

# The MINS 301 Discussion Forum

## Rationale for Forum Use:

First, important developments in the field of Information Technology occur on a daily basis. Staying abreast of recent developments is important for all professionals, but is especially so for IT professionals. In addition, current events provide some of the best case studies or illustrations of IT theory. Having student keep each other informed through postings in a discussion forum is a superb form of collaborative learning. A common observation is that discussion forums provide a means whereby students learn as much from one another as from course materials or lectures.

Second, the requirement to participate in the online forum adds a writing component to the MINS 301 course which previously had none. Although forum participation accounts for only 15% of students' overall grade in the class and is not fully instructor mediated, students should nonetheless gain practice in writing "executive summaries" and "personal reflections" regarding information they have located and evaluated. A peer rating facility implemented in the forum software allows students' to rate each others' postings. In this way, students receive summary feedback that should be more immediate than could be provided by the instructor alone.

## Forum Participation Requirements:

As part of MINS 301 you are required to participate in an online class discussion forum. Participation in the forum accounts for 15% of the course grade. The online forum is organized into categories that roughly parallel the topics outlined in the course textbook – Information Systems Today. Over the course of the semester you are required to post reviews of four (4) current articles (i.e. no more than 6 weeks old) that you have encountered on the Web and which relate to topics from the assigned readings. For each of the unique web-hosted articles you review, you should provide (1) the URL, (2) a short synopsis or executive summary, and (3) a personal reflection concerning implications for individuals, organizations or society at large. In addition, you are required to review and rate twelve (12) of the articles posted by classmates. Each topic category opened for discussion will remain open for only two (2) weeks. After that, the category will be closed to further postings. Although you may review articles from any legitimate online source, the online CIO and Computerworld magazines are good sources as is the ACM's Technews website.

## Calculation of Forum Participation Points:

For each of the four original article postings that you provide in the online forum, you will receive a minimum of 15 points. You will receive additional points if your posting is rated above "3-stars" by your class peers: i.e., 20 points for a "4-star" posting and 25 points for a "5-star" posting. For each review/rating/reflection that you provide, you will receive 4 points. In total you can earn up to 148 points for forum participation.

Note that the forum will be monitored for situations in which students "trade ratings" in order to earn extra points. If a pattern of postings arises that appears to indicate a conspiracy to circumvent the system, those postings will be disqualified. Note also that in your postings you are expected to reflect upon the ramifications of IS-related news and developments for individuals, organizations or society at large. Simply stating that you liked or disliked a particular article is not sufficient.

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## Expectations for Forum Postings:

Original article reviews are to consist of three elements:

1. A hyperlink to the original online article. This link tells the reader **WHERE** the article can be found.
2. A one-paragraph **summary** of the content of the article. The summary should be in your own words. You should not cut and paste a portion of the article to serve as your summary. The summary informs the reader **WHO** or **WHAT** the news item is about.
3. A one or two-paragraph **reflection** on the implications of the technology or the new item described in the article. The implications may be personal, organizational, or societal. The implications inform the reader **WHY** or **HOW** the news is important.

Follow-on reviews should consist the same information provide in #3 above, i.e. a one or two-paragraph reflection on the implications of the news. A sample dialog consisting of an original posting and a follow-up review are the following:

Author	Message
12/09/2006 21:15:03	Subject: Technology Integration in Schools
<b>EOConnor</b> ★★★★☆ Joined: 07/09/2006 18:33:55 Messages: 1 Offline	<p>For those of us who are business majors, talk about a ?BOOMING? market? technology integration in schools. If you think about the cost of constantly updating technology at Chico State alone, to keep up with the progressing, fast paced change of technology, you are talking about a HUGE amount of money. Millions of dollars are being spent to put updated technology into classrooms, computer labs, the library, and many other areas of school.</p> <p>In the article ?College debuts Internet so fast, it almost gives you whiplash? They are talking about Century College in Minnesota putting in a brand new 20 million dollar library and science building, a new 6 million dollar technology center with over 1 million dollars of new equipment. The schools focus is updating information and telecommunications to attempt to keep up with the estimated 95% growth rate of the internet within the next decade. If you think about the number of schools in the United States, from elementary to college level, the amount of money over the next decade being spent on technology integration (just in schools) will be far into the billions.</p> <p>To read this article: <a href="http://www.startribune.com/142/story/669000.html">http://www.startribune.com/142/story/669000.html</a></p> <p>Erin O'Connor</p> <p><a href="#">profile</a> <a href="#">pm</a></p>
21/09/2006 16:15:48	Subject: Re:Technology Integration in Schools
<b>cabbot</b> ★☆☆☆☆ [Avatar] Joined: 05/09/2006 11:15:31 Messages: 5 Location: South Lake Tahoe, CA. (originally Lafayette, CA.) Offline	<p>I agree. This is an interesting article that really sums-up the "information-age" that we live in. Close to a decade ago hardly any schools had computer labs or were "online" for student access. Now it's virtually unheard of. This technological shift still blows my mind. I, like everyone else my age, grew up without the internet, and many of our homes didn't even have a P.C. Now i couldn't even begin to imagine life without either. To a degree it's even scary in the sense of how dependent we've all become. We are a wired society. Boy, i must be getting old. I still remember when people had to check out books to do research and write papers. Thank God for Google eh? We now have a whole generation coming into its own that will only know of the "wired" world. It really is a trip when you realize the significance of it all.</p> <p><a href="#">profile</a> <a href="#">pm</a> <a href="#">email</a> <a href="#">www</a></p>

