

BA 382 - Homework Assignment Handout

Due Dates are shown on the Moodle

This document provides requirements and instructions for each homework assignment. Unless otherwise instructed, homework assignments are to be printed out and handed in during the class they are due.

An “A” grade (95/100 pts) can be earned by submitting a homework assignment on-time that satisfies ALL criteria, is written well, is relevant to the topic, and has no grammatical or spelling errors. Departures from the required format, omission of required content, and spelling errors will result in a grade reduction. An additional five (5) points may be earned by reviewing your submitted work and feedback. These five (5) points will be added to your total homework grade as extra credit. You must review your submitted work within one week after grading to be eligible for the points.

Assignments are due at the **beginning** of class on the date shown on the class schedule and will be collected after you have briefly summarized what you read with the class. A 5% “late fee” is assessed per day for late assignments and **worth zero points if submitted one week after their due date**. Also, tech alert grades are reduced by an additional 10% deduction if they are not shared in class.

Technical issues are not valid reasons for late submissions.

Please realize that the notes in the ‘callouts’ on Page 5 showing a sample tech alert are REQUIREMENTS, not suggestions. Remember to explicitly tie your article summary back to the material presented in the text. **Read the chapters BEFORE you look for articles.**

TA #1: Tech Alert on IT & Strategy (Ch 3 or 4) -OR- Hardware/Emerging Technology (Ch 5)

Ch 3 or 4 IT Strategy option: Find one article that relates to the content covered in Chapters 3 or 4 in our text. **For this option, choose one of the following approaches:**

- Summarize a recent ‘real-world’ example that illustrates one topic presented in one of these chapters or find a related article that extends the book’s discussion on IT and strategy, and/or;
- Discuss or provide an example of a key term shown in the book margins from Chapters 3 or 4.
- Look at the discussion questions at the end of the chapter sections and find an article that helps you answer a question that is posed, or;
- Follow-up on a specific case study that is presented in the text or find comparable examples. If you choose this option, you must focus on new information about the organization that is not included in the text.

Chapter 5: Moore’s Law and More

- Look for an article that discusses emerging technologies or trends discussed in the text, focusing on the use or potential use by organizations or individuals. Try to find examples of new products that illustrate the “fifth wave” of technology (RFID, wearable computing, emerging technologies).
- Other options would be to find an article that discuss Moore’s law, the move toward mobile technologies (smart phones), advances in hardware technology, grid computing, or e-waste.

TA #2: Tech Alert on Software (Ch 11 or 12)

Chapter 11: Understanding Software or Chapter 12: Software in Flux

- Find an article that focuses on managerial advice or trends relating to Cloud Computing, Open Source Software, Service-Oriented Architecture (SoA), Enterprise systems, ERP, Software as a Service (SaaS), or;
- Look for an article that covers user interface design and/or trends/advances in the user interface (speech, gesture recognition, mobility, etc.), or;
- Find an article that discusses new system development or implementation in an organization--Success or Failure; or

- If you have participated in the implementation of a new information system deployment at work (even as an end-user), you can write up your experiences. No article is required if you choose this option, but the rest of the tech alert requirements must be followed (quote from text, etc.)

REQUIRED FORMAT & CONTENT OF TECH ALERTS

Technology alerts are **one full-page** (no more or less) memos addressed to the instructor. The focus should be to 1) introduce the article by first explaining why it is relevant to our chapter topic, 2) summarize the main points of the article, and 3) provide a ‘response’ to the article.

Unless otherwise specified, the source used should be an article **published within the last 6 months** from a credible source. Acceptable sources are published articles in magazines, newspapers, scholarly journals, or on-line publications. Company web sites, personal sites, blog entries, Wikipedia entries, etc. are not valid sources of information for this assignment. Do not use company press releases or product announcements. Rule of thumb: **If you can’t find an article title, date when published, AND author name(s), then you are not looking at a suitable article for this assignment.**

I recommend finding in-depth articles in business magazines or newspapers that focus on USE of technology rather than the technology itself. An appropriate article selection with clear relevance to the chapter content is required. The business databases available from www.sou.edu/library may be helpful. Another good option is to browse or search specific on-line IT/business publications – links to some of these are provided in Moodle. The callouts on the following page highlight the **format and content requirements** for each tech alert.

