



Real World Topics



Digital Dark Age

Science & Technology

Practice Problem 1

How might we prioritize data to save and reduce the effects of information loss in the future?



Visit our topics center to learn more about each topic and access topic-specific resources.



Disappearing Cultures

Civics & Society

Practice Problem 2

How might the losses of endangered cultures across the world impact individuals and communities in the future?



Influencer Marketing

Business & Economics

Qualifying Problem

How might influencer marketing evolve as businesses strive to preserve their credibility while maximizing profits in the future?



Health Security

Science & Technology

Affiliate Finals Problem

How might health security efforts prevent, prepare for, and mitigate the impact of public health crises in the future?



World Finals Topic

TBD

We invite regional affiliate champions to attend our International Conference and compete alongside their peers in our world finals. We will announce a fifth problem topic on **March 1, 2027** for use at the **June 2027** competition.





Practice Problem 1



Digital Dark Age

Science & Technology

How might we prioritize data to save and reduce the effects of information loss in the future?



Visit our topics center to learn more about our Digital Dark Age topic, view suggested readings and access additional resources.

Background

The Digital Dark Age is an inability to access previously collected documented files, photos, and other information stored in outdated file formats, software, or hardware. Data becomes corrupt, scarce, or otherwise inaccessible as technology changes and physical media decays.

Context

Technology is constantly evolving with what once was considered revolutionary is now outdated, and progressively discarded. Information technology does not exist in a vacuum; digital media requires supplemental technologies to retrieve the information. Discs, drives, and other mediums can deteriorate. Even when preserved, the information can be lost without its specific reader. Proprietary file formats fall prey to the Digital Dark Age, as they are less widespread and preserving them increasingly difficult. Conservators and other data specialists strive to ensure digital information remains available. The Internet Archive is one of many organizations dedicated to preserving digital information for future generations. Updating files to modern formats has many obstacles, including expense, expertise, and equipment demands. Many archivists do not have the resources to update file formats for all items in their catalogues.

Questions to Explore

- How should archivists decide which data to prioritize saving?
- What methods can be used to modernize outdated file types?
- How might the loss of information affect the future of humanity?

Central Themes

1. Fragility of digital information
2. Logistics and ethics of data preservation
3. Societal impact of memory loss
4. Innovation in digital preservation





Practice Problem 2



Disappearing Cultures

Civics & Society

How might the losses of endangered cultures across the world impact individuals and communities in the future?



Visit our topics center to learn more about our Disappearing Cultures topic, view suggested readings and access additional resources.

Background

Disappearing cultures, also called endangered or vanishing cultures, represent the unfortunate phenomenon where unique and often ancient ways of life, traditions, languages, and customs face the risk of extinction. These cultures are typically marginalized and/or indigenous. They are threatened by factors such as globalization, urbanization, assimilation, environmental changes, conflict, and government policies.

Context

The loss of a culture is not merely the fading of customs and rituals; it often entails the disappearance of valuable knowledge, worldviews, and a rich tapestry of human heritage. Preserving and celebrating these diverse cultures is vital, not only for the communities themselves but for humanity as a whole. Culture contributes to the tapestry of human diversity and offers unique insights into alternative ways of living and understanding the world. Efforts to document, protect, and revitalize endangered cultures are ongoing, emphasizing the need for respect, cooperation, and the preservation of cultural diversity in an increasingly interconnected world.

Questions to Explore

- What role does cultural change as a result of globalization have on cultures?
- What strategies are being employed to revitalize and renew cultural practices?
- In the face of cultural loss, how are individuals and communities impacted?
- What are some ways to prevent the vanishing of cultures?

Central Themes

1. Globalization and cultural transformation
2. Cultural heritage and knowledge loss
3. Preservation and revitalization efforts





Qualifying Problem



Influencer Marketing

Business & Economics

How might influencer marketing evolve as businesses strive to preserve their credibility while maximizing profits in the future?



Visit our topics center to learn more about our Influencer Marketing topic, view suggested readings and access additional resources.

Background

Influencers combine marketing with their presence in the public eye to persuade others. By establishing devoted fan bases for specific brands and profiting from their visibility, they have revolutionized the advertising industry. Marketing influencers impact a variety of platforms such as online sources, television, music, and print media. These strategies aim to build trust and credibility by associating products with a respected figure, thereby influencing consumer behavior.

Context

Influential media is a complex marketing environment. Influencers shape consumer behavior with seemingly authentic recommendations. This type of media has developed hybrid advertising, blending personal and commercial messaging. Brands invest heavily in these collaborations because they can easily reach targeted audiences, especially younger viewers. Combining personal content and advertising raises complex transparency, authenticity, and consumer trust issues. The industry now struggles to preserve credibility while maximizing profits.ment but also fields like education, cognitive science, and virtual reality.

Questions to Explore

- What risks do brands face when partnering with influencers whose personal actions might affect brand reputation?
- How does the integration of advertising content impact an influencer's perceived authenticity?
- What role do platform algorithms play in determining which sponsored content reaches which audiences?
- What are legal and ethical implications of disguising advertisements as personal content?
- How does commercialization of personal content affect follower trust and engagement?

Central Themes

1. The power of influence in marketing
2. Authenticity and credibility
3. Risks and responsibilities
4. The future of influencer marketing





Affiliate Finals Problem



Health Security

Science & Technology

How might health security efforts prevent, prepare for, and mitigate the impact of public health crises in the future?



Visit our topics center to learn more about our Health Security topic, view suggested readings and access additional resources.

Background

Health security is a critical component of public health and global well-being, encompassing measures and strategies to protect populations from the threats of infectious diseases, biological hazards, and other health emergencies. It involves various activities, from disease surveillance, early detection, and rapid response to developing effective vaccines and medical countermeasures.

Context

Health security efforts are essential for preventing, preparing for, and mitigating the impact of public health crises, such as pandemics, bioterrorism, and natural disasters. Recent events, like the COVID-19 pandemic, have underscored the importance of robust health security systems and international cooperation in safeguarding public health globally. Investments in health security infrastructure, research, and emergency preparedness are vital to ensuring the resilience of healthcare systems and the protection of communities and individuals in the face of health-related threats. Practices, especially in the context of technology and the digital landscape.

Questions to Explore

- How can we ensure that everyone can have proper access to medical care?
- Is medical care something that can be equitized?

Central Themes

1. Comprehensive health security systems
2. Global health collaboration
3. Investment in preparedness and resilience
4. Equal access to medical care

