THE CSU GUIDE TO WRITING YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Charles Sturt University
## CONTENTS

**Introduction** ................................................................. 3

**Step 1. Getting organised** ........................................... 4
Organise your physical study space ........................................ 4
Organise your virtual space .................................................. 4
Get online at CSU Interact .................................................. 4
Organise your time .............................................................. 5
Understand Plagiarism ....................................................... 5

**Step 2. Understanding the assignment task** .................... 6
What is your first assignment asking you to do? ................. 6
What are your lecturer’s expectations? ............................... 6
Assignment weighting ....................................................... 6
Marking criteria ............................................................... 6
Updates from your lecturer ................................................ 6
Different types of assignments ............................................ 7

**Step 3. Understanding your assignment question** .......... 9
Understanding assignment questions .................................. 9
Example Essay Task ......................................................... 9

**Step 4. Getting started** ................................................ 10
Finding information .......................................................... 10
Where to look .................................................................. 10
How to search ................................................................... 10
Evaluating information for credibility ................................ 11
Taking notes ....................................................................... 12
Concept mapping ............................................................. 13
Your essay plan .................................................................. 14
Essay structure ................................................................... 14
Planning your assignment ................................................. 14

**Step 5. Writing your assignment** ................................. 15
Starting to write ............................................................... 15
Example paragraphs ........................................................ 16
Referencing your essay ..................................................... 17
Example Reference List .................................................... 17
Some tips on writing ........................................................ 17
A note on word count ....................................................... 18
Revising your draft ........................................................... 18
Final Proofing .................................................................. 18

**Step 6. Submitting your assignment** ............................. 19
How do you submit your assignment? ............................... 19
Cover page ....................................................................... 19
Extensions ......................................................................... 19
Special consideration ...................................................... 19

**Step 7. Getting your assignment back** .......................... 20
When will you get your assignment back? ......................... 20
How do you get it back? .................................................... 20
What does your grade mean? ........................................... 20

**Where to now?** ............................................................. 21
Reflect, celebrate, improve ............................................. 21
Use your feedback to improve your next assignment ....... 21
What if you don’t do as well as you’d hoped? .................... 21

**Support** ....................................................................... 22
Lecturers ................................................................. 22
Learning Skills Advisers ................................................. 22
Library support ............................................................. 22
Counsellors ................................................................. 22
Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) ................. 22
Regional and Remote Learning Support Team ................. 22
STUDY LINK .............................................................. 22
Academic appeals .......................................................... 22
Student Central ............................................................ 22
Assignments – there’s no avoiding them at university and successfully completing your first assignment can be challenging if you’re not sure what is expected or how to approach it.

Don’t worry: this guide will point you in the direction of all the information and support you’ll need to get your first assignment off to a flying start.

Throughout the guide, students who were once starting out at Uni just like you, share their tips on what did and didn’t work for them.

I used the assignment feedback service in Academic Support. It was terrific!

I wonder if assignments get any easier?

I can still remember doing my first assignment. I was very surprised with my mark.

I always get sick when an assignment’s due.

I love groupwork assignments, but sometimes working in a group can be tricky.

Subject forums are a great place to discuss assignment questions.

I should have asked someone about my first assignment. I wasn’t actually sure what to do.

Good luck!
It’s important to organise your study space as soon as possible.

Organise your physical study space
A dedicated workspace for study is a must. Find a place with comfortable seating, good lighting and free from distractions that you can call your own. This can be at home, a quiet space at Uni, or somewhere else that suits you. The most important thing is that it’s a space where you feel comfortable and able to focus on your studies and return to regularly to study. Ideally, you will be able to leave it set up ready to return to at any time.

Further reading: Tips for setting up an Ergonomic Study Space: ergonomics.about.com/od/office/ss/computer_setup.htm

Organise your virtual space
Creating a well organised filing system for electronic files will help you to avoid losing important information and provide you with easy access to your files and documents for each subject. The time to do this is now, before you start saving files in ‘temporary’ folders that you may not be able to find again.

Create a main folder for each of your subjects with sub folders for each assignment and other important information.

For example:

If you are sharing a computer, it’s a good idea to create password protected folders; at the very least this means that no one else can accidentally delete your hard work!

Don’t leave your files on the desktop if you are working on a university computer – many assignments have been lost this way!

