

The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril, and Promise

Honors Program Guide January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2011



The Phi Theta Kappa Experience:
Honoring Scholars, Building Servant Leaders



PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY

Additional Resources are Available Online

Resources include a detailed Honors Study Topic annotated bibliography, film list, and a list of links to further web resources, Phi Theta Kappa's Leadership Briefs and other external websites.

www.ptk.org
www.ptk.org/honors
<http://leadership.ptk.org>



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General Introduction

Phi Theta Kappa is dedicated to providing members with opportunities for intellectual growth and challenge, as well as opportunities for leadership development and service through the Society's Hallmarks. The central focus of the Hallmarks is an Honors Study Topic that offers chapters a platform for examination of a timely, interdisciplinary subject of vital importance to the human experience. This Guide serves as an introduction to The Phi Theta Kappa Experience through the Society's four Hallmarks: Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Fellowship. The Guide provides ideas for chapters to develop in each of the Hallmarks through exploration of the 2010/2011 Honors Study Topic, *The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril, and Promise*. Through analysis of the issues related to the Honors Study Topic, chapters will be able to develop Honors in Action activities that incorporate leadership roles, leadership development activities and service learning projects they initiate to engage their chapters, colleges, and communities.

~~The~~ ^{Your} Phi Theta Kappa Experience: Honoring Scholars and Building Servant Leaders

You've made the grade - now it's time to reap the rewards. Phi Theta Kappa's primary mission is to recognize students for their academic achievement. Your membership certificate entitles you to much more than recognition; it's your ticket to building a better you. Phi Theta Kappa can help you achieve your goals by an approach we call Honors in Action, based on our four Hallmarks of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Fellowship. Simply put, Honors in Action provides you with opportunities to **LEARN, LEAD** and **SERVE**.

Learn. Explore real-world issues through our Honors Study Topic. Currently, we're discovering the many facets of *The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril, and Promise*. These are issues that affect your everyday life – from social networking sites to scientific advances that can make the last decade's innovations seem quaint. This Honors Program Guide asks provocative questions whose answers will determine our collective future. How do educators prepare students for jobs that don't yet exist? Can "sexting" be a crime? Should any information be censored on the Internet?

Lead. After exploring in detail the issue that means the most to you and your chapter, you're ready to plan an Honors in Action Project. This takes leadership abilities – such as goal setting, teambuilding, organizing and motivating. As you develop a project, you should seek out others as mentors and partners – teachers, community leaders and colleagues. All of us have leadership strengths and deficiencies. *Phi Theta Kappa's Leadership Development Studies resources can help develop and advance your skills.* For further information, visit <http://leadership.ptk.org>.

Serve. This is so much more than volunteering your time. Serving is the "action" part of Honors in Action. It's taking what you have learned and applying it to make a positive difference. You'll learn by serving, too. Reflection is a critical component of service learning. A guide for effective reflection can be summed up in three questions: (1) What? (What occurred?), (2) So what? (What does it mean?) and (3) Now what? (What does this mean for future actions?).

Other Opportunities To Enhance Your Phi Theta Kappa Experience:

Five Star Competitive Edge

This is Phi Theta Kappa's personal and professional development plan that helps members enhance the skills and abilities that transfer recruiters and employers are looking for – such as critical thinking, writing, professional etiquette and goal setting. Competitive Edge is for ALL members, regardless of chapter size, activity level of chapter, or chapter location, and can be completed as an individual endeavor. The plan features five levels of activities – from one star to five stars – and is tracked completely online at <http://ce-web.ptk.org/edge/>. Activities range from completing online courseware to gaining leadership experience.

Annual Convention

The Phi Theta Kappa Annual Convention is the largest multinational gathering of community college students in the world. At the Convention, members learn from internationally known speakers and interact with peers and faculty. Educational forums offer in-depth examination of the Honors Study Topic, leadership and service-learning opportunities, college transfer, and career advice. Participants have called it a life-changing experience. Come prepared to gain a fresh perspective on our world! Learn more at <http://convention.ptk.org>.

Honors Institute and Honors Seminars

Known as the crown jewel of Phi Theta Kappa's honors programming, the Honors Institute provides a week's intensive study of the Honors Study Topic through outstanding speakers, intimate group discussions, field trips, and experiential exercises. Many Institute attendees make friendships that last a lifetime.

The Honors Seminar Series brings Honors Study Topic experts to your campus via DVD and/or web downloads. Supplement your Honors in Action research with a viewing and discussion of the seminar presentations. Visit www.ptk.org/honors/seminars for speaker information, subscription rates, and promotional materials.

Five Star Chapter Development Plan

Chapters are encouraged to use this Honors Program Guide as the basis for their chapter programming. To help put all the (chapter) pieces together, we've designed a step-by-step guide called the Five Star Chapter Development Plan. Level by level, step by step, your chapter will be able to follow a plan of activities that build chapter membership, administrative support, and Honors in Action programming. And the best part is your chapter determines how active you want to be – from one star to five stars. All chapters who achieve any level in the Five Star Chapter Development Plan will receive recognition locally, regionally, and internationally. Read more about the Five Star Plan at www.ptk.org/fivestar.

Hallmark Awards

The Hallmark Awards are the Society's competitive awards, designed to recognize the best of the best. Award categories recognize chapters, regions, members, officers, advisors, and even college administrators for their demonstration of Honors in Action! For a complete list of categories, entry forms and judging guidelines, visit www.ptk.org/hallmarks.

Chapter, Regional and International Officers

Members who are interested in taking an active leadership role within Phi Theta Kappa can aspire to officer positions at the chapter, regional, and international levels. The number and structure of chapter and regional officer positions vary from chapter to chapter and region to region. See your chapter advisor and Regional Coordinator for more information. At the Annual Convention, chapter voting delegates elect five members to the International Officer Team, which consists of the International President and four Divisional Vice Presidents. More information is available at www.ptk.org/directories/intofficers.htm.

The Phi Theta Kappa Experience is Honors in Action

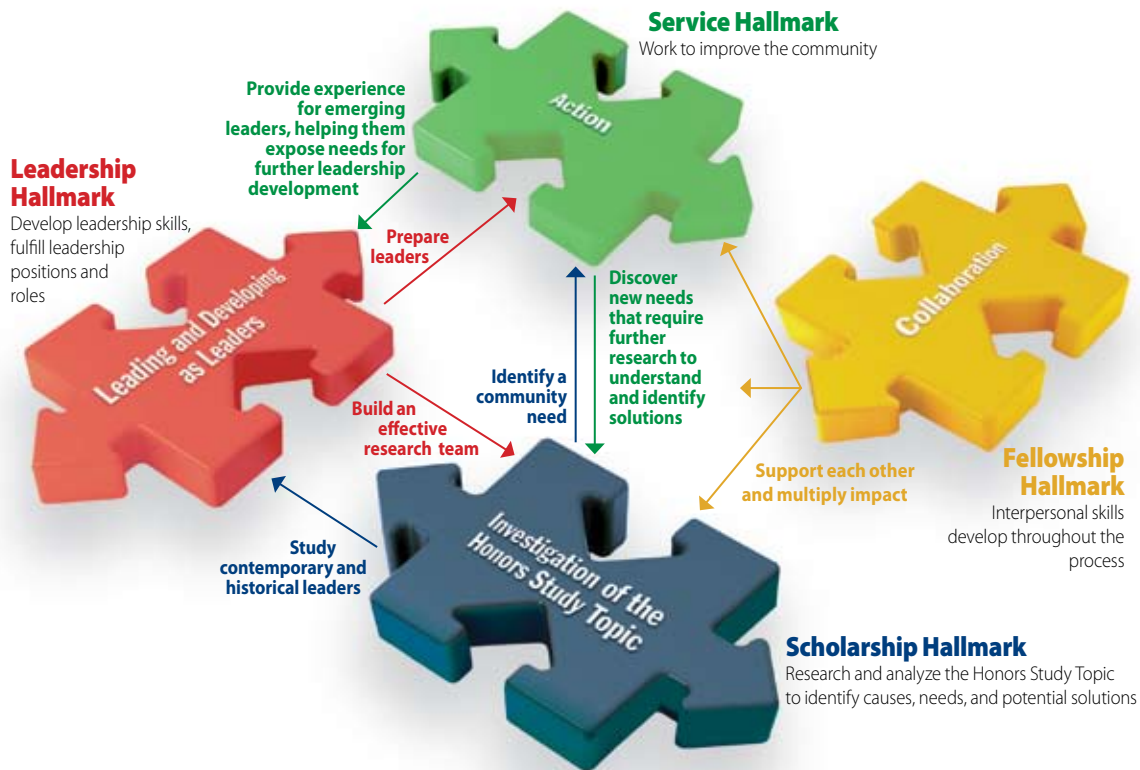
All of us – members, officers, advisors, as well as college faculty and administrators – contribute to the creation of the Phi Theta Kappa Experience through **Honors in Action**. “Honors in Action” means that scholars are engaging with their communities using the Phi Theta Kappa Hallmarks of Scholarship (defined as Scholarly Inquiry), Leadership, Service, and Fellowship to seek solutions for the world’s challenges related to our Honors Study Topic, *The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril, and Promise*.

The Honors in Action project descriptions in this Guide provide the initial ideas and guidance for comprehensive projects. They may vary in scope depending upon the number of people involved – a single Phi Theta Kappa member, a chapter, an honors class, an entire college community – but the essence of the projects remains the same: focus on an aspect of the Honors Study Topic and integration of all the Phi Theta Kappa Hallmarks through scholarly inquiry, leadership and leadership development, service and service-learning, and collaboration.

Imagine the incredible potential for impact when thousands of Phi Theta Kappa honor students focus their attention and efforts in the same area: *The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril, and Promise!*

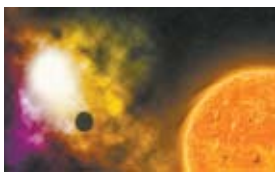
Honors in Action

Putting the pieces together



Issue 9: Science

What are the connections between the scientific process and information?



A space nebula and the sun

Study Questions

1. How has the increased access to information altered our everyday understanding of science?
2. What types of illness or new maladies may result from increased time spent using personal technology?
3. What role does increased access to information play in empowering us to live healthier lifestyles or to gain better quality medical care?
4. Some developing countries accept electronic waste and then use locals to dismantle it for the recycling market, exposing them to dangerous chemicals. Who should be responsible for the health and environmental impact of such practices?
5. What impact has the information gained from major scientific endeavors, such as the Human Genome Project, had on our understanding of who we are?
6. In what ways can the pursuit of pure science merely to gain knowledge improve the human condition?
7. Given the brain's plasticity, what impact do changes in the methods by which we gain information alter the way we think, learn and respond?
8. In what ways are greater scientific knowledge and technology blurring the line between man and machine?
9. As our acquisition of scientific information increases, we gain the capability to do previously impossible feats, such as human cloning. Does the fact that we can mean that we should? Who should make those decisions, and can the field of bioethics keep pace with scientific advances?
10. With the explosion of information resources that have a "scientific" feel or sound, how do we distinguish valid science from pseudoscience or myth?
11. Based on the scientific method of inquiry, hypotheses cannot be proved to be correct but can be proved incorrect. Why is that statement true and how has increased information through the years led to changes in our scientific beliefs?
12. How do new discoveries in neurological sciences apply to the development of artificial intelligence?
13. How might the development of artificial intelligence increase our acquisition and analysis of information?
14. How has neurobiological research influenced our understanding of learning disorders?

