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Rhetorical Analysis: Creating an App Casebook
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Rhetorical Analysis: Creating an App Casebook

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Overview

The purpose of this assignment is to use rhetoric to think and write critically about technology and the users' experiences with it. To do so, students will work collaboratively to determine what makes a smartphone app successful. Once they agree, each student is bound by the criteria they have created together. They will collect apps; compile them in a portfolio, and evaluate the app's appeal, in part, based upon the criteria they create. Part of their evaluation should center on the three rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos. Students will use Google Sites or another web-based platform to curate their app collection. They will build their own App Casebook. It will include the app's name, summaries for each, and any visuals the student deems essential to help further analyze each app's utility. Next, they will analyze the rhetorical effectiveness of the apps, given their target audience(s) and purpose(s). This approach to rhetorical analysis encourages students to a) survey, b) collect, and c) then analyze. The App Casebook assignment teaches students the importance of consensus and agreement about the nature of an artifact; they have to define the terms and use the criteria as a basis or form of analysis.

Time Commitment

2-3 weeks

Materials

Please review the Google Sites video (Flipped Classroom Tutorials), where there is supplemental information to help you build your Google Sites. Use your computer or smartphone devices to explore, Apple, Android, and Amazon app stores.

Assignment Process

- Students will form groups of two or three and answer the following question: What makes an app effective and/or popular for its target audience?
- Once the students generate some ideas, they will need to create a set of four to six criteria to help to define the efficacy and/or popularity of an app; or what makes it work.
- Then students will create a website using the Google Suite platform, Google Sites, to curate a collection of apps. Students can use any website platform to house their apps.
- Next, students will pick an app category and find apps within that category to add to their Google Site. Students will simply add the name of the app and/or any accompanying images that give presence to the app's appeal.
- Students will find and add a total of eight apps to their Google Site. They will provide a summary of each app and note its features, describing and explaining what the app does.
- Next, students will use the rhetorical appeals to analyze and determine the apps' worth. Students are encouraged to move beyond alphabetic text and consider multimodal ways to note the apps' appeal. For example, if a student finds a Meme or Gif that shows how the audience or user is impacted by the app, emotionally, then they should use it.
- Students will develop a draft of their site and share it with another group to get feedback on summaries and analysis of the apps included. In addition, they will get some feedback on the general design of their Google Site. Students are encouraged to think through the layout of their site.
- Finally, students will reflect upon their process for exploring, collecting, and analyzing apps.

Learning Outcomes

Students engaging in this assignment will:
- Gain experience composing in several genres to understand how the genre's conventions are shaped by purpose
- Gain experience using key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Locate and evaluate apps for general appeal, value, innovation, and significance for its audience
- Develop a writing project through multiple drafts

Learning Accommodations

- Material can be presented in multiple formats to include in-person instruction and asynchronous, digital delivery.

Works Cited

Flipped Classroom Tutorials. *Top 10 Tips for Google Sites for Beginner and Power User*. Youtube, 23 July 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dGdjh-usy4.