

# HISTORY OF INFORMATION: RESEARCH PROJECT

Presented July 8, 2009 - Megan Finn and Dan Perkel

# Research Project Steps



- 0. groups will be assigned Friday
- 1. Pick a topic – and write a research question
- 2. select sources
- 3. read and analyze sources (2 per person)
- 4. synthesize the results of your reading to answer your research question and make a compelling argument.
- 5. present results

# Deliverables



- PROPOSAL: due Wednesday, July 15, 2009
- LIST OF SOURCES: due Monday, July 20, 2009
- PRESENTATION: You will be assigned a day:
  - Wednesday July 29, 2009
  - Friday July 31, 2009
  - Monday August 3, 2009
  - Wednesday August 5, 2009
- PROJECT WRITE-UP: due Wednesday, August 5, 2009

# Grading



- Your grade on this project will be based on your presentation and your write up. We will look at the quality of your analysis, your argument's contribution to the History of Information, and the clarity of your ideas presented orally and in your write-up.

# Step 1:

Topic and Research question

# TOPIC and RQ - tips



- 1. Your project has to have a **historical component**
- 2. Pick something that you find interesting
- 3. Play to your groups' strengths
- 4. Write a **compelling** "how" or "why" research question
- 5. you must make an argument in your presentation.
- 6. not too narrow, and not too broad
- 7. Be modest.

# TOPIC: select one from a list



- -early Spanish or Chinese Language newspapers in California
- -the Homebrew Computer Club in California in the 1970s
- -the social function of Books of Hours in Medieval Europe
- -modern uses of the radio by indigenous Australians

# TOPIC and RQ: Another option



- A: Pick something that you feel is critical to understanding the history of information.
- B: pick a specific community, or region
- C: Last pick a specific time period
- Research questions might be: What are the institutions and technologies that shaped A for B during C?



# TOPIC and RQ: your choice





## Step 2:

### Selection of Sources

# SOURCES: “Types”



- Primary: Gets you as close to the action as possible
- Secondary: Scholarly analysis of the topic at hand

# SOURCES - tips



- 1. Patience. Invest time.
- 2. Pay attention to quality!
- 3. Two sources per group member
- 4. What counts as a source?
  - ▣ Secondary source: scholarly article or book chapter
  - ▣ Primary source: ask us



## Step 3

Read and analyze sources

# Critical reading



- Who is the author?
- What is their intention with this book or article?
- Who is the author talking to?
- What argument are they making?
- How do they make this argument?
- Why is this important to examining this research question?
- How does this work relate to other sources I am engaged with?

## Step 4:

Synthesis; address research questions; make an argument

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## Step 5:

Presentation; write-up

# PRESENTATION: tips



- Explain the topic you selected
- State your research question
- Discuss your approach to addressing the RQ
- Make an argument
- Support your argument with your analysis of sources
- Thoughts on future work or other questions raised

## Next....

before Friday:

Read the research project instructions

Brainstorm topic ideas for group meeting

Friday: group assignments and first meeting