Honors in Action

INFLUENZA

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Each year, we witness a worldwide outbreak of the influenza, which comes in many strains, but in 2009, the world was rocked by a strain called H1N1. This strain was so significant that it garnered major media attention, and the world braced itself for a highly lethal flu outbreak. Explore the epidemiology of influenza. Begin by gaining an understanding of what influenza is and is not. Research the pattern of the annual flu outbreaks. What makes H1N1 more significant than the usual annual flu strains (or is it)? What does it mean for a disease to be given pandemic status? If H1N1 began as swine flu, why are humans concerned, and what role does genetics play in this potential threat? How is influenza spread? Research the development of flu vaccines. We have flu shots each year—why are they sometimes effective and sometimes not, and why do we need a new one for H1N1? Explore the media coverage of the origins of the H1N1 strain and other potential worldwide threats, such as SARS. How has the media coverage affected public response? Where can one go for reliable information during a major health crisis? Does our current ability to access information help or hinder our ability to recognize serious threats?

Leadership Role(s): Talk to local health care experts (epidemiologists, public health department officials) and discover what action plan your community has in place for handling a major disease outbreak. What information do you need from them? How will you use that information? Talk to your college administration. Who is responsible for your college's action plan for such events, and what is that plan? Are students and employees aware of the plan? Are flu vaccines easily accessible for the college and community?

Leadership Development: As a chapter, read "Enlist Others: Attracting People to Common Purposes" in *Leadership Development Studies: A Humanities Approach*. Invite an Allied Health or a nursing faculty member to facilitate a discussion about the lessons you learned from reading the article and the ways you can use the information to develop your influenza project.

Action: Each year, there will be a cold and flu season. What steps can be taken to minimize the spread of any flu strain? What does your college

24 • 1975 - Microsoft is founded. 1977 - Television signals are transmitted on optical fibers. 1977 - Robert O'Connell's *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Heart of Legitimate Power and Greatness* is published. 1979 - First digitally recorded album released. 1980 - CNN is launched. 1981 - MTV is launched.

Using this Honors Program Guide to Launch Honors in Action

Your Honors in Action project will provide avenues for enriching your academic and extracurricular endeavors by:

- Sharing your knowledge and learning more about real-world, timely issues with others from diverse backgrounds and academic experiences
- Creating leadership opportunities and growing your leadership skills
- Engaging in meaningful service to others and learning valuable lessons that connect your classroom knowledge to real challenges
- Building a team of collaborators who share a common desire to make an impact

Using the Guide Step By Step

1. Read the essay introduction to the Honors Study Topic on page 6.
2. Review the issue related to the Honors Study Topic, found on pages 8-27.
3. Engage in a dialogue about the issues that connect and resonate with the members of your chapter, campus, or community.
4. Select an issue for your focus and explore the Study Questions more deeply.
5. Research the issue with academic, scholarly rigor (additional bibliographies for each issue are online in the expanded, online Honors Program Guide, available at www.ptk.org/honors/guide/).
6. Share the research with others who may be motivated to collaborate with you to address challenges or concerns that you uncover through your research.
7. Consider the Honors in Action project ideas related to the issue you selected for focus: Is there an issue that addresses the challenge or concern on your campus and/or in your community that you identified, or one that can serve as a model for how to proceed with another Honors in Action project?

Beyond the Guide

1. What are your **specific and measurable goals** for the Honors in Action project?
 - Whom will you serve? How will they benefit?
 - How will you grow and benefit?
 - How will you review your goals during the year?
 - How will you know when you have achieved these goals?
2. Describe and **plan the strategies** you will use to achieve the goals.
3. How will you **ensure impact** on your campus and/or in your community?
 - Who else needs to be involved?
 - What leadership roles need to be filled?
 - What new leadership skills can you develop?
 - What else do you need to know that calls for further investigation?
4. **Record and reflect** throughout the process of using the Guide and planning and implementing your Honors in Action project. Successful scholar-servant-leaders understand the value and importance of thorough recording and reflection. It is indispensable for:
 - Capturing the information you need for tracking progress related to the Five Star Chapter Development Plan and to prepare your Hallmark Awards entries
 - Recalling action-oriented details that are significant additions to scholarship applications, résumés, and cover letters
 - Providing valuable information for successors to sustain or grow the project

Keeping an Honors in Action Journal

The following lists pose questions related to the four Hallmarks and can guide your record-keeping and reflection as you use the guide and plan and implement your Honors in Action project.

Scholarship Hallmark

- ✓ How and why did you choose a particular issue related to the democratization of information?
- ✓ Who engaged in the research?
- ✓ What study questions were the researchers investigating?
- ✓ What are the different disciplines involved in the issue and study questions?
- ✓ What are the varied perspectives and points of view to explore?
- ✓ What are the details of your research plan (sources, deadlines, etc.)?
- ✓ What sources did each researcher consult?
- ✓ In what ways was the research challenging and how did you overcome the challenges?
- ✓ How do you better understand what's happening in the world related to the democratization of information?
- ✓ How did the discussions on the topic, issues, and study questions proceed?
- ✓ What are your research conclusions?
- ✓ How were the studies, research, analysis, and conclusions shared?
- ✓ What are the questions remaining for further research?

Leadership Hallmark

- ✓ Who are the leaders on this issue and what can you learn from their leadership and strategies?
- ✓ What processes did you use for setting goals, assigning roles, building a team, making decisions, staying motivated, empowering group members, and recruiting people for the project?
- ✓ What leadership lessons did you learn?
- ✓ How do you know that your leadership for the project was effective?
- ✓ What is the evidence for great teamwork, for example?
- ✓ Who are potential model leaders, mentors, and coaches for you on your campus and in your community?
- ✓ With whom did you make connections as mentors, coaches, and leaders on campus or in your community and what did you learn from them?
- ✓ Describe the details of your leadership development resources and events that improved your leadership.
- ✓ How did you and others overcome obstacles or threats to your project?
- ✓ What feedback did you receive from participants about the leadership of the project and how will you use the feedback?

Service Hallmark

- ✓ What are the different possible actions related to the Issue you chose?
- ✓ What specific actions will you take and why?
- ✓ Whom will you serve? (demographics, numbers, location, etc.)
- ✓ What organizations exist in the world and locally that are engaged in service similar to what you aim to do?
- ✓ How can you use what you learn from your analysis of their work to proceed with your project?
- ✓ What is the specific impact you intend to make?
- ✓ What are the details of your strategies and plan?
- ✓ How are you going to measure the impact (quantitative measures and qualitative measures)?
- ✓ What are the specific results and impact of your service?
- ✓ What are the reactions and feedback from the people and organizations whom you serve?
- ✓ What is necessary for the project to be sustained and grow?

Fellowship Hallmark

- ✓ Who are the different people and audiences with whom you can collaborate?
- ✓ How can you maximize the diversity and inclusivity for your project?
- ✓ What perspectives and points of view are represented in your group? What challenges and benefits does diversity create?
- ✓ What are your public relations and communication strategies? How will you measure success for these strategies?
- ✓ What are the details of meetings and events for planning, information gathering, presentations, and debriefing and reflecting?
- ✓ What feedback do you receive from meeting and event participants about the connections they make with others? How will you use the feedback?

Essay

The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril, and Promise

Each year since 1998 Beloit College in Wisconsin has published a "Mindset List" compiled by Professor Tom McBride and higher education communications expert Ron Nief. The list highlights the culture in which incoming freshmen have lived and can reveal a lot about the democratization of information. The Class of 2013 has always been able to read books on an electronic screen and always lived in a world in which they could watch wars, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, political elections, and police arrests in real time on television. The words "wymn" and "waitperson" have always been included in the dictionaries they consult, most likely online. They have always been able to migrate one medium, such as radio, DVDs, and compact discs, to another. For the Class of 2013, rap music has always been part of mainstream culture, and Natalie Cole has always sung with her father. The health care system has always needed an overhaul. Official race classifications in South Africa have always been outlawed. Babies have always had social security numbers. Cristóbal Colón has always been criticized for "founding" the Americas. Their world has been shaped by the democratization of information.

Even for those of us who are not part of the Class of 2013, access to information has served as a powerful force for change in both our lives and in the world journalist Thomas Friedman described in his 2008 bestseller as hot, flat, and crowded. We live in a world where five years ago there was no Facebook or YouTube. Today, Facebook has 200,000,000 global users, and every minute ten hours of video are posted on YouTube. Social networking sites are ubiquitous to the point comedienne Wanda Sykes expressed the skepticism some people feel about them on the "The Jay Leno Show": "If I didn't want to speak with you in the fifth grade, what makes you think I want to speak to you now?" These sites are now popular enough with Baby Boomers and Generation Xers, parents and grandparents of the class of 2013, that younger people are considering alternate sites like Multiply for their social network needs.

Media, including newspapers, mail, movies, phone calls, documents, and television are now all delivered in digital form. These changes shift power from providers to users. If we choose, for instance, to watch television shows on our own schedules, we can easily do so. We can visit "Green Acres," yearn to be part of the Cosby family, and watch "I Love Lucy" nearly every hour of every day on television worldwide, despite the fact that the series originally left the air in 1960. No time in our schedules to watch entire shows? No problem. We can watch video clips such as Lucy's audition for a Vitameatavegamin commercial on YouTube. iPhone users have downloaded one billion applications such as Whrrl v2.2, which helps people tell stories with their personal photos; Shazam, which helps identify songs users hear playing, even on another medium; and BubbleWrap, which allows people to pop bubbles with their fingers using their phones. There are even websites that tell people which sites are the top ten free medical applications for their iPhones. These sites help web

surfers check updated clinical data, decipher medical formulas, and even take an eye exam via a virtual chart. This shift in power has economic implications for providers and the advertisers in search of the best sites for their ads.

The power and promise of the ways information is disseminated on the Internet and through personal communication tools are extraordinary. Jeffrey M. Stibel argues in the introduction to *Wired for Thought* (2009), "Never before has the idea of a thinking machine brought together a greater confluence of thinkers and scientists. . . The Internet. . . will be (and already is) capable of creating a collective consciousness." People around the world watched uploaded video in horror as an Iranian woman was killed by government thugs, and that focused the world on Iran's 2009 election results and the protests that followed them. While the "net" can be a lifeline for people who are homebound, it has the potential as well to facilitate unprecedented cooperation between scholars and practitioners around the globe to use technology and shared information in finding cures for diseases such as cancer and AIDS. Information technology has also helped organizations such as Kiva match entrepreneurs with people who have donated more than \$100 million in \$25 increments to help start businesses in 185 nations.

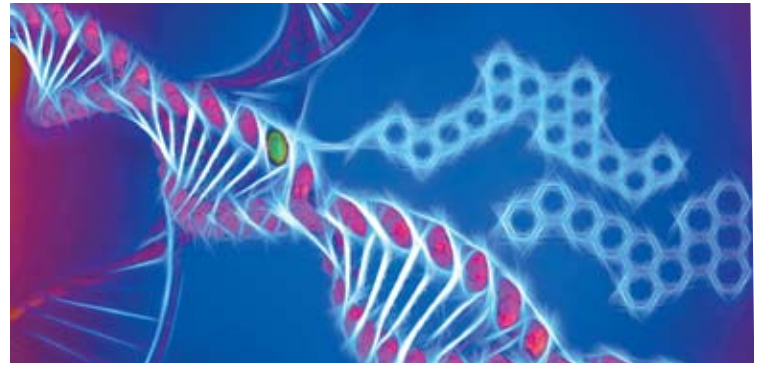
There is potential peril in the democratization of information as well. Identity theft has grown exponentially. Twenty-four-hour news outlets often report inaccurate information in an effort to get stories on air before their competitors. Political candidates can get information to potential voters, but governments can censor information as well. As information becomes more accessible, critics charge that the tools with which we access and disseminate it breed incivility and destroy formal language skills.

