



**MONASH** University

**FIT3098  
Social Informatics**

**Unit guide**

**Semester 1, 2009**

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# **FIT3098 Social Informatics - Semester 1, 2009**

## **Unit leader :**

Steven Wright

## **Lecturer(s) :**

### **Caulfield**

- Steven Wright

## **Tutors(s) :**

### **Caulfield**

- Jake Zhivov

## **Introduction**

Welcome to FIT3098 Social Informatics. This 6 point unit is a core unit of the Information Management major in the BITS, and an elective for other majors in that degree.

## **Unit synopsis**

This unit provides students with a critical understanding of the impact of information technology (IT) within contemporary social relations. Using case studies drawn from different social spheres, the unit explores the ways in which the diffusion of IT has reshaped thinking and practice concerning social collaboration, the production of knowledge and community building. Particular attention is paid to the emerging field of community informatics, and the implications that this field holds for the work of information and knowledge management professionals.

## **Learning outcomes**

At the completion of this subject, students will be able to:

Understand the nature and operation of information communities within contemporary society; Have an understanding of community informatics as an emerging discipline and professional practice; Be familiar with contemporary debates concerning the social impact of information technology use; Gain understanding of the collaborative behaviours and interdependencies which contribute to notions of community; Demonstrate the ability to analyse and critique cases from the information industry.

## **Workload**

For on campus students, workload commitments are:

- two-hour lecture and
- one-hour tutorial (requiring advance preparation)

- a minimum of 3-4 hours of personal study per one hour of contact time in order to satisfy the reading and assignment expectations.
- You will need to allocate up to 5 hours per week in some weeks, for use of a computer, including time for newsgroups/discussion groups.

Off-campus students generally do not attend lecture and tutorial sessions (although they are welcome). However, you should plan to spend equivalent time working through the relevant resources and participating in discussion groups each week, as well as regular chatroom sessions. Audio recordings of lectures are accessible from the unit MUSO site.

## Unit relationships

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Relationships

This is a core unit of the Information Management major in the BITS, and an elective for other majors in that degree.

You may not study this unit and IMS3010 in your degree.

## Continuous improvement

Monash is committed to 'Excellence in education' (Monash Directions 2025 - <http://www.monash.edu.au/about/monash-directions/directions.html>) and strives for the highest possible quality in teaching and learning.

To monitor how successful we are in providing quality teaching and learning Monash regularly seeks feedback from students, employers and staff. One of the key formal ways students have to provide feedback is through Unit Evaluation Surveys. The University's Unit Evaluation policy (<http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/quality/unit-evaluation-policy.html>) requires that every unit offered is evaluated each year. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the surveys as they are an important avenue for students to "have their say". The feedback is anonymous and provides the Faculty with evidence of aspects that students are satisfied and areas for improvement.

Faculties have the option of administering the Unit Evaluation survey online through the my.monash portal or in class. Lecturers will inform students of the method being used for this unit towards the end of the semester.

## Student Evaluations

If you wish to view how previous students rated this unit, please go to <http://www.monash.edu.au/unit-evaluation-reports/>

## Improvements to this unit

New chatroom sessions have been planned for off campus students.

## Unit staff - contact details

### Unit leader

**Dr Steve Wright**

Senior Lecturer

Phone +61 3 990 32994

**Lecturer(s) :**

**Dr Steve Wright**

Senior Lecturer

Phone +61 3 990 32994

**Tutor(s) :**

**Jake Zhivov**

### Teaching and learning method

Recorded on-campus lectures will supplement the delivery of the unit to students via the unit homepage on the World Wide Web. Communication between students and teacher will be undertaken face-to-face where possible, as well as through tools such as email, internet conferencing, and telephone. Readings are to be drawn mostly from the World Wide Web as well as printed resources.

### Tutorial allocation

On-campus students should register for laboratories using Allocate+.

### Communication, participation and feedback

Monash aims to provide a learning environment in which students receive a range of ongoing feedback throughout their studies. You will receive feedback on your work and progress in this unit. This may take the form of group feedback, individual feedback, peer feedback, self-comparison, verbal and written feedback, discussions (on line and in class) as well as more formal feedback related to assignment marks and grades. You are encouraged to draw on a variety of feedback to enhance your learning.

It is essential that you take action immediately if you realise that you have a problem that is affecting your study. Semesters are short, so we can help you best if you let us know as soon as problems arise. Regardless of whether the problem is related directly to your progress in the unit, if it is likely to interfere with your progress you should discuss it with your lecturer or a Community Service counsellor as soon as possible.

