

## SCC.205 Coursework 1: Computing in the News

### Introduction

Your task is to read and reflect on news articles that report on (1) benefits and valuable applications of computer technologies and (2) new problems or dramatic failures. The articles should be current, that is, published during the last six months (or up to twelve months if you really feel they warrant inclusion).

Try to find a breadth of articles that cover different topics of interest to you. Also reflect on whether you think the articles relate to the social, ethical, or professional themes of the module.

If you don't know where to start, check out web sites of major news providers – many have a technology section (e.g. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology> ). You can source news articles from mainstream sites of newspapers, tech magazines, trade journals – anything really and from anywhere around the world, as long as it is news and current.

If you have interests in a particular line of technology (e.g. drones, virtual reality), or a particular issue (e.g. privacy, sustainability) then by all means look out specifically for articles on those topics. But it is equally fine to collect articles that are “all over the place” in topics they discuss.

### The Exercise

This is a group exercise, to encourage team working. Groups will be made up of six members, and will be allocated in week 11. If for some reason you have not been allocated to a group, please contact Dr. Rubegni [e.rubegni@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:e.rubegni@lancaster.ac.uk)

Over the term, we expect you to follow news and collect 10 articles in each category (benefits, problems). Collect the articles in a document: for each article, start your entry with the publication date and copy in the headline with an embedded link to the original publication. It would be good to have a portfolio of articles that covers social, ethical and professional themes.

There are three main components to this piece of coursework.

- 1) For each article, write a **brief commentary**. This should be short (just a few lines, not more than 3 sentences) but clearly demonstrate your engagement with the article. Perhaps think of it like a quick Facebook post on a piece of news that caught your attention. **Don't** summarise the article but provide a short comment that implicitly shows what interested you in the article and what thoughts it provoked. You might comment on the issue discussed in the article, or also on the way it is discussed. You will not be judged for the views you express but for demonstrating engagement and reflection.
- 2) Write a **summary and commentary** for one article (or group of articles if they related) in each category (benefits, problems). The summary has to reflect the article accurately in a succinct and informative way. The commentary should demonstrate critical reflection, in paragraphs that each are clearly focused on one thought you expand on. You can include cross-references to any background material you have consulted (include a citation as footnote). Both the 'benefits' and 'problems' part of your essay should be not more than a page long (max ~500 words each). The two parts can of course be aligned around the same topic (e.g. virtues versus dangers of X) but that is no requirement, and discussion of separate topics is perfectly fine.

- 3) Write a final **reflective piece** (max ~500 words) that describes your groups views on the social and ethical challenges that the computing field faces over the next 5 to 10 years. What will be the major themes within the articles identified by the SCC.205 class of 2030?

### **Submission and Review Process**

You need to start on Week 11 this exercise.

You must submit a draft at the end of Week 15. Feedback will be provided in the labs of week 17.

Final submission is at the end of week 19

Your submission should be a single .pdf file with the group reference id (group number) all the names of the students on the first page. Please submit one piece per group. We therefore expect that there will be no submission for the other members of the group.

### **Marking**

The coursework counts for 55% of the module mark. 5% of this is allocated to the submission of a draft piece.

The work will be marked out of 50, as follows:

- 20 marks for the collection of news articles: up to 10 marks in each category. A full mark is awarded if the commentary is short and demonstrates engagement and reflection. It is not sufficient if a comment merely summarises without reflection, or if it offers a view without any reasoning (e.g., don't just say you agree/disagree with any particular argument, but say why).
- 20 marks for the short essays. For each of the two parts, up to 5 marks for the summary where the key criteria are how accurately the summary reflects the article, how succinct it is, and how informative. The remaining marks, up to 5 for each part, are for the quality of reflection and clarity of argument you demonstrate in the commentary.
- 10 marks for the reflective piece. The significant challenge here is to provide some reasoned justification as to the challenges identified – please be sure to give some time to discuss why you feel they will be so significant in the medium term.