

Assignment 1

Assigned: Thursday, February 22, 2007

Due: at the beginning of class on Thursday, March 1st, 2007

Overview

This assignment has two parts.

- 1) Answer **one of the three** short questions in Part I in approximately 400 words.
- 2) Answer the long essay question in Part II in approximately 800 words.

Some important notes:

- 1) Bring **TWO** stapled copies of your assignment to class.
- 2) Papers should be double-spaced, 12-point font (e.g., Times New Roman).
- 3) You are expected to work on this assignment on your own. If you have clarification questions or issues, please ask me or Judd.

Part I (40%)

(Option 1)

Discuss how Ryan's conception of notification norms could be applied to Hulbert, Haines and Beggs' arguments about resource allocation in non-routine situations.

(Option 2)

Analyze and critique McKenzie's argument about "natural trajectories" from Fischer's perspective/viewpoint. That is, your answer should be based on Fischer's arguments (and citing him when appropriate), not your own opinion.

(Option 3)

Discuss how the epidemic and the probit models of diffusion could be used to explain the adoption of the telephone in America.

Part II (60%)

Write an essay with these two related parts:

- a) Clearly *define* **four** of the eight concepts below, citing authors and page numbers where appropriate. In addition, *describe* how each concept helps our general understanding of information and/or information technology. To do this effectively, you should draw from the readings and cite the author's and their arguments when appropriate.
- b) Choose any information technology (other than the telephone) and relate it to *at least two* concepts from the four that you chose for part A. Your analysis and description of the technology should focus on making clear arguments which reflect your understanding of the readings and the authors' points of view. This essay need not contain any specific historical details about the development or use of the technology that you choose. In other words, the point of this essay is to demonstrate your understanding of the concepts and argue how they might relate to an information

technology of interest to you—you are not being graded on your understanding or knowledge of additional material (including history).

- i. Example: If I wrote about the telephone as an information technology, I might discuss potential issues surrounding its diffusion and adoption in developing countries. Alternatively, I might discuss issues surrounding our understanding of the emergence of new mobile phone technologies from older ones. The options here are limitless—but you want to find a clear way to relate your chosen information technology to the two concepts that you choose.

Interpretive Flexibility

Literacy of ICTs

Information Cascades

Technological Determinism

Diffusion of Innovations

Personal Network Density

Notification Norms

Homophily