### Unit Schedule

Week	Topic	Key dates
1	Introduction to social informatics	
2	Communities & networks in society	
3	Agency & structure in society	
4	IT & social relations	
5	The nature of information communities	
6	Knowledge & knowledge workers	Assignment 2

Mid semester break		
7	Memory	
8	The challenge of peer-to-peer production	
9	Web 2.0	
10	Community Informatics	
11	Community Informatics/eGovernment	Assignment 3
12	Social informatics in a global context	
13	Revision	

## Unit Resources

### Prescribed text(s) and readings

none required.

### Recommended text(s) and readings

Useful background reading:

Castells, M. (2002). *The Internet galaxy: reflections on the Internet, business and society*. Oxford University Press.

Rheingold, H. (2000). *The virtual community : homesteading on the electronic frontier*. MIT Press.

### Required software and/or hardware

There is no specific software requirement beyond access to word-processing and web browsers.

### Equipment and consumables required or provided

Students studying off-campus are required to have the minimum system configuration specified by the faculty as a condition of accepting admission, and regular Internet access. On-campus students, and those studying at supported study locations may use the facilities available in the computing labs. Information about computer use for students is available from the ITS Student Resource Guide in the Monash University Handbook. You will need to allocate up to 10 hours per week for use of a computer, including time for newsgroups/discussion groups.

### Study resources

Study resources we will provide for your study are:

made available through MUSO. These include lecture notes and tutorial exercises.

### Library access

The Monash University Library site contains details about borrowing rights and catalogue searching. To learn more about the library and the various resources available, please go to <http://www.lib.monash.edu.au>.

The Educational Library and Media Resources (LMR) is also a very resourceful place to visit at <http://www.education.monash.edu.au/library/>

## Monash University Studies Online (MUSO)

All unit and lecture materials are available through MUSO (Monash University Studies Online). Blackboard is the primary application used to deliver your unit resources. Some units will be piloted in Moodle. If your unit is piloted in Moodle, you will see a link from your Blackboard unit to Moodle (<http://moodle.monash.edu.au>) and can bookmark this link to access directly. In Moodle, from the Faculty of Information Technology category, click on the link for your unit.

You can access MUSO and Blackboard via the portal: <http://my.monash.edu.au>

Click on the Study and enrolment tab, then Blackboard under the MUSO learning systems.

In order for your Blackboard unit(s) to function correctly, your computer needs to be correctly configured.

For example:

- Blackboard supported browser
- Supported Java runtime environment

For more information, please visit: <http://www.monash.edu.au/muso/support/students/downloadables-student.html>

You can contact the MUSO Support by phone : (+61 3) 9903 1268

For further contact information including operational hours, please visit:  
<http://www.monash.edu.au/muso/support/students/contact.html>

Further information can be obtained from the MUSO support site:  
<http://www.monash.edu.au/muso/support/index.html>

## Assessment

### Unit assessment policy

In order to pass this unit, a student needs to

1. gain at least 40% of the marks available for the examination component
2. gain at least 40% of the marks available for the total non-examination component taken as a whole
3. gain at least 50% of the total marks for the unit.

Where a student gains less than 40% for either the examination or assignment component, the final result for the unit will be no greater than '44-N'.

### Assignment tasks

- **Assignment Task**

**Title :** Assignment 1

**Description :**

Assignment 1 consists of 10 short reflective pieces.

For 10 successive semester weeks, starting in Week 2, you will be required to address a question posed at the end of that week's lecture.

Your weekly answer of 150-200 of your own words is due no later than noon AEST each Tuesday of the following week (Weeks 3 to 12).

Upload each of your reflective pieces to the folder for your tutorial group.

Label each piece 'Exercise Week X', and don't forget to include your name.

**Weighting : 5%**

**Criteria for assessment :**

Specific tasks and marking criteria will be distributed at the appropriate time during the semester.

**Due date :** weeks 3-12

• **Assignment Task**

**Title :** Assignment 2

**Description :**

Individual students are required to provide a critical survey of a community-based website.

**Weighting : 25%**

**Criteria for assessment :**

Specific tasks and marking criteria will be distributed at the appropriate time during the semester.

**Due date :** week 6

• **Assignment Task**

**Title :** Assignment 3

**Description :**

Working in groups, students will survey the information needs of an organisation or community.

**Weighting : 20%**

**Criteria for assessment :**

Specific tasks and marking criteria will be distributed at the appropriate time during the semester.

**Due date :** week 11

## **Examinations**

• **Examination 1**

**Weighting : 50%**

**Length : 3 hours**

**Type ( open/closed book ) : Closed book**

## Assignment submission

The means by which assignments are submitted (email, via MUSO, in class, etc) is to be negotiated with your tutor. The due date is the date by which the submission must be received.

