24 Hours

(Due September 23, 2010)

Part One: Exist for 24 hours without any Internet access—no websites, email, online games, texting, twitter, Facebook, Skype, and so on. If in doubt, avoid the activity. Try and take notes about your experience, particularly if you have urges to do certain things, or if you find yourself unconsciously trying to do particular tasks or activities (checking email, opening a browser window). Think about if there are alternate ways to get information that you might be seeking online (looking out the window at the weather rather than checking weather.com) or ways to communicate with a friend or family member (calling rather than sending a message via Facebook).

Part Two: Write a four-page (approximately 1000 word) paper about this experience. For this paper your should draw on the following sources to interpret and analyze what happened:

- Class readings, including Gitlin, Lundemo, McLuhan, Ong, Bush, Carey (at least TWO)
- At least two other sources that either provide more context (studies that talk about how much of our lives is spent with media; news accounts of multitasking or new media use that you feel echo your experiences) for your account
- The notes you took; feedback from friends of what you were like during this time period

Be sure to address the following questions in your paper:

- What happened during your day? How did you fill your time?
- How difficult was this experience? What did you potentially miss out on as a consequence? Likewise, were there any unexpected benefits?
- What role does the Internet fill in your life? What do you use it for most? How much attention do you pay to your use?
- How do you think your use of the Internet compares with others in contemporary culture? How might it compare with someone who’s very different from you in some way (age, location, education, class, culture)?
- What was the most surprising thing that happened to you, or that you learned, during this experience?

Be sure to include a Reference List of all sources consulted in your paper, and also include in-text citations when you refer to sources, whether they are quoted or not. Please use APA or MLA style, and give as many details about Internet citations as possible.
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