Save documents you’re working on every five minutes and always back up your work in another place besides the computer you are working on.

Now that your study space is organised you are ready to start tackling your first assignment.

Get online at CSU Interact
Start by going online at CSU Interact (interact.csu.edu.au). CSU Interact is the virtual learning and teaching space at CSU.

In CSU Interact you will find subject outlines for each of your subjects. They include important information such as lecturer details, how and when lecturers can be contacted, textbook information and importantly, your assignment details.

I always give myself a week more than I need to prepare assignments. That way, if I get the flu or my computer crashes I still have enough time to meet the deadline.

I print each of my subject outlines. I’m always referring back to them, especially the assignment question.
Organise your time

Carefully check the details of your assignments—especially due dates—as you may have several assignments across different subjects due at the same time, which makes planning and time management even more important!

Remember, assignments are your opportunity to demonstrate your skills and knowledge, so make sure you give yourself every chance of success by allowing enough time to produce your best work.

Enter your assignment due dates in the session assignment planner which you can find at student.csu.edu.au/study/resources and work back to see when you need to begin preparing. Make sure you consider other commitments such as sport, vacations, and family events to get a realistic picture of how much time you need, and then add a little more time, just in case something unexpected comes up!

Understand Plagiarism

Before you start your first assignment, read the University’s Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism to be clear about the University’s expectation that you will demonstrate academic integrity in your assignments and exactly what academic integrity means.

Important tip: Most students don’t plagiarise intentionally, and it can be avoided by good note-taking, careful referencing and having enough time to prepare and review your work thoroughly before submission. Understanding this and acting on it when you do start your first assignment means that you are highly unlikely to plagiarise – and that’s a good position to be in!

Now that you’re organised, you’re ready to tackle your first assignment! The next section discusses understanding different assignment tasks and questions so you know exactly what you need to do.

SUPPORT:
Contact a CSU Learning Skills Adviser if you’re uncertain about plagiarism. You can find a Learning Skills Adviser here: student.csu.edu.au/study/learning-skills
What is your first assignment asking you to do?
The ‘Assessment Items’ section of your subject outline will tell you what you need to do for each of your assignments. This section usually includes the type of assessment, due date, and the percentage weighting. It may also include marking criteria, which outlines what your lecturer is looking for in your work and the basis on which it is graded.

What are your lecturer’s expectations?
For every assignment you undertake, it is important to know what is expected.

Be clear about the type of assignment, how it should be presented, and the reading required. Things like word count and referencing instructions are important and can vary from subject to subject, so make sure you are also very clear about these requirements.

Assignment weighting
The percentage of marks allocated to your assignment should give you an indication of how long to spend preparing it. For example, an assignment worth 5% should take far less time than one worth 40%. However, every mark counts, so don’t discount a task just because it’s worth a small percentage – that small percentage could be the difference between Pass or Fail, or even Distinction or High Distinction in the overall grade for the subject.

Marking criteria
Most subject outlines provide an explanation of how you will be marked, including which aspects of your work will be considered more important than others. For example, some assignments will allocate 5% to correct referencing.

Updates from your lecturer
Check CSU Interact regularly for any announcements and resources related to the assignment from your lecturer.

If you’re unsure about what is required in an assignment task, your first point of contact is your lecturer. The sooner you clarify expectations, the sooner you can get started, so make contact early. Remember, the only silly question is the one you don’t ask.

I was so glad I checked with my lecturer about my first assignment. I had misread the question and would have handed in something completely off track had I not asked first. Now I always double check I’m on the right track before starting. A couple of minutes up front saves me heaps of time in the end.

I panicked when I saw the first assignment was worth 30%. But I chipped away at it a little bit each day and it was done before I knew it. A little bit often is much easier than trying to cram a lot into a day or two.

In my first assignment I spent ages on fancy formatting and headings and graphics but didn’t get any higher marks than my friend who just handed in eight pages of plain text. When I checked back in the marking criteria, that’s all that was needed. I won’t make that mistake again!
Different types of assignments

The type of assignment task you are asked to complete for your first assignment will be one of a wide range of possible assignment types. The type of assignment will be chosen by your lecturer because it best suits the assessment task. The most common assignment types are explained below:

**Academic essay**

Essays are extended pieces of academic writing. They give you an opportunity to show that you understand the essay question, and that you have read sufficiently to demonstrate that you fully understand the issues involved and how they relate to the question. Essays also allow you to demonstrate your analytical thinking and that deep (rather than surface) learning has taken place. For these reasons, they are a common form of assessment at university.

