development of user interfaces? How is finger-usage (touch) different from mouse-usage?
  + Touch
    - space between buttons must be bigger
    - buttons need to be bigger
    - view angle has to be considered
    - do gestures matter?
  + Even contrast feet-usage
* Does the arrival of computers and, especially, internet for the masses make the people more intelligent or dumb?
* Does the constant availability of information via internet-ready smartphones make the people more efficient and informed?

In good assignment - you will need to define the problem in 3-5 sentences. What is the problem, where it can be seen and what is the state of things in your defined problematic area.

Then take the problem appart - try to get to the roots of things and find 3 aspects of that problem worth investigating. Good outlining of the 3 aspects are critical, analytical and cover a range rather than take a very narrow approach.

Problem needs to be a SOCIAL INFORMATICS problem and the definitions of the problem need to highlight both the social and the technical aspect of it.

\*\*\*LAUR'S EDIT\*\*\* On the basis of above instructions last year most points were awarded to assignments that:

1) clearly identified general problem (research puzzle);

2) then added three more specific questions/aspects about the problem;

3) while being interrelated (constituting a logical whole);

4) indicated possible research methods by which the questions could be answered;

5) were logically and clearly structured.

Bonus part included discussion of background (sometimes with relevant references) or wording of hypotheses (in case they were indeed worded that way not stated as matters of fact).

Worst case: long and ambiguous essay-like writing which provided a lot of author's opinions on various matters but did not enable to get clear answers to virtually any of the points mentioned above.