

TURNING POINT E-SIM

ABSTRACT

Turning Point is a simple online role play in which participants assume the role of delegates to a conference representing various perspectives on internet censorship. The case study of government regulation of Google Net in China provides a catalyst for debate on censorship of the media. Through a conference discussion, participants begin to grapple with some of the implications of web-based social networking technologies on understandings of citizenship and nationhood in an emerging global environment.

KEYWORDS

International Studies; Censorship; Internet; Globalisation; Blended learning; e-Learning; Reusability.

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DESCRIPTION

The premise of the scenario is that, due to developments in communications technology, the world is at a turning point necessitating careful decision making about the use and regulation of the internet. This online role play provides an opportunity for participants to explore and debate whether there should be free and open access to web-based communications technology. Participants take on the role of delegates to an international conference on converging digital technologies. Through conference papers and discussions, concepts of citizenship and nationhood are examined.



AUDIENCE/GROUP SIZE

Group size is scalable; however a minimum of 6 participants is recommended. Students are divided into 'interest' groups and allocated 1 out of 8 stakeholder roles to play. The number of interest groups and individual roles allocated is determined by the number of participants. There is potential for teaming participants within specific roles and/or running parallel role plays if desired.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Within the context of the Turning Point role play, participants are invited to further develop their:

- Knowledge and understanding of some of the implications of developments in communications technologies
- Appreciation of cross-cultural issues
- Integration of skills into action: research, communication, negotiation and computer literacy.

TIME AND SETTING

The Turning Point activity is conducted over a 1 week period in the first semester of *International Issues and Perspectives*, a year long subject within the UNSW Foundation Year Arts, Fine Arts, International Studies and Arts/Law programs. UNSW Foundation Year is a university preparation course for international students.

The role play is set in the present and utilises contemporary news items as triggers to discussion.

RESOURCES

- Online Discussion Board
- Contemporary news items

ASSESSMENT

This activity is conducted as a tutorial exercise scaffolding participation in online role play. It does not contribute towards the formal assessment for the subject.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Warm-up discussion	Familiarisation with using the online discussion board.
Scenario released	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scenario is released to set the scene for the role-play• Character role profiles are selectively released• Participants research their allocated role to determine what this person or organisation stands for and who they represent
Allocation of Roles	
Introductory message	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants write an introductory message explaining who they are (in role) and their initial views about the situation outlined in the scenario.• They then read the postings of others and try to determine who might support or refute their stakeholder view.
Kick start episode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A trigger event is released via the media and participants form a response to the issues raised.
Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants attend an online conference running over a 1 week period.• At the conclusion of the conference, delegates vote for the outcomes that best represents the interests and beliefs of their role.
Debriefing meeting	<p>A face to face debriefing meeting is held to discuss the learning outcomes from the role play. This meeting could be conducted online.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part A: Content issues addressed include various perspectives on;<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How should we use digital technology?○ Who should have access to this technology?○ What are the benefits and dangers of regulating the internet?○ How much regulation is acceptable?○ How is emerging communications technology impacting on concepts of citizenship and nationhood?• Part B: Reflection on learning

REUSABILITY

- As a multi-disciplinary role play simulation, it can be implemented across discipline areas, notably Journalism, Arts, Social Sciences, Politics, International Studies and Business.
- Trigger events can be adapted to suit a variety of levels and disciplines within secondary school and higher education.