

Final Report

The final evaluated work in this course will be a **Final Report** worth about 30% of your grade. You will write your final report in three stages:

1. **Choose a topic** (*deadline May 15, 3:30 pm*)
2. **Draft a proposal** (*deadline May 29, 3:30 pm*)
3. **Final version** (*deadline June 12, 11:59 pm*)

Deadlines for the topic and draft are firm; you **will** lose points for tardiness. You are encouraged to submit early; there is no penalty for repeated submission and revision within the deadline. Topic changes are permitted after these deadlines **but only with permission of the instructor**. The deadline for the final version is absolute; late submissions will be treated as if they were not submitted at all

(subject to the usual kinds of considerations of incomplete work; *i.e.*, missing the final submission deadline will be treated as if you missed a scheduled final examination).

Topic choice

Your topic must be a **case study of a particular enterprise involved in particular e-commerce activity**. “Enterprise” may include *subsidiaries, independent business units, NPOs, or government bureaus* at the discretion of the instructor. The e-commerce activity should be an important element of the enterprise’s business model, not an “afterthought” or something that “everybody does, so we should do it, too.” In submitting your topic you should give

- the name of the enterprise,
- a *brief* description of the particular industry or line of business the e-commerce activity targets,
- a *brief* description of the e-commerce activity,

- a *brief* explanation of the relation of the e-commerce activity to the enterprise's past success or future plans

“Brief” means no more than about 1000 characters (15 lines of 65 characters) total. This is **not** a draft!

Topics must be unique; in case of conflict, the first submission *received* will be given

precedence. Topics approved and under consideration will be posted to <http://people.ucsc.edu/~sturnbul/Econ139A/report-topics.html>.

<http://people.ucsc.edu/~sturnbul/Econ101/xc1-industries.html> provides an example of the format. **Addendum:** As mentioned in

class, amazon.com is specifically *excluded* as a topic because it is quite exhaustively analyzed in the textbook.

Submissions **must** be made **by email** to sturnbul@ucsc.edu, *directly in the email* (not submitted as a Word document or other attachment). They *should* be submitted as *plain text*, not HTML.

Draft of proposal

The draft of proposal should also be submitted as **plain text** in email to `sturnbul@ucsc.edu`, with a subject like **Subject: Final Report Draft: Online Service and Connect-the.com**. In the draft you should include all of the information from your topic proposal, in an “introduction to the essay” format. The rest of the proposal should explain *how* you propose to analyze the industry, including

- a brief background/history of the enterprise you chose,
- the economic theories (*innovator's dilemma, first mover advantage, structure-conduct-performance, game theory, network externalities, ...*) you plan to apply,
- any data sources (including graphs, statistics, product lists, *etc.*)

you have identified (*there should be at least 2 or 3 besides the textbooks!*),

- a *tentative* hypothesis you hope to support in your essay, and
- a list of useful references you have identified (*there should be at least 2 or 3 besides the textbooks!*).

The draft may be up to about 3000 characters. This is a draft *proposal*, intended to allow me to advise you that you're heading in the wrong direction. You should not expect to be able to use very much of this directly in your final report (and if you try to make it a draft of the final report, you probably will get a poor evaluation).

For this submission, I'm looking for (1) a draft of your introductory material, including a more extensive description of the firm, the industry, and the use of e-commerce, (2) a list of specific /sources/ you have referred to or have discovered but not yet studied, including

both descriptive material such as news paper articles and data such as stock price or historical revenues or income statements (you only need to provide the name/description and location of the information at this point), and (3) an hypothesis. The hypothesis is some general idea you have discovered about e-commerce that you should (eventually, in the final report) compare to the specific case, to support it or oppose it. The “populist myth” and the “monopolist myth” I described in class on May 27 are examples of hypotheses in this sense, although they are both very easy to disprove as stated.

How much work you do at this point is up to you. I need the above information at this stage to give guidance about how to accomplish the purpose of the report as I want it done. If you are not certain how that fits your plan, you may prefer to not write very much at this stage, but concentrate on background reading and researching useful general information about the topic, as well as sources for your

reference list. If you think you have a good idea what is needed, then you may write a lot for more concrete feedback about the content of your report.

The final report

The final report is a formal report. You should use a word processor to produce it. Submission by **email** in the form of a **PDF attachment** is **strongly** preferred, although other formats will be accepted.

The report should have a simple *title page* containing title, author, date, class and instructor. The title page is followed by the main text. After the main text, on separate pages, add your list of references, and any long tables or figures that you have not included in the text. If you do any statistical analysis (including generating graphs!), your data tables should be included as an appendix (a separate text file is fine). **All data and other material taken from other sources must be properly attributed, and the source included in your reference list.**