RESEARCHING
TO DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING

DEVELOPING CORE PROFICIENCIES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS / LITERACY UNIT

GRADES 9-10

RESEARCH TOPIC REPOSITORY

TECHNOLOGY

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PURPOSES AND USES OF A RESEARCH TOPIC REPOSITORY

A Research Topic Repository provides a starting point and a set of common source texts for a given topical arena in which student inquiry and research might take place. The Repository suggests issues to consider in narrowing and focusing a class or student research, provides examples of possible areas of investigation that might be pursued, lists broad inquiry questions that can lead to investigative paths, and includes a set of source texts for one possible area. The Repository also contains suggested places/ways to search for additional information in the general topic. The common text set models a range of text types and perspectives, and also two fundamental parameters for any set of sources a student will encounter or compile: 1) A source set should contain both background texts that are accessible to the student (relatively straightforward in approach, syntax, and language; not requiring extensive background to interpret; comprehendible, given the student's reading skill and level); and 2) A source set should also include extension texts that are rich, complex, and challenging (at the upper end of the text complexity band; characteristic of texts in the field being investigated; presenting sophisticated arguments and/or research studies; demanding that students read closely to unpack vocabulary, syntax, and meaning).

The Repository supports and informs teacher and student decisions that are made during the research process, as described in the Researching for Deeper Understanding unit plan and listed in each section below. The first decision is which Repository to use as a context for the unit and student research, or whether to develop a new, parallel Repository. Teachers and students should base this decision on the instructional level, curriculum context, student interests, and common text levels.

The Lexiles of the model common sources contained in this repository range from 940L to 1420L.

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I. INTRODUCTORY TOPIC DESCRIPTION

TECHNOLOGY

Teacher/student decision: How might we narrow the topic and focus the investigation based on the curriculum context, areas of interest, intended purpose, and anticipated product/use?

As an omnipresent influence on our world, both currently and historically, Technology is a broad and rich arena for student research, offering many potential areas of investigation, inquiry paths, and research purposes. The arena of Technology, encompassing technological advances, devices, and systems, their uses (and abuses), histories, and impacts on human experience, is applicable in almost any subject area or curriculum context. Technology offers both teachers and students a wide array of options for investigation, based on the researcher's purpose and the anticipated outputs of the research: the uses that will be served and the products that may result.

Because of the breadth and flexibility of Technology as a domain for research, teachers (or students) may need to limit the topic area before initiating the inquiry process. This could begin by focusing on a particular technological field (e.g., robotics), advance (e.g., the rise of the Internet), device (e.g., printing press, smart phone), or phenomenon (e.g., social media, laptop computers and tablets). Limiting could also occur by considering the role and impact of a technology in a particular field of study, such as physics, music, politics, or mass media.

The identified purpose(s) and anticipated product(s) of a student's investigation will also focus the topic and influence the process. If a student intends to use the research to define and inform a thesis-driven academic argument, the topic (and search process) should focus on issues and controversies in an area of Technology or an analysis of the impact of Technology in a particular field or realm of human endeavor. Alternately, if a student is investigating a topic of personal or career interest, and intends to use the research to inform an explanation of how a particular technology works or has been developed, a career or consumer decision, a design problem or plan, or a community-related project, this purpose and its intended results/products should also narrow, focus, and frame the inquiry process.

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II. POSSIBLE AREAS OF INVESTIGATION

Teacher/student decision: Which area of investigation might be most meaningful or relevant to a class or student and provide a purposeful context for investigation?

1. Technology's Role in a Historical Event (e.g., the impact of social networking on American politics or recent historical/social developments in the Middle East)
2. The Influence of Technology on Human Behavior (e.g., how social media has changed interpersonal relationships)
3. The Impact of Technology on Learning and Education (e.g., tablets in the classroom)
4. The History of a Technological Advance (e.g., smart phones)
5. The Use of Technology by Industry, the Military or Law Enforcement (e.g., robotics or drones)
6. A Writer's Views about and Representations of Technology (e.g., Ray Bradbury)
7. The Technical Aspects of a Device or System (e.g., how computer chips are produced and work)
8. A Comparative Analysis of Technological Systems (e.g., iOS vs. Windows systems)
9. Investigation of Career Options in a Technology-based Field (e.g., multi-media production)
10. Consumer Research about a Technology-Based Product (e.g., the technical distinctions between plasma and LED TV's)

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III. (A) POSSIBLE GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR INQUIRY AND RESEARCH

The following questions can be used to initiate inquiry and to guide students in identifying paths for investigation. The questions are presented somewhat generically, with the idea that a particular technological advance (e.g., smart phones) and/or technologically enabled phenomenon (e.g., social media), identified by the teacher and/or students, would serve as the focus of the questions, inserted where the questions currently say [the technological advance].

