Example assessment & marking criteria

Digital essay

# Digital essay example

This assessment task description and marking criteria and standards have been developed using the steps outlined on the [marking criteria and rubrics site](https://www.csu.edu.au/division/learning-teaching/assessments/rubrics-and-marking-criteria).

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| **Assessment type:** | **Digital essay** |
| **Subject:** | **INF530 Concepts and Practices for a Digital Age**  This subject sets the foundations of connected learning within new information environments created by the social and technological changes of the digital age. By focussing on connectivity, communication, collaboration and convergence, the subject addresses the challenges, opportunities and emerging possibilities for learning and teaching in information-rich participatory environments. Trends in knowledge construction, participation and social networks will be explored, including information futures and digital convergence. The subject introduces education informatics and the scholarship of digital teaching, and models connected learning through group discourse and collaborative inquiry in digital environments, including the reflective and participatory experiences employed throughout the course. |
| **Subject learning outcomes:** | Upon successful completion of this subject, students should:   * be able to understand the evolution of the web that has led to information and knowledge sharing; cloud computing; digital repositories and digital connectedness; * be able to identify and critique how current and emerging trends in the creation, circulation and communication of information and knowledge build connected learning; * be able to discuss the connections between transliteracy, information fluency and digital proficiency; * be able to demonstrate an understanding of how mobile and 'geo-social' relationships of learners, homes, communities, non-formal learning spaces, regions and the globalised economy influence learning; * be able to explore and respond creatively to the principles of connected learning as teacher and learner, including collaboratively guiding, constructing and assessing the work of peers; * be able to demonstrate an understanding of the importance and impact of connected learning as drivers to re-imagine learning in schools for a networked world; and * be able to examine education informatics from the disciplines of education, information science and information technology. |
| **Assessment task:** | Assessment task 8a. Digital essay |
| **Value & length:** | 50%, 1800 words |
| **Task description:** | *Prepare a digital essay on a topic that you have chosen which is derived from an aspect of the content of this subject, or extension of academic interests derived from the experience/s.*  The main component of this assignment is to compose a digital essay—a piece of writing meant to be read on the screen rather than on the page. A digital essay is an argument or analysis that uses hyperlinks and multimedia to leverage the affordances of the digital environment. The aim of this assignment is to develop and present an academic essay that reflects the environments, media, topics and issues that have been central to the content and participatory experiences of the subject Concepts and Practices in a Digital World. The topic for the essay is derived from an aspect of the subject content as defined by yourself.  The idea in this assessment is that you explore the possibilities presented by digital, networked media for presenting academic knowledge in a digital essay, in order to leverage the multimodal affordances of digital tools and environments to present your academic paper.  Such a digital academic essay provides you with the opportunity to present material from a range of sources and resources, ranging from websites, media sites, newspapers, journals, databases – in fact the very same types of sources and resources that we have used in this subject, and which school students and adult learners draw upon every day in their learning experiences. The opportunity to add relevant visual, audio and video media as well as direct hyperlinks to relevant resources is a realistic representation of a digital environment for academic and/or learned discourse.  By developing an academic digital essay in this environment you are provided with the unique opportunity to:   1. Choose a topic that allows you to pursue investigation of a topic or field of interest 2. Draw from the content of the subject and your extended reading in the subject, as well from the personal and participatory experiences in this subject 3. Develop knowledge and insight in your topic of choice to support your personal professional interests or professional workplace inquiries. 4. Demonstrate how a connection of a range of media forms can empower reader engagement through more than simple text, in order to engage with a remix of high quality content, knowledge, and media to create an energising academic essay.   You should choose a technology or digital forms that are most suitable to your own levels of technical ability. This is an opportunity to combine relevant and readily available tools to create a multi-modal essay. One thing a digital essay may *not* be is a Word document. You might repurpose a blog platform (ThinkSpace, WordPress, Tumblr, Blogger); a web platform (Wix, Weebly, Google Sites, Wikispaces), or slide program (Prezi, Sliderocket, Vuvox). You might even choose a Smore, ISSUS, Storify or iBook or some other form of ebook. There are many options, and the challenge is to work creatively as a writer in a digital environment.  Technical prowess is not formally assessed, but we are looking for imaginative and rigorous ways to presenting your **academic work** online. Part of our participatory process will be to help find the right solution to this learning challenge. The subject coordinator will provide opportunities for discussion, as well as support in the subject class discussion spaces.  Please note that, while we welcome assignments that reflect the instability of digital texts and ways of working, assessment regulations require that at least a version of the assignment is stable enough to be preserved for several months beyond the end of the subject. Please speak to your subject coordinator about this if you have any doubts.  The final version of the multi-modal digital essay will be published and shared with the class cohort on the Subject Website.  **Elements of the digital essay:**   * Have an interesting and ambitious project to write about. Your essay must include at least 1500 words of written text, and grounded in reading or research * Make your prose clear and engaging * Make thoughtful use of the affordances of the web – links, images, audio, video, slides and so on * Be professional. Present your work with imagination and care. Make sure your links work, and titles are clear. Acknowledge help. Document your sources, and provide references, either as links or with APA information at a relevant place/s in your final product. Use Creative Commons as appropriate * A digital essay is a coherent whole. Unlike the open-ended form of blog, to which you can always add a new post or page or link, the elements of a digital essay need to work together as parts of a cohesive structure. |
| **Rationale**: | Study of concepts and practices in a digital world has required engagement with multimodal environments, along with information, knowledge and scholarly engagement within the digital information ecology of 21st century learning. The digital essay provides an authentic task to extend and present academic enquiry using digital networked media. This authentic reflection activity is designed to further develop a student's engagement with information processing and thinking skills and to synthesise ideas as a result of their engagement with the subject content.  The assignment is designed to assess all the learning objectives in the subject, with an emphasis on 5, 6 and 7.  Students will be allocated a rating High Distinction to Pass/Fail as to how well you have addressed each criteria for:   * **Knowledge and understanding of concepts:** Evidence of engagement with the content of the subject and the chosen topic/s theme of enquiry * **Comprehension and analysis:** Evidence of a knowledge of the interconnected nature of information, and the use of research, literature, open access and other relevant data or information sources in the evaluation of information and knowledge flow * **Synthesis:** Evidence of synthesis and scholarly presentation of ideas relevant for academic discourse in a digital setting |