## Assignment coversheets

Assignments must include an assignment coversheet. Assignment coversheets can be found :

- via the "Student assignment coversheets" (<http://infotech.monash.edu.au/resources/student/assignments/>) page on the faculty website

## University and Faculty policy on assessment

### Due dates and extensions

The due dates for the submission of assignments are given in the previous section. Please make every effort to submit work by the due dates. It is your responsibility to structure your study program around assignment deadlines, family, work and other commitments. Factors such as normal work pressures, vacations, etc. are seldom regarded as appropriate reasons for granting extensions. Students are advised to NOT assume that granting of an extension is a matter of course.

Requests for extensions must be made to the unit lecturer at your campus at least two days before the due date. You will be asked to forward original medical certificates in cases of illness, and may be asked to provide other forms of documentation where necessary. A copy of the email or other written communication of an extension must be attached to the assignment submission.

### Late assignment

Assignments received after the due date will be subject to a penalty of 5% per day up to 5 business days, after which the assignment will not be accepted.

### Return dates

Students can expect assignments to be returned within two weeks of the submission date or after receipt, whichever is later.

Assessment for the unit as a whole is in accordance with the provisions of the Monash University Education Policy at <http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/assessment/>

We will aim to have assignment results made available to you within two weeks after assignment receipt.

## Plagiarism, cheating and collusion

Plagiarism and cheating are regarded as very serious offences. In cases where cheating has been confirmed, students have been severely penalised, from losing all marks for an assignment, to facing disciplinary action at the Faculty level. While we would wish that all our students adhere to sound ethical conduct and honesty, I will ask you to acquaint yourself with Student Rights and Responsibilities

(<http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/about/committees-groups/facboard/policies/studrights.html>) and the Faculty regulations that apply to students detected cheating as these will be applied in all detected cases.

In this University, cheating means seeking to obtain an unfair advantage in any examination or any other written or practical work to be submitted or completed by a student for assessment. It includes the use, or attempted use, of any means to gain an unfair advantage for any assessable work in the unit, where the means is contrary to the instructions for such work.

When you submit an individual assessment item, such as a program, a report, an essay, assignment or other piece of work, under your name you are understood to be stating that this is your own work. If a submission is identical with, or similar to, someone else's work, an assumption of cheating may arise. If you are planning on working with another student, it is acceptable to undertake research together, and discuss problems, but it is not acceptable to jointly develop or share solutions unless this is specified by your lecturer.

Intentionally providing students with your solutions to assignments is classified as "assisting to cheat" and students who do this may be subject to disciplinary action. You should take reasonable care that your solution is not accidentally or deliberately obtained by other students. For example, do not leave copies of your work in progress on the hard drives of shared computers, and do not show your work to other students. If you believe this may have happened, please be sure to contact your lecturer as soon as possible.

Cheating also includes taking into an examination any material contrary to the regulations, including any bilingual dictionary, whether or not with the intention of using it to obtain an advantage.

Plagiarism involves the false representation of another person's ideas, or findings, as your own by either copying material or paraphrasing without citing sources. It is both professional and ethical to reference clearly the ideas and information that you have used from another writer. If the source is not identified, then you have plagiarised work of the other author. Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that is insulting to the reader and grossly unfair to your student colleagues.

## **Register of counselling about plagiarism**

The university requires faculties to keep a simple and confidential register to record counselling to students about plagiarism (e.g. warnings). The register is accessible to Associate Deans Teaching (or nominees) and, where requested, students concerned have access to their own details in the register. The register is to serve as a record of counselling about the nature of plagiarism, not as a record of allegations; and no provision of appeals in relation to the register is necessary or applicable.

## **Non-discriminatory language**

The Faculty of Information Technology is committed to the use of non-discriminatory language in all forms of communication. Discriminatory language is that which refers in abusive terms to gender, race, age, sexual orientation, citizenship or nationality, ethnic or language background, physical or mental ability, or political or religious views, or which stereotypes groups in an adverse manner. This is not meant to preclude or inhibit legitimate academic debate on any issue; however, the language used in such debate should be non-discriminatory and sensitive to these matters. It is important to avoid the use of discriminatory language in your communications and written work. The most common form of discriminatory language in academic work tends to be in the area of gender inclusiveness. You are, therefore, requested to check for this and to ensure your work and communications are non-discriminatory in all respects.

## **Students with disabilities**

Students with disabilities that may disadvantage them in assessment should seek advice from one of the following before completing assessment tasks and examinations:

- Faculty of Information Technology Student Service staff, and / or
- your Unit Coordinator, or
- Disabilities Liaison Unit

## **Deferred assessment and special consideration**

Deferred assessment (not to be confused with an extension for submission of an assignment) may be granted in cases of extenuating personal circumstances such as serious personal illness or bereavement. Information and forms for Special Consideration and deferred assessment applications are available at <http://www.monash.edu.au/exams/special-consideration.html>. Contact the Faculty's Student Services staff at your campus for further information and advice.