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### Grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.:

You should treat a forum posting as an executive memorandum in which you are briefing both your supervisor and your peers on the possible impacts or strategic use of a new technology. As such, you will want to insure that your writing is clear, concise, and free of spelling or grammatical errors. You may want to consult the College of Business Writing Rubric for information concerning what is considered unacceptable, acceptable or superior written communication.

**California State University, Chico**  
**College of Business**  
**Writing Rubric -Guidelines for Assessment**

WRITING TRAIT	UNACCEPTABLE (1)	ACCEPTABLE (2)	SUPERIOR (3)
<b>Organization of Ideas and Content (OIC)</b>	Writing is not concise and has a tendency to ramble. No clear direction in the writing. Lack of focus and organization interfere with communication and understanding. <u>If appropriate:</u> Lacks a clear introduction and conclusion. <i>Needs work.</i>	Writing could be a bit more concise. Focus and direction of writing is acceptable, but could use a little work. Organization doesn't interfere with communication and understanding, but could use a bit more attention. <u>If appropriate:</u> Introduction and conclusion are acceptable, but could use a little work.	Writing is concise. Information is presented in a manner which makes it extremely easy for the reader to understand the points being made. Ideas are clearly stated. Focus and direction of the writing are extremely clear. <u>If appropriate:</u> Compelling introduction, informative body with details, and effective conclusion.
<b>Sentence Structure (SS)</b>	Poorly developed sentences. Sentences don't express ideas well. Sentence structure is sometimes so poor that it makes reading and understanding difficult. Sentences are awkward, rambling and would sound strange if read out loud. <i>Needs work.</i>	Sentences usually flow well while at other times are awkward due to lack of conciseness, wordiness, or lack of appropriate structure. Overall, most sentences clearly express ideas.	Extremely well developed sentences. Sentences flow well. Sentences clearly express ideas. Sentences are concise.
<b>Paragraph Structure (PS)</b>	Sentences within a paragraph are unrelated. No clear direction within the paragraph. Connections between paragraphs are confusing. <i>Needs work.</i>	Similar to Superior, but a few paragraphs need improvements. Most sentences within a paragraph build upon or relate to a single issue. A few paragraphs lack good lead-in or transitional sentences.	Organization of paragraphs enhances readability. Sentences within paragraph all build upon or relate to a single issue. Logical flow. Good lead-in sentence for each paragraph. Good transition between paragraphs.
<b>Word Choice and Tone (WCT)</b>	Writer struggles to use appropriate vocabulary. Language is vague. Words are used incorrectly. Tone and word choice are inappropriate for intended audience. Inappropriate use of "casual language" and clichés. <i>Needs work.</i>	Writer uses familiar words well and occasionally makes more sophisticated word choices. Tone and word choice are appropriate for the intended audience.	Sophisticated and appropriate use of vocabulary. Word choice adds to quality of the writing and enhances overall meaning. Tone and word choice are appropriate for the intended audience.
<b>Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling</b>	Writing contains numerous and/or significant errors which interfere with comprehension	Writing contains a few insignificant errors that don't interfere with comprehension or	Writing is nearly error free. For example, paper has no more than one error on any given page, or for

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<b>(GPS)</b>	and distract from the message. For example, three or more errors on a page, or for longer papers, more than five errors in the whole paper. <i>Needs work.</i>	distract from the message. For example, two minor errors on a page, or for longer papers, five or fewer minor errors throughout the paper.	longer papers, no more than four errors throughout paper.
<b>Professional Format and Use of Conventions (PF)</b>	Document has numerous and significant printing and/or formatting problems. Aesthetic qualities of the paper would be an embarrassment to an organization. Doesn't follow basic formatting conventions (e.g., citations and documentation). <i>Needs work.</i>	Document is reasonably neat and professional looking. Document has a few minor formatting or convention problems (e.g., citations and documentation).	Document is extremely neat and professional looking. Everything formatted correctly. Proper use of any necessary conventions (e.g., citations and documentation). Paper's aesthetic qualities are what one would expect from a business professional.
<b>Professionalism</b>	The reader (e.g., instructor, coworker, client, CEO) of this document would view it as unprofessionally written.	The reader (e.g., instructor, coworker, client, CEO) of this document would view it to be adequate, but not extremely professional.	The reader (e.g., instructor, coworker, client, CEO) of this document would view it as extremely professional.