Capstone Project Narrative

The central idea of my capstone topic focuses on the connection between technology and social science. I plan to examine how technology has impacted human relations. Technology has gradually evolved from simple tools to do a job to an essential part of modern culture that has the potential to take over people’s lives. My goal for this project is to explore how, when, and why this has occurred. Questions I hope to explore include whether technology has made people better or worse communicators, and if social pressure increases when information is available at any time rather than only in person.

In answering these questions, it would be beneficial to discuss them with a variety of internal individuals to whom some of these issues apply. This could be done through interviewing other students, as well as faculty members or administrators. I would like to have the majority of this research done by mid-february. By March 12, I would like to have my thesis prepared, as well as an outline of the final paper. At this time, I will be able to write the paper and compile the necessary materials for the Capstone presentation.

Internal Subject Matter Expert Plans:

- Galloway faculty member: Questions I would like to ask:
  - How have your communications with students and colleagues changed since the era before email?
○ Have you noticed any changes in how students interact with each other in the social media era?
■ Does this change their behavior in class?

External Subject Matter Expert Plans:

● I will talk to a professional who frequently works with young people who are experiencing anxiety. Questions I will ask:
  ○ What are the most common factors that cause stress/anxiety with your clients?
  ○ How have these factors changed over time, as modern technology has developed?
  ○ What techniques have been successful in combating stress/anxiety associated with this?
Works Cited

Ehmke, Rachel. "How Using Social Media Affects Teenagers." *Child Mind Institute*, childmind.org/article/how-using-social-media-affects-teenagers/. Accessed 13 Feb. 2020. This article discusses the differences between how young people communicated in the past compared to the era of social media. Before text messaging, teens would interact with each other over the phone or in person. Both required them to have real-time conversations as opposed to text/email conversations. When the primary method of communication does not involve reading nonverbal social cues, the ability to interpret this when having conversations diminishes. This information is important to my research because it explains what has changed about the way people communicate in the modern era. In addition, this source discusses the profound psychological impact that this has, particularly on young people.

Grover, Sean. "How Technology Lowers Emotional Intelligence in Kids." *Psychology Today*, 14 July 2017, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/when-kids-call-the-shots/201707/how-technology-lowers-emotional-intelligence-in-kids. This article explains the impact of technology on five key elements of emotional intelligence as defined by behavioral scientist Daniel Goleman. They are: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy and motivation. Self awareness is negatively impacted because when kids are dependent on technology and being constantly connected, they have less time to reflect upon themselves and their own thoughts. Self regulation is decreased because the instant
information makes people more impulsive. Social skills are impaired because face-to-face conversation is becoming increasingly uncommon, and kids tend to be less empathetic when they are more detached from other people. Technology can also decrease motivation because when people grow used to the total control that technology provides, they become disconnected when having to solve real-world problems.

Hendriksen, Ellen. "How Technology Makes Us Anxious." *Psychology Today*, 27 Mar. 2018, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/how-be-yourself/201803/how-technology-makes-us-anxious. Technology has provided us with much more control over uncertainties than we have ever had. We can get directions, read reviews, or parse through a guest list easily. The consequence of this is that we have less experience dealing with uncertainties during a time in our lives where the more large-scale life choices: college, careers, etc. are becoming increasingly uncertain. Social media is unlike any previous method of communication because it allows us time to think about how we want to react before sending a message. In addition, when social status is measured in the form of likes and comments people are incentivised to post things online which may not aligned with who they are authentically. While it may initially feel reliving to be able to control how other people see us, it ultimately leads to anxiety and "social crisis" when the gap between someone's appearance and who they really are becomes too large. When observing other people's social media, even when we are aware that it is different from real life, we will inherently compare ourselves to other people, another cause of anxiety. This article is helpful because it describes how modern technology changes how we communicate and
the effects that this has. Also many of the examples mentioned here I feel are very relatable and applicable to what I have observed personally.

Jones, Alison. "More Technology Use Linked to Mental Health Issues in At-Risk Adolescents." *Duke Today*, 3 May 2017, today.duke.edu/2017/05/more-technology-use-linked-mental-health-issues-risk-adolescents. This references a 2017 study which found associations between adolescents' mental health and their use of technology. It was found that they used technology more, symptoms of depression and anxiety decreased, but attention problems and ADHD symptoms increased. It is unclear whether technology use was the result of mental health problems, or if existing symptoms became worse with technology use.

Taylor, Jim. "How Technology Is Changing the Way Children Think and Focus." *Psychology Today*, 4 Dec. 2012, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-power-prime/201212/how-technology-is-changing-the-way-children-think-and-focus. One positive impact of technology is that, similar to how reading books trained people to be more focused, the internet has trained our brains to scan information efficiently. However, one negative impact is that it reduces people's ability to keep their attention focused. This is important because without the ability to focus and pay close attention, our memory, learning ability, and problem solving ability is diminished. This article is helpful because it also provides information about how our communication methods have changed. It explains the differences in the effects on our behavior for different methods of communication.