**Report writing**

Reports are common communication tools, as they assist in the decision-making process. Written for a particular purpose, they usually outline a problem, provide the relevant facts and ideas about a situation, and then recommend a course of action. Reports are highly structured so that information they contain can be easily understood. Headings within the report allow each section of the report to be identified separately from the remainder of the report, enabling the reader to select and read sections of particular interest or importance. A report often includes the use of subheadings, diagrams, tables, graphs and illustrations to further clarify information.

**Group presentations**

Group presentations involve working with your fellow students to develop a presentation on a particular theme or topic. When undertaking a group presentation, it is important that you are clear about which parts of the assessment task you are expected to work on in collaboration with your group members and which parts, if any, you must complete independently. You should also be clear on the marking process: for example, do you receive a group or an individual mark for all or part of the assessment? If in doubt, check with your lecturer/subject coordinator. Group presentations allow students to learn from each other by contributing their individual skills and knowledge to a desired outcome.

**Critical review**

A critical review or appraisal is an academic review of an article that offers both a summary and critical comment. Book reviews, play or movie reviews, critical reviews and literature reviews all perform a similar task of evaluating or appraising how well various texts and artistic productions communicate their purpose to the reader, or a wider audience. You should consult your subject outline or subject coordinator to find out what structure and content to include when completing a critical review assessment task.

**Annotated bibliography**

Annotate means to ‘make a note’, and biblio refers to ‘book’. Simply stated, an annotated bibliography is a list of sources or citations with a brief evaluative summary (annotation) about each source. Its purpose is to describe and evaluate a full text in a way that provides sufficient information for the reader to make an informed decision about whether they are likely to benefit from reading the full text.

**Case study**

A case study is a description of a series of problems, challenges or issues that need to be investigated and solved. Subject coordinators use case studies because they add a real world dimension to your studies by approximating real-world situations. They are also used to assess your understanding of the relevant theories and concepts, by asking you to apply these theories and concepts to solving the problems detailed in the case study. Your task is to read, analyse and present a solution to the case study. A case study has these main features: it’s taken from real life (although true identities may be concealed); it’s believable for the reader (the case contains the setting, personalities, sequence of events, problems and conflicts); and it includes sufficient information for the reader to appreciate the problems and issues involved in the situation detailed in the case study.
Reflective journal
Reflective journaling is a way of recording your experiences and progress in a critical and analytical way. It gives you an opportunity to link theory to practice and provide a commentary of your experiences and changing beliefs and skills as your study in a particular area progresses. Reflective journals should be more than merely your description of what you have done; they should be an examination and record of how your particular theoretical concepts are reflected in your experience.

Participation
Participation in subject tutorials or an online forum provides an important forum for you to demonstrate assessable skills and knowledge. Therefore, your lecturer may include participation as an assessment item. Participation is not just about being seen or heard in class. Marks will be assigned based on your level of preparedness and engagement in conversation and meaningful discussion.

Depending on what you are studying, you may also have other types of assignments such as performances or lab work. For details about what is required, always check your subject outline. If you are still unclear, speak to your lecturer.

I had assumed my first assignment would be an essay. Instead it was preparing a presentation in a group. It was great fun and we learnt heaps. I think it actually took me longer than an essay!

SUPPORT:
You might also like to discuss your first assignment and study program with a Learning Skills Adviser before you start to research and write your first assignment.

Learning Skills Advisers are available to assist you to develop your academic writing and other learning skills. For example, they can help you to learn how to analyse assignment questions, write essays, reports, and literature reviews along with other assignment types. They can also help you to learn how to read and write critically, structure an argument and paragraph clearly and reference correctly.

Maths and statistics advisers are also available, and if you would like help to develop your English language skills, there are specialist advisers who can assist in that area too.

You can find more information about Learning Skills Advisers and how to contact them at student.csu.edu.au/study/learning-skills
Understanding assignment questions

It is not unusual for students to find understanding assignment questions challenging. You may need to use more than one glossary or dictionary to correctly define the assignment question and fully understand what is required to successfully respond. Referring to a subject dictionary, the glossary of your textbook, or the Essay Writing Glossary and Common Instruction Words in Assignment Questions will help you to make a start. You can find these resources at student.csu.edu.au/study/resources

Assignment questions contain three types of words:
- **Instruction words:** (verbs): indicate what you are required to do (e.g., examine, discuss)
- **Content words:** define the topic
- **Limiting words:** indicate the limits (parameters) of the topic discussion (analysis, examination, etc.)

