Emerging Media Strategies

MCL 206 CRN 8127 | Spring 2017 | 5-8:50 p.m. Feb. 17 & 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Feb. 18 | Meredith 125

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■ Course information

This workshop examines the challenges associated with emerging technologies, balancing the idealism of long-term strategy with the reality of day-to-day operations. You will think about how you can introduce emerging technologies in your business or organization. And you'll create two plans to do just that — one in as a part of a team and one on your own. You will also share and examine insights about tackling roadblocks to technological innovation and implementation.

Learning Outcomes:
• Have a better understanding of the current landscape of emerging technology.
• Apply the fundamentals of teamwork and organizational effectiveness to real-world situations.
• Evaluate the relative strength of differing approaches to technological development, implementation, and maintenance, based on published information and classmates' experiences.
• Create a realistic model for technological advances within your organization.

■ Materials, policies, grading

Required Materials:
• I'm Feeling Lucky: The Confessions of Google Employee Number 59, by Douglas Edwards

Policies:
• Accommodations: If you have a disability and require academic accommodations, please let me know or contact Student Disability Services, 107 Old Main, 515-271-1835.
• Cheating: The School of Journalism and Mass Communication does not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty.
• Deadlines: Assignments are due on time. Late work will receive no credit.

Course Requirements: You may earn up to 100 points, as follows:
• In-class Written Reflection on Readings and Discussion Topics — 20 points
• Small Team Exercise and Presentation — 40 points
• Final Paper (i.e. Strategy and Implementation Proposal) — 40 points

Final grades: Final grades for the course will follow this scale:
• A = 90-100%
• B = 80-89%
• C = 70-79%
• D = 60-69%
• F = Below 60%

■ Discussion questions

I'm Feeling Lucky

• Google has an uncompromising position for consumer satisfaction. What are some big challenges or hurdles, though, to putting customers first?

• Could you see yourself taking a risk like Douglas Edwards did, leaving a stable job for the uncertainty of a start-up? Why?

• Douglas struggled with organizational structure and behavior at Google. How much energy should you invest in being politically correct and working within a hierarchy? When is it appropriate to break protocol?

• Not everyone is a programmer or engineer. How should others (e.g. marketing, sales, communications, etc.) justify their involvement in emerging media strategies?

■ Written reflection

Hierarchy is no longer the rule of business. An engineer may have a stronger idea and perhaps more power than an executive, particularly when it comes to emerging technology.

Today, digital is everyone's responsibility. Relate the themes of communication, teamwork and leadership to emerging media strategies in the current organization where you work (or where you wish to work). Draw on specific evidence from the reading, tonight's discussions, and your own experience/perspective.

It will not be enough to simply summarize the reading and discussions; you need to bring your own voice to this reflection. For example, you might make an argument that the Google culture, as described by Douglas Edwards, reminds you of the environment where you work. State a clear opinion about something, and craft a compelling argument. Defend your position with evidence.

Length and Format:

• Your written reflection should be approximately 1 to 2 pages, single-spaced. If you need to write more to articulate your point, that is fine.

• You do not need to create a list of works cited. However, when referencing the book, please cite the author's last name and a page number in parenthesis — for example, (Edwards, 43) — at the end of the sentence.

• Write your reflection within Word/Pages/etc. and **email the file to chris.snider@drake.edu before leaving campus tonight**.

Points: 20 possible, as follows:

• up to 2 points for clearly stating a position or argument within the opening

• up to 8 points for integrating evidence from the readings

• up to 4 points for integrating evidence from tonight's discussion

• up to 4 points for integrating evidence from your own professional experience

• up to 2 points for effectiveness and overall quality, including spelling, grammar, etc.

■ Small team exercise and presentation

This course is intended to be a workshop. In that spirit, you will now work in small teams to develop a proposal for an emerging media strategy, as well as an implementation plan. Working collaboratively to address a real-world problem will help you learn through applied experience.

This exercise will happen in three steps:

1) Your team must identify a company or area of a company that needs improvement. This will take some discussion, secondary research, etc. While doing so, your team should begin to build an argument – from an industry and organizational perspective – for why a change is necessary.

2) Your team will need to gather user perspective, so that you're not making a proposal based solely on the views of team members and/or industry data and trends. For this part of the exercise, each team will need to gather insights from **at least three people outside of this class**. Specifically, you will need to talk to people who work for the organization about the challenges they face, or to people outside the organization about their perception of the company.

3) Finally, your team will need to prepare and deliver a brief presentation. This should be approached as if you are trying to sell an executive and/or an investor on your proposal. There will need to be sufficient context and detail, yet the presentation will need to be crisp, clear, engaging, and, above all, highly persuasive.

Length and Format:

• Each team will have no longer than 15 minutes to present its proposal.

• Your team may prepare its presentation in PowerPoint, Prezi, etc., or whatever means you feel will be most effective.

• If preparing an electronic presentation, please email the file to chris.snider@drake.edu.

Points: 40 possible, as follows:

• up to 28 points for adequately addressing each of these areas:

  o Which brand and which area need improvement?

  o Rationale from organizational perspective?

  o Impacts to brand?

  o What team do you need to successfully make this happen?

  o Milestones? Challenges you will face and how you will overcome?

• up to 8 points for integrating evidence from readings/discussion/supplemental research

• up to 4 points for effectiveness and overall quality

■ Final paper - due at noon March 6, 2017

This final assignment will assess your understanding of the principles of communication, teamwork and leadership, relative to emerging technology. It will also provide you with the opportunity to apply this knowledge to a real-world problem or opportunity.

Your task is to identify an emerging media (e.g. Virtual Reality or the Internet of Things) that you feel the organization where you work (or wish to work) should better exploit. However, this assignment is not about your personal feelings or opinions. Your final paper should be an examination of industry data, organizational perspective, and user preferences.

Begin your paper by clearly identifying an emerging tech opportunity for the organization in question. Provide sufficient background about the organization and its current brand presence. Likewise, provide sufficient detail about the emerging tech opportunity, including any relevant trends.

Next, explain your idea. Provide rationale, integrating industry data, organizational perspective, and user experience. You can rely on secondary research for industry data. However, for organizational perspective and user experience, you should gather primary research. Talk with a mix of colleagues for organizational perspective and friends or family members for user perspective. This could take the form of one-on-one interviews, a small focus group, or even some observations of people interacting with the emerging tech in question, or even with the organization's brand presence as it currently exists.

The final section of the paper should specify any risks of adopting or not adopting this strategy. You will also need to address implementation details, including milestones, budget, and the composition of the team that should be involved in the effort.

Length and Format:

• Your paper should be 3 pages, single-spaced, not including any appendices (e.g. screen shots, graphs/charts, etc.) or the list of sources cited. You may write more, if necessary.

• Use American Psychological Association (APA) style for citations, as well as the lists of sources cited. Purdue University maintains a helpful online resource: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Points: 40 possible, as follows:

• up to 10 points for identifying and explaining an emerging tech opportunity for a specific, real-world organization

• up to 15 points for making a solid recommendation that incorporates industry, organizational and user perspectives (this means conducting both primary and secondary research)

• up to 10 points for adequately explaining the implementation plan, including milestones and budgetary percentages

• up to 5 points for overall quality, including proper formatting, spelling, grammar, etc.