Teacher/student decision: Which questions best lead to initial inquiry paths, given the chosen area of investigation, purpose, and intended product? Are other questions/paths relevant?

1. What is the history of [the technological advance]? How was it conceived and developed, and how has it evolved over time?
2. How does [the technological advance] work? What are its component technologies, and how does it integrate with other technologies?
3. What is the science behind [the technological advance]? How did scientific research and/or engineering lead to its development?
4. What are the advantages of [the technological advance] over other technologies? What are its drawbacks or limitations?
5. How has [the technological advance] influenced society and people's lives so far? What long-range impacts might result from its use, both positive and negative?
6. What are the differences in the ways various cultures or social subgroups view and use [the technological advance]? Why do these differences exist?
7. What would life be like without [the technological advance]?
8. How have various authors viewed or depicted [the technological advance]? How do their views compare?
9. What controversies surround [the technological advance] and its use? How do observers with a range of perspectives view [the technological advance] and the controversies surrounding it?
10. How is [the technological advance] viewed and discussed by academicians in related fields? What are the academic debates surrounding its development and use?
11. What career options and opportunities are related to [the technological advance]? How might someone learn about and pursue those options?

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III. (B) POSSIBLE GROUPED INQUIRY QUESTIONS

1. What is the history of social networking? How was it conceived and developed, and how has it evolved over time?
2. How does social networking work? What are its component technologies, and how does it integrate with other technologies?
3. What is the science behind social networking? How did scientific research and/or engineering lead to its development?
4. What are the advantages of social networking over other technologies? What are its drawbacks or limitations?
5. How has social networking influenced society and people's lives so far? What long-range impacts might result from its use, both positive and negative?
6. What are the differences in the ways various cultures or social subgroups view and use social networking? Why do these differences exist?
7. What would life be like without social networking?
8. How have various authors viewed or depicted social networking? How do their views compare?
9. What controversies surround social networking and its use? How do observers with a range of perspectives view social networking and the controversies surrounding it?
10. How is social networking viewed and discussed by academicians in related fields? What are the academic debates surrounding its development and use?
11. What career options and opportunities are related to social networking? How might someone learn about and pursue those options?

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IV. COMMON SOURCE TEXT SET

The common text set for this Repository presents a model text sequence focused on a particular area of investigation; the common text set can be used in various ways by a teacher and students, depending on the degree to which they want to focus inquiry and research on the areas of investigation suggested by the texts in the set. Each common text is linked to a specific reading activity in the unit plan, and each includes a short set of text notes and a set of text-based questions to initiate students' close reading.

Teacher/student decision: Which of the following ways should the common source texts be used?

1. **Provide background and direction for inquiry focused on the area of investigation:** In this case, students will read and analyze the common texts as either the main sources for or as a research base as they embark on inquiry and investigation directly related to the area(s) of investigation presented in the texts. They will develop the close reading skills required for effective research through text-based discussions and analysis of the common texts, as explained in the unit plan. Students may then extend their individual research into closely related areas and new texts.

2. **Provide skills practice and a starting point for students' research:** In this case, students will work with the text set to learn about and practice the close reading skills required for effective research, but will then conduct research into a related, but new area of investigation identified by the teacher or students, applying those same skills with new texts.

3. **Serve as models for the teacher:** In this case, the teacher may identify other, similar texts in a chosen area of investigation and build a new or expanded common text set, which parallels the model set in terms of breadth, richness, and complexity. Students will develop the close reading skills required for effective research using the teacher's new common text set and will launch either teacher- or student-directed inquiry in a new area of investigation area suggested by the texts in the set.

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IV. COMMON SOURCE TEXT SET (CONT'D)

Teacher/student decision: Which of the common texts will we use for skill development? As a foundation or starting point for research?

The general text characteristics and their *sequential use in the unit's activities* are outlined below:

Text #1 - *Stimulus*: Rich, high interest text that can stimulate student thinking and discussion in the general topic area and lead the class or a student to consider various areas of investigation. Might be a literary text.