See if you can identify the instruction words, topic words and limiting word(s) and phrase(s) in the following example essay question

**Example Essay Task:**
Analyze how the emergence of new media has given governments and corporations greater options for digital surveillance.

The task word is: ‘Analyze’, which means to find the main ideas and show how they are related, what their function is and why they are important.

The topic is: ‘emergence of new media’

The limiting words/phrases are: ‘governments and corporations’ and ‘options for digital surveillance’, meaning the research will focus on ‘governments and corporations’, as opposed to individuals, and the emergence of new media only in so far as it relates to ‘greater options for digital surveillance’.

It is important that you fully understand the assignment question before you start to plan your assignment. Understanding the meaning of the instruction words is particularly important. If you misinterpret the instruction words, you won’t be able to answer the question satisfactorily – regardless of how much effort you put into your essay.

**Tip:** You may find it helpful to write the question and any further instructions in your own words (paraphrase) and check with your lecturer or tutor that your interpretation of what is required is accurate.

**Example:** Analyze how the emergence of new media has given governments and corporations greater options for digital surveillance.

The topic is new media but you are not required to write everything you know about new media – quite the opposite; you are required to write only about new media in relation to governments and corporations and digital surveillance.

If you discuss how new media has given *individuals* greater options to secure *their homes*, or corporations and traditional surveillance methods, all of the information you provide about *individuals or traditional surveillance*, will be irrelevant — off topic — and will not be considered as contributing to answering the essay question.

**SUPPORT:**
Want to know more about Topic Analysis? Check out this library tutorial for a more detailed look at Topic Analysis [www.web-ezy.com/csuweb-ezy/topic](http://www.web-ezy.com/csuweb-ezy/topic)
Finding information
Assignments provide you with an opportunity to build on and demonstrate your understanding of a topic. You will need to support your arguments by referring to a number of sources and referencing those sources correctly. Some lecturers will provide all the readings you need, whereas some will call for you to find a mix of relevant sources, such as books, journals, newspapers, and/or websites.

Researching can take up a lot of the time required to complete an assignment. Ensure that you allow enough time to properly research the topic before you start writing your assignment.

Where to look
There are a large number of sources you can use to support your arguments. While it may seem easy to ‘Google’ all you need for your assignment, you may be required to locate more scholarly articles and information.

Some possible sources might be:

- Your prescribed textbook – this is often a good place to start your research.
- Recommended readings (listed in your subject outline) – these represent readings and sources that your subject coordinator thinks are relevant and reliable.
- Books and eBooks – use the Library’s search to identify relevant textbooks.
- Journal Articles – CSU subscribes to a large collection of academic journals.

All of these sources can be found using the CSU Library website: student.csu.edu.au/library

How to search
Using the Library, either in person or online, is a skill that you’ll need throughout your university studies.

If I have a question I ‘ask a librarian online’ here: www.csu.edu.au/division/library/help/live-chat

SUPPORT:
For help on how to conduct detailed searches for information, the CSU Library has prepared a number of online tutorials to guide you. You can access the tutorials here: www.csu.edu.au/division/library/how-to/watch-it
Evaluating information for credibility