Thirty years ago, futurists predicted we would use portable computers and use telephones without cords. We would live in dormitories and travel in blimps. Today, they predict lifespans of 150-200 years, electronic contact lenses, and implantation of cybernetic chips for organ repairs. Commuters will wear video glasses that will allow them to watch television shows and films and gather information as they travel to and from work. We may increasingly "lifestream" by documenting all aspects of our lives. We should, futurists suggest, be able to communicate with our computers by merely thinking something.

Over the next two years, Phi Theta Kappa members will have opportunities to examine in depth the power, peril, and promise inherent in the democratization of information. We hope you will use what you learn to grow as scholars and leaders as you develop Honors in Action projects. May the promise of the democratization of information far outweigh the perils. Let's show the power of Phi Theta Kappa members to do good worldwide A3 AISB. ATB.*

*translation: anytime, anywhere, anyplace as it should be. All the best.





25,000-30,000 BP – Earliest cave drawings are created.

3,100 BCE – Cuneiform writing is developed in Sumeria.

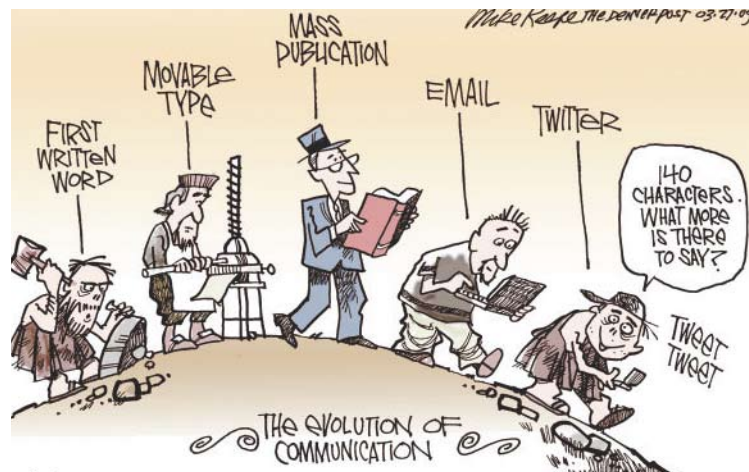
8th or 9th Century BCE – Greek Epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are transcribed from oral tradition to written.

Circa 425 BCE – Herodotus writes the first scientific history.

Circa 300 BCE – Travel begins on the Silk Road to connect Asia with Europe for an exchange of goods.

Issue 1: Definition

What does the phrase “democratization of information” mean?



Democratization

Pronunciation: \di-1mä-krə-tə-1zā-shən\ *noun*

1: To make democratic

Democratic:

- 1: of, relating to, or favoring democracy
- 2: *often capitalized*; of or relating to one of the two major political parties in the United States evolving in the early 19th century from the anti-federalists and the Democratic-Republican party and associated in modern times with policies of broad social reform and internationalism
- 3: relating to, appealing to, or available to the broad masses of the people (democratic art)
- 4: favoring social equality : not snobbish

Source: Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary – www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary

Study Questions

1. What are the principles we use to define democratization?
2. How do other societies define democratization?
3. To what extent is there a democratization of information?
4. How has the democratization of information determined the course of history?
5. How have people acquired information through the generations?
6. What are some historical examples of the democratization of information? What are some contemporary examples of the democratization of information?
7. To what extent has the democratization of information been a force for change in the modern world?
8. How might the definition of democratization of information have changed over time?
9. To what extent has social networking altered the definition of the democratization of information?
10. What factors affect our ability to process and understand information?
11. To what extent is the democratization of information a prerequisite to leadership?
12. In what ways have the methods with which people disseminated information changed over time?
13. Does access to information ensure democratization? Are all citizens invested with equal power and do all enjoy legitimate liberties and freedoms?

Honors in Action

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY CLICKS

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Choose six nations that you would like to “visit.” Research those nations and learn about their language and culture and the ways in which information is disseminated. Investigate the climate, economy, food, clothing, and media of the nations to determine the ways in which those factors influence the democratization of information. How do these nations define the democratization of information? What can we learn from the different ways they define it? What is the power, peril, and promise inherent in better understanding cultures that are different from our own?

Leadership Role(s): Organize a “Virtual World Tour” and offer opportunities for chapter members, students on campus who are not members of your chapter, fellow Phi Theta Kappa members at other colleges, faculty, and community members to tour with you. Lobby your college administration to offer credit courses involving international travel. Discuss the possibility of your college offering credit courses with a virtual travel component.

Leadership Development: Organize a workshop on articulating a vision for your virtual tour guides, so they can effectively encourage college and community members to join the chapter’s tours. Plan a training session about professional presentations before speaking with your college administration about developing credit courses that highlight travel.

Action: Organize a “Virtual World Tour” and, for your virtual visit, decorate your location to reflect the nation you are visiting. Serve local dishes and play local music. Invite a citizen of the nation to which you are virtually traveling to share his or her experiences with your group. At the first virtual destination, distribute “passports” that you will stamp each time a student takes a virtual trip with you. Organize an essay contest for students who travel with your chapter to the nations you researched. Formulate an essay topic that asks students to reflect upon their virtual travels, paying special attention to what they learned and how the virtual trips have inspired them to conduct either more virtual trips or to engage in real-time travel.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your college campus
- Fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter who participated in the virtual tours and the essay contest
- Staff of your college or local newspaper
- College administrators who discussed international education with the project's leadership team
- Community members from nations selected for your virtual tour

Reflection: At the end of each virtual trip and at the end of the project, discuss the idea of virtual travel. How much information were you able to glean from your virtual travels. Did virtual travel encourage you to engage in actual travel? What was lost that can only be experienced through real-time travel? What did you learn about the democratization of information from your virtual travel? What would you change if you were to organize the project again?

THE GREAT DEBATE

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Organize a research team to explore issues related to the Honors Study Topic to determine which topic or topics best represent the ways in which students are affected by the democratization of information. What do we mean by the democratization of information? Which issues most affect the lives of students? Which issues are most likely to garner interest among students? What are the intersections between the issues that most affect and would most interest students on your campus? Develop a bibliography of potential sources for debaters to consult.

Leadership Role(s): Organize the elements of the debate, including articulating your vision, inviting students on campus and fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your campus to participate in the debate, forming research teams to work with debaters as they prepare for the event, securing permissions from college administrators and support from campus faculty, and promoting both the debate and the panel discussion. Work with local middle school officials to share your results and organize a discussion of your topic and the concept of civil discourse with their students.

Leadership Development: Invite a faculty member from the Speech Communications Department and one from the Government Department to conduct a workshop for chapter members and debaters on research and debate methods. Ask them to help you better understand ways to organize an effective debate and to ensure the panel discussion afterwards furthers your appreciation of civil discourse.

Organize a workshop for your debate leadership team on goal setting and planning a major event. Work on a timeline that will help your team work on the elements of the project in a timely manner that allows members opportunities to enhance their leadership skills.

Action: Announce a debating competition to be held at your school. Select a timely and controversial topic, and draft a position statement concerning the topic. Debaters will then sign up to argue the pro or con position of the statement. Contact participants and tell them that they have been accepted to participate in the debate with one caveat: They

must take the position opposite from the one they originally selected. Based on the number of debaters who accept, organize debating teams and use what you have learned in your research of the democratization of information to help them prepare for the event.

Hold and film the debate. Arrange to share your findings with middle school students. Discuss civility with these students. Model civil discourse to them and strategize on how they can become civil participants in society. Assist the middle school students in writing a pamphlet on civility that they can share with others.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on campus beyond the chapter
- Fellow Phi Theta Kappa members from other local chapters
- Campus faculty and administrators
- Middle school students in your community

Reflection: Have the debaters ask themselves: Did my methods of evaluating information change once my position had to change? What preconceived notions do we bring to the table when evaluating information? Can we ever approach information from a "value neutral" perspective?

Afterwards, hold a roundtable discussion and talk about the process of preparing for the debate. How did the debaters gather their information? Did they find it difficult to research a position they did not hold? How many debaters who originally signed up to debate did not go forward with the project? Did anyone change his or her mind about the issue because of the research? How uncomfortable is it to argue for a position one does not hold personally? Focus the discussion on the idea of civility. Did the debate remain civil or uncivil? Did the twist thrown at the debaters increase or decrease the level of civility?

Compare your debate with the debates that take place on cable. Was your debate more or less civil than the typical television debate? Are television debates unnecessarily uncivil? Request to go on a local television news broadcast to share your results with others.

Bibliography

Stross, Randall. *Planet Google: One Company's Audacious Plan to Organize Everything We Know*. 2008.

Stross takes a look at Google's plan to organize the known information in the world for access by Internet users and raises questions about ambition, access, copyright, privacy, and the power of the company's technology and vision.

Sunstein, Cass R. *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge*. 2006.

Sunstein's work is a good synthesis of the history and promise of the Internet and the ways in which the worldwide web has exceeded early expectations in terms of the democratization of information.

Weinberger, David. *Everything is Miscellaneous: The Power of the New Digital Disorder*. 2007.

Weinberger explores the ways in which the new digital order is reworking what we know and learn about the world.

Issue 2: Technology

How has technology influenced the spread of information?



Array of large radio telescopes in New Mexico, USA

Study Questions

1. What is the digital divide and how has technology helped to fill or create it?
2. How has the development of technologies helped increase information access for citizens of developing regions?
3. What role do cell phones play in opening communications in developing areas?
4. How does this increased access affect communication in our region? What differences exist in regions throughout the world?
5. How has the development of information technology systems influenced information availability to global audiences?
6. Why do some people make conscious decisions to avoid information technologies?
7. In what ways does technology limit information access and distribution?
8. How vulnerable are information technologies to disruptions in service?
9. What technologies that we enjoy today had their origins in scientific and military applications?
10. How do we determine that information technologies become obsolete and what happens to them?
11. How has technology increased our ability to collect and mine data to make it more useful?
12. How has technology contributed to online voyeurism and addictions?
13. How did technological advances result in the development of the Internet?
14. How do advances in information acquisition lead to the perceived need for more technology?
15. How do information technologies promote the study and preservation of languages?

Honors in Action

LIVE WITH THE MET

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Examine the websites for the Metropolitan Opera Company (Met), the National Endowment for the Arts and other resources about opera. What are the demographics of people who attend opera? What are the implications of this demographic for opera companies like the Metropolitan Opera in New York City? What steps has the Met taken to increase its audience? How has technology played a significant role in the efforts to expand the Met audience?

Leadership Role(s): Organize a workshop on opera that relates general information to specific operas being broadcast by live stream by the Met. Go to www.metoperafamily.org to access the annual Met schedule and classroom materials for each performance. Work with a member of the music faculty or someone who is learned about opera to choose a performance to study from the schedule. Who was the composer? Who was the librettist? Who staged notable performances of the work? Who were the notable performers who sang roles in the opera?

If there is no live streaming performance in your area, work with the Met to see if it is possible to have your college included as a Met Live in HD site. Or you may work with a local movie theater to bring the Met Live in HD series to your community. Independent venues such as colleges may submit applications online by filling out the form found on the Met website: www.metoperafamily.org/broadcast/hd_events_current.aspx. Click on the box labeled "Cinema Operators" found on the lower left side of the page.

Leadership Development: Host a workshop with arts and social sciences faculty to develop a pre- and post-questionnaire for Met Live in HD attendees to be sure the questions asked will result in valid and reliable outcomes.