Students will use this text as a jumping off point for inquiry in **Part 1, Activity 2.**

Text #2 - *Background information*: Accessible informational text providing accurate background information on an identified area. Characteristics – rich, quality, credibility, connection to the inquiry. Should be a quality source of rich information on central aspects of topic. Should frame an area in a way that can lead to many paths of exploration, rather than a single perspective or focus.

Students will use this text to build background and practice skills of close reading and initial text analysis (for credibility, accessibility, and relevance) in **Part 1, Activity 3, and Part 2, Activities 2-3.**

Text #3 - *Background information*: Accessible informational text providing additional and complementary accurate background information related to an identified area of investigation.

Students will use this text to build background and practice skills of close reading and initial text analysis (for credibility, accessibility, and relevance) in **Part 1, Activity 3, and Part 2 Activities 2-3.**

Text #4 - *Perspective on the Topic:* Short, but potentially more challenging informational text that presents or suggests a particular perspective on an identified area of investigation. Should come from a credible source.

Students will use this text to identify one of multiple ways of viewing the identified area of investigation, to practice close reading skills of analyzing perspective and bias, and to compare with other perspectives in **Part 2, Activities 2-3.**

Text #5 - *Perspective on the Topic*: Short, but more challenging informational text that presents or suggests a second or contrasting perspective on an identified area of investigation. Might come from a less known source with uncertain credibility.

Students will use this text to identify one of multiple ways of viewing the identified area of investigation, to practice close reading skills of analyzing perspective and bias, and to compare with other perspectives in **Part 2, Activities 2-3.**

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IV. COMMON SOURCE TEXT SET (CONT'D)

Text #6 - *Perspective on the Topic:* Short informational text related to an identified area of investigation that presents or suggests an additional or contrasting perspective. Might come from an unusual source with uncertain credibility.

Students will use this text to identify one of multiple ways of viewing the identified area of investigation, to practice close reading skills of analyzing perspective and bias, and to compare with other perspectives in **Part 2, Activity 2-3.**

Text #7 - *Argument related to the Topic*: Longer and more complex informational text related to an identified area of investigation with rich content, a clear perspective, and effective, well-developed argumentation.

Students will use this text to deepen their understanding of the identified area of investigation and the issues, debates, and controversies that surround it, and to practice the close reading skills of analyzing arguments, their reasoning, and their supporting evidence in **Part 3, Activity2.**

Text #8 - *Argument related to the Topic*: Longer and more complex informational text related to an identified area of investigation with rich content, a clear perspective, and effective, well-developed argumentation.

Students will use this text to deepen their understanding of the identified area of investigation and the issues, debates, and controversies that surround it, and to practice the close reading skills of analyzing arguments, their reasoning, and their supporting evidence in **Part 3, Activity 2.**

Text #9 - *Argument related to the Topic*: Longer and more complex informational text related to an identified area of investigation with rich content, a clear perspective, but potentially flawed or unsupported argumentation.

Students will use this text to deepen their understanding of the identified area of investigation and the issues, debates, and controversies that surround it, and to practice the close reading skills of analyzing arguments, their reasoning, and their supporting evidence in **Part 3, Activity 2.**

Text #10: - *Academic or Research study related to the Topic*: A text representative of how academic research and/or discussion is presented in text form, with rich content, complex or technical information/ideas, from a credible source.

Students will use this text to deepen their understanding of the identified area of investigation and how academicians view, study, and discuss it. Students will learn and practice the close reading skills needed for reading text from an academic field in **Part 3, Activity 2.**

NOTE: the teacher or students may supplement this text with additional examples of academic writing from fields related to the area of investigation.

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V. COMMON TEXTS:

TECHNOLOGY: THE ADVENT AND IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

[Note: Because of the area of investigation, all texts have been located through Internet searches.]
Text Complexity Range: 940L to 1420L