Often your problem may be that you have too much rather than not enough information about your topic. Be aware that not all sources are created equal and you need to assess them as accurate and reliable sources of information. This is especially true of sources found on the internet. Try using the “CARS” (Credibility, Accuracy, Reasonableness, Support) checklist when evaluating potential sources of information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS TO ASK</th>
<th>THINGS TO LOOK FOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREDIBILITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who wrote the web page and can you contact him or her or the organisation?</td>
<td>Make sure author provides e-mail or a contact address phone number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the purpose of the document and why was it produced?</td>
<td>What are the author’s credentials?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this person/organisation qualified to write this document?</td>
<td>What institution is the author affiliated with? Look at the first part of the URL to find out. (e.g. <a href="http://www.somesite.org/">http://www.somesite.org/</a> or <a href="http://www.somedomain.com/">http://www.somedomain.com/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the evidence of quality control?</td>
<td>Know the distinction between author and webmaster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACCURACY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When was the information produced and last updated?</td>
<td>Check for the date the page was last updated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the links working?</td>
<td>Check for broken links.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comprehensive is the document?</td>
<td>Who is the target audience – novices or experts on the subject?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the information popular or scholarly in nature?</td>
<td>Does the depth of information match the potential audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REASONABLENESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What goals/objectives does this page meet?</td>
<td>Is the web page a mask for advertising? If so, the information might be biased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How detailed is the information?</td>
<td>Does the page state the level of information that is being provided and the target audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What opinions (if any) are expressed by the author?</td>
<td>View any web page as you would an infomercial on television: why and for whom was it written?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the page associated with some form of advertising?</td>
<td>Do messages appear across the screen prompting use of other services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPORT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the information presented cited correctly?</td>
<td>Are references and a bibliography provided?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are supporting links on the topic provided?</td>
<td>Are the links evaluated and do they complement the document’s theme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is additional software required to view the site or access its information?</td>
<td>Is supporting software provided?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are viewing options recommended or available?</td>
<td>Is there an option for text only, or frames, or a suggested browser for better viewing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the information free?</td>
<td>Are there provisions for accessing the information such as registration or fees for service?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From University of the Frazer Valley Library, www.ufv.ca/library/tutorials/cars.htm
Taking notes

When reading, it is important to make notes that you can easily refer to later. Effective note-taking will make it much easier when it comes to writing your assignment. Ensure that you record all of the bibliographic information of any specific notes you make (e.g., author’s name, title, page numbers) so you can reference the source. Examples of note-taking sheets are shown below.

Read relevant articles, make notes as you go, like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOTE-TAKING SHEET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAGE NUMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking notes like this will make your referencing much easier as you won’t have to try and remember later where you found your information.

SUPPORT:
You can find more information about how to reference here: student.csu.edu.au/study/referencing-at-csu
Concept mapping

Now that you think you have enough information to present a strong, logical argument to answer the assignment task, it is time to start planning your assignment. Planning involves grouping or categorising information into a series of points and determining a logical order to present your points. Your aim is to create a logical, coherent and transparent structure.

Concept mapping is a technique you can use to group the ideas you have read and made notes about into a number of meaningful sections. Concept mapping can be done using pen and paper or post-it notes. There are also a number of software packages for concept mapping that are free to download.

CONCEPT MAP EXAMPLE

I start every assignment with a concept map. I braindump what I know, potential information sources, headings – the lot. Then I tidy it up as I go and it forms the basis of my assignment plan.

SUPPORT:
Try free concept mapping software https://bubbl.us/
Your essay plan
Your plan should include key points, references and supporting arguments for each section. Refer to your notes and concept map to develop this plan.

An academic essay should be presented in the form of introduction, body and conclusion; headings are not necessary.

Report writing requires a different structure where headings are more commonly used. Reports can also feature lists, graphs and other items relevant to the subject.

Start a word document for your assignment and save, save, save!

Essay Structure

In the introduction
- Make a general statement about the topic
- Give a preview of what you intend to say in the main body of the essay
- State your main idea (thesis)

In the body
- Follow the plan set out in your outline/framework
- Elaborate on and substantiate the claims you made in your introduction
- Provide an objective or unbiased view of the issues and consider more than one interpretation
- Try to link paragraphs so that the whole piece is cohesive

In the conclusion
- Sum up your arguments
- Reiterate your main idea (thesis) statement
- Satisfy the reader that you have answered the question

Planning your assignment
Planning your assignment involves developing the broad outline for your assignment. This is done by following six steps:

1. Formulate your thesis: Did you start your research with a thesis? Has it changed now that you have researched the question further? Or have you developed a thesis now that you have researched your topic? What is your thesis or viewpoint? If you didn’t have a viewpoint before you started your research you should have one now to help guide your response to the question. Remember, your thesis will help you structure your essay.

2. Decide which points you wish to include in support of your viewpoint or thesis.

3. Check to see if there is a logical grouping of ideas or points.

4. Decide on an order of presentation. Order could be determined by, for example, level of importance, time in place, the question, geography or personal preference – importantly it should follow the order indicated in the introduction.

   Note if there are any points that disagree with your viewpoint that you should address.