Action: Using what you have learned about opera and Met Live in HD performances, visit classrooms on your college campus and in local high schools to promote the event, and talk about ways attendees can better appreciate the experience. Work with faculty to develop ways the Met Live in HD performance can be used in classrooms on your campus and in local high schools.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter who participated in the Met Live in HD performance
- Students on your college campus
- Students at your local high school
- Faculty on your college campus
- College administrators with whom you can work to determine whether your campus would be an effective Met Live in HD site
- Community members who view the Met Live in HD performance

Reflection: Have attendees complete a pre- and post-questionnaire addressing their attitudes and impressions of opera and the use of technology to deliver what is often seen as an “elite” art form. Discuss together as a chapter what you learned about the arts and the ways technology can help democratize information. How did you grow as scholars and leaders? What would you change if you were to organize the project again?

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Investigate the role that cell phone technology plays in opening communication in developing areas. Search the literature to examine the history of communication needs during your country’s development, discover how these technologies improved communication and the effects they had on social, economic and cultural growth. Investigate the implications of improved communications for developing countries.

Leadership Role(s): Develop an educational forum to present your research to the college and community. Invite additional speakers from among immigrant faculty, students, and citizens of developing countries to share their experiences with the impact of cell phones in their homelands and how this technology has affected life there. Invite representatives from cell phone companies and other organizations that played a role opening these frontiers to share the benefits and constraints of these projects.

Leadership Development: Organize a chapter team to lead this project and a goal-setting workshop to help the team learn how to determine measurable goals, develop a project management plan and implementation timeline, organize committees, and collaborate with community groups, businesses and public safety agencies.

Action: Apply your learning to local underserved populations (women’s and family shelters, elderly, crime victims, disabled, etc.) that need communication access. Find local organizations that collect or recycle cell phones and work with them to provide cell phones to the underserved groups in your area. Have your college serve as a collection point and invite fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter to participate with you.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your college campus
- Fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your campus
- Faculty members on your college campus
- Community cell phone manufacturers and recycling organizations

Reflection: After the project is over, spend some time reflecting on the project impact, what you learned as scholars and leaders and about technology and sustainability. How could you improve the project if you were to continue it or repeat it?

Bibliography

Carr, Nicholas. *The Big Switch: Rewiring the World, From Edison to Google*. 2008.

Carr explores the impending shift that computer utilities will replace personal in-house computers much in the way that electrical utilities replaced onsite power generators in the past. He explains how our lives will center around one planetary World Wide Computer and examines the benefits and disadvantages of this inevitable future.

Eco, Umberto. *Turning Back the Clock: Hot Wars and Media Populism*. 2006.

In this series of essays, novelist and philosopher Umberto Eco looks at media presentations of topics like 9/11, anti-Semitism, European politics, globalization, manners, religion, Harry Potter, and a host of topics. In this translation by Alastair McEwan, Eco challenges notions of privacy and speech, abilities and responsibilities of individuals, groups, and governments with respect to communication, and how ideas and attitudes evolve over time.

Hassan, Robert. *The Information Society*. 2008.

This work provides a valuable resource for understanding the nature of the information society and its impact on globalization. Hassan engages the contemporary debates around the network effect, singling out two processes: commodification and acceleration.

Tapscott, Don. *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation*. 1998.

Tapscott profiles the Net Generation, which is using digital technology to change the way individuals and society interact. This book makes a compelling distinction between the passive medium of television and the explosion of the interactive digital media, sparked by the computer and Internet. The author shows how children empowered by technology are taking the reins from their boomer parents and making inroads into all areas of society, including our education system, government and economy.

Tapscott, Don. *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World*. 2009.

Tapscott takes a look at the Net Generation and how it consumes information. Inspired by a private research study involving surveys of 11,000 young people, Tapscott discovered a remarkably bright community with revolutionary ways of thinking, interacting, working, and socializing. His research suggests how the Net Generation processes information, ways to engage and attract young talent in the workforce, and ways for educators to tap the Net Generation potential.

Wright, Alex. *Glut: Mastering Information through the Ages*. 2007.

This fascinating exploration of the ways humans have collected, organized, and shared information shows how the information age started long before microchips or movable type.

Issue 3: Individual and Community

How does the dissemination of information influence the individual and the community?



Study Questions

1. To what extent does an individual have a right for his/her personal information to remain private, and who is responsible for its protection?
2. How do individuals use information to represent or misrepresent themselves online?
3. How has the democratization of information led to more or less civility, and what role does anonymity play?
4. What impact has increased access to information had on informed debate?
5. With increased access and sharing of information, who owns the rights to what, and how has that changed with time?
6. To what extent should employers be able to prescreen employees by accessing their social networking communities?
7. To what extent should individuals and/or communities have the unfettered ability to disseminate hateful or potentially dangerous ideas?
8. Through the years, how has increased access to information affected our awareness of the world around us or our civic engagement?
9. With today's shared information, is any work ever truly "original," and how can we know?
10. What impact has the democratization of information had on our time management and quality of life?
11. Have social networks engendered new forms of bullying or simply increased the opportunity for an age-old activity?
12. If individuals develop online addictions (pornography, shopping, gambling), should communities be expected to respond and, if so, to which addictions?
13. To what extent do we live our "real" lives versus our "cyber" lives, and who are we in each?
14. In what ways are we more inclined to use information to become more informed and aware or to support our entrenched beliefs and positions?

Honors in Action

SENSORY GARDEN

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Conduct general research on blindness and the democratization of information. What is the percentage of the population that is blind or vision impaired? How do the sight challenged use email, navigate the Internet, etc.? What are the ways different groups experience sensory information? What are the special challenges the vision impaired face regarding the democratization of information? How are they active participants in it? Set up a meeting with honor students at your local school for the blind. As you get to know each other better, begin discussing how the vision-impaired students receive and process information.

Leadership Role(s): Meet with administrators from the school for the blind with your proposal for the sensory garden and to receive final approval to proceed with the garden. Invite members of the local press to the opening of your garden. Share your results with other chapters at your regional Phi Theta Kappa convention and encourage those chapters to develop sensory gardens in their communities.

Leadership Development: Organize a workshop on diversity and working sensitively with blind and vision-impaired students for chapter members.

Action: Plant a "sensory" garden that could be experienced and enjoyed by all. To prepare for planting the garden, visit your local botanical garden with vision-impaired students. Work in teams, with each blind student accompanied by one "blind for a day" blindfolded Phi Theta Kappa member and a second Phi Theta Kappa member serving as a helper for each pair. Ask the blind students to guide the "blind" Phi Theta Kappa members and explain how to "see the garden" through sound, smell, and touch. Based upon your experiences in the botanical garden, plan and plant your own garden. Select garden flowers for their fragrant and tactile qualities. Add a water fountain for aural enhancement, and plant a vegetable garden so that students can use their sense of taste to enjoy the garden.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter
- Faculty from your college campus
- Community members from the school for the blind and local media

Reflection: Work with a faculty member from your local school for the blind to develop a reflection writing exercise for participants from the school and your chapter. Compare experiences and discuss ways everyone grew as scholars and leaders. What would you do in a different way if you were to organize the project again?

THE TRUTHINESS PROJECT

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Organize a research team to investigate the ways in which members of your community access information. What newspapers are most read? Which news broadcasts are number one in terms of viewers in your area? Which radio shows draw the most listeners? What websites are most visited by students on your campus? To what extent do you have access to information from a variety of sources with different interpretations of news and events?

Leadership Role(s): Organize your research team as well as the team that will develop the “truthiness” Academic Forum on campus. Invite faculty members to work with participants to better understand how to analyze sources of information and ask all faculty members to bring their classes to the forum. Meet with your college librarian before the symposium begins to discuss the goals of the session.

Leadership Development: “How do we know what is true?” Have a faculty member and/or research librarian present to conduct a workshop for chapter members and other students who plan to participate in “The Truthiness Project” on how to find and evaluate valid sources.

Action: Organize “The Truthiness Project” on campus. Invite students and fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your campus to participate. Have each project participant partner with a faculty member on campus to draft two statements. One statement for each paper will be demonstrably true, but one will be clearly false. Have each student write two “position papers” using sources found from books and journals in academic libraries and/or from Internet sources. Convene a panel of faculty and students to select the top two students to present their papers. After the top two students present their papers, hold short discussions about the information gleaned from each presentation. What questions do audience members have about the work? Reveal which of the papers supported valid claims and which papers used “truthiness” to support invalid claims. Ask audience members, “How do we know what is true?” and “What is our responsibility as information consumers to seek a variety of sources before formulating our beliefs?” Write a research guide to be placed in your college’s library that will assist students in evaluating sources. Conduct source evaluation workshops in individual classes. Offer information to the college assessment team.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- Faculty on your campus
- Fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter

Reflection: Before students begin work on their position papers, conduct a “pre-survey” to gain information on the audience members’ current understandings of accessing and evaluating academic sources when conducting scholarly research. Conduct a “post-survey” to discover what audience members learned about finding and evaluating sources. Compile the results of your symposium and seek to have them published in an academic education journal. Track the students who attended the symposium to see if their approaches to using sources in academic research and writing have changed.

Bibliography

Bauerlein, Mark. *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future (Or, Don’t Trust Anyone Under 30)*. 2009.

Bauerlein begins by addressing the assumption that the digital age and the “information superhighway” were supposed to revolutionize knowledge as we know it, producing more informed, astute, and engaged citizens. Instead, he argues that during the current information age, young people are more intellectually disengaged, professionally unmotivated, and civically uninterested than ever.

Jacoby, Susan. *The Age of American Unreason: Revised and Updated*. 2009.

Drawing on the work of Richard Hofstadter’s *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (1963), Jacoby skewers what she perceives to be a decidedly anti-intellectual, anti-rational approach to life in modern-day America. She argues that not only is anti-intellectualism accepted, but it is actually encouraged and even celebrated as people who are “just folks” are somehow more authentically American than intellectuals or experts. Jacoby examines the Internet, among other things, as a source of this anti-intellectualism and discusses the consequences of this growing trend.

Klingberg, Torkel. *The Overflowing Brain: Information Overload and the Limits of Working Memory*. 2009.

Klingberg points out that today’s average person is inundated with vastly much more information than members of past generations received; however, physiologically and cognitively, human brains have not changed much since the Stone Age. Klingberg posits that our “Stone-Aged brains” may be reaching their limits to absorb this seemingly limitless amount of information, producing a sense of disconnect among individuals; and he suggests strategies for “exercising” our brains to better meet the challenges of receiving today’s levels of information.

Manjoo, Farhad. *True Enough: Learning to Live in a Post-Fact Society*. 2008.

In the age of eyewitness accounts and instant technological documentation, the truth is more verifiable than ever. However, Manjoo argues that facts are becoming less and less important as people simply interpret events through the lens of previously held beliefs.

Issue 4: Language and Communication

How do language and communication shape information and vice versa?



Macedonian political poster

Study Questions

1. To what extent are the conventions of text messaging and tweeting altering spoken and written language?
2. In what ways has the 24-hour news cycle had an impact on the reliability of information?
3. To what extent do public figures and celebrities have a right to privacy? To what extent does the media have the right to cover them?
4. Why has “spin” become a pervasive part of mass communications? What roles do public relations professionals and publicists play in mass communications?
5. What are the standards and responsibilities of citizen journalists and the media outlets that use their material?
6. Why have “fake” and satirical news gained popularity?
7. To what extent has mass communications increased or decreased literacy in the world?
8. How has media affected language and culture around the world?
9. How can newspapers remain relevant in a digital world?
10. What role does the author’s anonymity play in the context of discussion boards and blogs?
11. To what extent do appearances on YouTube and reality television lead to lasting careers?
12. How and why has technology such as email and texting affected conversation arts, journaling, and formal letter writing and why does that have an impact?