AUTHOR	DATE	L	LOCATION
Text #1: *Why I Take Good Care of My Macintosh*			
Gary Snider, American Beat poet	1988	840L if written as prose	http://ittimes.ucdavis.edu/v6n4jan98/snyder.html
Text #2: *The History of Social Networking*			
Gordon Goble, Internet columnist and technology product reviewer	September 6, 2012	1390L	http://www.digitaltrends.com/features/the-history-of-social-networking/
Text #3: *How Twitter Works*			
Jonathon Strickland, senior writer and podcast host for Discovery Communications	NA	1260L	http://computer.howstuffworks.com/internet/social-networking/networks/twitter.htm
Text #4: *The Negative Impact of Social Networking Sites on Society*			
Dave Parrack, freelance writer, Internet columnist and blogger from Manchester, England	April 12, 2012	1200L	http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/negative-impact-social-networking-sites-society-opinion/
Text #5: *The Positive Impact of Social Networking Sites on Society*			
Dave Parrack, freelance writer, Internet columnist and blogger from Manchester, England	April 19, 2012	1190L	http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/positive-impact-social-networking-sites-society-opinion/
Text #6: *The Uses of Social Media*			
brillblonde, a teen blogger and writer of poetry who posts entries on Teenink.com	November, 2012	1060L	http://teenink.com/opinion/pop_culture_trends/article/508056/The-Uses-of-Social-Media/
Text #7: *Tweet Me to Your Leader*			
Matthias Lufkens	October 8, 2012	1350L	http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/10/tweet-me-to-your-leader-how-the-worlds-big-shots-use-social-media/263752/
Text #8 (Title 1): *How Social Media is Having a Positive Impact on Our Culture*			
Josh Rose, blogger and digital creative director of ad agency Deutsch LA	February 23, 2011	940L	http://mashable.com/2011/02/23/social-media-culture/
Text #8 (Title 2): *How the Internet Gets Inside Us*			
Adam Gopnik, writer, critic, essayist, and novelist who has written for The New Yorker since 1986	February 14, 2011	1220L	http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2011/02/14/110214crat_atlarge_gopnik?currentPage=1
Text #9: *Facebook's Faceplant*			
Cory Doctorow, essayist who writes about technology	November 26, 2007	1410L	http://www.jus.uio.no/sisu/content.cory_doctorow/24.html
Text #10: *In Social Media and Opinion Pages, Newtown Sparks Calls for Gun Reform*			
Pew Center research staff	December 20, 2012	1420L	http://www.journalism.org/commentary_backgrounder/social_media_and_opinion_pages_newtown_sparks_calls_gun_reform

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TEXT #1

Why I Take Good Care of My Macintosh

By Gary Snider, American Beat poet

Date: 1988

Complexity Level: Poem, so NA (but if written as prose, measures at 840L)

Source/Link: UC Davis IT Times website

http://ittimes.ucdavis.edu/v6n4jan98/snyder.html

TEXT NOTES

Text #1 should provide a jumping off point for a class discussion of Technology and its relationship to our lives, as well as a first opportunity to practice close reading skills. Many literary texts, fiction or nonfiction, could provide such an interest-building reference point (for example Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenhiet 451* or Bill McKibben's *The Age of Missing Information*).

This shorter text is a poem written in 1988 by noted American Beat poet Gary Snyder, pondering his relationship with his Macintosh computer, a poem which is still relevant even though Snyder himself had moved from using "a Macintosh Plus with a 20Mb hard disk in 1988 to a Mac Powerbook 1400cs with 750 Mb" ten years later in 1998 (IT Times annotation to the poem) – and probably onward to a new technological device today. The poem is rich with images and metaphors, any of which might start a discussion about our relationships with technology, and what that relationship says about us. While written as a poem, it also presents a kind of imagistic argument, with its "Why…" – "Because…" structure. All students should be able to read this text easily, but will also need to dig deeply into the language of the poem to uncover its meaning, and to make their own meaning from it related to the unit's topic and their potential investigation of subtopics in the field of Technology.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. Snyder presents a number of images that represent reasons why he takes "good care of my Macintosh." Pick any of his statements that follow the word "Because" and explain what a close reading of the image reveals.

2. Snyder states that "my computer and me are both brief in this world, both foolish, and we have earthly fates." What does a close reading of these lines from the poem reveal he seems to be saying – both about technology and life? What are some other ways we might think about – and research – relationships between humans and the technologies we come to love (and sometimes hate)?

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TEXT #2

The History of Social Networking

By Gordon Goble, Internet columnist and technology product reviewer

Date: September 6, 2012 (updated by digitaltrends.com staff, first written in 2009)

Complexity Level: Measures at 1390L, but reads much more easily due to straightforward language and approach; should be accessible to most high school students.