5. Delete any points that you now consider irrelevant.

You now have a broad outline for how your assignment will be structured. From here it is a matter of writing your assignment to fill out each of the headings you have described.

SUPPORT:
For examples of linking words, see the resources tab at student.csu.edu.au/study/resources
ASSIGNMENT OUTLINE EXAMPLE

INTRODUCTION

Thesis: People are aware of digital surveillance to some level, but there is still potential for exploitation that needs to be removed.

Key Points:
- What is new media?
- What is digital surveillance?
- How does new media allow for digital surveillance?
- What are the implications of digital surveillance?

BODY

Point 1: Topic Sentence: New media is a term that encompasses a range of media types that are either recently developed or being developed.
Summary of supporting argument: Use definitions from a range of sources to arrive at a common definition and provide an example of some types of new media.

Point 2: Topic Sentence: Digital surveillance summarises a number of techniques and processes that seek to track the demographics and behaviours of new media consumers.
Summary of supporting argument: Use definitions by Humphrys (2011) and Bendrath & Mueller (2011) to discuss what constitutes digital surveillance and what potential it has to harm consumers of digital media on a number of levels: socially, financially, and as a society.

Point 3: Topic Sentence: New media, especially those delivered electronically, presents an opportunity for governments and corporations to employ digital surveillance.
Summary of supporting argument: Humphrys (2011) lists several examples of ways in which new media allows for digital surveillance. I will also look at Bendrath & Mueller (2011) and their work on the potential for more deep and far-reaching digital surveillance and the effect that this could have on consumers of new media.

Point 4: Topic Sentence: Digital surveillance has broad and far-reaching effects for users of new media.
Summary of supporting argument: I will look at Fuchs’ (2011) work on the ways in which new media is still able to be exploited by corporations. Balance this view with Best's (2010) claims that consumers are aware of surveillance and consent to this by using new media and associated technology.

CONCLUSION

Restate main points: Demonstrate how the question has been answered. A number of examples have shown that the penetration of new media has greatly increased the opportunity for governments and corporations to conduct digital surveillance on consumers of new media. The financial worth of demographic and behavioural data gathered by digital surveillance has increased in line with the ability to gather, store and analyse this data. Community sites such as Facebook, where users volunteer a large volume of data about themselves, are particularly susceptible to digital surveillance. Whilst consumers of new media are aware of the potential for digital surveillance, we must be aware of the potential for exploitation and take steps to see that it does not occur.
Example paragraphs
Following on from the example on the previous page, here are some example essay paragraphs.

Introduction
(General statement) Digital surveillance is an emerging issue associated with the penetration of new digital media throughout our lives. (Thesis) While the existence of digital surveillance is widely accepted by consumers of new media, there is potential for exploitation by governments and corporations that must be addressed. (Outline of essay/key points) After exploring the definitions and scope of new media and digital surveillance, this essay will seek to analyse how governments and corporations can use digital surveillance in ways that are both helpful and harmful for users to new media. Finally, a number of measures are introduced that would limit the negative impact of digital surveillance on consumers of new media.

Body (example)
*Point 3: How new media allows for digital surveillance*

(Topic sentence) New media, especially those delivered electronically, presents an opportunity for governments and corporations to employ digital surveillance. (Supporting argument) Fuchs (2012) discusses the economy of privacy and surveillance on social media sites such as Facebook. He advocates a series of steps “to protect consumers and other citizens from corporate surveillance and other forms of domination” (p. 141). The use of user data, (provided under the guise of building a profile within a gated community), to provide targeted advertising based on this data is a prime example of how advertisers and corporations can use digital surveillance in new media to exploit consumers. (Concluding sentence) Turning data into a valuable asset increases the likelihood of corporations conducting digital surveillance.

Conclusion
(Demonstrate that you have answered the question) A number of examples presented in this essay have illustrated that the penetration of new media has greatly increased the opportunity for governments and corporations to conduct digital surveillance on consumers of new media. (Summarise arguments) The financial worth of demographic and behavioural data gathered by digital surveillance has increased in line with the ability to gather, store and analyse this data. Community sites such as Facebook, where users volunteer a large volume of data about themselves, are particularly susceptible to digital surveillance. (Restate thesis) Whilst consumers of new media are aware of the potential for digital surveillance, we must be aware of the potential for exploitation and take steps to see that it does not occur.

