For this 5–6 page report, you will choose a piece of digital media to explore and prepare a rhetorical analysis of it.

due Wednesday, October 19; 300 points

Start by selecting a piece of digital media to analyze; I encourage you to choose a piece of media that links to your final project (as you are imagining it thus far) or that links to your professional interests.

You might want to do a web site analysis, perhaps looking at the online portfolio of a student or working professional, or the web site of a company you’re interested in working for, or the web site of a local nonprofit organization.

You might want to focus on video game writing, choosing a specific video game to analyze. You might want to focus on digital poetics, selecting a piece of digital poetry to analyze.

As you choose the piece you wish to analyze, also start thinking about ways to shape and focus your analysis. For instance:

- If you choose to analyze the online portfolio of a student or working professional, you might shape your analysis around how the designer negotiates displaying his/her professional identity while expressing individual personality (that is, how the designer runs the bandwidth of the professional and the personal).

- If you choose to analyze the web site of a nonprofit organization, you might analyze both the national web site and the web site of a local branch of the organization. You might shape your analysis on what elements are shared between the national and local sites.

- If you choose to analyze a video game, you might analyze the written content outside of the game; that is, you might focus on the writing on the package and in the instructions. You might shape your analysis on how the written content creates a framework for understanding and playing the game.

- If you choose to analyze a digital poem, you might analyze the multiple media that construct the poem. You might shape your analysis on how the media (e.g., text, images, sound, movement) work together, or don’t work together to create meaning and a digital experience.

Next, create a heuristic for yourself for assessing the piece of digital media you’ve chosen to analyze. Essentially, this is a framework you will apply to structure your analysis and to shape your claims and conclusions. You might select a framework such as:

- Focusing on audience: Assessing the audience for the media and the appropriateness of the media to its audience (you might, for instance, do some background reading and digging to identify the core audience, such as that audience’s demographic characteristics).
• Focusing on **purpose**: Establishing the purpose of the media and assessing its appropriateness in achieving that purpose (you might, for example, carefully review the mission statement of the organization that created the media and use the mission statement as a starting place for your evaluation).

• Focusing on **ethos, pathos, and logos**: Analyzing the “feel” and character/personality of the media articulated by the different writing- and design-related dimensions of it; assessing the appeals to reason or logic demonstrated throughout it; exploring the appeals to emotion illustrated in it.

• Borrowing and reworking concepts suggested in our readings and using it as a lens for your analysis; for instance, you might apply Hart’s framework of content, structure, and relevance; you might apply Kilian’s review criteria: purpose, audience, content, appearance, accessibility, and organization.

You will more than likely need to do research to select your focus of analysis and to create your heuristic. Obviously, how and where you do research depends on the object of your analysis. Some general spaces and sources for doing research include:

• **The readings from class**: They offer frameworks, theories, and suggestions. Some might even mention or reference a piece of digital media you want to explore on your own.

• **The web sites of, devoted to, or somehow linked to the authors or creators of the digital media**: Backtrack a bit—for instance, if you’re analyzing a video game, be sure to check out the web site of the company that created the video game. Consider reading outside perspectives and opinions on or about the company. If you’re analyzing a digital poem, see if you can find the author’s personal web site; see if you can find any interviews with or biographies of the author.

• **Articles, newspaper clips, or other published work**: Search the MSU Libraries’ “E-Resources” area and databases (I recommend ProQuest and WilsonSelectPlus) for articles about the digital media you are analyzing.