Source/Link: http://www.digitaltrends.com/features/the-history-of-social-networking/

TEXT NOTES

This background article from a digital product review site is typical of the informational sources students may encounter when doing a Google-based Internet search. Though written by a relatively unknown author, it presents a straightforward but detailed history of the development of social networking as a technology-based phenomenon, with some lively authorial voice but a reasonably objective accounting. It moves from the antecedents of current social networking sites (e.g., CompuServe and AOL) to Facebook and beyond. Because it is found on a website dedicated to digital product reviews, it presents an interesting first opportunity to discuss credibility of Internet-based sources.

Students might also access the following sites for historical background information:

1. The Brief History of Social Media – Course Handout prepared by Dr. Anthony Curtis, Mass Communication Dept., University of North Carolina at Pembroke. http://www.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/NewMedia/SocialMedia/SocialMediaHistory.html
2. copyblogger.com – History of Social Media Infographic. http://www.copyblogger.com/history-of-social-media/
3. mashable.com - History of Social Media Infographic (developed by OnlineSchools.org) http://mashable.com/2011/01/24/the-history-of-social-media-infographic/

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. Initially, Goble suggests that the use of computers for social interaction was an unlikely phenomenon because "this whole sitting-in-front-of-a-keyboard thing was so… isolationistic." As the article progresses, what details/ideas does he present to suggest how this situation changed and led to the "omnipresent cultural phenomenon we know and love" today?

2. What does Goble imply might be the future of social media – beyond Facebook and Twitter? How might this trend be significant to society, given what he has described as the history of social networking to date?

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TEXT #3

How Twitter Works

By Jonathon Strickland,
senior writer and podcast host for Discovery Communications

Date: Not identified (but currently posted on website as of May 2013)

Complexity Level: Measures at 1260L, mostly due to some technical language used in Sections (pages) 3 and 4 of the article; Sections 1 and 2 should be accessible to most high school students.

Source/Link: howstuffworks.com (Discovery Communications)

http://computer.howstuffworks.com/internet/social-networking/networks/twitter.htm

TEXT NOTES

This text, drawn from Discovery Communications "How Stuff Works" series of web-based articles, presents a multi-part explanation of the technology behind Twitter, moving from a general discussion of background and the history of Twitter's development, to an explanation of what a "tweet" is, and then to more technical discussion of Twitter's application programming interface (API) and how it works on devices such as cell phones. The first two sections should be accessible to all students as background into this technological phenomenon, which will be referenced and discussed in later articles and studies in the text set; more technically-oriented students will find the information in Sections 3 and 4 most interesting and relevant. For a discussion of credibility of the site, this article represents an interesting comparison with Text #1. While it has been produced by a for-profit entity, Discovery Communications, the How Stuff Works site is described by the company as an "award-winning source of credible, unbiased, and easy-to-understand explanations of how the world actually works… founded by North Carolina State University Professor Marshall Brain in 1998." For more information about credibility, go to: http://www.howstuffworks.com/about-hsw.htm

Students might also access/read the similar article: *How Facebook Works* (http://computer.howstuffworks.com/internet/social-networking/networks/facebook.htm)

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. What details in the article suggest how Twitter is interconnected or related to other Internet-based technological phenomena, such as Google, Blogger, and Facebook?

2. What does the article imply are the limitations of "tweets," and therefor of Twitter as a social networking system?

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TEXT #4

The Negative Impact of Social Networking Sites on Society

By Dave Parrack, freelance writer, Internet columnist and blogger from Manchester, England

Date: April 12, 2012

Complexity Level: Measures at 1200L.
Conversational approach should make this article accessible to all high school students.

Source/Link: makeuseof.com, self-described as "a booming daily blog that features cool websites, computer tips, and downloads that make you more productive."

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/negative-impact-social-networking-sites-society-opinion/

TEXT NOTES

This Internet text is intended to be paired with Text #5, to present students with an opportunity to read and analyze two accessible articles that represent opposite views of an area of investigation: the impacts of social networking sites on society. In this case, the comparison is made somewhat easier (and perhaps more interesting), because the articles are very conversational in tone, are *written by the same columnist* one week apart, and have a parallel organizational structure. As such, they neatly lay out how two sides of an issue may be viewed, even by the same person. Though both articles present rather personal opinions and points of view, they are also relatively objective analyses of different ways to view social networking, rather than strong arguments for either side of the issue. They should represent a foundation for, and contrast to, the more strongly and complexly presented arguments found in Texts#7-9, and the research study of Text #10.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. Parrack discusses a number of ways in which social media may have changed human relationships in negative ways. What are two specific assertions he makes, and what evidence, if any, does he present to support his ideas?