**SUPPORT:**
You can download a list of Sentence Starters and Linking Words that are useful for essay writing from this page: student.csu.edu.au/study/resources
Referencing your essay
In academic writing it is very important to acknowledge the sources you used in producing your work. This acknowledgement comes in two forms; in-text referencing and the reference list. You are required to reference your work both in-text and in a reference list at the end of your assignment.

Example Reference List

References


Some tips on writing

- Sometimes it is easier to use headings to structure your work while you are writing. For example, turning the points from your assignment outline into headings can help organise your draft. Remember to take them out before submitting to maintain the correct essay format.

- Topic sentences are important features of writing. If you read the introduction, the topic sentences of each paragraph in the body, then the conclusion, the reader should have a good idea of your arguments.

- Do not use first person, such as ‘I think…’, ‘I believe…’, ‘In my opinion…’, unless you are specifically required to do so. If you are unsure, check with your lecturer.

- Do not use slang or colloquial terms

- Make sure you relate all of the points you make back to your thesis. This is often done in the concluding sentence.

- Use full terms rather than contractions (e.g., do not, rather than don’t)

- Use full terms rather than abbreviations (e.g., Australian Tax Office, rather than ATO)

- Write numbers in text form (e.g., eleven rather than 11)

- Label all diagrams, tables and images

- Use page numbers

I’ve printed out the APA Guide and keep it handy when writing assignments. I build the reference list as I go so I’m not stuck at the last minute

SUPPORT:
For more information about referencing, visit student.csu.edu.au/study/referencing-at-csu

There are also a range of programs you can use to manage references and electronic copies of documents. One such program is EndNote which you can access here: libguides.csu.edu.au/endnote
A note on word count
As a guide, your essay should be within 10% of the word limit set by the task (i.e. for a 1000 word essay you should aim for between 900 and 1100 words). The word count generally does not include your reference list at the end of your essay.

Revising your draft
Once you have completed your first draft, read over it carefully to check that your essay is logical and flows well. Check your grammar and spelling. Ensure you have provided enough evidence to support your claims, and check you have referenced any ideas that are not your own. It is often useful to read your work aloud when proofing, and then have someone else (friend, family member,) read over your essay and give you feedback. Continue to revise your first draft until you are happy with it.

Final Proofing
Use a checklist to proofread the final draft of your assignment before submitting.
A useful checklist, ‘Editing, proofreading and presenting your essay’ can be found under the resources tab at student.csu.edu.au/study/resources

If I haven’t reached the word count, it usually means I’ve answered the assignment question properly. If I’ve gone over, it usually means I’ve repeated myself or gone off track!

Your introduction should account for about 10% of an essay.

Read each topic sentence. This usually gives you a good idea if you’ve stayed on track and answered the question.
Don’t leave it to the last minute to submit your assignment.

How do you submit your assignment?
There are various methods of submitting assignments including online (via EASTS), in person or by mail. The way you submit will be specific to each subject (and sometimes each assignment). Always check your subject outline well before the due date to find out how you need to submit your work.

EASTS (Electronic Assignment Submission Tracking System)
EASTS is a common way to submit assignments online. If available, a link to EASTS will be included in your CSU Interact subject site.

You should become familiar with EASTS well before you actually need to submit your assignment. Information you’ll need includes the format, file type and file name conventions required to submit as well as where to locate the files for the easiest and fastest transmission.

More information about EASTS can be found at: online.csu.edu.au/de/eastssubmission

Cover page
Check your subject outline to see if you need to include a coversheet or coverpage on your assignment. Even if this is not a requirement, it’s a good idea to include on the first page of your assignment the following details:

- Your name
- Your student number
- The name of the subject
- The title of your assignment

Also include your name and student number on the bottom of each page of your assignment. You can do this using footer in Microsoft Word.

Extensions
If something comes up that will prevent you from meeting the deadline for your assignment, you should contact your lecturer as soon as possible to request an extension. If you have reasonable grounds you may avoid late penalties. If your assignment is more than ten days late without an extension it may not be accepted for marking. Refer to your subject outline for detailed information of the policy on extensions.

Special consideration
If you need an extension because of illness or misadventure and that extension will take your submission date to later than the end of session, you may be eligible for Special Consideration.

For assistance with a Special Consideration Application or more information, contact a Student Support Officer.

ALWAYS keep a copy of the assignment you submit!

