**IST 486 Assignment #1:   
Social Media Use and Reflection**

Submission Details:

Due: Thursday, February 10, 2022

Value: 50 points

Submission: Blackboard via assignments tab

The purpose of this assignment is twofold: First, I want you to reflect on your relationship with social media (blogs, microblogs, websites, email, social networking sites), so that you can be more cognizant of the motives you have and the gratifications you receive from your use of social media. Second, I want you to get practice reflecting and writing. Social media content producers must be lucid, eloquent, witty, succinct writers, who are keen witnesses of the world around them. They also must have their own style. Practice will help you find your voice and hone your skills of observation.

Your task:

**Pick 4 consecutive days** to do this exercise. It is important you do these in sequence, and pick days that are "typical" for you (weekdays might be better than weekends, for example).

**Day 1 (24 hours):**

When you spend time with social media, document it on the Media Diet Diary Form. Note how long you spent reading/writing and skimming social media, identify the platform or channel (Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.), and document what activities you did (read several friends updates; replied to a comment; liked a post), note what lead you to do those activities (i.e. why you did it), and finally record any emotions or thoughts you had about the activities you performed. At the end of the 24 hours, write a few paragraphs reflecting on what you learned about your behavior and your needs.

**Days 2 to 4 (72 hours):**

Abstain from accessing any social media. Delete your feeds from your tablets, mobile devices, and refrain from checking in on your computer (leech block, which is an Add-On for Firefox is a software solution for blocking social media on your browser). At the end of each day write a paragraph or two reflecting on your abstinence on the Social Media Diet Diary Form. What do you miss? What does not checking feel like? How has it changed the way you spend free time? When did you give in and check any way? When and why did you find that you just *had* to use a social media channel to plan, coordinate, inform, emote?

**Day 5:**

Write a 5-6 paragraph **Reflection Essay** that makes a single, clear argument about your experience and what you want your audience of readers to learn about your experience. This should be written with a single, clear thesis statement – so you need to encapsulate your experience in a lesson or to make some point about you, about social media, about society, or something else. **You must write this essay on day 5.** You need to get used to writing quickly after observing an event, even if you’re juggling other life’s happenings.

**Reflection Essay Style Guide**:

* Write in an expository format: Introduction, thesis statement, the body of the essay supporting that thesis statement, conclusion. Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab has a helpful guide: <http://bit.ly/1T2B4SP>.
* Write for an audience beyond me and this class. For example, you can imagine you are a YouTuber and you are crafting a script of what you want to say for your fans.
* Bring in your voice. Formal, academic writing won’t engage an audience. It’s okay to be informal, but good grammar, punctuation, and spelling is a must.
* Be concise and concrete. Avoid wordy sentences. Help your audience really imagine what it was like for you.
* Do NOT include your paragraphs from days 2 to 4 in this reflection essay.
* Do NOT convince your audience that social media is good/bad. Move beyond “addiction” arguments, and really interrogate for yourself why you find social media important (or not) to your life. The more you can understand what motivates you to use social media applications, the more you can tap into that when you manage social media accounts for an organization or brand.

**Example: IST 486: Media Diet Diary Form**

Name:

**Day 1: Tuesday, January 29, 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time (Start-Stop)** | **Channel** | **Device** | **Activities** | **Motivating Factors** | **Reflections** |
| 11:02-11:07 | Facebook | Blackberry | Scrolled down my newsfeed. Read about 6 friends' updates, and liked one of them. | My phone dinged, telling me there was a Facebook update. I've been chatting with a friend through Facebook, and thought it was a chat message from her. It wasn't. | The ding interrupted my work flow. I was glad for the distraction, but had a hard time picking up where I left off with my work. Most of the updates were uninteresting, and one made me a little jealous because one of my friends called out another friend to make fun of her, and I wasn't included in the fun. I was touched by an update by one of my oldest friends who took a photo of her office, which now features art work my daughters sent her. She's a good friend, and seeing the photo makes me miss her. |
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