2. Parrack concludes with an assertion that, "Most people would rightly refuse to walk around with a billboard attached to their front revealing all and sundry to the world. Yet we do just that on social networking sites." What does a close reading of this sentence, in relationship to the rest of his article, suggest he means?

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TEXT #5

The Positive Impact of Social Networking Sites on Society

By Dave Parrack, freelance writer, Internet columnist and blogger from Manchester, England

Date: April 19, 2012

Complexity Level: Measures at 1190L.
Conversational approach should make this article accessible to all high school students.

Source/Link: makeuseof.com, self-described as "a booming daily blog that features cool websites, computer tips, and downloads that make you more productive."

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/positive-impact-social-networking-sites-society-opinion/

TEXT NOTES

See text notes for Text #4

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. Parrack organizes his discussion of the positive impacts of social networking into six related areas. What are the key assertions he makes about social media in one of these areas? What evidence, if any, does he cite to support his assertions?

2. In what ways do Parrack's assertions in this article contrast with his assertions in his article about negative impacts?

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TEXT #6

The Uses of Social Media

By brillblonde, a teen blogger and writer of poetry who posts entries on Teenink.com

Date: posted in November, 2012

Complexity Level: Measures at 1060L.
Teen voice and syntax make for an easy read accessible to all high school students.

Source/Link: Teenink.com, self described as "a national teen magazine, book series, and website devoted entirely to teenage writing, art, photos and forums.
Students must be age 13-19 to participate, register and/or submit work."

http://teenink.com/opinion/pop_culture_trends/article/508056/The-Uses-of-Social-Media/

TEXT NOTES

This text presents students with another perspective on social media, from the point of view of a student writer and blogger. For that reason, it represents both an easily accessible read and an opportunity to discuss the credibility of blog posts, and particularly posts from somewhat anonymous voices (who is brillblonde?). Though the writing is less professional than many of the other texts, it is also typical of much of what is being currently written and published on the Internet. It also discusses examples of students who are using social media to make a name (and even a potential career) for themselves, and thus could be a jumping off point for research into career pathways and opportunities related to the unit's topic and area of investigation.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. What evidence in this post tells you something about the author, her perspective, and her views about social media? What makes her credible to you as a reader? Not credible?

2. The author concludes by saying, "Using social media, we can create a known presence of ourselves worldwide." What evidence is presented to support this broad conclusion? Is it a well-reasoned or logical assertion? Do you as a reader agree?

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TEXT #7

Tweet Me to Your Leader

By Matthias Lufkens

Date: October 8, 2012

Complexity Level: Measures at 1350L, mostly due to relatively long sentences, many of which are expanded by references to Twitter addresses; journalistic approach makes this article accessible, if challenging for most high school students.

Source/Link: The Atlantic online

http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/10/tweet-me-to-your-leader-how-the-worlds-big-shots-use-social-media/263752/

TEXT NOTES

This article from *The Atlantic* bridges between objective, journalistic reporting and analysis or opinion, and thus presents students with both background information and an interpretation of that information that can be seen as a kind of argument. The article also focuses on the area of investigation of social media and the impacts on the realms of politics and government, both nationally and internationally. It provides interesting statistics and anecdotes about the increasing use of Twitter and other media by world leaders, as well as some analysis/opinion about what these patterns indicate, and why they may be a positive trend. Student might use this article as a jumping off point for extended research into the impact of social media on political and governmental processes.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. What specific data does Lufkens cite to support his assertion that "the use of social networks has become an integral part of government communication"?

2. "For those not yet convinced about the power of social networks, consider this: If Facebook were a country, it would be the third-largest, behind China and India. Twitter would rank fourth, with more than half a billion registered users." What does a close reading of this statement and its information imply? Are these accurate, supported assertions? How is the inference we might draw from this data central to Lufken's concluding claim that "'Twiplomacy' is here to stay"?

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TEXT #8

(a paired text set, with the first referencing the second)

How Social Media is Having a Positive Impact on Our Culture

By Josh Rose, blogger and digital creative director of ad agency Deutsch LA

Date: February 23, 2011

Complexity Level: Measures at 940L, mostly due to its shorter sentences, but still presents a lively and challenging read for most high school students.