## Marking criteria & standards of performance

Developed by Judy O’Connell

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| **Criteria** | **HD** | **D** | **C** | **P** | **FL** |
| **Knowledge and understanding of concepts:** Evidence of engagement with the content of the subject and the chosen topic/s or theme of enquiry  **20 marks** | Accurately identify the range and breadth of the concepts and theories pertinent to the chosen topic/s or theme of enquiry. Pinpoints the major areas of influence, and existing and/or emerging factors for consideration. Provides a sophisticated and tightly presented rationale for the digital essay | Evidence of precise engagement with the concepts and theories pertinent to the chosen topic/s or theme of enquiry. Establishes a range of important factors to present a clear and well-formed rationale for the digital essay | Makes comprehensive connections between the concepts and predominant ideas relevant to the topics/s or theme of enquiry. Identifies important points and establishes connections to provide a purposeful foundation for the digital essay | Is abreast of the concepts relevant to the topic/s or field of enquiry, and provides a reason for engaging with the chosen topic/s or field of enquiry in the digital essay | Unfamiliar with concepts relevant to the topic/s or field of enquiry. Limited or inadequate foundation for the digital essay |
| **Comprehension and analysis:** Evidence of a knowledge of the interconnected nature of information, and the use of research, literature, open access and other relevant data or information sources in the evaluation of information and knowledge flow  **15 marks** | Draws from the content and information sources beyond the subject material, demonstrating a sophisticated critical research of ideas and principles beyond those introduced in the subject modules to analyse and evaluate the topic/s. Expert knowledge and use of the information sources, data, platforms and networks are coherently integrated in a critical and creative stance that provides insightful reflection of the field of enquiry. New forms of information are scrutinised, strengths identified to facilitate divergent or flexible thinking infused into the analysis and synthesis processes. Evaluation provides a connected interpretation, linking all aspects to the topic with insight | Draws from content and information sources beyond the subject material, being able to conceptualise understanding and justification through interconnections made in the ideas explored. A sound understanding of information sources and information networks provides critical analysis and quality evaluation and scrutiny of information and sources, and facilitates intuitive insights in the discussions | Draws from the subject content and beyond the subject readings to support conceptualisation of ideas. Provides evidence of critical analysis, however evaluation may lack insight or be a mix of descriptive and analytic thinking in the engagement with information sources and information networks to develop and present ideas | Draws from the subject content, and relevant key references are used, and these are drawn on in an appropriate manner. Limited though sound analysis of a range of information sources, with tentative or descriptive presentation of ideas and relationships between sources and forms of information | Understanding is vague, lacks logic and /or is not analysed and evaluated |
| **Synthesis:** Evidence of synthesis and scholarly presentation of ideas relevant for academic discourse in a digital setting including application of APA (6th) referencing style  **15 marks** | Clearly and concisely synthesises and expands ideas relevant for academic discourse in a digital setting. Writing is highly engaging, with multimodal approaches and has provided a framework for the collection and analysis of media elements that enhance a reader's knowledge experience by being organised to realise an intended meaning. The fluent professional style and tone of writing and coherence of essay structure is tied to the digital platform, presenting a reading/viewing experience which is accurate, engaging, and utilises convergence and synthesis to present the digital essay. All resources are appropriately attributed and free of APA (6th) errors, while also leveraging the affordances of the digital essay | Shows a deep level of thinking to synthesise major points and issues. Makes use of multimodal approaches to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and to add interest. Coherence is created by the interaction between the different elements the digital environment/s used, and demonstrates an insight into the characteristics of different information sources and formats to present a synthesis of the important issues raised. All resources are appropriately attributed, and free of APA (6th) error | Shows attention to the quality of the writing and digital forms of communication in the expression of ideas. Presents information and supporting evidence in a manner that conveys a clear and distinct perspective, such that readers can follow the line of reasoning. The work is scholarly and uses APA (6th) format and appropriate digital forms of attribution. | Shows attention to the quality of the writing and digital forms of communication in the expression of ideas. Uses digital modes effectively to engage the reader in a scholarly approach to the digital essay. Some errors in APA (6th) referencing style. | Writing, content, ideas and digital modes are poor and /or incomplete, showing inconsistencies, and lack of reading and research. Frequent errors in APA (6th) referencing style. |