Honors in Action

IT’S ALL GREEK TO ME

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Languages are a natural part of cultures and typically reflect the realities and needs of their host culture. With exploration, colonization, and modernization and technology, some languages have begun to disappear. Some groups are making concerted efforts to preserve languages and to promote their heritage (i.e. “Cajun” French, Gaelic languages, transcribing verbal languages to written formats, etc.). Likewise, certain technologies that were once cutting edge and then the norm for communication are disappearing—reel-to-reel tape, celluloid films, punch cards, early floppy discs, photographs, paper tapes, amateur radio, analog systems, and so on. As a chapter, study the history of communication and storage forms. What were the technological advances of previous years? Which of these technologies are no longer used, and which are virtually impossible to find?

Leadership Role(s): Determine your leadership team for the project. What limitations are there in putting together a display or lecture series? Which groups and individuals can be invited to participate in the project? Determine the preferred venue for presenting your research and do so. Invite local organizations, historical groups, amateur radio relay leagues, local schools and the like to participate in the presentation.

Leadership Development: Organize a workshop on speaking with community members and groups. Invite a speech/communications faculty member to work with members to hone their communication skills.

Action: Invite retirees and others who worked with these earlier technologies to discuss how they were used and the impact these technologies had at their time. Search local shops, museums, and collections for examples of these lost or rare mediums. As a chapter, prepare a plan for presenting information on the history of these communication mediums. As a part of the project, look at questions of how to best present these items.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- Community members from a variety of organizations

Reflection: What were the successes of your project? What were the challenges? Make plans for future events based on the ways in which you have grown as scholars and leaders who serve your community.

GENERATIONS

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Every generation has its stories, and as the populations age, the number of these stories declines. As a chapter, select a group from whom you'd like to chronicle (for example, men and women who served during the Korean War, former faculty at your college, faculty preparing to retire, local political or civic figures, etc.). Look to family members, friends, local people in the community, veterans groups, retiree groups, local care homes, and so on who would agree to speak with you. In what ways has language usage changed over time? How does language affect the way stories are communicated? What are the non-verbal ways generations communicate? What stories and themes transcend generations?

Leadership Role(s): Identify local or regional groups who may be working on similar programs, or groups who may be interested in sponsoring the project or working with your team. Prepare a plan to present the collected information, inviting the participants to be a part of a seminar series. Identify other organizations at your college who might be interested in working with you on the project.

Leadership Development: Invite a speech/communications faculty member to help members learn to effectively articulate a vision and a historian to conduct a workshop for members in creating oral histories.

Action: Work with a faculty member or local history group to develop an effective oral history project. Determine which types of media to use, how the collected information will be stored, presented, and displayed (self-published booklet, video display, airing on local television or radio programs, etc.), and who will have future access to the materials. This project may include workshops on public presentation, ethical responsibilities to the interviewees, their families, and to the community, archival work, copyright, fundraising to offset costs, and similar topics.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Faculty on your campus
- Community members willing to share their stories for your oral history project

Reflection: Reflect on the project's successes, problem areas and solutions, and impact to refine potential future collections. What have you learned about other generations? What do you hope other generations learned about you?

Bibliography

Bohannon, Laura. *Shakespeare in the Bush*. 1966.

A classic in anthropology and communication studies, this piece by anthropologist Laura Bohannon discusses her attempts to discuss Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with a group of Tiv elders during her fieldwork in West Africa. For many, this piece opens the dialogue on language and meaning. What we think we mean and how we communicate those meanings are not universally consistent, and are good starting points for discussions on language and cross-cultural communication.

Curtis, Drew. *It's Not News, It's Fark: How Mass Media Tries to Pass Off Crap As News*. 2007.

FARK website founder and editor Drew Curtis takes a critical look at news media in the 21st century, with a special focus on how 24/7 coverage has watered down content. In a time when anyone can be a journalist, and when news channels are on continuously, who decides what is important and what is not?

Glassner, Barry. *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things*. 2010.

Do we really live in more dangerous times? In the updated revision of this text (originally released in 2000), sociologist Barry Glassner looks at perceptions of fear endemic in many groups, particularly in America since 9/11. Glassner discusses the agencies and agents of fear and their manipulations of information, and the notion that it is our perceptions that have changed, not the actual levels of threat.

Pinker, Steven. *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*. 1993.

In this solid discussion of how we create language and grammars, Pinker discusses how language development is based on instinct. At each level, he notes, we are "experts" in our language development and rules. Pinker also discusses how language development plays a role in the varying ways in which cultures view the world and plays a part in cultural and technological development. Pinker also discusses how so-called "language experts" typically grossly underestimate the language skills and prowess of the average individual.

Ravitch, Diane. *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn*. 2004.

A noted educator and former Assistant Secretary of Education, Diane Ravitch examines the forces and groups who determine what is and what is not appropriate for students in our public and private schools. Ravitch notes "that educational materials are now governed by an intricate set of rules to screen out language and topics that might be considered controversial or offensive." Her review of how these governing rules came about and the groups that produced them offers an important insight into how communication can be, and is, manipulated to produce unclear or inaccurate presentations, and how this impacts society as a whole.

Issue 5: Education

What is the relationship between information and education?



Study Questions

1. How do educators decide what to teach and how to teach it?
2. Is it more important to know, or to know where to look?
3. How do educators prepare students for jobs that don't yet exist?
4. What have we learned about learning and learning styles that has changed education?
5. To what extent do we all have the potential to be experts now?
6. It has been said that the master's degree is the new bachelor's degree and the associate degree is the new high school diploma. Will this trend continue in the current information age – why or why not?
7. What is gained and what is lost in online education?
8. As technological literacy becomes more important in education, who is left behind? What are the ramifications?
9. In what ways can personal technology devices be tools of education rather than distractions? Does technology change the boundaries between students and teachers?
10. To what extent has the expansion of public education in the world been the result of the democratization of information?
11. What is the history of “academic freedom” and how does it differ around the world?
12. How has the democratization of information increased or decreased the level of discourse in scholarly debates?
13. In the information age, to what extent is it realistic to define a “core curriculum”?
14. To what extent is it a good use of resources for scholars to study arguably obsolete subject matter?

Honors in Action

ONE HUNDRED POINTS OF HITES

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): How do community colleges increase access to information? How, when, and why were community colleges established? What is the history of community colleges in your state? What is the history of your community college? What does it cost to attend your college for a year? Investigate the scholarships available to you and fellow chapter members who plan to continue taking community college courses. What scholarships does Phi Theta Kappa have for members? How are each of these things communicated to your student body and fellow Phi Theta Kappa members?

Leadership Role(s): Work with college administrators to gain permission to place a copy of your Hites Booklet in the college president's office and in the admissions office. Send copies of the booklet to your local newspaper and arrange a meeting with your state representative and senator to share the booklet with them to help them learn more about the impact your community college has had on a wide variety of students.

Leadership Development: Invite your college president to a meeting to help members learn ways to effectively communicate with college administrators and public officials.

Action: Since the Hites Scholarship Fund will support scholarships for community college students, raise funds for the Hites Foundation and donate \$1.00 for each member inducted into your chapter this year. To determine the impact your community college has had on students, interview single parents, adults returning to school, traditional and online students, and GED students to gain unique perspectives on how the community college has made a difference in the lives of students. From these interviews, pull out one especially strong quotation from each interviewed student and place the quotes on your “Hites Page.” With the permission of the interviewees, compile a “Hites Booklet” that showcases each student's photograph and quotation. Have the pages show that a donation has been made to the Hites Scholarship Fund in the interviewee's name. Finally, create a “One Hundred Points of Hites” kit to give out to other chapters.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your college campus
- Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter
- Community members who are former community college students
- College administrators
- State political leaders

Reflection: Discuss what you learned about community colleges and their role in the democratization of information. How did you grow as scholars, leaders, and community activists? Share what you have learned with other chapters, so they can replicate and expand on it according to the chapter's needs.

THE BANNED BOOK CLUB

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Research the history of book censorship. How often are books challenged? On what basis are they usually challenged? Why do challengers want the books removed from school reading lists ... classrooms ... libraries? How do various communities respond to calls for censorship? Host a panel discussion on censorship at your campus. Invite individuals such as authors, publishers, and school administrators to serve on the panel. Other participants could include school board members, parents, or students. Encourage an honest discussion surrounding issues of censorship, working hard to ensure that, in your setting, divergent voices are heard.

Leadership Role(s): Meet with your college president, the chair of your local school board, or your mayor and discuss your concerns regarding censorship. Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper or to your state representatives expressing your opposition to censorship.

Leadership Development: Conduct a workshop on developing a personal philosophy of leadership. Use what you have learned to guide your exploration of the impact censorship has on the democratization of information.

Action: Organize a book club on your campus. The club's major rule will be that all of the books on the club's list will have appeared on American Library Association's Top 100 List of Banned Books. Read one banned book every month and meet to discuss the text. Why was the book challenged? Do your group members agree or disagree with the challenge to the book? Is it ever appropriate for a book to be censored in one setting but supported in another? Is there a difference between removing a book from a reading list versus a library?

Sponsor a "Read-In" where students, faculty members, and community members will gather and read "objectionable" passages from banned books. Discuss why the passages were deemed by some to be objectionable and how the passages could have merit.

Sponsor a "Self-Censored" day when students will refuse to speak for the entire day to show solidarity with censored artists. (Students could even consider taping their mouths shut for visual effect.) After the "Self-Censored" day, record your experiences and share them through your chapter's website or blog.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- College administrators on your campus
- Local public officials

Reflection: Discuss what you learned about censorship and how it affects your lives as students and community activists. What were the challenges you faced while working on the various aspects of your project? How did you overcome those challenges? How did you grow as scholars and leaders?

Bibliography

Battles, Matthew. *Library: An Unquiet History*. 2003.

Battles explores how libraries have accumulated, preserved, shaped, inspired, and obliterated knowledge. The author reveals how the library has been the battleground of competing notions of what books mean to us and how throughout its many changes, the library has served two contradictory impulses: the urge to exalt canons of literature – to secure and worship the best and most beautiful words – and the desire to contain and control all forms of human knowledge.

Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. 1987.

Bloom discusses concerns that Americans have become too narrow in their focus and worldview. As higher education moved toward increased specialization in the 20th century, Americans were ill-served. He believes every student should read the works of the great philosophers who asked the question, "What is man?" in preparation for living philosophical lives.

Gruwell, Erin. *Teach With Your Heart: Lessons I Learned From the Freedom Writers*. 2008.

Gruwell updates her work with Long Beach, California, students and discusses the lessons she learned about America's educational system and about life while working with the Freedom Writers.

Ravitch, Diane. *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn*. 2003.

Ravitch offers an analysis of the causes of censorship. She suggests solutions for ending it, which will improve the quality of books for students.

Ravitch, Diane. *Left Back: A Century of Battles over School Reform*. 2000.

Ravitch describes the ongoing battle of ideas and explains why school reform has so often disappointed. She recounts efforts that diminished the schools' ability to provide a high-quality education for all children.

Issue 6: Economy and Business

What roles does information play in business and economics?



