

EMAC3328: The Digital Society

Course Information

Location: ATC Building 2.918
Time: Monday and Wednesday 2:30 - 3:45pm
Course Website: <http://elearning.utdallas.edu> and find “EMAC3328”

Professor Contact Information

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Office Location: ATC 4.909
Office Hours: Monday 4-5pm or email me for an appointment

Course Description

In this course, we will be focusing on one important dimension of the digital society – online communities. Enabled by various digital media platforms, online communities are becoming an increasingly important part of our work and social lives. How are communities designed? Why are some communities more successful than others? And what are some of the issues in the research field? To answer these questions, students will survey multiple theories and empirical research of online communities, and apply their skills through both design challenges and critical analysis of existing communities.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Understand important features of online communities.
- Describe and analyze online communities using theoretical concepts and vocabulary.
- Make informed design and management decisions for online communities.
- Become familiar with research issues in the field.

Required Texts

- Building successful online communities: Evidence-based social design, by Kraut and Resnick (2011). ISBN: 9780262016575.
 - Available at [Off Campus Books](#) and [Amazon](#)
- Additional course readings will be posted to eLearning.

Course Requirements

- **Attendance and participation:** Class sessions will involve intensive discussions as well as individual and group activities. Therefore, participation and active discussion are absolutely essential for the success of this class. I expect you to come to every class prepared and ready to discuss critically about the assigned readings and community sites. Be prepared to defend your position with examples, statistics and scientific studies.
- **Reaction forum posts (individual):** Students are required to write weekly reaction papers on assigned readings and post them to the elearning discussion forum. These forum posts should focus on **all of the readings** of each week and should include four parts:

- 1) a brief summary of each paper's key points
- 2) their strengths and limitations, especially their strengths
- 3) their connection to each other as well as other readings
- 4) their application to the communities we study.

Each forum post is due by **11:59pm on the Sunday before the class meeting**. So the first forum post is due on 9/8 and the last one is due on 12/1. Out of the twelve forum posts, ten of your best ones will be included in your final grade, but I encourage you to post every week as it is a great way to engage the readings critically.

- **Site reviews (individual and team):** Each week, the syllabus lists a few sites within a genre for site review. Individually, every student is required to look at these sites and engage in some social activities on these sites as a participant. If you are already somewhat familiar with the site (for example, Wikipedia), try to go beyond its surface, and devote your time to exploring the mechanisms of interaction and observing the social dynamics according to the readings and frameworks reviewed in class.

Students also sign up to deliver a site review presentation (up to 30 minutes) in class twice during the semester. Those who sign up for the same week would work within the team to present together. In addition to what is required for every student, the site review team is required to participate in each community for a substantial amount of time (**at least three hours on each site, for each team member**). Take careful notes on your experiences every time you connect and become very familiar with its purpose, history, user roles, leadership, code of conduct and social structure. An analysis template will be provided on elearning. The site review presentation usually happens on Mondays, and will serve as a starting point for class discussion.

- **Design project (team):** Students will work in teams of **up to three people** to propose, design, implement, and market a new online community throughout the semester. This project has several deliverables, including:
 - 1) First presentation (mid-semester): idea pitch
 - 2) Second presentation (end of semester): mockup, user scenarios, and a design document (4-8 pages, 12pt, double spaced). More details will be provided later.
- **Final paper (individual):** A final paper can take two forms. It could be an essay critically analyzing an existing online community using the concepts and theories covered in class. It could also take the form of an empirical research paper. In either case, please let me know your community/research topic of choice, and get my approval before writing the paper. The final paper should be 10-20 pages long (12 points, double-spaced) and follow APA format. More details on the final paper will be provided later.

Your performance will be evaluated according to the following:

Attendance and Participation	25%
Forum posts	20%
Site reviews (team)	15%
Design project (team)	20%

Final paper (individual) 20%

Academic Integrity

Scholastic Dishonesty: Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting for credit any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source, is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments (Due before each class)
8/26 & 8/28	Syllabus overview	Syllabus
9/4	Organize for projects	Site review template
9/9 & 9/11	Importance of online communities	<p>First forum post due on 9/8</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kraut & Resnick, Chapter 1 (elearning) Rheingold, H. (2012). <i>Net Smart: How to Thrive Online</i>. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. – Chapter 4 (ebrary – UTD login required) National Initiative for Social Participation white paper <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wikipedia (Find one article of interest and learn about the major points of discussion on the “talk” page. Contribute at least 100 words to this article and follow closely the development of this article, especially your edits.) Check out the article on Online Community Check out the Village Pump Lamest edit wars on Wikipedia (skim, pick one and explore in detail)
9/16 & 9/18	Theories	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oldenburg, R. (1997). <i>The great good place: Cafés, coffee shops, community centers, beauty parlors, general stores, bars, hangouts, and how they get you through the day</i>. Chapter 2 (elearning) Howard Rheingold (1993) Introduction and The Heart of the Well, in <i>The Virtual Community</i>. Wellman, B., & Gulia, M. (1999). Virtual communities as communities: Net-surfers don't ride alone. <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reddit (and subreddits, such as News and the UTD subreddit) Slashdot
9/23 & 9/25	Social networks	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rheingold, H. (2012). <i>Net Smart: How to Thrive Online</i>. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. – Chapter 5 (ebrary – UTD login required) Gladwell, M. (1999). <i>Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg</i>. link Ellison, N. B. & boyd, d. (2013). <i>Sociality through Social Network Sites</i>. In Dutton, W. H. (Ed.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies</i>. (elearning) <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook Twitter Pinterest
9/30 & 10/1	Social and technical	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessig, L. <i>Code, Version 2.0</i>, Ch. 1-3 Baym, N., 2010. <i>Personal Connections in the Digital Age</i>. Chapter 2. “Making new media make sense.” (elearning) Putnam, R. D. (2000). <i>Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community</i>. New York: Simon & Schuster. Chapters 1 & 13. (elearning)