Source/Link: Mashable.com
According to Wikipedia, Mashable "is a Scottish-American news website, technology and social media blog founded by Pete Cashmore in 2005. The website's primary focus is social media news, but also covers news and developments in mobile, entertainment, online video, business, web development, technology, memes and gadgets. It does approximately 50M page-views per month and is one of the world's largest websites."

http://mashable.com/2011/02/23/social-media-culture/

How the Internet Gets Inside Us

By Adam Gopnik, writer, critic, essayist, and novelist who has written for The New Yorker since 1986

Date: February 14, 2011

Complexity Level: Measures at 1220L, but sophistication of ideas and references makes this a very challenging, college-level reading experience for high school students.

Source/Link: newyorker.com

http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2011/02/14/110214crat_atlarge_gopnik?currentPage=1

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TEXT #8 (CONT'D)

TEXT NOTES

These two articles, one a conversational and accessible blog post on a website dedicated to social media information and the other a very complex critical essay from *The New Yorker*, present an interesting paired reading experience and two related arguments about social media, the Internet, and their effects on us. The first, *How Social Media is Having a Positive Impact on Our Culture*, is a personalized post from an advertising agency director, who argues that in multiple ways social media such as Twitter and Facebook are having positive impacts on the way in which we live; he uses a range of anecdotal and personally researched evidence to support his claims. In his article, he also cites (and praises) the second text, a critical essay from *The New Yorker* that was published the week before his post; this reference allows students both to see how ideas move across sources and how rapidly one text can lead to another, especially in the age of Internet journalism.

How the Internet Gets Inside Us, in contrast to the blog post by Rose, presents a scholarly argument characteristic of criticism in literature and the arts, citing a number of recently published works that fall into three contrasting views about the Internet and its beneficial effects on society. The Gopnik text is a long and challenging one, with sophisticated syntax and language, many references to texts students will not be familiar with, and a set of rather abstract assertions. The text may not be accessible to all students, but will present the most skilled readers with a close reading experience characteristic of texts they may encounter in college. The gist of the article and its argument can be read without having to read all the criticism of specific works that Gopnik cites, by focusing on the following sections: Paragraphs 1-4, 10-11 (beginning with "Cognitive entanglement…"), and 23-end (beginning with "Armed with such parallels…"). It is recommended that all students at least encounter the first four paragraphs, which explain Gopnik's categorization of critics of the Internet as either "the Never-Betters," "the Better-Nevers," or "the Ever-Wasers."

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. In his blog, Rose concludes by stating: "The Internet doesn't steal our humanity, it reflects it. The Internet doesn't get inside us, it shows what's inside us." What evidence does he discuss that leads to this assertion? How is it related to what Gopnik asserts in his article?

2. When thinking about the impact of the Internet on us and our reading habits, how does Gopnik explain the differences in point of view between "the Never-Betters," "the Better-Nevers," and "the Ever-Wasers"? [paragraphs 1-4]

3. Gopnik concludes by asserting that, "Thoughts are bigger than the things that deliver them. Our contraptions may shape our consciousness, but it is our consciousness that makes our credos, and we mostly live by those." What does a close reading of this sentence suggest he means? How has his critical argument led up to this final thought? How is this idea related to Rose's statement that, "The Internet doesn't steal our humanity, it reflects it. The Internet doesn't get inside us, it shows what's inside us."?

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TEXT #9

Facebook's Faceplant

By Cory Doctorow, essayist who writes about technology

Date: originally published in InformationWeek, November 26, 2007

Complexity Level: Measures at 1410L, largely due to the author's use of unusual terminology; presents a very lively and challenging read for high school students.

Source/Link: Content
Selected Essays on Technology, Creativity, Copyright and the Future of the Future
(creative commons self-publication of collected essays on technology, available through SiSU, Structured Information Serialized Units, a "comprehensive future-proofing electronic document management system.")

http://www.jus.uio.no/sisu/content.cory_doctorow/24.html

TEXT NOTES

Doctorow is known (and sometime condemned) for his lively, often sarcastic, and very opinionated essays about trends in technology. This text is typical of his work, and presents students with an energetic example of the new journalism related to Technology to be found on the Internet, with a challenging text to read and analyze closely, and with an example of an argument based mostly on opinion rather than evidence. Doctorow makes a series of assertions, such as "Facebook is no paragon of virtue," that are strongly worded but not always backed by supporting information. His conclusion, that Facebook is a "volatile" and evanescent phenomenon, soon to be "on the scrapheap of net.history," also presents students with an interesting point of view to consider, both in their research and their own uses of social media.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. Doctorow states that social media sites may be subject to what he labels "boyd's Law:" "Adding more users to a social network increases the probability that it will put you in an awkward social circumstance." What does a close reading of this sentence reveal he is implying? What argument does he present that this "law" may lead to the eventual downfall of Facebook?