Study Questions

1. Much of the information on the Internet appears to be free. Who is making money and how are they making it?
2. Information technology, such as computer-aided manufacturing, has increased productivity and automated many job functions. How does this affect under-employment, job security and income?
3. How have global marketing and the importation of inexpensive goods affected our economy?
4. Moore's Law states that computer capacity doubles every two years. What effect does this have for obsolescence of equipment?
5. How has increased access to information affected global markets? How have global markets affected local economies?
6. What entrepreneurial opportunities have arisen as a result of the democratization of information?
7. What effect did access to information have on the worldwide financial institutions?
8. Glocalization is a term that means "thinking globally while acting locally." What does the democratization of information have to do with this effort?
9. The ability to buy and sell directly through the Internet has eliminated the "middle man." What businesses have been affected both positively and negatively?
10. One proposed method of making healthcare more affordable is the centralization of medical information. How might this be accomplished and what might be involved? What are the trade-offs with this information being centralized and available to third parties?
11. What type of information is collected about us as we transact business over the Internet?
12. What is meant by a "secure site," and how is information kept secure?
13. Some futurists say the career for which you are studying may not exist when you are ready to enter it. How does this affect career choice and preparation?
14. We are constantly presented with Internet marketing and advertising. Does this make us more likely to buy or does it desensitize us to advertising's appeals?

Honors in Action

WHERE DO YOU WEAR?

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): The United States has access to an abundance of inexpensive clothing. It is inexpensive because it is produced in factories in developing countries where workers are paid low wages and frequently do not have the same working conditions and employment protections that we enjoy in the United States. Research the clothing market and gather information about factories in developing nations. What is the cost of manufacturing clothing compared to the retail cost? What is the average wage of third world factory workers? Trace the making of a garment from the origination of its material to the final distribution channel. Consider the role retail outlets such as Wal-Mart, Target, Costco, and others play in the importation of clothing made overseas. Invite an economics professor to give a presentation on the implications of global markets for clothing to students and community members.

Leadership Role(s): Discuss the development of "Where do you Wear" Day with your college administration and ask their advice on making it an effective all-campus activity. Work with faculty to allow faculty members to make announcements at the beginning of classes on campus to encourage widespread student support. Share what you have learned with fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter and encourage them to replicate "Where do you Wear" Day on their campuses.

Leadership Development: Organize a workshop on understanding ethical leadership. Focus particularly on how ethical leadership can inform decisions about what clothing to wear and how to support just economies at home and abroad.

Action: Organize a "Where do you Wear" Day on campus. Create posters and signs for display around campus on "Where do you Wear" Day. Use the information about where clothing is made garnered from your research for your posters. Encourage students to investigate where their clothing was made. Ask students to use push pins to identify on a map the nations where their clothing was made. At locations around campus, have chapter members write sticker labels with the names of the countries where students' clothing was manufactured and place them on each article of clothing or accessory for which the country of origin can be determined.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your college campus
- Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter
- Faculty members and administrators on your campus
- Local retailers

Reflection: Develop an evaluation form to see what students who participated in “Where do you Wear” Day learned about global clothing markets. How did what they learned affect their clothing choices? Consider how your research and actions in the community have informed your choices about the clothing you buy. What did you learn about global markets? What did you learn about making ethical leadership decisions? How have you grown as scholars and leaders?

LOCAL MARKETS

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Examine the materials created by The Institute for Local Self Reliance to determine the extent to which buying locally affects the economy and local businesses. How does choosing to shop at local businesses benefit your community’s economy? What are the benefits of shopping at chain stores? What are the hidden costs of opting for chain stores?

Leadership Role(s): Work with college administrators to identify community businesses to survey about local products and to determine to what extent your college can use locally grown and locally available items. Work with faculty to construct a valid and reliable survey, consider distribution methods, and analyze survey data. Work with chapter members to determine how you can become more informed shoppers.

Leadership Development: Develop a workshop in which chapter members use the Intergroup Model Building: A LEGO Creature exercise to create a strong team. Use what you learn in the workshop to help you more effectively work as a team on your research and Honors in Action activity.

Action: Survey the companies in and around your community who offer their products for local sale. Compile this information and make it available to the community. Work with graphic design students to design a publication detailing the buy-local opportunities, including store locations and hours of operation. Invite companies listed to donate a portion of the cost of copying the publication for distribution. On your own campus, inquire whether the college food service uses local sources for produce and dairy products that may be available. If not, advocate with food service and college administrators for using local products on campus.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- College administrators
- Local business leaders

Reflection: What did you learn about the consequences of your shopping choices? To what extent is there a need to turn the tide of chain retail expansion and rebuild our local economies? How did you grow as scholars and community leaders? What lessons will you take

from this experience to utilize in developing other Honors in Action activities?

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Issue 7: Government and Public Policy

How does information affect governments and public policy?



Dallas, Texas, USA, a protest at City Hall, April 15, 2009

Study Questions

1. How does information contribute to civilization building?
2. What factors contribute to transparency in governmental decision making? To what extent is an open society a prerequisite for transparent governance?
3. How has access to information affected formal political organizations versus grassroots political organizations?
4. How much information does a government have the need to collect, keep, and track on private individuals and businesses and for what reasons or purposes?
5. Does the public have a right to know everything about public figures?
6. Does the world need an “Information Clearinghouse” to counter such things as terrorist threats or information warfare?
7. How has information driven regime changes around the world?
8. How has access to information engaged people in governing processes? Does information overload prevent effective participation in governance?
9. What’s the difference between “spin” and misinformation or propaganda? How are the parameters set for public figures regarding responsible dissemination of information?
10. How is the balance between civil liberties and state interests determined?
11. When is it okay to censor information? What are the legal arguments for and against censorship? What are the ramifications of censorship for citizens and for a government? When is access to information considered harmful and who decides?
12. To what extent should governments assist victims of identity theft if they have been careless?
13. Can policies be too “data-driven”?

Honors in Action

SMART ENERGY USE

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Smart meters are energy meters that provide more information than traditional meters. Since deregulation of the electrical industry, government regulators have been looking for ways to make energy use match energy generation. The smart meter is a first attempt to give consumers some ability to address that situation. Many power companies are installing meters or have plans to do so. How will the installation of these meters affect the information about our energy use available to business and local governments?

Leadership Role(s): Work with college administrators and public utilities officials to determine the ways you can best reach members of your college and community to share what you learn about smart meters.

Leadership Development: Work with your chapter advisors to consider “A Question of Leadership: What Can Leaders Do to Avoid Groupthink” from Phi Theta Kappa’s *Leadership Development Studies: A Humanities Approach*. Discuss what you have learned about thinking creatively and utilize the skills you develop from your workshop as you develop your Smart Energy Use project.

Action: Determine the extent to which smart meters are present in your community. If they are not, organize an energy forum and invite a representative of the local power provider to address your campus. If from your research you determine there is an opportunity for influencing the decision, research smart meter technology and cost and make a determination if it is economically feasible to advocate for wide-scale installation in your community.

If meters are in place, become familiar with the type of information the meters provide and develop materials to supplement power company brochures or rewrite them for a different audience. If you have a large Latino population, join forces with the Hispanic Students Club or Spanish classes on your campus to translate information for that community. If there is no near-term plan for smart meters to be installed in your community, research and present information on energy-saving practices that will fit easily into a family’s lifestyle or a business’s routine with a minimum of adjustment.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- Community members and utility company officials

Reflection: Organize a forum for chapter members and students on your campus to discuss the ways in which learning more about smart meters has changed the way you view and use energy on a daily basis. What challenges did you face when talking to people about smart meters? How did you grow as scholars and leaders? Where will you go from here with your research and community action?

WHO MIGHT BE BEING YOU?

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Explore the significance of identity theft and plan an informational talk on campus. Determine the logistics—when, where, who? Develop a timeline. What all needs to be done before hosting the event? Research identity theft—how prevalent is it, how at risk are we, what is the economic impact? What is the penalty for those who steal other people’s identities? What role does government play in the prosecution of these crimes? Research ways to keep your personal information more secure, including the information that you put on social networking sites. How is your personal information kept secure on campus, online, and by various institutions with whom you have working relationships? How secure is this information really? By what means can our personal information be hijacked and used for fraud? What information is the most valuable to criminals? With whom on campus could you meet to discuss this topic and campus cyber security?

Leadership Role(s): Meet with local banking officials to discuss their procedures and safeguards. Plan for these meetings by determining what questions you should ask. What information are you seeking? Meet with the manager of a local store to discuss how identity theft affects that business and, in turn, its customers. Contact the local police department to determine who is in charge of identity theft crimes and meet with him or her to discuss these issues. How common is this crime in your area? What is the usual scenario? If you are a victim of identity theft, how much will it likely cost you to clear your record? What steps must you take? Out of the experts with whom you have met, determine whom to invite to be your speaker. What information will you use to determine who would be the most effective speaker?

Leadership Development: Organize a workshop on creating a leadership journal in which you will keep a matrix and regular schedule for monitoring personal information. Share what you learn as you develop your Honors in Action project.

Action: Design an informational flier for your campus and have an expert check it for accuracy. Distribute your flier at the discussion. Provide copies to the people with whom you met so they may also distribute your flier at their locations. Ask your college administrators if the information can be posted to the college website. Evaluate your own situation. Are you doing all that you can to avoid identity theft? Encourage members to check their credit reports every six months to check for fraud. Organize a workshop at a regional Phi Theta Kappa conference to share what you have learned about identity theft with fellow members.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- Members of Phi Theta Kappa beyond your chapter
- College administrators
- Community officials

Reflection: What did you learn about the power and peril of the democratization of information? Discuss what you have learned about protecting your documents and personal information. Share the personal plans you have developed to safeguard your identity.

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H1N1, terrorist attacks, looming financial meltdowns, and who knows what else? In a world with so many alleged dangers, how do we make sense of what is and what is not a threat? In this solid companion piece to Barry Glassner’s *The Culture of Fear*, Siegel looks at and deconstructs the culture of fear and the ramifications involved.

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Shirky discusses the ways in which social networking, blogs, and other new forms of mass media are changing the way people organize themselves politically. He explores the role of the tools used to organize people without formal organization, the success of those tools in bringing people together, and the perils and promise inherent in such methods of organization.

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Wright examines the successes and failures of Islamic militants in the post-World War II era. He discusses the communication failures and lack of communication between agencies that led to 9/11 despite sloppiness on the part of Al Qaeda and its operatives.

Issue 8: The Arts

How do the arts convey information?



Musicians in LaBoca, Argentina

Study Questions

1. How are the arts used as a record of culture and history?
2. Who has traditionally had access to the arts and how has that changed?
3. How are the arts democratized?
4. How do traditional crafts (pottery, quilting, tapestry) transfer information through generations?
5. Technology has provided more people with the means to create art. How has this changed the type of art produced and information communicated?
6. Social networking tools have provided the means for artists to collaborate across time and distance. What implications does this have for the future of art forms?
7. Musicians and authors can now self-produce, self-publish, and self-distribute their work. How does this affect access to more and varied music and literature?
8. How does live streaming of the Metropolitan Opera's performances to local theaters convey information about art and culture? In what ways is it different to view a performance via technology, rather than in person?
9. How do online museum collections increase access to information about artists and their works?
10. Controversial artists' exhibits, such as Robert Mapplethorpe's "The Perfect Moment," have caused politicians to call for cutting funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. How does this relate to the democratization of information? When is this censorship and when is this legitimate public/political response?
11. Netflix, iTunes, on-demand video, and Sirius Radio have replaced the traditional distribution of entertainment arts and made them more accessible, yet we must purchase new equipment for access. Has this made entertainment art more or less accessible?
12. How has the phenomenon of "Famous for Being Famous" altered our concept of celebrity as it relates to the entertainment arts?
13. *American Idol* has provided a new path to music-artist success. Does this democratize music or diminish it?