- Resnick, P. (2001). Beyond bowling together: Sociotechnical capital. In J. Carroll (Ed.), *HCI in the new millennium* (pp. 647-672). ([link](#))

Sites:

- [UrbanBaby](#)
- [CafeMom](#)
- [BabyCenter](#)

10/7 & 10/9 Starting new communities

Idea pitch presentation due on 10/9

Readings:

- Kraut & Resnick, Chapter 6
- Matt Inman talk: <http://igniteshow.com/videos/oatmeal-how-get-5-million-people-read-your-website-ep-69>

Sites:

- [Flickr](#)
- [Scratch](#)
- [instagram](#)

10/14 & 10/16 User roles and lifecycle

Readings:

- Panciera, K., Priedhorsky, R., Erickson, T., & Terveen, L. (2010). *Lurking? cyclopaths?: a quantitative lifecycle analysis of user behavior in a geowiki*. ([link](#))
- Howard T. Welser, Dan Cosley, Gueorgi Kossinets, Austin Lin, Fedor Dokshin, Geri Gay, and Marc Smith. 2011. Finding social roles in Wikipedia. iConference '11. (elearning)
- Preece, J., & Shneiderman, B. (2009). The Reader-to-Leader Framework: Motivating Technology-Mediated Social Participation. ([link](#))
- Ducheneaut, N., Yee, N., Nickell, E., & Moore, R. (2006). "Alone together?" Exploring the social dynamics of massively multiplayer online games. *SIGCHI*. ([link](#))

Sites:

- [Sephora Online Community](#)
- [Home Depot Online Community](#)
- [Ultimate Subaru Forum](#)

10/21 & 10/23 Motivations and Participation

Readings:

- Kraut & Resnick, Chapters 2 & 3
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25, 54-67. ([link](#))
- Daniel Pink TED [talk](#)

Sites:

- [Encyclopedia of Life](#)
- [Amazon Mechanical Turk](#) (Please do at least two tasks.)
- [Games with a Purpose](#) (Please try at least two games)

10/28 & 10/30 Socializing newcomers

Readings:

- Kraut & Resnick, Chapter 5
- Boreum Choi, Kira Alexander, Robert E. Kraut, and John M. Levine. 2010. Socialization tactics in wikipedia and their effects. CSCW'10. ([link](#))

- Cliff Lampe and Erik Johnston. 2005. Follow the (slash) dot: effects of feedback on new members in an online community. GROUP '05. ([link](#))

Sites:

- [Patientslikeme](#)
- [Fitocracy](#)

11/4 & 11/6 Conflict and Deviance

Readings:

- Kraut & Resnick, Chapter 4
- Dibbell, J. (2008). Mutilated furies, flying phalluses: Put the blame on griefers, the sociopaths of the virtual world. *Wired Magazine*, 16(02). ([link](#))
- [Group is its own worst enemy](#)
- Bernstein, M. S., Monroy-Hernández, A., Harry, D., André, P., Panovich, K., & Vargas, G. (2011). *4chan and/b: An Analysis of Anonymity and Ephemerality in a Large Online Community*. ICWSM. ([link](#))

Sites (Note: there might be offensive content)

- [4chan](#)
- [bronysquare](#)

11/11 & 11/13 Identity and gender

Readings:

- Turkle, S. (1995). *Life on the screen : Identity in the age of the Internet*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Chapter 8. (elearning)
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday. Introduction and Chapter 1. (elearning)
- [Identity and Deception in the Virtual Community](#) by Judith Donath

Sites:

- [Pro Ana forum](#)
- [iVillage](#)

11/18 & 11/20 Topics: Enterprise social media; Online and offline

Readings:

- Shen and Cage (2013) Exodus to the real world? The impact of offline gatherings on community participation and social capital. *New Media and Society*. (elearning)
- Humphreys, L. and Liao, T. (2011), Mobile Geotagging: Reexamining Our Interactions with Urban Space. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* ([link](#))
- TBD

Sites:

- [Meetup.com](#)
- [SeeClickFix](#)
- [Craigslist](#)

11/25 & 11/27 Fall break

12/2 & 12/4 Topics: TBD

Last forum post due on 12/1

Readings:

- TBD

12/9 Design presentations

Final paper due on 12/11