Additional comments:

- Include at least one direct reference (quotation) from the assigned chapter of the text. This quote must be used to provide a logical connection from the textbook to the information in your article summary. **Cite the quote properly (e.g. (Gallaugher, 2014, p. 123)) or ((Gallaugher, 2014, sec. 5.3) for e-book users)** and use the format shown on the next page. Do not include our text under the memo heading where you will list the article citation that you found.
- Any text that comes straight from the article must also be in quotes. Because the memo is a summary of the article and you have given all the proper citation information in the first paragraph, you can cite the article within the text by referring to the article itself, the writer’s name. (See tech alert for example.)
- If you read terminology or see acronyms that you are unfamiliar with, look them up (in the book glossary or in an on-line computing dictionary), and include the definition in your write-up. If you don’t understand what you are writing about, that defeats the purpose of this assignment. **Do not use an article you don’t understand – look for another.**
- Conclude your memo with your own thoughts/comments. Do not provide new information from the article in this paragraph. This paragraph can include, but is not limited to:
 - personal observations,
 - your perception of the importance of the issue or your response to what you learned, or
 - conclusions about how the information from the article supports or refutes information from the text, or from something you’ve learned in another class,

Identifying the source of your information: As shown in the example on the next page, use published articles and include the name of the article, the author, the date posted (not the date you accessed it), and the name of the journal, newspaper, or magazine. **Do not identify the search engine (Google or the library database (EBSCO-Host) as the source of your article.** Use the name of the publication itself.

The sample tech alert on the next page is an illustration of the content and format of a tech alert.

Please Note: the sample assignment uses a bullet format to summarize some points made in the article. Using bulleted points can be helpful, but this is not required. If you do use bulleted points, be sure that you provide a logical ‘introduction’ to the points, that each point corresponds with that introductory statement, and that the points you make are consistent in style, verb use, etc.

BA 382 Tech Alerts: REQUIRED FORMAT--each “callout” below indicates a required element to be included in each tech alert.

Include this line.

Technology Alert #n

Include book chapter in Subject line

To: Daniel Clark, MM
From: your name
Subject: Outsourcing Software Development (Chapter 10)
Date: Today’s Date

Properly formatted APA Citation with hanging indent

Pickering, C. (2015, October 10). *Choosing the best software sourcing solution*. Retrieved from

<http://itmanagement.earthweb.com/article.php/3629041>

Specific and relevant reference to textbook content.

In response to our discussion concerning the trends towards outsourcing software development, I thought you might be interested in the article cited above. Outsourcing is defined in the textbook as “the purchase of any product or service from another company” (Gallaugher, 2014, p. xx) or ((Gallaugher, 2014, sec. x.x) for e-book readers).

This article compares the benefits of outsourcing software development to the benefits of developing software in-house. According to a recent survey, “50% of existing production applications were delivered by in-house development, 46% by purchased packages, 3% by domestic outsourcing, almost 1% by Application Service Providers (ASP), and 1% by offshore outsourcing.”

Use 12 pt. font with single-spaced paragraphs and one blank line between paragraphs.

The article mentions the following advantages of in-house development:

- Employee commitment: employees realize that their success depends on corporate success.
- Company knowledge: employees know the company products, they know how the company operates, and they understand company culture.
- Physical proximity: the developers and users can have regular face-to-face meetings as well as informal contact around the “coffee pot”. As noted in the article, physical proximity “promotes better personal relationships that, in turn, promote better project results.”

Summarize article in your own words. All direct quotes must be in quotation marks. (Bullet format used here is just an option—if using bullets, be consistent in style and format.)

Pickering notes that the primary advantage of outsourcing is to save on costs, but notes that the advantages of in-house development as stated above are hard to overcome. He concludes the article by stating that internal and external projects are not suited for the same types of projects. “The more commodity-like the project the better suited it is for external development. The more unique-which usually means the more critical to corporate success-the better suited it is for internal development.” He goes on to state that it doesn’t have to be all or nothing: the simple functions of a large project are subcontracted, while the subtle or complex functions can be developed internally.

Many of the points made in this article were consistent with those made in the text and it was helpful to read about how the approach taken may depend on the type of system in development. However, the article overlooked several disadvantages of outsourcing software

What do you think? The concluding paragraph should be your own thoughts about the topic, or observations on how issues discussed in the article compare to points made in the book or in class discussions. (This paragraph should address the topic of the article. Do not provide general critique such as “I thought the article was well-written” or “I wish that the author had included more information about...”