Honors in Action

THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF INSTRUMENTATION

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): To what extent is music an important part of a young person's education? How do music studies affect the way students perform in their other classes? What is the relationship between music studies and excellence in mathematics? How many schools in your community have regular music education classes? Are there programs for students who would like to take music lessons but cannot afford to rent or own instruments?

Leadership Role(s): Once you have completed your research and determined a need, promote the collection of musical instruments and locate and gain necessary permission from your college administrators for collection sites and times. Leaders learn how to recognize those who support them. Design and print t-shirts acknowledging those who gave time and resources. Provide them to the instrument donors. Working with band directors, organize a concert for which students perform using the instruments collected and distributed by your chapter. Attend and invite instrument donors to attend with you.

Leadership Development: Organize a workshop on "Leading by Serving." Use the selections on Harriet Tubman and becoming a servant leader from Phi Theta Kappa's *Leadership Development Studies: A Humanities Approach* to help you enhance your skills as community leaders.

Action: Determine the level of funding and the amount of need for music in your local school system. Create a used-instrument recycling program and provide instruments to aspiring young musicians who cannot otherwise afford them. Many of these instruments will need to be cleaned, repaired, or refurbished. Identify people who are willing to do this work at reduced or no cost. After the instruments have been collected and made ready for distribution, work with school band directors to determine an appropriate method for getting the instruments to the students who most need them.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Middle school and high school students, teachers, and administrators
- Students and faculty on your campus

Reflection: How did learning more about being a servant leader affect your experience working to gather information and instruments to help students in your community afford the tools necessary to study music? How did you turn what you learned into action? How did you grow as scholars and leaders? How can other Phi Theta Kappa chapters replicate your project in their communities?

SUPPORTING THE ARTS

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): A study from the University of California at Los Angeles found a direct correlation between students with high arts involvement and performance on standardized achievement tests. In times of economic crisis, to what extent is public funding for the arts cut in your community? If funding for the arts is cut, how does it affect arts education? To what extent are there alternative programs in your community where students can gain valuable information about and training in the arts? What are the model programs in other communities worldwide that may be useful in your own community?

Leadership Role(s): Survey performing arts organizations in your area to determine their need for assistance with maintaining or increasing attendance and public support. Identify one or two organizations your chapter is interested in supporting.

Leadership Development: Conduct a workshop on setting measurable goals, focusing on fundraising and working with your student activities administrators and student government association as well as arts organizations in your community.

Action: Find the annual schedule of the arts organizations you have decided to support, and choose two performances for support and study. Work with the student activities director and student government association on your campus to secure funds for a block of tickets for students to attend the selected performances. Study the performance piece and become familiar with aspects of the work, its creator, its history, and social significance. Use this knowledge to promote the event across your campus. Use your understanding of the work to organize a discussion with fellow students to help them get the most out of their experience. Arrange for performers to meet with your group to discuss the work after the performance. Support the company by volunteering as ambassadors or ushers for the performance or the season.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- Student activities administrators
- Arts organizations administrators

Reflection: Ask participants to complete pre- and post-performance questionnaires. Work with a statistics professor or institutional researcher to develop this assessment questionnaire. What did members and students on campus experience by studying and attending performances? How and why do the arts help democratize information?

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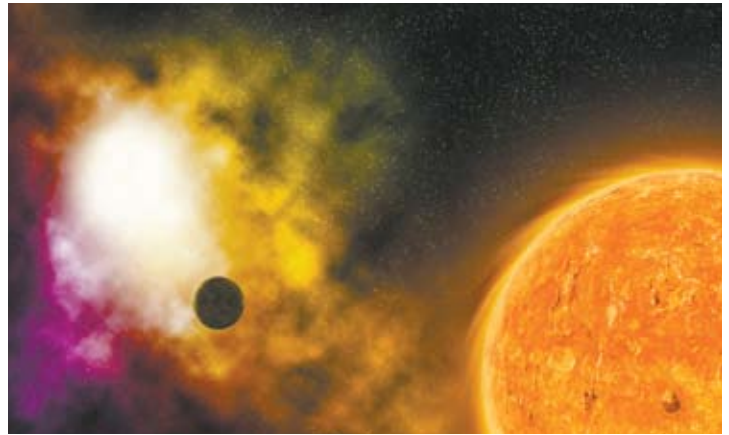
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Issue 9: Science

What are the connections between the scientific process and information?



A space nebula and the sun

Study Questions

1. How has the increased access to information altered our everyday understanding of science?
2. What types of illness or new maladies may result from increased time spent using personal technology?
3. What role does increased access to information play in empowering us to live healthier lifestyles or to gain better quality medical care?
4. Some developing countries accept electronic waste and then hire locals to dismantle it for the recycling market, exposing them to dangerous chemicals. Who should be responsible for the health and environmental impact of such practices?
5. What impact has the information gained from major scientific endeavors, such as the Human Genome Project, had on our understanding of who we are?
6. In what ways can the pursuit of pure science merely to gain knowledge improve the human condition?
7. Given the brain's plasticity, what impact do changes in the methods by which we gain information alter the way we think, learn and respond?
8. In what ways are greater scientific knowledge and technology blurring the line between man and machine?
9. As our acquisition of scientific information increases, we gain the capability to do previously impossible feats, such as human cloning. Does the fact that we can mean that we should? Who should make those decisions, and can the field of bioethics keep pace with scientific advances?
10. With the explosion of information resources that have a "scientific" feel or sound, how do we distinguish valid science from pseudoscience or myth?
11. Based on the scientific method of inquiry, hypotheses cannot be proved to be correct but can be proved incorrect. Why is that statement true, and how has increased information through the years led to changes in our scientific beliefs?
12. How do new discoveries in neurological sciences apply to the development of artificial intelligence?
13. How might the development of artificial intelligence increase our acquisition and analysis of information?
14. How has neurobiological research influenced our understanding of learning disorders?

Honors in Action

INFLUENZA

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Each year, we witness a worldwide outbreak of the influenza, which comes in many strains, but in 2009, the world was rocked by a strain called H1N1. This strain was so significant that it garnered major media attention, and the world braced itself for a highly lethal flu outbreak. Explore the epidemiology of influenza. Begin by gaining an understanding of what influenza is and is not. Research the pattern of the annual flu outbreaks. What makes H1N1 more significant than the usual annual flu strains (or is it)? What does it mean for a disease to be given pandemic status? If H1N1 began as swine flu, why are humans concerned, and what role does genetics play in this potential threat? How is influenza spread? Research the development of flu vaccines. We have flu shots each year—why are they sometimes effective and sometimes not, and why do we need a new one for H1N1? Explore the media coverage of the origins of the H1N1 strain and other potential worldwide threats, such as SARS. How has the media coverage affected public response? Where can one go for reliable information during a major health crisis? Does our current ability to access information help or hinder our ability to recognize serious threats?

Leadership Role(s): Talk to local health care experts (epidemiologists, public health department officials) and discover what action plan your community has in place for handling a major disease outbreak. What information do you need from them? How will you use that information? Talk to your college administration. Who is responsible for your college's action plan for such events, and what is that plan? Are students and employees aware of the plan? Are flu vaccines easily accessible for the college and community?

Leadership Development: As a chapter, read "Enlist Others: Attracting People to Common Purposes" in *Leadership Development Studies: A Humanities Approach*. Invite an Allied Health or a nursing faculty member to facilitate a discussion about the lessons you learned from reading the article and the ways you can use the information to develop your influenza project.

Action: Each year, there will be a cold and flu season. What steps can be taken to minimize the spread of any flu strain? What does your college

do? Identify appropriate partners on campus to increase awareness. Launch an informational poster campaign about influenza and its prevention. Research the efficacy of different types of hand sanitizers and choose the best one, then place hand sanitizer stations around campus. What resources will be needed, and where will you get them? Bring speakers to campus to discuss the facts and myths about influenza and H1N1. Whom will you select for your speaker, and why? Bring a flu vaccination program to campus. With whom would you work towards this goal, and what logistical concerns do you have to address? Develop a timeline. How will you promote the event, what will it cost, and who will be eligible? Share what you learn with fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter by developing an educational forum and presenting your findings at a regional conference.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- College administrators on your campus
- Community health officials

Reflection: What did you learn about working with chapter, college, and community members about articulating your vision of sharing vital information about ways to protect your health? How will you take what you learned about influenza and replicate your research methods to monitor and share information about other health issues? To what extent can the democratization of information help stem pandemics?

STEM CELL RESEARCH: THE ANSWER TO ERADICATION OF DISEASE OR MISGUIDED USE OF FUNDS?

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): As the global population increases and healthcare costs rise, cures for human diseases may be found through the use of stem cells. Stem cell research as a means of finding cures for human disease is a highly charged issue with significant implications. This subject is one associated with accurate information and misinformation that people need to understand in order to make informed decisions about legislation and public policy. Much of the debate centers around the suitability of embryonic and adult stem cells in curing disease and the bioethics of using them. Investigate the biology of stem cells and use your research as the basis for examining bioethical issues associated with this matter: moral, social and religious.

Leadership Role(s): Work with faculty and administrators on your campus to organize your forum on stem cell research. Work with statistics faculty to develop a valid and reliable survey which you will use to gather information about the perception of students on your campus about stem cell research.

Leadership Development: Invite a communications faculty member to conduct a workshop on how to effectively facilitate a discussion on a controversial topic and allow for the substantive contributions of people with varied viewpoints.

Action: Conduct a college survey to determine student understanding of stem cell research and perceptions on what others think about these issues and their connection to the democratization of information. Compare perception with individual understanding and publish the

research in your college or local newspaper. Use your scholarship to host a public forum on the topic and include bioethicists, theologians, geneticists, physicians, and citizens who have diseases that have been helped by stem cell research or might be helped by it. Provide opportunities for attendees to lobby local, state and federal politicians regardless of their viewpoints.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- Faculty members and administrators on your campus
- Medical personnel, theologians, and medical researchers in your community
- Fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter

Reflection: Share your survey findings with fellow Phi Theta Kappa members at a regional convention. Survey members and compare the results of those surveys with the general student population of your campus. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are the results different? How have you grown as scholars and leaders from your investigation of stem cell research and from the organization of your Honors in Action project?

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This classic is widely credited with launching the environmental movement. Carson documents the damaging effects of pesticides on the environment, especially on birds by thinning their eggshells, believed to have almost led to the extinction of our national symbol, the Bald Eagle. She also indicts the chemical industry for their campaigns of misinformation and the U. S. government for its too-ready acceptance of that information.

Mindell, David A. *Digital Apollo*. 2008.

This book explores the relationship between the astronauts and the automated technology that led to six Apollo moon landings, and considers the implications for our futures, whenever human roles are threatened by automation—man vs. machine.

Pollan, Michael. *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. 2009.

Scientific advances have revolutionized agribusiness and the food industry. But what impact have the technological advances had on the nutritional value of what we eat and on our overall health?

Powers, Richard. *Generosity: An Enhancement*. 2009.

In this novel, a perpetually happy student is believed to possess a rare euphoric trait called hyperthymia. She falls into the hands of a charismatic entrepreneur and his genetics lab, which is intent on developing a programmable genome that regulates one's sense of well-being. The book asks the questions, "If happiness genes are discovered, who will own the patent?" and "What are the implications to our species if we develop programmable genomes?"

Issue 10: History and The Future

How has the sharing of information evolved and what might be its future?



