Totally Wired

Part 1: Media Log

The Assignment

John Lennon said, "How can I move forward when I don't know which way I'm facing?" Indeed, as cultural beings do we really understand who we are and where we are going?

You are going to conduct an data analysis study and reflective assignment.
Examine and document your media environment and habits over a typical 24-hour workday beginning from the minute you wake up, to the minute you start to fall asleep.

Collecting the data

Think carefully about your methodology for collecting data—it is tricky to collect data on yourself whilst you are on the run. You might need different tools for collecting different sorts of data.
Create a Media Log (or a series of media logs) either in your writer's notebook, on your iPhone, iPad or all three. Sometimes it is easier to record yourself speaking. Take advantage of your internet history on your computer and your phone records.

Write down in detail what kind of media activity you are involved with or exposed to on an hour by hour basis beginning from the minute you wake up, to the minute you fall asleep. Meticulously describe the content, context and record the duration. Document everything—try not to leave anything out—the more data you can collect the better. Please record what TV shows you are watching/who you are watching with, which websites you visit, where you get your news sources from, whom you are texting/what you are texting, emailing, Facebooking, snapchatting.
Include your media engagement whilst doing homework or class projects.

Data collection gets complicated when you are multitasking. Try to record your multitasking habits as accurately as you can.
Pay special attention to difficulties arising from the data collection process.

Rudimentary Tally

Start to tally up how many minutes you spend on each media activity.
Tally up how many hours/minutes you spend on media activity in a 24-hour period.
How many hours do you spend on homework related media activity as opposed to media entertainment?
How much time do you spend alone with your media gadgets? How much time do you spend on your phone? What do you use your phone for? Scan through your data to see if there are any patterns occurring allowing you to form some initial observations and conclusions.

Analyzing the Data

Now that you have a log full of raw data, it is time to organize that data into meaningful chunks. In order to do this, you need to formulate a strategy. You form a research strategy by developing good research questions:

- **Initial Questions to Consider**

What are your multitasking habits on the computer? At home? In class? How do you organize your tabs?
What social media networks are you engaged in? What are your favorites? Is there a specific order for engaging in them? Which ones do you spend the most time on? How long? What conclusions can you draw?
How many texts (roughly) do you send per hour? Who are you texting? What are the typical reasons for texting? How many texts do you receive per hour? Do you have notification alerts? How do you respond? What does this say about you? Your culture?
Video games—what do you play? With whom? For how long? For example, do you spend more time in a game than with your friends and family? (classes and dinner don't count. Such obligations are like being in class.)
At school, observe how much media is incorporated into classroom activity. How many TV's or adverts are you exposed to around campus? How do you organize doing your homework?
Which TV shows/films do you watch? Do you watch the news? Sports? Which channels are they on? Do you watch most of your films/news via the web?
Which companies own your media gadgets?
Do you ever turn your phone off? When?

- **Communicating Research**

After organizing research into meaningful chunks you will need to communicate the data to an audience in such a way that they will understand it and find the material relevant and interesting (data display).
How can you best represent the data contained in your logs?
Should you organize the data to show your multitasking habits?
Or, time spent engaged in study versus entertainment?
What kind of tables or graphs would best represent your results?
How many data displays do you need to represent your research?
How do you establish guidelines/rationale for data display?
What questions do you personally want to ask of your data?
Look at national statistics on media consumption. How do you compare?

Be aware of biases when presenting your data

- **Conclusion**

Data analysis needs good conclusions. First of all, summarize how much time you spend with each activity throughout the day. Look carefully at this data. Can you see any patterns emerging? Are there any surprises? How much time is spent without media? Is there a particular TV channel you spend a lot of time watching? Who owns that channel? Which companies own your media gadgets? Evaluate how much time was spent in "productive" media engagement (here you need to define what "productive" means to you), versus how much time was spent purely for entertainment. Where is most of your media time going? Once you have made conclusions about your media behavior think about the class resources we have discussed. Relate your personal media habits to more global concerns about passive media consumption. Think critically about how our digital behavior is impacting our lives and your identity.

What does it mean to be human in our rapidly changing digital landscapes?

For Submission:

Produce the Media Log (including audio files and/or videos you used in recording your media log).

Make sure that your reflection is genuine.