Technology Plan Assignment

Creating a business plan is the primary activity of BA 499 Business Planning, the capstone course required for business majors. The purpose of this assignment is for you to think about 1) how your type of business could achieve competitive advantages through the use of technology and 2) how information technology can be used to support your core transaction processing. To do this, you will need to find and examine two different software applications that could be used by your business. (If you don't have an idea for a business plan yet, that's okay – just pick a specific type of business that you could potentially be interested in.) Note: Many classes evolve around your business idea so it will benefit you in the long run to decide on a business type and use the same business for your remaining courses.

Secondly, you will need to develop your information system that is intertwined within your marketing strategy. Information systems will aid in customer data collection and can be used to facilitate customer retention if properly used to its full potential. You will develop a strategy that uses your information system to attain and retain current and future customers.

Formatting and Content Requirements: Your report must be a minimum of **three full pages** (max 5) and should be professional in appearance. Specifically, include a centered title at the top of the first page, and create a page footer with your name, date, and page number (in *Page x of y* format as shown in this document). The following five sections should be included with underlined headings, paragraphs should be single-spaced with double-spacing between and no extra spacing between lines. **Use Times New Roman 12-point font.**

Business Description:

- Provide a thorough description of your potential business: products/services your business will provide, your target market, an estimate of the size of the business, and where your business will be located. If you are proposing a unique type of business, be sure that your business model (how do you make your money) is evident. Copying and using an existing business is not permissible. Be able to discuss why you chose a particular target market and location for your business.

Social Media and Marketing Strategy:

- Discuss your social media and e-commerce strategies. Some possible questions to consider: What types of Web 2.0 strategies would you employ? Would you have a web site? What purpose(s) would it serve? Do you anticipate conducting any B2B or B2C e-commerce? How can you use social media to increase your competitive advantage? Which social media sites will you use (you must specifically name the ones you will use)?

Information System:

- List at least **five** different pieces of data (other than name, phone, email) that you will collect from your potential customers - assume you can get any information you would like such as birthdate, social security #, etc.
- Two of the five pieces of data must be unique to your industry (e.g. if selling alcohol, you would need a birthdate). **Be specific and use all five pieces of data.** This is the heart of your information system so attention to detail is crucial. Specifically address what processes you will use to attain and retain your customers with your information system. For example, will you mail them a postcard on their birthday?

Data processing needs

- Look for a software solution that is specific to your type of business. General applications are available for common business tasks (such as payroll and accounting), but there is also a wide range of “vertical software applications” that address the needs of specific types of businesses, such as retail management, service management, restaurant management, fundraising, etc. Often, there are even more focused solutions within an industry type - for example, there is retail software specific to bicycle shops, restaurant management software addressing the unique needs of pizzerias, etc. Find software that is customized as much as possible to your specific business type.
- Describe why your company needs a software program and what type you are searching for.
- Find and compare two like applications (purchasable software or a web-based “cloud computing” solution) that address your core transaction processes. For example, if your business is a retail store, focus on a system that streamlines point of sale (POS) and inventory processes.
- Create a table (sample table shown below) to compare your selected programs using the format shown below. In the first column, list at least **eight** software requirements for your business, and indicate whether the solutions that you are considering would meet these requirements.

Example of selected software requirements for a Property Management Company. Start each requirement with a VERB – each requirement should complete the sentence: “The system will be used to _____.”

Software Requirements	Name of Software A	Name of Software B
Process Rental Income	Yes	Yes
Calculate Management Fees	Yes	No
Enter work orders for repairs	Yes	Yes
Issue monthly owner statements	Yes	Yes
Track tenant complaints	No	Yes
Track security deposits	Yes	No
Print 1099 forms	Yes	No

- Choose one of the two applications that you looked into and state why you would choose that application over the other.
- In narrative form, **specifically describe two business processes that are automated or streamlined through the use of your chosen software.**

Operating Environment

- Your solution will determine your hardware needs. What are the specifications of the hardware/operating system needed to run your chosen software? Most web sites include specific information on system requirements. List all of the requirements in this section.
- For every piece of equipment that your business needs, you need to provide the specifications of that hardware (processor speed, memory, OS, etc.).
- **If your chosen solution is a web-based SaaS offering, you will still need to supply the specifications of the hardware and operating system that you will be using to access the SaaS.**
- **You will not get credit for this section if you merely put that you need a computer that can access the Internet.**