2. What are the major premises behind Doctorow's concluding statement that Facebook will eventually join other social media sites "on the scrapheap of net.history"? What evidence does he cite to support this position?

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TEXT #10

In Social Media and Opinion Pages, Newtown Sparks Calls for Gun Reform

By Pew Center research staff

Date: December 20, 2012

Complexity Level: Measures at 1420L,
and presents a very challenging text for high school students, typical of research studies they may read in college and also may encounter in their own deeper searches into Technology topics.

Source/Link: Journalism.org, The Pew Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism

http://www.journalism.org/commentary_backgrounder/social_media_and_opinion_pages_newtown_sparks_calls_gun_reform

TEXT NOTES

This research-based article presents students with a challenging example of the ways in which research into social and journalistic topics is conducted and published, responsibly and objectively. It includes a series of data displays and analyses that indicate patterns in social media posts following the Newtown shootings that were related to stricter gun control laws, suggesting that media such as Twitter and blogs are increasingly being used as forums on which such topics are debated. It compares the data from these forms of new "editorialism" to data about patterns in more traditional newspaper editorials and op-eds, as well as to data about YouTube viewing patterns. The report includes links to a Methodology section (http://www.journalism.org/methodology_3), explaining the ways in which data were collected and analyzed, and to a related article about How Blogs, Twitter and Mainstream Media Have Handled the Trayvon Martin Case (http://www.journalism.org/commentary_backgrounder/special_report_how_blogs_twitter_and_mainstream_media_have_handled_trayvon_m) as well as other Pew Center reports.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. What data does the study cite to indicate that the social media responses to the Newtown shootings that were related to stricter gun laws were different from the responses to the 2011 shootings in Arizona?

2. What do patterns in the data presented in this study suggest about the relationship of opinions expressed through social media and those expressed through newspaper editorials and op-ed pieces?

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES RELATED TO SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

Twitter in the Classroom - Article by John Calhoun on Tech Nation, "an introspective wiki on technology in education".
http://56wrtg1150.wikidot.com/twitter-in-the-classroom

You DO Like Reading Off a Computer Screen - Essay from Cory Doctorow [1250L]
http://www.jus.uio.no/sisu/content.cory_doctorow/6.html

It's the Information Economy, Stupid - Essay from Cory Doctorow [1320L]
http://www.jus.uio.no/sisu/content.cory_doctorow/8.html

Are social media creating the laziest generation?
CNN Opinion OP Ed from Dean Obeidallah [1280L]
http://www.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/07/18/obeidallah.laziest.generation/index.html

Zuckerberg to Grads: "Good Luck Competing with Me"
Mark Zuckerberg's 2011 Graduation Speech at Cal Berkeley [600L]
http://www.satirewire.com/content1/?p=3139

5 Ways New Media Are Changing Politics - Us News online report
http://www.usnews.com/opinion/slideshows/5-ways-new-media-are-changing-politics

Fed up with censorship, conservatives create alternatives to Facebook
Biased news report from Liberty Unyielding website [1360L] – similar articles also found on fosnews.com and blaze.com
http://libertyunyielding.com/2013/02/01/fed-up-with-censorship-conservatives-create-alternatives-to-facebook/

Social Media Is Not Your Friend
Editorial by Penny Young Nance, president of Concerned Women of America, on foxnews.com
http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2011/09/15/social-media-is-not-your-friend/

What Would Jobs Do? Technology and Schools that Work
Speech excerpted in NY Post by Rupert Murdoch, chairman of News Corporation.
http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/
what_would_jobs_do_SeJNmLMhG6euhtsgIeXhGP

Social Media is About Sociology Not Technology
Article by self-proclaimed "digital analyst, sociologist, and futurist" Brian Solis, which presents an analysis of relationships between media and business marketing strategies.
http://www.briansolis.com/2007/08/social-media-is-about-sociology-not/

Social Networking News - A set of links to NY Times articles related to the topic of social media
http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/subjects/s/social_networking/index.html

Guide to Searching for Resources on Technology through EBSCO and other Informational Databases
[to be developed in future versions of this repository]

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