When submitting your assignment, give yourself some extra time in case the internet drops out, or something else happens and you can’t get online.

If you’re submitting via EASTS, save your file onto your desktop to submit. Not having to go down into multiple directories speeds up the submission process.

If you need to ask for an extension, make sure you do so BEFORE it’s due.

Be aware that CSU uses Due Date rather than Submission Date, and is based on Australian Eastern Standard Time. This is especially important if you are submitting from a different time zone!

SUPPORT:
For help with EASTS, view the Frequently Asked Questions page: online.csu.edu.au/dedocs/EASTS_FAQ
When will you get your assignment back?

You should normally expect your marked assignment to be returned to you within three weeks of the due date, if your assignment was submitted on time.

If the assignment was submitted online you can track it in the following way:

1. Go to online.csu.edu.au/de/dewsweb.sqt?run=START
2. Select a session and click Get Subjects
3. Select the subject code of the assignment you are seeking confirmation for
4. Click the relevant assignment number and check for a date in the received column
5. If there is no date in the returned column the assignment is still with the marker or subject coordinator.

How do you get it back?
Check your subject outline for information on how to collect your assignments

What does your grade mean?

Always refer to your Subject Outline for subject specific guidelines about grading criteria. The following grade key provides a general guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>High Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>Pass Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You spent considerable time and effort preparing your first assignment. The process doesn’t end when you submit it.

Reflect, celebrate, improve
When you receive your results, reflect on what you have achieved and celebrate your successes. Remember this is only your first assignment and the beginning of a steep learning curve.

Use your feedback to improve your next assignment
- Read your feedback thoroughly (your marker may have provided feedback throughout your assignment as well as on the last page)
- Make sure you have a clear idea about how to improve your next assignment
- If there is something you don’t understand, speak to your lecturer
- Remember the advice provided when preparing your next assignment.

What if you don’t do as well as you’d hoped?
If you fail your assignment, or don’t do as well as you’d hoped, it’s not the end of the world. Discuss your options with your lecturer.

The other students in my class and I made a pact that we’d all go out together if we passed our first assignment. We did. What a great night!

In my assignment feedback, my lecturer suggested I do some extra work on my writing and grammar. I enrolled in a STUDY LINK course and did much better in my second assignment.

SUPPORT:
You can also find relevant information about Academic Advice and Appeals here: student.csu.edu.au/study/academic-advice
At CSU there is always someone to help.

Lecturers
You should approach your lecturer or tutor with questions relating to subject content or assignment expectations. They are available to assist you. Contact information and consultation times are available in your subject outline. Your subject site in CSU Interact is also a good point of reference, including subject announcements and the forum.
Go to: interact.csu.edu.au

Learning Skills Advisers
Learning Skills Advisers can help you to understand your assignment questions and provide advice on structure. Learning Skills Advisers can also provide feedback on assignment drafts. For more information go to: student.csu.edu.au/study

Library support
The CSU Library offers a range of support services to assist you to research and locate information for assignments. Go to: student.csu.edu.au/library

Counsellors
Sometimes life gets in the way of assignments! Student counselling and confidential assistance with personal matters is available to all students. Find more information at: student.csu.edu.au/support/counselling

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)
Every Indigenous student at CSU can receive extra study support (including help with preparing assignments) through the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme. Find more information at: student.csu.edu.au/study/learning-support/itas

Regional and Remote Learning Support Team
The Regional and Remote Learning Support Team aims to make study at CSU a successful experience for students living in some of the most remote areas of New South Wales. This includes providing assistance with assignment preparation. You can check when the team will be in your town or get in contact with a team member here: student.csu.edu.au/study/learning-support/regional-and-remote-learning-support

STUDY LINK
Short self paced courses in areas such as academic writing that can help you develop skills needed in assignment preparation.
Go to: www.csu.edu.au/student/studylink

Academic appeals
If you need advice regarding an academic appeal, make contact with a Student Support Officer. More information is available at: student.csu.edu.au/study/academic-advice

Student Central
If you’re not sure who to talk to, Student Central should be your first point of contact.
Go to: student.csu.edu.au/support/student-central

So what are you waiting for? Good luck with your first assignment.

CSU Staff are really helpful and willing to help. Don’t delay contacting someone if you have a question. If you’re not sure who to ask, always start with Student Central and they’ll point you in the right direction.