Mayan pyramid in Mexico

Study Questions

1. How has the exchange of information affected the development of cultures and civilizations? How has the evolution of information changed the world?
2. How have events like the Agricultural, Industrial, and Information Revolutions shaped our information systems? (Consider cave art, alphabets, manuscripts and carvings, movable type, telegraph, telephone, etc.)
3. How does information affect our understanding of history?
4. How do we define “information age?” What are some of the key information ages of history?
5. How will the growth of technological innovation be perceived by future generations?
6. How many of the predictions of science fiction and the entertainment industry have come true? How do they continue to shape our view of the future?
7. How can studying past and current events prepare us for the future?
8. How has access to information changed language and communication styles or venues?
9. How is a “connection to our past” enhanced and shaped by access to information (return to vinyl records, genealogy, scrapbooking, etc., the so-called “lost arts”)?
10. How have advances in information technology changed historical interpretation?
11. What types and formats of information sharing have we lost or are losing?
12. What is the Information Revolution, and how are we learning from/using the new information and information formats created?
13. What does the future hold?

Honors in Action

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Research how information was shared and gained in the early 1960s. What sources of information do you use in your daily lives today that were not available then? How would going without them affect your daily existence now? Invite speakers who recall that era to discuss how they got by without today’s access to information. Consider what types of information technology that you use today that will be obsolete in the next decade. Research the availability of this technology in your area. Who lacks access? Plan a community electronics redistribution drive. Does your community have a recycling program? If so, meet with its coordinator to discuss the logistics. Prepare for the meeting through research and determining what information you want to gain from the meeting. Plan a timeline. With whom will you need to work? Where will it be held? How and who will delete personal information from the items before they are redistributed? Who will get them? Will they be able to use them? What will become of any unusable items? Keep records of how many items you take in and how many you redistribute. Report your results on campus and to Phi Theta Kappa Headquarters.

Leadership Role(s): Explore the feasibility of sponsoring this “technology blackout.” How long will it last? Is there any way members who are in online courses can participate and still fulfill requirements of their classes? Are there any essential functions that your members might need to complete during the period that would require the use of modern means and, if so, how can they plan around them? Who in your life needs to know in advance of your intent? How will the chapter monitor participation and compliance?

Leadership Development: Invite a historian to conduct a workshop about historical methodology and the ways students can learn about their own lives and about the future from studying history. Share what you learn with students who will join your Honors in Action project and were not able to participate in the workshop.

Action: Organize your chapter to conduct a trip back in time by going without accessing or sharing information through any means that would not have been available in the early ‘60s. Invite other organizations and individuals to join you. During the week, have participants keep a journal

about their experiences. How does it affect their normal functioning in the world? What impact does it have on their interpersonal communications? Did they feel as connected to others or less so, and in what ways? How aware were they of what was happening in the world? What tasks could they not do? Challenge fellow members of Phi Theta Kappa beyond your chapter to join you in this technology blackout. Replicate the technology with middle school students in your community. In what ways did the middle school students react to the exercise that were similar to and different from the reactions of college students?

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- Fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter
- Middle school students

Reflection: Have participants type synopses of their reactions to the week and submit them, then publish them on a chapter website, school publication, or local newspaper. Host a discussion on campus about your “Back to the Future” project. Decorate with a 1960s theme. Discuss what ways of gaining and sharing information are essential in your daily life. What were your reactions and feelings? How significant was the loss of your cell phone or computer? How is our ability to gain and share information different today, and what impact does this have on our quality of life?

SCIENCE FICTION

Investigation of the Honors Study Topic (Research): Science fiction and popular entertainment have offered their views of “The Future” for decades. Each group has built its own particular reality, with descriptions and displays of technology, opinions on culture and society, and variations on the future of humanity. At a series of chapter meetings, watch old episodes of “Star Trek” or early 1940s and 1950s sci-fi films. Discuss how the future is portrayed in each. What types of technology and societies did they predict we would have? How is leadership presented? What lessons are inherent in these presentations? Invite faculty members who are scholars in science fiction to discuss how the view of the future has evolved.

Leadership Role(s): Contact local engineering schools or companies, NASA, scientific and agricultural research groups, and others who are planning for and working on future technologies. Work with your college’s administrators to determine what steps you should follow to organize your film series on campus.

Leadership Development: Organize a series of lessons for chapter members and other students on campus regarding planning for research, putting together presentations, exploring legal issues with film presentations in an academic setting, and working with academic and non-academic entities as partners.

Action: Put together a film series, invite students and community members to attend, and have a speaker address the themes in the films. Survey audience members about their perceptions about the evolution of technology and how the entertainment field has influenced our views

of the future. Compare and contrast the predictions from the past to the realities of current and emerging technologies. How much of “The Future” has become real? Invite international chapters to work with you on the project and to share information about the ways in which the future has been portrayed in science fiction across cultures. What are the similarities and differences? Prepare your findings for presentation at a Phi Theta Kappa regional event and publication.

Collaboration:

- Chapter members
- Students on your campus
- Faculty and administrators on your campus
- Local engineers, scientists, agricultural researchers, and futurists
- Fellow Phi Theta Kappa members beyond your chapter and region

Reflection: Develop a chapter blog to share your findings and thoughts about the democratization of information and what we know about the past and speculate about the future. Invite your Phi Theta Kappa partners to blog with you and readers to share their ideas about the future from their personal perspectives as well as the perspective of the cultures in which they grew up. Discuss online how the blog has helped you grow as scholars and prepare to be effective leaders in the future.

Bibliography

Aslan, Reza. *How To Win a Cosmic War: God, Globalization, and the End of the War on Terror*. 2009.

Aslan examines the “good and evil dualisms” on both sides of the war on terror and explains why it is in the best interests of people on all sides to look beyond demonization of enemies. He explores the history of religious, political, and military conflicts in the Middle East and the Western response to the conflicts as well as Islamic extremists’ distortions of their own religion and history.

McNeely, Ian F. *Reinventing Knowledge: From Alexandria to the Internet*. 2008.

Ian complicates the notion that the current Information Age is unique. Instead, he argues that “information ages” have existed throughout history and that previous cultural and technological advancements have spawned information explosions similar to the one we are currently undergoing. Topics addressed include the rise of libraries, the development of monasteries as repositories of knowledge, the rise of the university, the popularity of letters circulated among the intellectual elite, the rise of the discipline, and the development of the scientific laboratory.

Norton, Jeremy. M. *From Gutenberg to the Internet: A Sourcebook on the History of Information Technology*. 2005.

Norton traces the history of technologies from the 15th through the 21st centuries with a concentration on discoveries made during the 19th and early-to-mid-20th centuries. A timeline designed to encourage research and development is included.

Phi Theta Kappa Honors Program Committee

The Phi Theta Kappa Honors Program Committee is responsible for making recommendations to Headquarters staff about the new Honors Study Topic every two years and for assisting with the compilation of the Program Guide. Made up of Phi Theta Kappa advisors, Headquarters staff, and consultants, the Honors Program Committee is selected for its broad knowledge of the democratization of information and Phi Theta Kappa's integrated approach to the Hallmarks as well as its balance in academic disciplines.



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Phi Theta Kappa Honors Institute Topics and Sites

Established in 1968, Phi Theta Kappa's Honors Institute is an intensive exploration of the Honors Study Topic, featuring internationally recognized speakers, small group seminars, educational field trips and experiential activities.

1968	Our Cultural Heritage: 1800-1860 Endicott College, Beverly, Massachusetts	1990	Civilization at Risk: Challenge of the '90s Adelphi University, Long Island, New York
1969	The Changing Nature of American Society: A Challenge to Government Marymount College of Virginia, Arlington, Virginia	1991	The Paradox of Freedom: A Global Dilemma University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota
1970	A Study of Twentieth-Century Drama Bennett College, Millbrook, New York	1992	1492-1992: The Dynamics of Discovery College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts
1971	Man, A Part of Nature/Man, Apart from Nature Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado	1993	Our Complex World: Balancing Unity and Diversity Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
1972	The State of Our Nation: Toward Responsible Contributory Citizenship American University, Washington, D.C.	1994	Science, Humanity and Technology: Shaping a New Creation Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan
1973	Voices of Human Experience, I Endicott College, Beverly, Massachusetts	1995	Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities: An Indelicate Balance Chapman University, Orange, California
1974	Voices of Human Experience, II Ferrum College, Ferrum, Virginia	1996	The Arts: Landscape of Our Time Bryant College, Smithfield, Rhode Island
1975	Franklin and Jefferson: Apostles in '76 University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia	1997	Family: Myth, Metaphor and Reality Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington
1976	William Faulkner: The Man, His Land, His Legend University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi	1998	The Pursuit of Happiness: Conflicting Visions and Values The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
1977	Music: The Listener's Art Cumberland College, Lebanon, Tennessee	1999	The New Millennium: The Past As Prologue The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.
1978	Man Alive: Can He Survive? Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado	2000	In the Midst of Water: Origin and Destiny of Life The University of San Diego, San Diego, California
1979	The Brilliant Future of Man: Problem Solving Time Lees-McRae College, Banner Elk, North Carolina	2001	Customs, Traditions, and Celebrations: The Human Drive for Community Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia
1980	A Time for Truth: America's Need for Governmental Renaissance Endicott College, Beverly, Massachusetts	2002	Dimensions and Directions of Health: Choices in the Maze Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina
1981	Man in Crisis: A Quest for Values State University of New York, Purchase, New York	2003	Dimensions and Directions of Health: Choices in the Maze The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.
1982	The Short Story: Mirror of Humanity University of Southern Mississippi, Long Beach, Mississippi	2004	Popular Culture: Shaping and Reflecting Who We Are University of California, Los Angeles, California
1983	Signed by the Masters C.W. Post College on Long Island, Greenvale, New York	2005	Popular Culture: Shaping and Reflecting Who We Are University of Nevada Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada
1984	America, A World-Class Citizen: Image and Reality University of Southern Mississippi, Long Beach, Mississippi	2006	Gold, Gods, and Glory: The Global Dynamics of Power University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware
1985	Ethics and Today's Media: An Endangered Alliance? Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado	2007	Gold, Gods, and Glory: The Global Dynamics of Power Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois
1986	The American Dream: Past, Present, and Future Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas	2008	The Paradox of Affluence: Choices, Challenges, and Consequences San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California
1987	The U.S. Constitution: Assuring Continuity Through Controversy University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia	2009	The Paradox of Affluence: Choices, Challenges, and Consequences University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia
1988	The Character and Climate of Leadership: Old Frontiers and New Frontiers Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington	2010	The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril, and Promise Chapman University, Orange, California
1989	The Americas: Distant Neighbors Building Bridges University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada	2011	The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril, and Promise To Be Announced

About Phi Theta Kappa

Phi Theta Kappa is the honor society for community college students. Since its founding in 1918, Phi Theta Kappa has recognized the academic achievements of students in associate-degree programs. The Society has grown from eight charter chapters in Missouri to approximately 1,250 chapters located in all 50 of the United States, Canada, Germany, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the British Virgin Islands, the United Arab Emirates, and U.S. territories. Approximately 100,000 of the most outstanding two-year college students are inducted into membership in Phi Theta Kappa each year. Phi Theta Kappa offers students opportunities for engaging in scholarly activities, earning academic scholarships, providing service to the community, developing and practicing leadership skills, and enjoying fellowship with other scholars.

Phi Theta Kappa Mission Statement

The purpose of Phi Theta Kappa shall be to recognize and encourage scholarship among two-year college students. To achieve this purpose, Phi Theta Kappa shall provide opportunity for the development of leadership and service, for an intellectual climate for the exchange of ideas and ideals, for lively fellowship of scholars, and for stimulation of interest in continuing academic excellence.



PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY