

Team Project Assignment:  
**Inventing the Future**

The Task:

Choose an invention or new product or service first developed at MIT or by a MIT alum. Write a 10-15 page paper that does the following:

*Briefly* describe the technological basis of the product, enough for those outside your major to understand its origins and purported value. Analyze the inventors' progress from conception, through creating the product and building the organization, to their delivery of the product or service to its customers or end-users. Interview the key people involved, and identify the critical people and organizational issues they encountered along the way. Describe how they addressed these issues and relate what, if anything, they learned from them. Discuss the current and likely future challenges the organization faces and how they might meet them.

Logistics and Milestones:

You will work in teams of *four or five*. The instructors will assign teams in the first few class sessions.

You can look in several places to find new products and services that have come out of MIT. We suggest you first look in your own department. Inventions by those in your own academic area are most likely to hold your interest over the semester, and be easier to research. Teams must choose their focal product or service by **Session 8**.

We will select a limited number of teams to present their projects in class on **Session 22**. Selected teams will be notified well in advance.

Teams must submit their final papers on **Session 23**.

Additional Advice:

Do not delay. Research of this kind requires planning and coordination, and those that emerge unscathed will be those who start working on this today. While this holds for most assignments (and in all aspects of life), the meetings and interviews to gather data for this assignment make the point worth stressing.

Rely on your teammates and the teaching staff to help you with any obstacles as soon as they appear.

We look forward to learning from you, so good luck!